

# THE CRANK & STOKE

THE VOICE OF THE HISTORICAL ENGINE SOCIETY

Founded 1970

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**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

Greatest Show on Earth!	1
A Smokey Adventure	2
Engine Spotlight	3
Youth Driving the Future of HES	4
Sta-Rite—Continued	5
Safety Meeting	5
2026 Raffle	6
Kuhlspring You Say?	6



## GEARIN' UP FOR 2025!

Hello fellow HES members, it's that time of year again! I am looking forward to yet another amazing show with some amazing friends!

Another reminder to all exhibitors, please see the map below on where to enter for this year's show. There will be a banner that says **VENDOR ENTRANCE**.

**Registration:** Please be aware that the office is now located in the pavilion on the other side of the circle (look for the HES banner).

Office Hours:

- ◆ Thurs: 1-4 pm
- ◆ Fri/Sat 8:30-4:30 pm
- ◆ Sunday 9-3:30 pm

Be sure to stop in to register and renew your membership. Members are given until September 1st to renew their memberships. If

you have not renewed by then, your name will be removed from the membership roster. If you are unable to attend the show, you may use the form in this newsletter and mail it in. Please bring your enclosed membership pass each day of the show. Upon registration of your exhibit, you will receive your show buttons and plaques.

Also at the office pavilion you may purchase the new 2025 hats, shirts and sweatshirts along with prior year's shirts. You may purchase HES cups, koozies and, of course, raffle tickets at the office as well.

**Picnic:** As we do every year, please don't forget about our Saturday evening picnic. We will be grilling hamburgers, hotdogs and corn in the pavilion near the fire-pit. This is for all members

and exhibitors and not for the general public. The show ends at 5 pm so give the crew time to get things ready. We will eat around 6 pm. If you would like to help, please do! Social time will continue at the fire pit.

**Safety Meeting:** See **Page 5** for important information on our **mandatory** Safety Meeting.

Have a great time!

### OCTOBER MEETING

Please be aware that the October 9th meeting has been rescheduled due to a conflict at Farmpark. The new date is **October 16th**. The meeting will be held in the auditorium as always. As a reminder, the October meeting is our election night. Five Officer's and four of the Director's positions will be voted upon.





## A SMOKEY TREASURE!

Contributed by Adam Lang Jr.

Buried deep in the Great Smokey Mountains lies a little-known treasure. Located roughly 10 miles southwest of Gatlinburg Tennessee at the intersection of Injun Creek and the Grapeyard Ridge trail lies the remains of an early Nichols and Sheppard steam traction engine. You may be asking yourself, "How did a steam engine end up in a river between two mountains?" The easiest answer I can come up with is that nobody knows for sure, but it is rumored that a drunken operator slid it off the side of the cliff, causing the engine to roll down the side of the hill. The damage was severe, leaving the engine in individual pieces. All that lies in the creek bed is the boiler, front axle and wheels, drive wheels, some of the gearing, and half of the crankshaft with the crank disc. It is hard to say if any of the other parts are further up the hill, but I am sure if they are, they are buried beyond sight now.

After seeing a TikTok video about it last fall, I knew we had to find this engine on an upcoming trip to Tennessee in the spring. After a quick Google search, we found where to go to get on the trail and the adventure was on. My friend Clinton, my sister Gracie, my girlfriend Erica, and I set out on the trail on a humid Sunday morning after taking in some mountain views. After watching the distance markers we knew we were in the right area, but no steam engine was in sight. It was at this point we realized we should've done a bit more thorough Google search and that there was another trail-head. We decided to not quit and charge on to finish the brutal 4 mile one way hike. It was extremely rough, especially for us not used to hiking. In the end it was worth it to see it and we all left with a story to tell. We ended the adventure with swimming in a different river, eating some sandwiches and enjoying a few beverages before going on to our next adventure.







# ENGINE SPOTLIGHT

Contributed by Donald Kuhl



## STA-RITE ENGINE COMPANY

La Crosse, WI

The Sta-Rite engine story starts in the small industrial city of Racine, WI back in 1903. A local drug store owner named Thies W. Theisen joined business relations with John P. Davies, the owner of the Racine Malleable and Wrought Iron Co. The new enterprise was called the Reliance Iron and Engine Company. In August of 1903 the Racine Daily Journal published an article detailing the new company opening.

"It will be the Reliance Iron & Engine Company with a capital stock of \$15,000. The incorporators will be J.P. Davies and T.W. Theisen and the concern will be located in the old Racine Malleable and Wrought Iron Company buildings on the west side of the river. Operations will be commenced at once and gray iron specialties and gasoline engines will be manufactured. At the start from 25 to 30 men will be employed and increased from time to time."

The earliest advertisements listed "general repair work, grey iron castings and specialty machinery built to order" with engines in name only. The first mention of the company producing gas engines is in mid 1905. The Sta-Rite name was used as brand name from their engine subdivision as the parent company retained its name of Reliance Iron and Engine Company. In these early years, R.I.E.C. sold directly and made representation agreements with several mid-west farm equipment dealers. There are surviving examples of these Racine made Sta-Rite's with special manufacturers tags noting a specific dealer or a more standard tag.

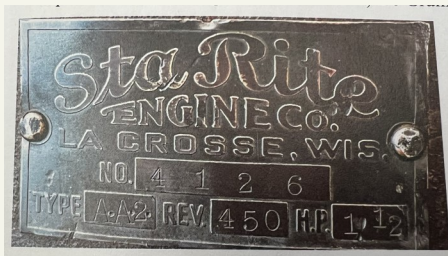
Note under the 5 HP tag... This 5 HP Sta Rite is also in Don's Collection. Note the name of the La Crosse Implement Company. They were a contract dealer for Sta-Rite engines at this time, but became more involved later in the story.



During the six years that Sta-Rite engines were produced in Racine, R.I.E.C made about 2,000 gas engines. Some local news articles back in 1909 note that R.I.E.C. remodeled their factory and workers are on 12 hour days to keep up with demand. It was obvious that the current two 64 X 164 (foot) buildings were too small to keep up with demand. They had to grow and in 1911, they made a deal to move to a larger factory in another city.

On January 26, 1911, the Reliance Iron and Engine Company was reincorporated as the Sta-Rite Engine Company and moved all the way across the state to the city of La Crosse. The reincorporation & move was facilitated by Albert Hirschheimer. Albert was the owner of the La Crosse Implement Company (a large Sta-Rite contract dealer) known at this time as the La Crosse Plow Company (manufacturer of the Happy Farmer tractor). He was also the President of La Crosse board of trade where he used his influence to help fund the move. The old La Crosse Plow Company location and buildings became the new home to Sta-Rite Engine Company. Albert held the post of Treasurer after all the dust settled.

Most surviving Sta-Rite engines were built at the La Crosse factory. In total, nearly 8,000 engines were believed to have been built in La Crosse from August 1911 to December 1916. For unknown reasons (perhaps mismanagement or competition), the company seems to have struggled in the mid teens...at the time when other engine companies thrived. On January 6, 1917, the State of Wisconsin has a record of the dissolution of Sta-Rite Engine Company. The remaining assets were sold to Allis Chalmers in 1929.



## NOT JUST ALONG FOR THE RIDE; YOUTH DRIVING THE FUTURE OF HES

Contributed by Adam Lang Jr.

### Idea: Youth Engagement and Involvement in the Club

#### ♦ Introduction:

⇒ Complications of youth INTEREST in antiques

#### ♦ Engagement:

- ⇒ The first step in getting someone involved
- ⇒ Requires having something that catches the attention of the person
- ⇒ Activity and motion
- ⇒ OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE

#### ♦ Involvement:

- ⇒ The second step of getting someone involved
- ⇒ Competition
- ⇒ Comradery
- ⇒ Good gradation of age of members and officers

With the dawn of the technological era, it has never been more important to look towards the future of our organization of preserving what is from the past. As time progresses, more focus is placed on technology and less is placed on mechanical items. At the time of this writing, I am freshly 21 years old. Why is that important? Everyone I have met in this hobby that has stories about their fathers or grandfathers family farms and old tractors are now roughly the age of my grandparents. This means we are several generations removed from being genuinely exposed to the usage of this equipment productively.

I attend roughly a dozen shows a year, with each one having a different aspect that is focused on. I have taken some time to observe what those close to myself in age chose to stay and watch. From what I observed, the most critical component of engaging a young crowd is to have young participation. One way HES heavily promotes youth involvement by using the *Competent Operator* and *Operator in Training* system. This allows children to roam on their garden tractors with direct supervision and participate in HES events such as the parade. Young adults in the club are strongly encouraged to operate their machinery in various demonstrations and activities such as plowing, attempting the teeter-totter, tractor pulling, and operating the excavation equipment. Displays and demonstrations led by younger people are another way of gaining engagement. One of these displays that I believe perfectly fits this idea is the starting demonstration, which is led by HES Director Jake Baxter, who is only a year younger than myself. Other demonstrations such as threshing and tractor pulling are mainly staffed with younger members as well.

As previously mentioned, technology is the primary focus of our society today. This can be used as a tool to promote our hobby in a way that we couldn't in previous times. Social media especially has had a major impact on the promotion of our hobby, allowing anyone to share pictures, videos, and information at any time. Facebook seems to prevail as the most uniform platform for pictures and information in our hobby thanks to the "groups" feature. The biggest problem with Facebook is that it does not necessarily target a younger audience. According to data extracted from the HES Facebook page, only about 35% of viewers are under the age of 45 years old. The trend with younger people is the app called TikTok. Believe it or not, there are thousands of videos of antique equipment reaching millions of viewers. Based off a video I put together from our July show, a strong 82% of all viewers were under the age of 45, with 33% being under the age of 24. To continue strong engagement within our organization, we all must continue a strong push to promote and communicate to others about what we do.





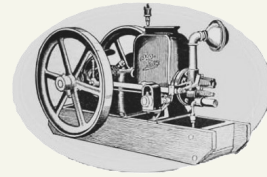
## STA-RITE-CONTINUED

### At a Glance:

**1914 Sta-Rite (La Crosse Made)**

**Model BC1 - Size: 4 HP**

**Owner: The Kuhl Family**



Sta-Rite engines are most known for their high top/contoured shaped hoppers and dry heads (no water cooling cores). A unique design feature on these engines is the exhaust valve 'U-shaped' rocker. This U-shaped casting will pull the exhaust valve open in line with the engine reducing side wear on the valve guide.

This engine was really, really worn out when acquired. Nothing was straight nor round where it should have been. That being said, it still managed to run when I bought it. It's mechanical restoration to make things right (Sta-'Rite') was fairly extensive.

What makes this engine special:

- ♦ It's sporting the original clutch pulley (that was an expensive option at the time)
- ♦ The supporting wood are the original skids for this engine (110+ year old wood)
- ♦ This is the only surviving Sta-Rite engine with a Webster magneto (all others had Wizards or igniter points with battery/coil.
- ♦ The Simplicity tag is unusual. There was a contract dealer in Wisconsin that private labeled all their equipment as Simplicity. I believe this was originally sold through them to carry that ID tag. All other Sta-Rite identifiers were stripped.



I've traced the history of this engine back as far as I could. I know it served as a farm engine in Ontario. How or when it got there, I have no idea. Substantiating that is the aluminum wrap on the Webster magneto. That was a Canadian thing. A Michigan collector brought it back to the US around 2000 when I bought it. See it at Farmpark in late July.



## SATURDAY SAFETY MEETING

Contributed by Adam Lang



The Historical Engine Society annual show safety meeting will be held at 09:00 on Saturday, July 26 at the HES office pavilion (see page 1 for information on new office location). We pride ourselves on being a fun and professional organization with safety being a leading factor. We will discuss our club safety rules as well as other topics related to our show. If you are operating equipment or staying on the grounds overnight the meeting is mandatory. We also welcome and encourage any other HES members or guests to attend as well! Safety is everyone's responsibility!



THE VOICE OF  
THE HISTORICAL  
ENGINE SOCIETY

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**Meetings will be held the 2nd Thursday of the month  
(except December, January and February) at 7:30pm  
in the Theater at Lake Metroparks Farmpark  
8800 Euclid Chardon Rd. (Route 6)  
Kirtland, OH 44094**

The Historical Engine Society is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to provide a focal point for people interested in the machinery of a bygone era. We encourage the collection, preservation, restoration, and exhibition of power producing devices and the machinery driven by these units.

Society fellowship consists in the sharing of knowledge, ideas and educational programs. Work parties, picnics and field trips make this a truly family oriented organization. The annual show is a year-round effort, culminating in a gathering of people and their machines. Visitors are treated to the sights, sounds and demonstrations of the power of the past.

## 2026 RAFFLE

Contributed by Adam Lang

**Where do you find A Ford? In Michigan, of course!** After the restoration of the Massey-Ferguson 135 last year we decided that maybe we should focus on some other projects and purchase a raffle tractor complete and ready to raffle for 2026. We kept the criteria simple: a utility size tractor that wasn't too old or too new, had a nice restoration, was less than an hour away, and was of course "a great deal"! As the search went on and on we realized that the summer show season was creeping up on us and it was time to pull the trigger and get one purchased. Many possibilities were explored and a couple of deals didn't work out before "the right one" finally presented itself!

On June 4th a tentative agreement was reached and on the following Sunday my son Adam Jr. and Girlfriend Erica made the trip to Britton, Michigan and hauled home a beautiful 1977 Ford 3600. The tractor was professionally restored sometime around 2013 and owned by a Ford enthusiast before his passing and liquidation of the collection. It features a 46 HP 3-cylinder gasoline engine and 8-speed transmission. Of course, our 3600 was manufactured in Ford's famed Highland Park facility in Michigan, less than an hour from where we found it!



## KUHLSPRING YOU SAY?

Approximately 25 HES members gathered at the home of Don and Elaine Kuhl (pronounced "Cool") for a spring gas-up on May 24th. We took the name as a knock-off from the Coolspring Power Museum located in Coolspring, Pennsylvania. The Kuhl's were able to showcase their amazing collection of engines, plus several members brought engines of their own to run...some for the first time since acquired. We also had a few vintage vehicles there as well.

Lunch was provided by the Kuhl's and the Kirby's and we even had an opportunity for a group photo. Even though some had come and gone before the photo, here is a photo of most of the attendees.

