Shay Locomotive #7
By Dan Hauser

The Arcata and Mad River Shay Locomotive #7 is proudly parked in the Roundhouse in Samoa. It is displayed with other local steam engines at the Timber Heritage Association’s growing museum.

The #7 has a long connection with Arcata as one of our logging railroad artifacts. Shay Locomotives were gear driven and built for unique operations. They were slower than traditional rod driven locomotives, but able to pull heavier loads over steep and twisting rails. Ours is 50 tons, having three cylinders and two trucks attached to the gears. It is one of only 188 still in existence out of the hundreds that were built. We have one other, a three truck Shay, the Hammond Lumber Company #33.

Lima Locomotive Works in Lima, Ohio built the Shay in 1918 for Lamson Logging in Washington State. In 1942 Northern Redwood Company purchased it. They used the Shay on the Arcata and Mad River Railroad between Korbel and Korbelex, near the current Alder Grove Industrial Park, and on their 10 miles of logging railroad up the North Fork of the Mad River. Simpson Timber Company purchased Northern Redwood in 1956, converted the logging railroad to trucks and used diesel locomotives on the Arcata and Mad River Railroad – commonly known as the Annie and Mary Railroad. The Shay was donated to the City of Arcata and put on display along with an Annie & Mary caboose, near the Arcata Ball Park about where the former Arcata Endeavor is located today.

Over the years the display was popular, but suffered from occasional vandalism. In 1969 Simpson requested the return of the Shay to run an excursion with the understanding that ultimately the locomotive would be returned to Arcata. The Shay was totally rebuilt at the Eureka Boiler Works shop in Eureka and put in full working condition. Simpson Timber operated a very popular, but costly, excursion train during the summers of 1970.

The Mills Act Comes to Arcata!

On July 6th the City Council adopted a resolution directing Community Development staff to develop a Mills Act program for owners of Landmark properties in Arcata to utilize as a financial incentive to improve and maintain their historic resources. This is one of several steps lately that the City has undertaken to encourage and support the preservation of historic resources throughout Arcata.

The Mills Act is available to owners of local, state or nationally listed historic properties. Properties can be either owner-occupied or income producing. In exchange for a reduction in property tax, the owner enters into a contract with the City wherein he/she agrees to maintain and/or improve the listed property to a certain standard.

The Council has identified the Mills Act as one of several incentive programs that can benefit the City as a whole by contributing to the maintenance and improvement of historic properties, the revitalization of residential neighborhoods and commercial/downtown areas, and the preservation of the historic fabric of the City.

Application materials, standards and protocols are being developed by the city. Owners of non-designated historic properties, who are interested in the Mills Act program, must first go through the Landmark designation process.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact Alyson Hunter, Senior Planner at the City of Arcata at ahunter@cityofarcata.org.
President’s Message
From Alex Stillman

Welcome to the Historical Sites Society of Arcata. We publish a newsletter four times a year and will send you periodic email updates on Museum activities through MailChimp. Our website is arcatahistory.org. Thank you for supporting and preserving Arcata’s history and its built environment.

After lovely summer days, fall is definitely in the air. In August, we sent out the first Mail Chimp email notification. I hope you were able to open and read it. It featured Claudia Israel's *A Farewell to Mugs*, which is on display at the Phillips House. This display, designed by Claudia and Jeanette Cooper, tells the story of the mug.

We are also featuring a display about Sandra Fletcher's hooked rugs. The Phillips House Museum was built during the mid-1850’s; housewives living there worked on handicrafts to better the farm life for their families. Besides being beautiful and useful, handcrafted items “re-purposed” materials to create children’s clothing, a better rug to keep the floor warm or a pieced quilt for the bed. Young women were involved in crafting items for their trousseaus.

One of our HSSA members, Sandra Fletcher, became fascinated with rug hooking after she visited Nova Scotia. Sandra found strength and respect in rug hooking. Her natural ability was seen early, and she was encouraged to enter the McGown teacher’s training program. She became a nationally known master rug hooker and rug-hooking teacher who exhibited her work nationally and internationally. Her students remember her as a gifted and patient teacher with a keen eye. Many of her local students are HSSA members and are continuing her love of rug hooking. Sherry Eaton, Karole Ely, Mary McNellis and Alex Stillman have all won blue ribbons at the Humboldt County Fair for their beautiful hooked items!

Sandra collected wool and dyed it for shading in her hooked rugs. When she passed away in 2010 she bequeathed her “stash” of wool to the Historical Sites Society of Arcata. Part of the collection was sold last year; we brought her remaining wool to the 2016 Natural Fiber Faire on September 10 and 11 at the Arcata Community Center and sold it to raise funds to preserve our own history.

HSSA website, arcatahistory.org, has been upgraded by Andy Alm. I met with Mary Ann McCulloch, president of Eureka Heritage Society to discuss ways our organizations can work together.

The Holiday Tea is on Sunday, December 11 from 2-4 at the Phillips House. If you have fallen in love with a mug(s) in Claudia’s collection, you may buy it during the tea. I look forward to seeing you then. We confirmed Steve Lazar as our speaker for our annual luncheon in March 2017. His topic will be *Postcards of Arcata.*
Arcata Subdivisions
*From an interview of Edith Stromberg-Wall by Susie Van Kirk (2009)*

**Pacific Manor**

"Kent Stromberg and I were married in 1958. At that time, he was a college student. He had worked, for Chet Spiering as a carpenter while he was going to school. After we married, he obtained his own contractor's license. We started contracting as Humboldt Bay Builders in 1960. The first subdivision we did was Pacific Manor. It had 180 lots. We started that in 1961. Pacific Manor is across from Pacific Union School near the hospital. We started on Upper Bay Road and went north, west and north from the corner of Janes Road and Upper Bay Road. We probably built 150 of those homes. In the mid 1960s, we had a lot of houses under construction without construction loans. The loan market dried up and we ended up losing some of those lots to investors, who then, in turn, built the rest of the subdivision.

In those days, people were naming streets after family members. The streets in Pacific Manor are: Ernest Way, which was named for Kent's father, who was Ernest Stromberg; Alice Avenue is for his mother; there is small street that is called Edith Drive which is mine; Leslie Court, which was an uncle of Kent's who died in '56, I believe. Leslie was a teacher at Arcata High and then he became an insurance salesman for New York Life. I believe there is a Kent Court, which actually got named after we lost that section. Kent did not want a street named after him, but it ended up happening. Ball Court was named after the people we bought the property from.

**Bloomfield**

Chet Spiering's first subdivision was Bloomfield, which was built in the late 1940s. Spiering was from Michigan, hence the name Bloomfield, named for a town in Michigan. The company was known as Blakeslee Spiering. Blakeslee was Virginia Spiering's maiden name. Originally Bloomfield had three streets; Blakeslee, Zehnder, and Iversen. Bloomfield School was built on land that Spiering donated.

Spiering always donated property to the school district, because he felt it was important to have neighborhood schools. The property donated in Sunny Brae was actually in the Jacoby Creek School District, but was owned by the Arcata Elementary School District. For awhile, at the very beginning, the Jacoby Creek school bus would stop in front of the Sunny Brae school to pick up kids. The line separating the districts goes up through Sunny Brae in an odd way. When we purchased the rest of that property, we had a choice to go either with the Jacoby Creek School District or the Arcata School District. We chose to go with the Arcata School District because it seemed to make the most sense. Our kids went to that school and we were part of that district, so that is how we decided. It just was silly to take the bus from one district into another.

Mr. Spiering was an amazing character. He left town at least twice, leaving a mess in his wake. He certainly had a great deal of charm and he was able to charm banks in the most amazing way. He left a lot of bills. It was amazing to me that he would leave banks 'holding the bag'. For example, the Margaret Lane area of Sunny Brae was half finished when he left. We ended up buying it through the bank because they were trying to clear it up and the City desperately wanted it done as well. There were situations like that. He came back at some point for a few years and then left again. He didn't come back after that. He actually bought some property in Crescent City and got investors, some from here. One of them, whose name I won't mention, came to me after the whole thing in Crescent City fell apart and said, 'you know, I knew the whole history, I knew how it was going to end and I still invested. He was charming. He was convincing.' He and Virginia eventually divorced. She died a few years ago. I'm not sure if he is still alive or not to tell you the truth.

**Sunny Brae**

Before Kent died around 1974 or 75, we purchased some land that Spiering had managed to retain ownership of. He had logged it, but not built on it. It includes lower Panorama, when you come up Blake Court. Then we bought
the rest of the property, which was about sixty acres and took Panorama on up the hill to the east. Then I did Subdivisions (cont.)

Beverly Way and those two subdivisions after Kent died. I changed some of the lot sizes because they were really small and I didn’t like those small lots. I merged and made a new map on that property. These were bigger lots because it was upper SunnyBrae.”

Student Housing
We built the student housing on the north end of H Street for John Lipscomb and his investment group from the Bay area. We did Colony Inn in the 1960s, and then we built another Colony Inn in Chico and that would have been 1974-75.

Other Subdivisions
We worked with Bill Thompson in Valley West and we built most of the apartments out there, either for him or other investors. And we built the Ramada Inn about 1969. We ended up buying a piece there in late ’70s, 1976 or so, and we put that little subdivision in that is off Valley East Blvd, I think it is; Devlin, off Valley East.

There are some houses there, about 20 or 30. Small little houses, the same house that we did in Westwood Manor. We did a subdivision off of Alliance Road that has houses in one row and four-plexes in another. We called it Westwood Manor. At the time Kent died, 1977, I had the Valley West subdivision underway, I had a subdivision in McKinleyville underway, I had one subdivision in Arcata about to go in Sunny Brae, and the one on California, and two subdivisions in Napa. We had forty employees and we were working nonstop. There was no way I could keep everything. I just couldn’t, so I let the Napa stuff go and I sold off the California project to Jim Franke and group and then I finished the rest.

We did a few houses in Greenview in 1956. Another small subdivision, Brookwood was down near Brookside, which was south of Haeger. I don’t remember who the developer was in Brookside. He was not a local person as I recall, somebody who came to town and built those houses. My grandparents bought one of those houses.

Thoughts about the Future
I’m on the board of Humboldt Bay Housing Development Corp. and our mission is to provide as much affordable housing as possible. So I look at it from that angle. For the most part, I feel most of the stuff we did [Kent and Edith] wasn’t called first-time homebuyer stuff, but it really was. When we started building in Pacific Manor, our land cost was 10% of our final sales price of the house. And now it is at least 40% if not more. That’s the big difference I see. I don’t know how we fix that one. Everybody wants that little piece of land. They don’t want to live in condos, particularly if they are young couples. They want a yard, a place for the kids to play. I don’t see that happening anymore. Life has changed.
Shea #7 (continued)

through 1973. Unfortunately, the excursions did not generate a sufficient profit, insurance costs were too high and tourism was not part of Simpson's business plan. At the end of summer in 1973 the program was closed and the Shay was parked in the railroad shop.

In 1978 Simpson started remodeling the Korbel Saw Mill and the removal of the old railroad shops. That meant that the Shay had to be removed. As Mayor of Arcata, I contacted Simpson to have the Shay returned to Arcata. Simpson's California Vice President was Tom Ingham. Tom told me that there were several parties interested in purchasing the Shay and that we could have it for the highest bid. I responded that there was a verbal agreement for the Shay to be returned to Arcata at the end of the excursion train. Negotiations took several months until Simpson agreed to return the locomotive.

I contacted some friends in the newly formed Northern Counties Logging Interpretive Association (NCLIA) for help in getting the #7 ready to move. Led by Henry Sorensen, Roger Frick and Bill Fahey we spent several weekends at the Korbel shops. We cleaned and painted and even tried to get the boiler approved so it could come into town under its own power. Unfortunately, because it was not used for so long it did not pass the boiler inspection.

On April 7, 1979 the sparkling Annie & Mary Shay was pushed out of the shop in Korbel decorated in flags and bunting. Henry Sorensen and Roger Frick were in period costume as engineer and fireman. As Mayor, I got to wear my top hat and ride in the cab as two of Simpson's 44-ton diesel locomotives pushed the Shay to Korbelex. From there the Northwestern Pacific took over and pushed the Shay to 10th and L Streets near where the old Arcata Train Depot once stood. There were a lot of people along the way taking pictures and a good crowd gathered for the ceremony.

All during this time there was discussion about where the Shay could be displayed and protected. Both the Arcata Parks and Recreation Commission and the City Council considered various options. The property on Alliance Road near Foster Avenue along Jolly Giant Creek was named Shay Park as the first option. When development costs became too great consideration was made to put it at Larson Park. When the tennis courts were constructed, an excavation was made at Larson Park so that the locomotive would be easier to see and a building designed with windows for display and protection.

After the ceremony transferring the Shay back to Arcata, the Northwestern Pacific pushed it to a covered structure at Humboldt Loaders off of St. Louis Road. Because the location was not secure, we removed everything that could possibly be vandalized or stolen. That included the front end plate, all the brass including oilers and the bell, the builders plate, gauges and even the light bulbs from the cab. Everything was packed in two large wooden boxes and stored at the City's Corporation Yard. During the early morning hours of July 1, 1982 a fire occurred that destroyed Humboldt Loaders and badly damaged Number 7. The Arcata Volunteer Fire Department crew avoided spraying water directly onto the locomotive thereby minimizing the damage to the metal. The wooden parts were burned off or badly damaged and there was some metal warping. The Shay sat on the siding until 1986 when it was moved to the NCLIA facility on Glendale Road. There under the direction of Henry Sorensen and Wes Fulton major repairs and restoration was undertaken.

The City of Arcata sold the Shay to the Timber Heritage Association, successor to NCLIA, in 2001 for $1.00. Shortly thereafter at a cost of thousands of dollars the Shay was moved to its permanent home for display in the Samoa Roundhouse just below the Samoa Cookhouse. As a final note, many of the parts that were removed back in 1979 have been returned and reattached. However, many of those parts never made it including the bell and builder's plate. They were apparently lost, stolen or wound up in someone's private collection. Maybe someday the Shay will find all its parts and be returned to its full beauty.
Membership Form: Historical Sites Society of Arcata

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________________

City: __________________ State: __________________ Zip Code: __________________

Phone: __________________ email______________________________

($)25) Individual ($35) Family ($100) Preservation Partner

( ) Additional contribution

My gift is ( ) in honor of________________________ ( )in memory of________________________

Please provide contact information so we can notify honorees.

To join HSSA send your dues to:
Historical Sites Society of Arcata
PO Box 4521
Arcata, CA 95518