



THE BARN BURNER



SAN RAMON HISTORIC FOUNDATION

Dedicated to the preservation of San Ramon's early farms and homesteads

Camille Thompson-Editor

A Message From The Board

As you know, during the pandemic, all large events at the Farm have been canceled. The Board meets every month with city staff via Zoom in order to keep up with ongoing property needs. The Park is open every day for family or small groups wearing masks and practicing social distancing. The staff and all the animals are happy to have human interaction. We will be so thrilled when we can return to welcoming large groups to special events.

On February 27, 2021 the Board held a Crab Feed Pick-Up event. Customers ordered meals online, and arranged a time for meal pick-up at the Dougherty Community Center. For \$60 per person, each meal included salad, pasta and a large cracked crab. Your support helped us complete projects at San Ramon's only Historic Park. In our effort to continue to support our local San Ramon business partners, the crab was

provided by Cal Crab Feeds, and the pasta was prepared by Gianni's Italian Bistro. Hopefully, we can have our annual crowd pleasing Crab Feed in person, January 2022! Mark your calendars now!

Visit www.srhf.org to find out about more activities and events at the Farm, which is located at 19953 San Ramon Valley Boulevard. Family groups visit every day and enjoy the rural farm atmosphere.

Our membership drive was very successful, but it is not too late to become a member of the Foundation and support the Farm. Individual membership is \$50, and a family membership is \$100. Donations and yearly membership dues may be sent to: SRHF, PO Box 1, San Ramon, CA 94583.

Thank you for supporting our Historic Park!

Carol J. Rowley

President, San Ramon Historic Foundation Board

Antique Farm Engines - The Challenge

As Found in a Barn of Donald C. Wood, Grand-nephew of Charlotte E. Wood

Ron Frye



Yep, that's about an inch or so of dried bird poop encrusting this engine. Some of our engines were found in similar conditions, though not as extreme as this example. Surprisingly, the babbitt bearings, valves and rings looked brand new, the valve faces and seats having a mirror-like finish! Very strange for an engine in this condition, but the restorer found clues as to what happened. (That won't be discussed in this article.)

Once the engine and associated parts were steam-cleaned, sand-blasted, broken parts repaired with J-B Weld, painted and lubricated, missing parts purchased, and the rusted-out gas tank repaired and sealed, she's as good as new. (Steam-cleaning this engine landed the restorer in bed for three months under a doctor's care with a serious pulmonary infection, weakness, dizziness

(See Engines on pg. 2)

Engines

(cont'd. from pg. 1)

and no voice. That'll teach him to use a respirator next time he sandblasts an engine in this condition!)

An engine like this would have been used for pumping the life blood of any farm... water; but the farmer would also have used it wherever he needed portable power for belt-driven equipment. As a matter of fact, Don Wood said this little engine was used to extract water from a creek to water a portion of that farm's crops.

This is one tough little well-running engine... and very heavy! It is the only antique farm engine owned by Forest Home Farms that uses a Wico EK magneto.

On the restored engine, notice the spikes mounted on the side of the wooden skids. They'd be inserted into the skid's holes (just one hole is in view) to secure the engine to the ground, keeping it from moving around as it powered the equipment or pump it was driving. Two more spikes are on the other side of the engine. The handle shown is for starting the engine.

Check out this engine at Forest Home Farm's next Sheep Sheering Day. We'll give her a spin so you can see it run.



Organic Garden Restoration Project

Dall Barley



Among the projects the Board is currently focusing on is the renovation of the existing demonstration garden at Forest Home Farms. This garden was installed before the school field trip programs began in 2002. The garden is intended to show not only how farm families raised their own food, but also to demonstrate the principles of organic gardening, composting and the effective use of drip irrigation.

The original garden was installed as a series of Eagle Scout projects. The exterior fencing, planting beds and compost bins were all individual projects completed over a period of several months.

Over time the garden structures have begun to deteriorate. The compost bins were rebuilt by volunteers several years ago. But now the exterior fence posts are rotting out, the grow beds are collapsing and the irrigation system is both inadequate and failing.

The Foundation has joined with City staff to define the effort needed to restore the garden to its primary function, as well as to develop a satisfactory water supply to the north side of the property, including the sheep barn and pasture. At the direction of the

City a contractor is developing an estimated cost for this restoration effort which will include replacing the fencing and planting beds, installing rodent control and the addition of an electric source for an irrigation timer.

An earlier vision for an expanded garden, while enticing, was deemed to be beyond the scope of what the Foundation was willing to undertake. Where possible these plans will be taken into consideration when restoration work begins on the garden.





Many thanks to our tireless volunteers, (L-R) Shirley Ernest, Carol Lopez-Lucey, Rene Beck, Patsy Galati, Suzanne Zimmerman, Carol Rowley, for their efforts to ensure the succes of the 2021 Take-Out Crab Feed!



Farm Exploration Kits

Jessica Reaber

As the warmer weather continues to draw people outside, staff have created Farm Exploration Kits for visitors to use around Forest Home Farms. Kits are available to reserve for \$5 on Mondays and Fridays. Farm Exploration Kits include a magnifying glass, binoculars, a bug viewing jar, golf pencil, crayons, and an activity booklet. The activity booklet contains picture and word-based scavenger hunts, directed activities using items found at the farm, and space to sketch and trace various areas on the property. Kits are kept out of circulation until they have been sanitized and set aside for a three-day cycle. Staff sees this as a new way to engage residents and respond to the Master Plan findings that residents desire spaces and programs that facilitate connection to nature.



Surviving the Great Depression



In the early 1930s, during the Great Depression, Travis Boone's parents, Numa and Minnie, struggled financially to keep the farm. According to Travis's wife, Ruth, things got so bad that the bank where the Boones had taken out a loan against the farm, held an auction of the Boone's farm equipment to recoup some of their money. Evidently, the Boones were so well liked in the community, that none of their friends and neighbors bid on anything. Numa was the only one who placed bids, so he was able to keep all his equipment.

Such a great story of Numa and Minnie's high regard in the community, and of neighbor-helping-neighbor in times of need.

The San Ramon Historic Foundation thanks these organizations for their generous grants.

Kiwanis Club of San Ramon Valley www.srvkiwanis.org.

Dougherty Valley/San Ramon Rotary Foundation www.dvsrrotaryfoundation.org.



COMING SOON!

Due to the current uncertain times prompting last-minute program changes, please visit the City of San Ramon website for the most current information about Saturday events.

http://www.sanramon.ca.gov/our_city/departments_and_divisions/parks_community_services

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