

AROUND THE MUSEUM

During February Hap Manit was busy up on the roof of the diesel shop with a snow blower to reduce the snow load and ice build up on the north side of the building. As the sun doesn't reach this section until late afternoon in the winter, the snow melts slowly and refreezes causing water to back up and leak into the building. Hap almost singlehandedly has been trying to keep ahead of the problem. The detail of hauling garbage, cleaning restrooms etc., may not be noticed unless it's not done. Those doing this work should be appreciated.

LA PORTOLA TAR PITS

The Union Pacific started cleaning up the tar pits in the balloon track area on March 15th. A contractor brought in equipment and started removing the old oil, some probably dating from early railroad times. Steam engines burned a heavy bunker C crude oil and in fueling or working on the engines a small amount was occasionally spilled. Over the years the oil was allowed to accumulate in a pond area near our balloon track. Being a heavy tar-like substance it wouldn't go away, so finally because of environmental reasons it had to be removed. When the job is done in a month or so we will have a nice clean area. Union Pacific is to be thanked for accepting the responsibility for the clean-up. One of our museum locomotives is being used to spot cars for the contractor and in return they agreed to grade our parking lot.

NEXT MEETING

Our next social meeting will be held on April 16, at 7:30 pm in the Diesel Shop meeting hall.

HOUGH LOADER

An ancient Hough bucket loader was loaned for our use last year. It ran, but not too well. The owner, Pat Noble, borrowed it back last fall and when it returned it hardly ran at all. Since we have a need for such a machine on numerous occasions, we made an agreement with Mr. Noble to pay half the overhaul costs. Hank Stiles and Brian Challandar tackled the job. The engine was removed and taken to a local machine shop where the block was bored, crank built up and turned, valves ground and reassembled. The engine was then placed back in the loader. Hank welded up all the broken welds and did some body work on the hood. Hap painted the engine compartment and chased parts. The engine was started and purrs like a kitten. It's ready for another 40 years of work.

TRACK WORK

February and March have been very dry this year. Our one man track gang, Ken Roller, got cabin fever and as soon as the snow melted he started working on laying rail on Rip No. 3. By mid March he had 1,000 feet of track laid and was finishing the tamping. This will give us storage space for our growing collection. We really appreciate Ken's hard work and dedication.

OIL TANK

Union Pacific donated a former steam engine oil tank to our museum. The tank was in use as a car oil storage tank at Stockton and was no longer needed. It arrived in a WP mill gon and was lifted out and onto a concrete pad with our Little Giant crane. Larry Cope, Norm Holmes and Jim Ley made it happen. It will be used as an oil storage for steam engine fuel.