

# QUINEBAUG VALLEY ENGINEERS



## The Zagray Quarterly

September 2019

### PRESIDENT'S NOTES – GEORGE LEHR

Sorry to say I bear sad news for those who have not heard; longtime QVEA member and past director, Merle Thoma, passed away on July 31<sup>st</sup>. I've missed Merle, for he has not been active at the farm for some time due to medical issues. I'm aware of how much he did at the farm now that all the mowing he used to do is my job. May he rest in peace.

Our annual elections will take place at the October meeting, but there are no open director positions and no one has applied for any of the officer's positions.

The July show was uncomfortably hot and sticky, yet we all survived and the show was reasonably successful given the conditions.

We have received some nice donations, including a 1956 John Deere 420U tractor with a Shawnee loader and backhoe. Also, a Massey-Harris hay baler and a corn chopper, both in better shape than the ones we already had.



It's been a busy summer, and good progress has been made on projects. Cleanup has continued; we sold 2 Caterpillars and a dumpster full of scrap metal. We're working on filling the second dumpster.

The grading being done around the new Tractor Building and into the show field is going well and the footing and foundation for the pavilion have been poured.

In addition, Connor and Ethan got the Atlas Imperial engine to run. It needs some tweaking and a cooling water system, but it should be in good running condition for the October show; hope to see you all there.

## **FROM THE DESK OF THE TREASURER – Art Chester**

There are a couple of spots in the new Tractor Barn available. A \$2500 donation will reserve an 8' by 22' space in the building. Act now, as they will be gone soon!

Lifetime memberships are \$500 and help the museum grow!

For those of you who contribute to the United Way campaign, QVEA is now listed as a charitable organization allowing you to direct your donation to us for the support and expansion of the Zagray Farm Museum. The Pfizer Foundation also has a volunteer program that provides QVEA with substantial donations each year, based on the volunteer work of members who work or are retired from Pfizer.

We are set-up with Amazon Smile as well. This program donates ½ of 1 percent of eligible purchases to a charity of your choice. The pricing is the same on Amazon Smile as on Amazon. Paste or type this link <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/06-1426891> into your browser to connect to QVEA's page and get started!

# **Tractor Building**

We have completed the mezzanine – all 480 feet of it! We also completed the concrete work under both shed roofs, as well as entrance pads for the big doors. The project is essentially complete and filling up with tractors and crawlers.

## **Looking great !!!**

### **Saw Mill**

Our emphasis is on producing the necessary materials for the second engine building. We can now store lumber under the rear shed roof of the new tractor building, giving us more room under the mill.

Still wanted – Logs for the saw mill. Even though we received a substantial number of logs, we are still on the lookout for more. 16'6" pine logs in particular that are 20 inch diameter or more on the small end will make good rafters. 12'6" logs of similar size will be used for 2X4's and siding. We have a good supply, but having extra material in stock would be nice. Power has been installed to the woodworking building and the tractor repair shed.

## Pavilion Building

We broke ground for the pavilion building in mid-August, pushing off the topsoil. Topsoil in this 80' by 60' area was so thick it was spread on a 100' by 200' area at the rear of the Tractor Building with some leftover! An additional area where the play yard currently sits and the food vendors park for shows will be cleared of topsoil raised level, topsoil replaced, and reseeded.

Over Labor Day weekend Sean walked the excavator up and we set grade for the footings. They were poured 9/3. Frost walls, pass-thrus and backfilling will be done before the October show. Perhaps the slab completed as well.



Sean with the first bucket!



Sean took a second to say "Hi".



And VOILA!! By Wednesday after Labor Day weekend, the footings and foundation were done!

Construction will be early next spring. We are working on the kitchen plan and are hopeful that it will be permitted over the winter.

## Pond Excavation

It is dry and ready for digging as time permits.

## The Bob Chester Engine Building

We had planned to erect a second engine building about 40 feet west of the current building. My dad and his wife have been tremendous supporters financially over the years while we struggled with our co-tenant and the landlord over use of the property. In his memory, the family will provide funding for the building, primarily materials we cannot produce on site. This moves the project up the timetable and puts more pressure on our sawmill crew to produce the beams needed. The building will house small flywheel engines as well as dad's two put-put tractors and other items. A complete wrap around porch is planned for this building (so I don't have to add it later!). I am excited to get started! Foundation construction in 2020.

### STATIONARY ENGINES – CONNOR BISHOP & ETHAN BAILEY

Despite the extremely hot weather we had during our summer show, we still had a good time in the engine building. I was pleased to see that the Fairbanks Morse engine had no cooling issues, regardless of not having a radiator or heat exchanger. Even with the hot weather and four runs during the day of about 20 minutes each, the cooling water did not get above about 150 degrees. I will likely plumb in a cast iron radiator just to have the capability to cool if we desire, and then after a final leak check we can fill the engine with antifreeze (150 gallons!) and I will not have to drain water at the end of the year.

All our gas engines ran fine, however my propane fired oilfield engines displayed some cantankerous behavior due to the temperature changing the air/fuel mixtures. Since my Pattin Brothers engine has been run for several shows since getting its new bearings, I needed to re-shim the connecting rod to remove a knock.



I was also looking forward to running the new Bessemer FC during the show, but a bad magneto and a bad replacement magneto prevented that. New coils are on the way from Mark's Magneto, and I will run a spare mag in the meantime. I also reworked the steel skid under the engine with I-beams to make the engine easier to work on and operate. Currently I have the cylinder water jacket plates removed so I can remove the handfuls of rust flakes to improve cooling water flow and efficiency. It should be running for the fall show.

Another engine that we will have running for the fall show is the Atlas Imperial diesel! This project has shown that just because an engine is rebuilt, doesn't mean that it will start easily.



The valves had to be adjusted four times before they were right and we battled fuel pressure issues. Now with those problems out of the way, we successfully started the engine on September 1<sup>st</sup>. It only

ran on two cylinders, had terrible gear noise from the cam and governor gear, and the injection pump leaked a huge amount of fuel, but it ran! After adjusting the injector pushrods, gear lash, and pump packing glands, the engine runs much better. Once we fill the engine with water to allow for longer runs, we can continue adjusting the injectors to make it run smoothly.

Another engine jumped on my trailer and made its way to the farm. This one is a halfbreed oilfield engine, it started

out life as an Ajax steam engine and was converted to gas with a Ball cylinder, piston, extra flywheel and weight ring. It is in running condition, but I will go through the bearings and plumbing before attempting to start it.



As the number of our air-start engines increase, and with plans for a second engine building, we are in need of good air compressors that can produce 200PSI at a decent flow rate. Keep your eyes open for potential air compressor donations.

We are also in the process of setting up the drying shed/tractor shed to be a repair building. With the tractor building complete we were able to move most of the equipment there for display, leaving the drying shed empty. We have plans to set up our new Grizzly lathe, a compressor, welder, workbenches, etc. in that building for our repair and maintenance projects.

Enjoy the last of the shows this year, and see you at the Farm in October!

-Connor

## Secretary & Editor, Dianne Tewksbury

We had several picnics and work party lunches for volunteers this summer. Here are pictures from some of them including a surprise birthday party for George Jarvis, our crane operator, who turned 90 this past July.

Several members coordinated efforts to have a pig roast fund raiser at the farm in early August. Pictured here (from left to right) is Melissa Bezanson, Joe Motuzick and his wife Colleen. Melissa and Marc



organized and arranged for a pig and a smoker. Andy Milardo helped with the delivery of the smoker and the pig. Andy and Art Chester got the pig on the smoker. Art was the lucky guy who had to tend to the pig and the smoker all night. Joe, Art and Kathryn carved the pig. Kathryn and Colleen organized a raffle and Melissa was in charge of desserts. It was quite a success and everything was delicious!!



Once in a while during these picnic/work party events, some of the farm machinery is brought out of the barn for some exercise. Dave Chester with his son, Landon (left) and Marc Bezanson with his son, Miles (right).



**The “barn” or tractor storage building, is filling up!**



**Wanted:** 13.6 X 26 turf tire in good shape for the Museum’s newly acquired John Deere 420U. Even better if it’s on a JD rim!

**NEXT SHOW: OCTOBER 5 & 6, 2019**

Dianne Tewksbury  
QVEA Secretary & Editor  
90 Park Road  
Colchester, CT 06415

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

**QUINEBAUG VALLEY ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION, INC. (QVEA)**



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

STREET \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are \$20.00 per person for one year, payable with application.  
Dues include liability insurance at the farm.

**RETURN TO: QVEA, 180 SOUTH PLUMB RD, MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457**