

MAY 2007
NEWS LETTER NUMBER 13

AMADOR SAWMILL AND MINING ASSOCIATION

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A 501 (c) (3) tax exempt non-profit Ca. corporation

"The primary objectives and purposes of this corporation shall be for public purposes: acquiring, restoring, and preserving authentic historic working sawmill and hard rock mining equipment for public education through display and demonstration, together with related activities."

Restoration of Corliss Steam Engine Continues

Progress has been slow as many missing parts have had to be machined from scratch. However the acquisition in January of blueprints of the original 1904 engine has been a big help! These blue prints were saved when the Nordberg plant closed in 1975. These prints are now archived at the Michigan Technological University.



New Test Base

Ken McCoy was able to acquire some metal framework from a scrapped mobile home. It has been fashioned into a temporary testing base for the engine and flywheel for the dry run on compressed air once the engine is complete. We will be able to set the long range Corliss valve action, adjust the fly ball governor, run in the new piston in it's re bored cylinder and set up the newly poured Babbitt bearings with the proper shims.



New Fence

Last November the crew installed fencing panels around the new Corliss concrete foundation to provide security but still allow the engine to be viewed. The roof will be installed after a crane has installed the engine on to its base. A flat belt has been donated costing \$735. The boiler on the donkey winch will be spotted just to the right of the end fence panel. A 3" steam hose will connect the engine to the donkey boiler.

2007 Fair: Since 1970 the sawmill has been run at the Amador County Fair. This year's dates are July 26th thru the 29th. Transporting and setting up the heavy mill equipment for the show is done the week before the fair opens. We need volunteers to help out. This is a great time to take photos and see how it all goes together. Our annual autumn pot luck dinner and saw dust production party will be held on November 3rd with the mill belted to a restored 1954 Chrysler Hemi industrial gas engine instead of steam.



Corliss engine

The original crankshaft bearings needed to be reground. The crankshaft resisted sliding off the flywheel hub, so heat lamps were used to heat the hub while dry ice was packed around the shaft. After many days, ideas, a 65 ton hydraulic jack and much effort, it finally slipped off! The shaft was reground and Babbitt was melted and poured into a mould to create new bearings. The photo to the left shows the shrinking of the shaft and expanding

the hub to reinsert the crankshaft on to the flywheel. Graphite spray is being applied.

Steam class: Three sawmill crew members attended a 2-day steam class in April put on by the Roots of Motive Power group in Willits. Richard Hansen, Kevin Jarrett, and Jim Jarrett said they learned a lot about steam, and really enjoyed the hands-on sessions on the Ohio Railway steam crane, the 110 HP Best steam traction engine, the Heisler logging steam locomotive, and the Willamette steam donkey. These three are our new steam experts!!

Projects, projects, projects galore

Project leaders (and workers) are needed to determine what needs to be done, how funds will be raised to cover costs, and to schedule workdays. As a group of antique equipment collectors, we have acquired for ASMA a lot of equipment needing restoration or repair. Once the Corliss project is completed, installed and working at the fairgrounds, we need to direct some energy into either completing or fixing some of the “projects” that will enhance the sawmill operation, or add to our sawmill educational exhibits. Perhaps we should sell what no one is willing to work on to “cash in” on the funds needed for other projects.

Here are some of our “projects:

Burnett woodworking equip – how will this be used? Where displayed?

Washington Iron Works boilers – repair, scrap, or modify for a boiler display?

(3) Small stationary steam engines – repairs needed, how will they be used? Or sell?

Schram mobile air compressor – needs to be rebuilt and reassembled

Pallet jack – needs repair, how will it be used?

In addition, there is on-going maintenance needed for the sawmill structure, GMC truck, steam donkey, Chrysler Hemi engine, 911 trailer (lumber storage).

Financial Report

ASMA received about \$18,750 in various types of donations in 2006. Most of that came from equipment donations (Burnett & Son’s woodworking equipment, Calaveras Telephone’s GMC truck and Fruehauf trailers, a new laptop computer, and a flat belt for the steam engines) totaling \$10,487. An additional \$5,915 was donated by volunteers who paid ASMA expenses and much of the restoration costs out of their own pockets. Cash donations from various individuals totaled \$2,351. Our current cash balance is \$535. Thanks to Jerry Virtue’s leadership the two Fruehauf trailers donated last year have been sold at auction and brought \$500.



How did they do that?
Photo of 1" steel flywheel puller arms, heat lamps, dry ice and 65 ton hydraulic ram. It took many hours of heating and cooling to budge the shaft that first ¼ inch. Even then it took many more hours to press the flywheel off.

Trailer for Donkey engine acquired

In 2004 the reconstructed Donkey engine was dragged by winch onto a lowboy trailer and towed to the fairgrounds for its first public showing and steam-up. In 2006, however, the winch was not available and it was not possible to push or pull the Donkey onto a lowboy, so the Donkey didn't make it to the fair. The original plan to transport the fifteen ton Donkey steam engine was to build a permanent trailer under the engine for easy towing, and truck axles were acquired to that end. However, volunteer time has not been available to accomplish this task. This April, Bill Braun purchased a lowboy trailer which he will lend to ASMA to transport the Donkey to the fair. He also purchased the same winch used in 2005, and will donate the winch to ASMA to mount on the GMC truck (a prior donation).

Contribute an article for the newsletter

Have we missed a topic you are interested in? Contact editor/reporter Alan Langmuir if you have an idea for an article, have a photo, or you want to write a short article on something you were involved with.

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Still to be done before the fair:

Test run engine on stand in the shop on air and steam
Move engine to mill and install
Engine room walls and roof completion
Truck winch repair and installation
Move the donkey/boiler to the mill



In 2002 artist Rand Huggett donated his time and talent to come up with a watercolor vision of the sawmill. It shows a rendition of the Corliss engine and boiler in place.

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