

TOBACCO VALLEY FLYWHEELERS GAS & STEAM ENGINE CLUB

Spring

April 2024

Newsletter

**“PRESERVING ANTIQUE ENGINES AND TRACTORS FROM THE PAST, SO
FUTURE GENERATIONS CAN ENJOY THEM”**

CLUB NEWS

Hello Tobacco Valley Flywheelers Members,

We hope everyone is doing well and enjoyed the winter months. We had a very busy 2023, with adding two fairs to our schedule, so it has been nice to let the engines rest and take a little break. To recap, in 2023 we started our year with some of our members attending Belltown's 48th Antique Engine and Tractor Meet in East Hampton, CT. 3 of our members took home 1st place bells in various categories. Randy Root got 1st place for having a heavy weight engine, displaying his 5 HP Plessisville Canadian Engine, Donnie Hargreaves got 1st place for most unique display, where he had a Keystone Cement Mixer with a 2 HP Stover Hit and Miss Engine and Joanne's Cement Shoe Company. Lastly, Jim Shea got 1st place for most restored engine, where he displayed his 2 ½ HP Stover and its fresh coat of paint.



In May, we went to Zagray's Spring show in Colchester, CT where Chris Allen displayed his 2 HP Jaeger Engine. This engine has a special meaning because it came from a cement mixer that Chris found in the "sell" pile at Zagray. The engine needed a magneto and bracket, a muffler, a gas tank, and some TLC. He also found a nice 3 wheeled industrial cart and managed to bring this engine back to life. We really enjoyed seeing it run at the Zagray show.

In June, we did our annual display at Brainerd Memorial Library's Agricultural Day, in Haddam, CT. This is only our second time being part of this event, but we really enjoy it. These kinds of events bring in families with kids of all ages and we love being able to engage the kids with our display. Some kids could sit and watch our display all day!

In August, we had a display at the Potato and Corn Festival in North Branford, CT. We were approached by someone at the Belltown show and asked if we would be willing to do a display at the POCO Festival. It sounded like a great opportunity and something that made sense to us since we have the fresh ground cornmeal display. POCO was also a nice festival for us to figure out some kinks since there were some new additions to our display. One of our new additions was Randy

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Root's 1905 2 HP International Harvester vertical engine. Randy bought this engine along with another vertical engine back in May. Randy has always wanted a vertical engine so when this opportunity became available, he couldn't help but jump on it. Originally, Randy wanted this engine to run the corn grinder, but we found out that the engine didn't have the kind of power that the corn grinder needed. Eventually, this engine ended up running our clown display. In addition, Michelle Root debuted her braiding machine, which will be discussed in more detail under the treasurer's section of this newsletter. We also had two hand crank corn shellers that Chris Allen attached to a wooden sawhorse that he made. The kids loved getting to try these out!

September was the busiest and most chaotic month for us, but in the best way possible. The month started out with us displaying at the Haddam Neck Fair for a long Labor Day weekend. We were excited to see all of our repeat customers for our fresh ground cornmeal. The following weekend we were at the Hebron Harvest Fair. We were asked by Ed Hodge if we would be willing to put on a display at the Hebron Fair. We knew we would be putting a lot on our plates by adding this fair to our schedule, but it turned out to be such a success and we are looking forward to going back this year. The weekend after that we had our annual show at Haddam Meadow's State Park. It was another successful show! It takes a lot of time, effort, and help to put on that show and we are always so appreciative of our club members that make the time to help put that show together.

Lastly, in October we enjoyed a nice one-day event at Dudley Farm in Guilford, CT. We have been going to this event for the last couple of years, where we put on a small engine display. This event is held on the picturesque grounds of the historic Dudley Farm Museum. Dudley Farm is currently in the process of building a saw mill and we are so excited to see it in action one day.

An Engine Story from our Vice President

It was a cold dark windy night years ago back in September 2023 at about 11pm when I was frantically searching for anything that would feed my struggling addiction..... of old antique engines that is.... I happen to come across a post in marketplace that was listed as an "old rusty one lunger cement mixer," with my heart pounding with anticipation to get more details I couldn't click the post with my nine fingers quick enough..... THEN!!!! There it was! BOOM!!!! A completely moss and mold covered pile of rust that appeared to be what looked like an old cement mixer only 2.5 hours away in Rhode Island that I just had to have! So that being said, I did what any normal person would do.... Ran out



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to the garage pulled out the newest truck I have for such a long journey, my 1994 GMC 2500 and hooked the trailer to it so I would save time when I must leave for work at 4am the next morning. The morning came and I sped to work with trailer in tow and I was able to wait till about 7am before I messaged the gentleman that had so graciously listed this amazing treat! It took him forever to respond, it was 7:04 when I heard the messenger notification. With a few messages back and forth I confirmed it was available and the address. Punched in the GPS and it said a 2 hour 35 minutes to your destination. Seconds later sending out an email that I was leaving the

office for a few hours I pushed that GMC down the highway dragging the trailer as fast as she would go. About 2 hours and 5 minutes I reached my destination (the GPS must have not calculated the timing correctly? Not sure what happened there?). As I arrived, I hopped out of the truck and an older Italian man named Tony met me at the door. He proceeded to tell me how he did concrete work his whole life and is now retired and how he got the old mixer in trade about 40+ years ago for a job that he did and had always planned to “fix it up someday.” It was just as it was pictured completely covered in moss and mold and every moving part that it had was completely seized up but, appeared to be all there. On the frame was a 2 hp Hercules engine that appeared to be in pretty good shape with no cracks in it, that alone was worth what he was asking for it. So, without further ado I paid the man and loaded it on the trailer. The ride home was smooth but seemed to take much longer, 2 hours and 45 minutes with stopping for about 5 minutes for gas.

Once at home I decided to unload and power wash it to see what kind of condition it was actually in. after power washing it was the original Hercules 2hp hit and miss engine with the tags and serial numbers that matched the mixer that was built in 1922, now a 101 years old! I decided that I would try and free up this seized rusty pile of iron slowly and work on the mixer over the winter so I could show it off in the fall shows next year. so, I started tinkering with it every night after work for only 4-5 hours a night till I had completely disassembled and gone through the engine rebuilding every part with care to not disturb the patina. About two weeks later I was ready to give it a crank to see if I could get it to “pop”, and before I knew it one crank later it was up and running like it was new!!! So, I decided to let it run for a bit and see what would happen... and about 4 hours later I had to shut it down because it was getting late. The next day I worked on freeing up the drum and gears and to my surprise I got it all freed up and working smoothly. Installed the engine back in the frame and fired the resurrected mixer to life once again as she was meant to do 101 years ago!! Come see it at the shows in 2024!!!!

Jeff Rousseau

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SCRIBBLINGS FROM THE TREASURER

I have a very exciting update on the braiding machine that I mentioned in the last newsletter. My Dad, Randy Root, worked all summer long building the perfect cart and cover for the braiding machine. I also helped him paint the cart as well as the little reducer that was added to help slowdown the braiding machine. The braiding machine made its debut in August at the POCO Festival in North Branford. This festival was the perfect way to debut the braiding machine because we were able to learn how to thread the machine, wind bobbins, and make bracelets with the braided rope. We also realized that the gears needed to be switched because the thread wasn't winding fast enough. For its debut, my dad had picked up some red, white, and green string for us to try and use on the machine. I wasn't completely sold on the colors because I wanted something that wasn't only meaningful to me, but would also be meaningful to the people looking at the display.

The braiding machine that I saw at CAMA in Kent, CT had pink and white thread. They would donate money to breast cancer research foundations. I loved the idea of donating money to charities, but I didn't want to copy their idea. I asked some of our club members for ideas and it wasn't until our secretary, Crane Allen said, "What about red, white, and blue?" that everything clicked. I loved this idea the second he said it and I knew immediately that if we did red, white, and blue string we could make charitable donations to various veteran's organizations. It was perfect the way it all fell together and it was something that hit close to home for me and I knew it would touch those that saw the display as well.

By our next show, which was the Haddam Neck Fair, I had purchased red, white, and blue string and began the bobbin winding process. It was a huge success. We put out a separate donation jug and a sign that said, "All proceeds from bracelets will go to various charities for Veterans." We continued to do this for the rest of our shows and got so many compliments about the machine, handmade bracelets, and our effort to raise money for veterans. At the end of our show season, I am so ecstatic to announce that we raised over \$700.00! We split these donations among 3 different veteran's organizations; K9's for Warriors, Wounded Warrior Project, and Homes for our Troops. This entire experience really touched my heart! I am grateful that our first year of doing this was such a success and I hope we are able to raise even more money for our



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veteran's this year. Thank you to everyone that donated and was eager to get a bracelet! I can't wait to see what 2024 has in store for us and the braiding machine.



I also just wanted to say thank you to all our members that have been supporting us this year. Whether it is liking and sharing our posts on Facebook or coming to events and talking with us, we truly appreciate it. We also love to hear from you and what you would like to see more of on our social media pages or in the newsletter. Please feel free to reach out if you have any ideas or suggestions. In addition, membership renewals are another way to support the club. This money really helps us keep the club going when it comes to the upfront expenses of the show and fairs. There are a couple of ways you can renew your dues. You can either send a check to the address below or you can go to our new website, click on Membership, fill out the form, and pay online.



If there is a red star next to your address label that means that our records indicate that you haven't renewed your dues.

To renew via mail please send a check for \$20.00 to:

Tobacco Valley Flywheelers
c/o Michelle Root
100 Saddle Hill Drive
Middletown, CT 06457

Sincerely, Michelle Root

Tobacco Valley Flywheelers Club Information

Meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30.

The address is Third Congregational Church. 94 Miner Street, Middletown, CT 06457

TVF mailing address: P.O. Box 206 Cromwell, CT 06416

TOBACCO VALLEY FLYWHEELERS GAS & STEAM ENGINE CLUB

Board of Directors

President: Randy Root

Vice President: Jeff Rousseau

Secretary: Crane Allen

Treasurer: Michelle Root

Directors: Mike Semanoff, Bill Bengston, and Donnie Hargreaves

Safety Officers: Larry Cummings and Chris Allen

2024 Events for Tobacco Valley Flywheelers

- May 4th – 5th – **Zagray Spring Show** – Zagray Farm Museum – Colchester, CT
- TBD – **Agricultural Day** – Brainerd Memorial Library – Haddam, CT (10 AM – 2 PM)
- July 20th – 21st – **Zagray Summer Show** – Zagray Farm Museum – Colchester, CT
- August 30th – September 2nd – **Haddam Neck Fair** – East Hampton, CT
- September 5th – 8th – **Hebron Harvest Fair** – Hebron, CT
- September 14th – 15th – **TVF Annual Fall Show** – Haddam Meadows State Park – Haddam, CT
- October 5th – 6th – **Zagray Fall Show** – Zagray Farm Museum – Colchester, CT
- Some additional events may be announced later in the year. We will keep you updated through our Facebook Page – so make sure you are following us!!



Club Member Appreciation

Mike Semanoff enjoying a nice tractor ride after working in the cook shack all day. Mike has been a valuable asset to TVF for years and we don't know what we would do without him. Thank you for all that you do Mike. We appreciate it!