

ly to put up the money to purchase the locomotive and donate it to the Society. So as you read this, final details are being worked out and hopefully by the end of July the WP705 will be back home. Future details and pictures along with a list of donors will be printed in the next Train Sheet.

Jan Brietwieser has resigned from her duties as a Director as well as Gift Shop Manager due to personal reasons. She has her hands full right now and did not have the time to devote to the Society. I hate to see Jan go as she was the driving force in moving the Gift Shop into the Beanery and expanding our merchandise along with all the fantastic shirts she brought in. She has promised to stay involved and help out when she can. On behalf of the Board, I want to give Jan a big Thanks!!!

At this year's Membership meeting, we had about 40 people attend! We were treated to a fantastic Spaghetti feed cooked up by Gail McClure, and had a superb Wine provided by Vic Neves and his fiancée, Anne. I made a short presentation of ongoing and upcoming projects at the Museum along with some comments by John Walker about his new role in our organization. Kerry Cochran talked about Operating Department activities and Eugene Vicknair updated everyone on the Zephyr Project. Ed Wagner presented the Society with a huge check in the amount of \$15,000 in memory of his brother, Joe, to be used solely for the purpose of upgrading our grounds to ADA compliance. This will go along way in making our grounds more Handicap accessible in the very near future. THANKS ED!!!!!!! After that, slide shows from Vic Neves, Wayne Monger, and John Walker entertained the crowd until the wee hours of the morning in fine Winterail form. Thanks to all who helped and attended, and I hope to see more of you next year.

Well, the ongoing saga of Magnolia Tower continues. We had everything in place to begin disassembly and I'll be darned if something else didn't go wrong. The contractor who is doing the work for Amtrak finished the remediation process and was ready to begin disassembly when a Union issue came up and the whole thing came to a screeching halt again!!!! At this point, the tower is being moved about 40 feet from its present location to allow construction to continue on the new Amtrak servicing facility. This is costing us nothing as the contractor is doing it for us gratis. Once it is moved, then we have to refigure how to disassemble it and move it to Portola. If it were not for the relentless work by Eugene Vicknair and Doug Morgan, Maggie would be a pile of firewood right now. We are not even going to begin to guess what is next so as soon as something is done, we will report it. (when I was working out of Oakland, Maggie Tower was always a pain for us to get across. Now it seems she is going to get the last laugh!)

The US Army has notified us that one of the M-60 tanks has a new home. It is going to the City of Pittsburg, CA. One of their people has come up and picked which one they want and they are making arrangements to move it in the next couple of weeks. The other one is being given to another organization that has not been notified yet so I can not say who, only that it has a new home also.

There are many other exciting and big things in the works at our Museum. We continue moving in the right direction. We need your support, not only in fundraising and donations, but by just coming up to the Museum when possible and volunteering

to work the Operating crew, assisting our CMO work on the Locomotives, or helping us with the track work. There are always many things that need to be done, big and small so every little bit helps. Make sure you check out our calendar of events for the next work weekend. Don't forget Portola Railroad Days, Truckee Railroad Days, or this year's new and improved Railfan Day. Hope to see you soon in Portola!

## Western Pacific Marine Fleet Tugboat *Hercules*

By Eugene Vicknair

While the WP had their corporate offices in San Francisco and considered it their western terminus, only subsidiary Sacramento Northern had an all rail entrance (passenger only and short-lived at that) into the city. With the Southern Pacific holding the only direct freight route into town, WP, like fellow shut-outs Santa Fe and Northwestern Pacific, restored to reaching their westernmost outpost via water.

The WP marine freight fleet only rostered a small number of boats during its history, but all had varied backgrounds and interesting histories. While future articles will cover the tugs *Virgil G. Bogue* and *Humaconna* and car ferry *Las Plumas*, this installment focuses on the sole operating survivor: tugboat *Hercules*.

Western Pacific's San Francisco operations were made up of newly built trackage and some bones inherited from the Ocean Shore Railroad, an aborted attempt to link Santa Cruz and San Francisco with an interurban railroad. WP began hauling freight across the bay in 1908, before the east-west mainline was even completed. The initial fleet consisted of two barges built in 1908 by Kruse & Banks of North Bend, Oregon. Barges 1 and 2 were all wood construction and had an overall length of 266 feet, beam of 39½ feet, draft of 12¾ feet, net tonnage of 934 tons and a gross tonnage of 1339. In 1928, they were supplemented by all steel barge 3, built by the Moore Dry Dock Company. Featuring a net tonnage of 1200 tons, the 3 measured 258 feet long, had a beam of 38 feet and draft of 12½ feet. After 1928, barge 2 was typically held in reserve until needed and would be used with rented tugs from the Red Stack fleet. Each barge could carry up to 13 average freight cars.

Motive power for the barges was provided by tug boats *Hercules* and *Humaconna*. The *Hercules* was an all-steel boat originally built as a sea-going tug by John H. Dialogue and Son in 1907 at Camden, New Jersey. She was constructed for the San Francisco-based Shipowners' and Merchants' Tugboat Company and joined their Red Stack fleet (named for their red-painted smoke stacks). After being completed, *Hercules* towed sister ship *Goliath* around South America and through the Strait of Magellan to San Francisco Bay. Both vessels were oil-burners and *Goliath* carried extra fuel, water and supplies for the journey.

The *Hercules*, registration number 20481, has a hull length of 151 feet, beam of 26 feet and carries 85,400 gallons of fuel oil. This gave her a cruising range of 21 days and a maximum speed of 10 knots. Since she was originally built for sea going service, there was bunk space for 18 and capacity for 30 days of provisions. A typical crew was 15, allowing for three

standing watches in the engine room. Due to her narrow hull, *Hercules* presented cramped quarters for those who served on her. Her main deck was often a soggy place: since the *Hercules* rode low in the water, the deck was often awash from ocean waves.

*Hercules* spent her ocean-going career towing barges, sailing ships and log rafts up and down the Pacific coast. Since the prevailing winds made sailing difficult and required a round-about course to stay with the wind, sailing vessels were typically towed on their northbound voyages beyond San Francisco. In 1916, the *Hercules* towed future museum-mate the *C. A. Thayer* to Port Townsend, Washington. Often, the tug towed huge rafts of cut log, often holding millions of board feet of prime Washington and Oregon timber bound for mills in central and southern California. Bulk cargo was hauled in barges among the west coast ports and the *Hercules* even made trips to Hawaii as part of her runs. At least once she ventured to Panama, towing a huge caisson (a steel built structure used for closing the entrance of canal locks) to be used in the Panama Canal, then under construction. A small bit of irony considering the Canal would help bankrupt future owner Western Pacific.

Ocean tug life was harsh and frequently busy, but gaining a berth aboard a ship like the *Hercules* was typically considered a good career. Tug crews were kept supplied with good food and were often well paid, particularly the senior crew and captain. The skill and experience needed to manage a tug and heavy tow on the open sea were highly respected. Shallow sand bars and narrow bay entrances challenged the crews and one either learned their craft well or ended up unemployed, or worse, wrecked on the shores.

*“Out through the Golden Gate, the most beautiful harbor in the world. North, towing this barkentine to Port Washington in Canada. Thence south, empty, to Astoria where we picked up six million feet of timber in a raft to tow south to San Diego. Long, slow, lazy days, making no more than three knots. Even the patent log [a device trailed in the water to measure speed] would not work. We rigged a fishing line on it and caught beautiful king salmon on the way.”*

— Albert J. Hody, fireman, describing life aboard *Hercules* in 1919. Excerpted from an oral history in the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park collection. From SFM On-Line.

After a little more than 15 years in ocean service, *Hercules* left the Red Stack fleet in the early 1920's and was sold to the Moore Dry Dock Company. Western Pacific purchased her from Moore in 1924 and typically paired her with barge 1, running freight cars among the rail docks WP interchanged with. At the height of railroad marine operations on the bay, WP craft called at the State Belt Railway pier on Fisherman's Wharf, Northwestern Pacific's dock at Tiburon, Santa Fe docks in Richmond and San Francisco, and the WP's own slips in SF and Oakland. WP service was quite a contrast to her ocean days, with its short transits and frequent dockings. For over 35 years, the *Hercules* would be a regular sight on the bay, bridging the gap among the bay area's railroads.

Starting in 1955, the WP sought to replace both *Hercules* and *Humaconna* and the three barges. The studies undertaken eventually led to the design and construction of the *Las Plumas*, a self-propelled car ferry and the last word in SF Bay marine rail-

roading. After *Las Plumas* began regular service on July 29, 1957, the *Humaconna* was decommissioned and the *Hercules* was placed on stand-by service with barge 3. In September, 1961, the *Hercules* was also retired. In early 1962, she was sold to Thomas & Brown Shipbuilders, Inc.

The venerable tug seemed destined to fall to the scrapper's torch until the California State Park Foundation purchased her in 1975 for the San Francisco Maritime State Historic Park, located at the Hyde Street Pier in San Francisco. Restoration began in 1977 under the auspices of the National Park Service. In 1986, *Hercules* was awarded designation as a National Historic Landmark and was later documented as part of the Historic American Engineering Record's Maritime Project.

Several dedicated crews of volunteers worked on her during the 1980's and 1990's, returning the ship to a fully operational and sea-worthy condition. Today, she is fully operational and occasionally operates on the bay with her trained, volunteer crew. Aside from the heavily modified and demotored *Las Plumas*, the *Hercules* is the sole survivor of the marine fleet that once served the WP.

### **the *Hercules***

Overall Length..	151 ft
Beam..	26 ft
Draft..	18 ft aft, 10 ft forward
Gross Tonnage..	409 US Tons
Motive Power..	3 cylinder, triple expansion
Cylinders..	17", 24", and 41" with 30" stroke
Horsepower..	125psi/770hp at 90 RPM (originally 180psi/1000hp)
Boiler..	Scotch Marine Firetube
Boiler Specs..	16' diameter, 11'9" length
Furnaces..	Four, oil-burning type
Fuel..	Bunker C oil
Built..	1907, Camden, New Jersey
Service..	1907-1924: Shipowners' and Merchants' Tugboat Company "Red Stack fleet" 1942-1961: Western Pacific Railroad 1962-1975: stored out of service 1975-current: San Francisco Maritime State Park

## **Archives/Library Report**

By John Walker

Work on the Arthur Walter Keddie Railroad Library archives continues this summer with generous donations coming in regularly. Several folks responded to my last report with specific donations. In fact, there is a huge pile (some 30-40 boxes) of new donations to work into the collection. Doug Peterson of Lodi donated several boxes of magazines, newsletters and annual reports, which helped to fill some specific holes in our collection. Harold Seyforth's family (Harold worked as an engineer on the WP during the 1940's and early 1950's) donated several boxes of books, paintings and a unique collection of postage stamps which all feature trains and railroad themes. In memory of her husband