

# Jim Stoughten: Stoked up on steam

By RENA LANGILLE  
(This is the first of a three part article about Market resident Jim Stoughten.)

At the Livingston Baker Apartments, located in the historic Market District, Jim Stoughten (pronounced stawton) stands by his home-made seismograph. It looks very complicated.

On top is a plate with a strip of paper covering the top. The paper comes from a roll at one end of the machine. Over the paper is a little needle sitting very still. Underneath the plate and at the other end are wires and gizmos and other things that look complex. On the floor is a sensor set for 3.0 on the Richter Scale. A smaller setting and the sensor would pick up vibrations from trains traveling through the railroad tunnel running underground nearby, so Jim has it set for earthquake size vibrations.

There's an oscilloscope, amp readers, and voltage meters covering two old metal desks in the corner of his apartment. He once built an Electrometer to measure the voltage output from lightning; but there isn't much lightning in Seattle.

He misses the thunder storms over the farm in Indiana where he grew up. It was there in

Lawrenceburg, on his parents' farm, where he milked 30 cows, did farm chores and worked

the wheat harvest. He liked the hard work of harvest, but there was something more important to him than gathering the wheat. What was important, was the neighbors steam driven thresher that was brought over for the harvest. In those days. The thresher was a large bulky contraction driven by steam, and Jim was fascinated by the boiler on the frame that supplied power to run it.

Jim was a tall, lanky 12-year-old in 1938 when he learned to work

with boilers. While most kids his age were passionate about baseball, Jim's passion lay elsewhere. He was fascinated by steam engines, first working on the railroad and then working on high-pressure boilers on a gas-drilling rig in the Indiana oil fields.

The rigs were made of steel beams with a long pile driver in the middle. He stoked coal which heated a high pressure boiler to make steam. The pressurized steam ran a pump controlling the pile driver. It was hard, grimy, dangerous work, but it was exciting.

While the pile driver pounded a drill bit into the earth, the foreman watched closely. Somewhere between 300 - 400 feet, the bit would near a gas pocket. Just as it hit gas the foreman would run up to Jim yelling "She's gonna blow!" Jim stomped a pedal that tipped a 50gallon barrel of water over the fire to kill the steam, and "ran like hell."

Seconds later a 4,000-pound bit, backed by 2,000 pounds per square inch of pressure, screamed out of the drill shaft making a noise like a runaway locomotive. It could be heard for miles. As the bit sped out of the hole, the rig would be showered with rocks and water, and as soon as it was safe the shaft would be capped.

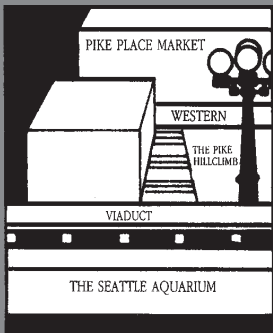
At age 18 the army called. It was World War II and Jim was sent to Fort Kinley, near Manila in the Philippines, and put in charge of the base power supply. During his duty there a typhoon hit. The storm screamed and hammered the base. Winds drove the rain horizontally; it was like being attacked by giant nails. His only thoughts were to make sure his diesels were in top operating condition and the switch gear well sealed. As fast as he could, he disconnected the power house exhaust systems that went up through the roof and ran for shelter. Trees and landscape were torn up, roofs blew off, but the heavy power supply engines held down their concrete floor and continued to run, keeping lights on throughout the storm.

He was in Manila on July 4, 1946, when the Philippines gained their independence. The bay was filled with the US 7th fleet, and the new jet fighters, Lockheed P80 Shooting Stars, flew over. A 21-gun salute was given as MacArthur and US dignitaries performed the ceremony. Then Jim was transferred. Assigned to the 13th Air Force, he flew into base on a "Gooney Bird" DC-3 to run generator units, and was finally transferred to a U. S. Marine troop ship to go home. What a luxury - air conditioning, good food and discharge papers. Coming into beautiful San Francisco Bay he climbed the ship's funnel to greet the Golden Gate Bridge. Then began life as a civilian once again.

*Continued next month.*



Jim Stoughten photo/Rena Langille



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## Marketeers strike fear into opponents' hearts

SPORTS, continued from Page 6

H.A., the team with the [fancy] yellow hats, again. Our team knew what these chefs cooked and looked to deliver it, air-mail: BOOM! Actually, it was H.A. who struck with the long balls (one guy had like *three* triples) but it was the Marketeers deftly orchestrated game of small ball that won it! Loads of cheering, high-fivin' everywhere and as one player said, "It feels better to walk out and say 'good-game, good game...' when you win. (11-5)

The PLAY-OFFS began after this paper went to print. Look for the big news in next month's issue. :-)

**2005 Regular Season Standings, The Blue League**

	(wins - losses - ties)
The Guardians	6 2 0
Jabu's Tavern	5 2 1
Two Degrees	5 3 0
Faux Shizzells	4 3 1
Pike Place Marketeers	4 4 0
Hornall Anderson	3 5 0
The Slackers	2 6 0
The Groupies	2 6 0