



Seagrave Fire Engine Restoration Nears Completion



Photo by Fred Deadrick

The City of Livermore acquired its first fire engine in 1920 from the Seagrave Company. The City retired it in the 1950s. Since late 2008, a team of Livermore Heritage Guild volunteers, hired specialists and generous local businesses and citizens have restored it to its second life. Figure 1 (above) shows the vehicle on January 30th after application of gold leaf detailing. Although this photo makes the project look complete, it has only reached the 90 percent mark. Donations of \$10,000 and many accessories still need to be added to complete the renovation.

In the fall of 2008 a small project was started in the Duarte Garage by Chuck McFann to determine if the engine of Livermore's 1920 Seagrave Fire Engine could be re-started after sitting idle for nearly 50 years. This seemingly simple project seeded the efforts of initially six volunteers, soon to grow to a team of twenty. Starting the engine involved examining and repairing nearly all of the vehicle's subsystems including the fuel system, cooling system, lubrication and ignition systems. It soon became

"I'm fascinated with our local history. Like most kids, I loved firetrucks as a child. The restoration of the Seagrave gave me the opportunity to donate the gold leaf which so beautifully and artistically decorates the truck."
- Lance Cavalieri of Cavalieri Jewelers

apparent that if all of these vital subsystems were to be disassembled, examined, repaired and reassembled, we might just as well examine the drive train, transmission, differential, wheel bearings and braking systems, too. Well, one thing led to another, and the full restoration is now nearly complete. *(Continued on page 2)*

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RESTORATION TEAM

The restoration team is composed of both retired and working volunteers possessing considerable mechanical, electrical, metal working, wood working and artistic skills. They have also demonstrated a love for historic restoration of machinery and tools, all of which are present in the Duarte Highway Garage.

The current team includes (in alphabetic order): **Jim Boehmke, Will Bolton, Richard Bouska, Clive Bush, Fred Deadrick, Randy Jennings, Bill Junk, Jeff Kaskey, Chuck McFann, Don Meeker, Ralph Moir, Don Mullenhoff, Dan Nelson, Mervyn Nichols, Kevin Nista, Bob Rice, Ed Rominger, Alan Salmi, Ben Schluchter and Irv Stowers.** These volunteers have contributed over 10,000 hours to the restoration.

Figure 2 (Right): "Real Ralph" Newman at work mixing dyes to apply to the gold leaf. Ralph Newman is a true artist and the work is very much like painting a mural onto the fire engine. **Figure 3 (Below):** The unadorned Seagrave, driven by Irv Stowers and Will Bolton, rolled down Second St. under its own power in the 2011 Livermore Rodeo Parade.



Photo by Doug Jorgensen

"After seeing the time, quality of workmanship, and love this team had put into this project, it was an honor to be asked to put the final touches on the Seagrave. And to see the reactions on the team members' faces when they saw it for the first time was unforgettable. Most of all, I think I made some new friends."

- "Real Ralph" Newman of Boulder Creek, Calif., gold leaf artist



FUNDING

The restoration could not have proceeded at all without the full support of the Livermore Heritage Guild Board of Directors. Over the now three-plus years, the Board has allotted \$33,000 to the restoration project. This funding has come only after detailed budget proposals were submitted and reviewed. In every case the final allocation for the year was somewhat less than that requested.

During this same time period, the restoration team began to inquire among friends, colleagues and local businesses if they would consider donating to the restoration of this historic vehicle. Most were intrigued with the concept of restoring a true relic of Livermore's past. Some gave a cash donation; the majority gave in-kind donations commensurate with their skills. The vast majority of the cash donations came from members of the restoration team itself - \$10,500 in all. Another generous donation came from the Livermore-Pleasanton Firefighters Association (IAFF Local 1974) - \$1,974. This was followed by charitable organizations such as the Questers and the Altamont Cruisers - \$1,250. Other personal and smaller corporate donations have amounted to an additional \$7,500. The total cash contributions now amount to \$19,000 - a very significant payback to the funds allotted by the LHG.

The most significant Livermore community contributions came in the form of in-kind donations in the form of materials and services. There is a wealth of giving people in Livermore and if you ask for something that they can fit into their spare time and utilizes equipment and infrastructure that they possess, they will generously contribute. Tri-Valley Auto Body, 3529 First Street, agreed to

"I walked in the Duarte garage one day and saw that the Seagrave headlights had long ago been bashed in with a baseball bat or tire iron. One of the guys said to me 'those can never be restored!'. That's all I need, is to have someone tell me something can't be done. After restoring the headlights to like-new condition, I was hooked!"

- **Jim Boehmke**



"The Livermore-Pleasanton Firefighters are proud to have the opportunity to donate to the Seagrave project. Firefighters have a special bond not only with each other, but a bond with those who served before us, and the equipment that served in the day. The Seagrave reminds us how far we have come with our modern-day equipment, and understand some of the difficult working conditions experienced in the early days. The amazing Seagrave project being carried out by the Heritage Guild will become that symbol of our history and heritage."

- **Todd Rueppel - Livermore-Pleasanton Firefighters Association (I.A.F.F. Local 1974)**

paint the entire body after Jim Boehmke invested 800 hours in getting all the sheet metal "paint ready." This work alone is valued at nearly \$16,000. Tri-Valley Auto Body also agreed to talk to their paint supplier PPG Paints who obtained, through Ned's Auto Body Supply in Concord, nearly \$2,500 of epoxy paint. Lance Cavalieri of Lance Cavalieri Jewelers and John and Sue Houghton donated the 23-karat gold leaf used to detail the body and chassis of the Seagrave. At today's prices this is nearly \$3,000. Randy Jennings, a local artist and cabinet maker, volunteered many hours to pinstriping the chassis and created the intricate designs for the scroll work that were later applied by Ralph Newman, a master pinstriper from Boulder Creek, Calif. In all, the in-kind donations have amounted (Continued on p. 6)

Figure 4 (Below): The Seagrave was stored outdoors at the City water treatment plant for more than a decade until it was towed to the Duarte Garage in October 1976. It sat dilapidated in the Garage for 32 years until the Livermore Heritage Guild began its restoration in 2008.

I have mentioned this before, but the Guild simply could not do the work that it does without each and every one of you. The Guild's support comes from obvious things such as donations and volunteers, and also from interest and information. Visitors often first come to the Carnegie or the Garage because someone else knew that they would be interested in something inside, and the next thing we know there is a new volunteer. Certainly that was the case with our Seagrave restoration team. As the restoration of the Seagrave is nearing completion, this is a great time to recognize and feature some of the project donors and volunteers, including a few words from them about why they chose to be part of the project. The comments show that there is no typical donor or common reason for participating. Many are not, or at least were not, Guild members, so they often come to us initially with an interest in things that they would not describe as "history." For instance, the gift from the Livermore-Pleasanton Firefighters Association is not necessarily because they are history buffs (though we know that some are), but because their bond with firefighting and firefighters is strengthened by honoring the people and equipment that raced to the flames nearly a century ago. As important as our donors is our incredible team of volunteers, occasionally referred to as the "Busted Knuckle Bunch." The Guild board would never have considered making the large investment that it did in the Seagrave without having such a talented team to entrust with the project. You may nod appreciatively when you note that many of the same names show up on project team as on the Donor Honor Roll. With the Guild Board's calculated risk in doing the initial funding, the Seagrave team has delivered such a showpiece that Seagrave donations are well on the way to recouping the investment. (Please consider donating, too!)

By the way, if you have a group that might be interested in a visit to the Duarte Garage/Lincoln Highway Museum to see the restored fire engines and other historic items, but can't fit into the one day per month schedule, please contact Bill Junk with a visit request. He can often accommodate groups that otherwise might not be able to make it. We, of course, gratefully accept donations for such visits-our fire engines and the rest of the garage always have something needing to be done.

I was fortunate to be able to join a small group tour of the historic Tesla mining town area out Tesla Road southeast of Livermore, led by Dan Mosier and Bill Carter. Bill is a retired state park ranger whose area included the adjacent Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area that encompasses the former Carnegie Brick Works, so he knows the area very well. Dan, as many Guild members know, has written papers and books about Tesla and coal mining throughout Corral Hollow (the Guild sells Dan's *History of Tesla* at the History Center). Between the two of them, they knew more answers than the group could think of questions. None of the structures are still standing, but our guides were able to make the area alive for us as they walked us along the path of the railroad, past locations of bunkhouses, bars and homes, and described the development of the town that was for a time the second-largest in eastern Alameda County. Livermore was larger, but the sizes of the two were more comparable than I imagined, with Tesla reaching about 1,200 at its peak (in 1898, says Dan) at a time when Livermore was nearly 1,500 (1,493 in the 1900 census). Tesla had a library, a post office, running water and sewer and apparently threw parties so popular that Livermoreans would risk the harrowing ride through the hills to attend.

The site is a small piece of an expanse now owned by the state, purchased with off-road vehicle funds. They are in the process of determining how the land is to be used (it is currently not open to the public). There are no plans in place at this time, but if you have an interest in how this historic site is handled, stay alert for public hearings and opportunities to have your voice heard. Certainly the off-road vehicle interests will be making their views known so we should make sure that heritage interests are also part of the planning. With vision, it could be an opportunity for effective synergy. If this sort of tour interests you, Bill Carter will be conducting another history walk, this time of the Carnegie site. Because the site is an operating off-road vehicle park, he will do the visit on a Thursday, April 19th, in hopes of avoiding the weekend crowds. Let us know if you are interested in attending. There is a sign-up sheet at the History Center, or you can email me jkaskey@yahoo.com. Bill has a limit to the number of people he is allowed to bring on the site, so please let us know soon.

Thanks also to Elise McFarland, State Park Interpreter at Carnegie SVRA, for helping to put a bug in Bill Carter's ear that the Livermore Heritage Guild might make a good partner for these tours. Bill is an active member of Tracy's historical society, the West Side Pioneers, and although Bill and I met a while back to talk about their historic Lammersville School program (an excellent model for what we might do with Midway School), we had not pushed the collaboration further. Elise participated in our Carnegie Centennial celebration last year and made the connection for us.

What's coming up? Stay tuned for the auction and some great history talks with guest speakers!

Jeff Kaskey

Donations to Seagrave Restoration Project - Thank You!

IN-KIND DONATIONS (Approximate Value):

- (1) Tri-Valley Auto Body, 3529 First St., sprayed all red paint, sanded & polished truck body, \$16,000
- (2) Randy Jennings, provided chassis pin-striping, provided drawings of gold filagree to "Real Ralph" Newman for application to the body of the Seagrave, \$4,500
- (3) PPG Paints & Ned's Auto Body Supply of Concord. PPG donated paint to Ned's Auto Body, who donated it to Tri-Valley Auto Body of Livermore, \$2,500
- (4) John & Sue Houghton, donated six spools of gold leaf for application to chassis of Seagrave, \$1,500
- (5) Lance Cavaleri of Lance Cavaleri Jewelers, donated 20 books of gold leaf for all body filagree work, \$1,200
- (6) Jeff Barile, San Mateo Fire Department Station #21, two fire engine service ladders - one a roof ladder and the other an extension ladder; and pump hose caps, \$1,000
- (7) Bob Rice, donated numerous machined parts and speedometer mounting, \$1,000

OTHER IN-KIND DONATIONS: Mark Deadrick, 3DYN, LLC, San Diego, machined bezel for oil flow gauge and vehicle serial number plate • Michael McJilton, Oakland, original Seagrave siren • Gary Spencer, Gold Seal Plating, Oakland, provided copper & nickel plating & buffing for headlights • Chuck & Patrick Brown, Coast Oil, San Jose, lubricants and solvents for engine and transmission and differential • Eldon Porter, machining custom ladder support • Howard Cederberg, California Metal Craft, stainless steel trim for firewall • Al Salmi, made CAD drawings for speedometer drive bracket • Todd Rueppel, original Livermore Fire Axe • Ralph Moir, sycamore lumber for constructing tool box and hose bed • Dean Okano, Dean's Auto Electric, generator restoration • Allen's Towing, frame transport to/from Tri-Valley Auto Body and during 2010 Rodeo Parade • Kevin Nista, Early Years & Exotics, steam cleaning, tow chassis, sandblasting, nickel plating liaison • Evelyn & Herman Folkendt, custom made removable seat cover • Bob Smith Glass, Dublin, DC795 adhesive • Irv Stowers, parade banners • Scott Stauffer, Kelley-Moore Industrial Coatings, paint for rigid suction hoses • Home Depot (Ava Neese), paint matching service • Paul Knechtli, machine shop work • Tri-Valley Cobbler (Danny), hand made a leather "saddle" for the engine hand crank; made straps and buckles to hold fire hoses into hose racks •

AAA Glass (Gary Anderson), hand made glass for speedometer and spotlight • Duane Sunnarborg, precision machining for speedometer & headlights • Robert Ackley, oak wood for construction of battery box • 30 Minute Muffler, Livermore, tubing for heat exchanger • Harold & Asta Dhont, brass plate material for firewall serial number • Pleasanton Steel, steel material for hose bracket and plates • George Nannetti, original Seagrave fasteners • Monument Auto Parts, Livermore, discount on miscellaneous parts • Wagner & Son, discount for cleaning oil pan • Delivery of finished sheet metal by Dave & Kathy Jones, Gary Stimmel, Rich Bouska • Valley Machine Shop, machining of six pet cocks • Seever & Son Tires, discounted tires & tubes • Restoration Hardware, Walnut Creek, hardware handle • Dan Smalski, Allegis Corp., T-handle for toolbox • Don Mullenhoff, metal buffing service • Finish Master, Dublin, metal preparation services • Marco Tahtaras, sheet metal repair

MAJOR CASH DONATIONS: Neil Riley \$2,500 • Irving and Patty Stowers \$2,500 • Livermore Pleasanton Firefighters Association (IAFF No. 1974) \$1,974 • Jim and Minnie Boehmke \$1,500 • Jeff Kaskey \$1,500 • Tom Deadrick, All Wheel Engineering, LLC, San Diego \$1,500 • Ralph Moir & Dick Ryon & Doris Ryon, Second Chance Properties \$1,000

Donations of \$151 to \$999: Questers - local Livermore chapter \$750 • Fred & Marianna Deadrick \$750 • Altamont Cruisers - Joe Wilder \$500 • Peder & Margaret Andersen \$500 • Sheri Morris and Valerie Thomey \$250 • Tim Sage \$250 • Gary Drummond & Anna Siig \$250 • Marie Abbott \$200 • Kaas Corp., Dublin. \$150 • Kenneth & Nancy Nather, \$150 • Livermore Dairy Queen, \$150 • Lynn Owens Memorial Fund
\$100 Donations: AVR Corp. • Bank of America Matching Program • Bay Area Horseless Carriage Club's "Pumpkin Tour" 10/21/10 • The Door Doctor, Pleasanton, Calif. • Marc Belon • Richard Finn • John Houghton • Dave and Kathy Jones • Tim Kordes, LPFD • Cindy & Gary Stewart
Donations of \$25 to \$99: Peter & Rowena Ales • M. Andersen • Gary Cahill • Camaro Club • George & Sharyn Cunningham • Mark & Cheryl Evans • Charles & Arlene Folkers • Douglas Fraits • Susan Junk • Mark & Wendie Lagasse • Andy Lundberg & Dorothy Clarkson • Myrna & Walker Margand • Jerry & Paula Miller • Kathleen Young

Cash Donations at Special Events: First public start of engine event, 10/21/10, \$714 • Altamont Cruisers "2011 Nostalgia Days" attendees, \$214 • Home Depot "Fire Safety Day" Collections, 10/7/11, \$137 • Donations for Fire Truck at 110th Anniversary of Light Bulb Party 6/24/11, \$136 • Donations at Duarte Garage open house, 1/15/12, \$110.

Seagrave *(Continued from Page 3)*

to an estimated \$38,000 - making the total direct contribution to the restoration \$71,000.

QUOTES FROM DONORS

Those supporting the restoration have been generous both in their gifts and in their accolades, as evidenced by the testimonials accompanying this article.

"The Altamont Cruisers are happy to work with community projects to help kids stay off drugs which is one of our main commitments. We are able to do this through money collected during our yearly Nostalgia Day Car Show each September. The Cruisers were happy to help out, not only by donating some time to restore the Seagrave, but also by being able to put money towards new tires.

I guess the Cruisers are all (well many of us) big kids at heart and enjoy mechanical items from the past that get a chance for a new life. If we can get one or two young kids to enjoy the touch, feel, and sounds of the Seagrave, we hope in the future they too will become interested in mechanics or invest in our community as a fireman."

- Joe Wilder - Altamont Cruisers

RESTORATION PROGRESS

Since the July/August 2010 publication of this Newsletter covering the restoration of the Seagrave, much has transpired. At that time, the vehicle had been disassembled, chassis and body parts had been painted, and reassembly had just begun. Since then the team has:

- Reassembled the engine and started it utilizing the original starter motor (in Sept. 2010, see Figure 5 on page 7);
- Drive train (transmission and transaxle) was closely examined, cleaned and lubricated;
- Gold pinstriping was added to the chassis;
- The vehicle was driven under its own power for the first time in over 50 years and then entered into the annual Rotary Club-sponsored Rodeo Parade where it won first place for antique vehicles (in May/June 2011, see Figures 3 & 7);
- Nearly all body panels have now been installed including the fire hose truck body. The installation of the front fenders is awaiting some electrical and under hood modifications;
- The long-awaited gold leafing has now been applied to the body. (See Figures 1, 2 and 6.)

"In 1963, I joined the Livermore Fire Department. It wasn't long after that the Seagrave Engine was taken out of reserve service and allowed to deteriorate. I'd always hoped to be involved in its restoration, so when I heard a crew of volunteers were restoring the Seagrave I volunteered to draw all the gold leaf designs and to stripe the chassis. I also agreed to find them a pinstriper/gilder who was qualified to do the kind of work I had in mind. We found such a person in Ralph Newman ('Real Ralph' a nickname acquired in Junior High because his best friend was Ralph and his friend's dad was Ralph) and the results were outstanding and the fulfillment of one of my life's desires." - **Randy Jennings**

The art of gold leafing has all but died out. Certainly we see pinstriping on race cars and real hand-painted pinstripes add to the sportiness of many high-end vehicles. But today, what looks like gold on a vehicle is usually a vinyl decal (decalcomania) applied by heat or water. The gold leaf you see on the Seagrave is pure 23-karat gold about 0.1µm (3.9 millionths of an inch) thick. It is applied by first sketching the design onto the painted sheet metal. A thin layer of adhesive 'sizing' is then applied and allowed to reach a tacky state. The gold foil (supplied in books of thin sheets) is then applied to the surface. After pressing into place to ensure adhesion, it is covered with an overcoat to enhance durability. These are the essential steps to gilding.

However, Ralph Newman then went further and applied tinted clear coats to the gold leaf shapes to achieve a more leaf-like appearance and further applied colored shadowing to add a three-dimensional appearance. These details are visible in Figure 6 on page 7.

DONATIONS

Donations amounting to \$10,000 are still needed to fully reimburse the deficit to the LHG Treasury and to complete the Seagrave restoration. This fully restored vehicle will become the "crown jewel" in the Duarte Garage and we encourage you to consider a donation to complete this gorgeous Livermore treasure. Donations should be made by check to "Livermore Heritage Guild Attn: Seagrave Restoration." Donations may also be made to the Seagrave Restoration in memory of Lynn Owens, retired Livermore Fire Dept. division chief and a longtime LHG member.

The Seagrave's original serial number plate (No. 25055), original Seagrave log book and original bell have disappeared over the years. The restoration team hopes that these items can be found and returned to the Duarte Garage.

CONCLUSION

With the restoration of the 1920 Seagrave Fire Engine nearing completion, the entire restoration team would like to acknowledge the enormous trust placed in it by the Heritage Guild Board and the patrons who generously donated their funds and efforts that ultimately have made this restoration possible. *-by Irving Stowers*

The Livermore Heritage Guild thanks the volunteers and donors to the Seagrave Fire Engine Restoration Project. See the Honor Roll on pages 2 & 5.



Photo by Fred Deatrick (September 4, 2010)

Figure 5 (Above): First engine starting in over 50 years leads to a lot of smoke. Watch the event on YouTube at: http://youtu.be/EO_c4_NNec

Figure 6 (Left): Details of hood ornamentation (bearing a 1920 'LFD' logo) done in 23-karat gold.

Figure 7 (Below): Will Bolton and Ben Schluchter drove the Seagrave out of the Duarte Highway Garage under its own power for the first time in 50 years on May 21, 2011 (before the hood was restored).



Photo by Irv Stowers

"When I first saw the old fire truck I said to myself 'Painting This Thing is Going to be a Lot of Work,' but after seeing the quality of the restored steering wheel, I was convinced that this was going to be a quality job and I wanted to be a part of the project."
 - J.R. Romero, Tri-Valley Auto Body (3529 First Street)

"The Seagrave fire engine is significant to us because of its connection to the Historic First Street Fire House and mural."
 -Ralph Moir and Dick & Doris Ryon, Second Chance Properties (owners of the old First Street fire house, 2369 First St., former garage of the Seagrave and site of the "Firefighters' Parade" mural, painted in 2010)



LHG Events Calendar & Notes

SUNDAY, MARCH 18TH and **SUNDAY, APRIL 15TH**, Duarte Garage
Open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m on "old" Lincoln Highway, Portola Ave. at L St.

THURSDAY, APRIL 19TH, tour of the former Carnegie townsite (space
is limited - contact the History Center or Jeff Kaskey to sign up). See page 4.



By Bill Nale, eLivermore.com, Sept. 4, 2006

BANK RUPTURED: The Security Pacific Bank building, 1620 First Street (1st & P, northeasterly corner), opened in December 1973. After Security Pacific merged into Bank of America in 1992, Hollywood Video occupied the building. With the decline of retail video rentals (VHS, then DVD), the Livermore store closed and Hollywood filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy in 2010. The building, age 38, was demolished in December 2011, to be replaced by a Walgreens Pharmacy. A century ago, the giant Farmers Warehouse Co. hay warehouse no. 1 stood there, consumed by a fire in 1926. *-Jason Bezis*

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The Livermore Heritage Guild History Center is located in the historic 1911 Carnegie Library building at 2155 Third Street. History Center hours generally are Wednesday through Sunday, 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Phone: (925) 449-9927. Free admission.

Annual membership dues are: Individual \$25.00, Family \$35.00, Senior (age 62+) \$15.00, Student \$15.00, Sponsor \$75.00 and Patron \$150.00. Life (Individual) \$500.00 and Business \$300.00 memberships are also available. Please make checks payable to "LHG." Mail to P.O. Box 961, Livermore, CA 94551. Printed at Beta Printing, Livermore.

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