



Rural Hill Piper

F all Newsletter 2009

Rural Hill
Where History Comes Alive

P.O. Box 1009
Huntersville, NC 28070
4431 Neck Road
Huntersville, NC 28078
704-875-3113
www.ruralhill.net
office@ruralhill.net

Facilitated in cooperation with
Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation



A Note From Ed...

Fall has been a busy time here at Rural Hill. The excitement of the Amazing Maize Maze, the Sheep Dogs Trials and more, has kept us on our toes. We have had a great time making new friends and introducing *thousands* of people to Historic Rural Hill. See page 2 for our complete event wrap ups. And speaking of friends, you can now join us on FaceBook. That's right; Rural Hill is officially, socially networked!

More than ever, Rural Hill and its programs are growing and in continuing need of your support both financially and in volunteer hours. Admission prices and facility rental fees only cover a portion of operating costs, and we can always use your skills – whatever they may be! Please consider a pledge to the Rural Hill Living History Fund. This Fund will allow us to continue to make wonderful opportunities available to our community, especially to the tens of thousands of families and school children who are inspired by their visits here each year. Gifts begin at only \$150, and forms are available for download on our website. I will gladly mail a form to you if you cannot download the form from our website. Please let me know.

And always, please contact me with your questions, ideas, or to find out how you can be a part of the excitement here at Rural Hill. I look forward to great things in the New Year...

Thank you for your continued support of the Catawba Valley Scottish Society and Rural Hill,

Ed McLean, Executive Director

ed@ruralhill.net or (704) 875-3113

www.ruralhill.net



F all Wrap Ups!

The Amazing Maize Maze

Despite the rainy, rainy weather this fall, the Rural Hill Amazing Maize Maze was an overwhelming success. We advertised in print, radio and also on WCNC and the MI Connection (Mooresville, Davidson, Cornelius cable). We received extensive coverage including features in the Observer, Huntersville Herald, LKN Savings and Lake Norman Navigator.

With a record attendance of 21,300 (1500 more than the 2008 record), this year's final weekend saw 5000+ ...another Rural Hill record!

The Sheep Dog Trials

The beautiful weather on November 7 & 8 helped grow the Sheep Dog Trials by 50% compared to last year; There were near 1,300 attendees on Saturday, and 900 on Sunday!

New this year, Rural Hill hosted the Friends for Life LKN "Rally to Rescue Pet Expo & Adoption Fair" and "Strut Your Mutt" March at the Davidson Schoolhouse on Saturday. The great turnout brought new visitors to Rural Hill and our Sheep Dog Trials, while helping animal rescue efforts in our area.

A very special **Thank You** to Zac Vinson and Kelly Franklin for their hard work in assisting with the management of this fall's Amazing Maize Maze and Sheep Dog Trials!



Rural Hill extends a special

THANK YOU

to its Community Partners for their support:



**Town of Huntersville, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation,
Camp Wagging Tails, AT&T Yellow Pages, Duke Energy and
LakeCross Veterinary Hospital**



Davidson Flag Returns Home

On September 30, the Mecklenburg Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution helped to bring home the memorial flag of 1st Lieutenant Jo Graham Davidson, Jr. A flag ceremony was held in the Rural Hill burying ground in honor of the occasion. Ms. May Davidson made available the flag that covered the casket of her brother, the JROTC from Hopewell High School folded the flag, and it is now on display in the Davidson Room at Rural Hill.

1st Lieutenant Jo Graham Davidson, Jr. is the 4th child of Jo Graham Davidson and his wife Annie May Alexander Davidson. Jo was born at Rural Hill November 21, 1914. He graduated from Long Creek School and attended Georgia Tech. When WWII started, he joined the Army and was on his way to South Africa when he died in a plane crash in Cayenne, French Guiana. His body was interred at the family grave at Rural Hill on May 1, 1948.

Bethesda Schoolhouse

Rural Hill has applied for a Lowe's Charitable & Educational Foundation Grant for Bethesda Schoolhouse and its conversion to a useful classroom on the Rural Hill grounds.

Built around 1898, the Bethesda school is the oldest identified rural school house for black children in Mecklenburg County. It was relocated to Rural Hill by the Historic Landmarks Commission to stand in the place of the original school that served black children.

In the 1940s, the school was closed as part of a program of consolidation, according to a landmarks commission report. For the next 20 years it remained a focus of community social gatherings. The one-story school fell into disuse in the 1960s, and has been deteriorating ever since.

The Lowe's grant would provide for the restoration of the building for use in a variety of education programs for the community and Rural Hill guests.



Holly Bend Purchased By Mecklenburg County



Mecklenburg County recently purchased nearly 212 acres of land including the Holly Bend estate. The new land deal helps to link the county-owned Cowan's Ford Wildlife Refuge and Rural Hill, providing nearly 1,200 acres of contiguous preserved land.

Holly Bend was built for the eldest son of John & Violet Davidson during the five years between 1795 and 1800. Robert moved into the home in 1800. The Holly Bend property was originally part of Rural Hill. The federal-style house is a good example of the county's aristocratic elite, has been well preserved and was designated an historic landmark in 1974.

Beth Eakes Martina said her father always wanted to have a farm and bought the land in 1970 after shopping other sites. Martina said her father worked hard to help restore the property, including hiring architect and preservation historian Jack Boyte. Her father sent a carpenter to historic Williamsburg to do research for the restoration project. Eakes died in 1989 and, per his will, the land was held in trust and could not sell for 20 years.

- continued on page 5

Hay For Sale!

Eddie Ferguson has been busy baling hay at Rural Hill. We now produce our own hay and sell it to the Latta Equestrian Center and several other local horse owners. This is a new "business" for us in our efforts to support the CVSS and Rural Hill. If you have some friends that are in need of hay, please have them contact Eddie at the farm.



Mark Your Calendars!

2010

First Footin' January 1

Stepping off at 11 AM to help celebrate the Scottish New Year. Bring something to add to our traditional Stone Soup.

National Tartan Day April 6

Celebrate the Heritage of Scottish Americans

Rural Hill Scottish Festival and Loch Norman Highland Games April 16 - 18

A weekend full of fellowship, Celtic music, dancing and athletic competition!

Holly Bend...continued

Park and Recreation manager Michael Kirschman said county officials plan to study how to use the Holly Bend property in the future, but said they want to make the home a public facility that can be used for tours or as a rental place. The master plan work should kick off in the coming months.



On December 2, guests of the County, including members from Rural Hill, will be touring the Holly Bend property and discussing plans for the structures and use of the property.

Rural Hill extends a special thank you to Beth Eakes Martina and the Eakes Family for the donation of historic logs that have been in storage at Holly Bend since 1973. Our log cabin crew will work over the next couple years to re-construct the two log cabins on the grounds at Rural Hill.

Excerpts taken from The Charlotte Observer; Photos by L. Mueller



NEW Rural Hill Sign

Check out the new Rural Hill sign at the entrance on Neck Road. This beautiful sign was made possible through the generosity of a grant from Southwood. Thank you, Southwood!!

Planning for the Future of Rural Hill

At a meeting of the Board of Directors meeting in early November, a Vision Committee was formed for the strategic planning for 3, 5 and 10 year milestones. The committee will be comprised of Sarah McAulay, Pat Wheeler, Morris McIntosh and L.D. Bass.

Members and friends of Rural Hill are invited to please share your ideas and suggestions! Email your thoughts to ed@ruralhill.net.

Catawba Valley Scottish Society

Board of Directors

Robert G. McIntosh, *Chair*

Jim Puckett, *Vice Chair*

R. Gary Keith, *Secretary*

Maurice D. McIntosh, *Treasurer*

L.D. Bass, Jr.

Sarah Belk Gambrell

Sarah McAulay

Trey Barnette III

John L. Taggart

Pat Wheeler

Royce Hagaman

Staff

Ed McLean, *Executive Director*

Mark Vandivier, *Office Manager*

Eddie Ferguson, *Farm Manager*

Mission

The mission is to educate people about the culture, heritage and contributions of the Scots and Scot-Irish and to provide venues for recognizing and celebrating their rich legacy.

Rural Hill is Networked!

You can now visit us on Facebook...



You can click to our Wall via the circular "F" from our Rural Hill homepage or while on Facebook, search for "Rural Hill." You can track event updates, the latest photo postings and albums (all available for download), as well as read the many Friend comments. Start a discussion with us and leave comments of your own!

Join the Catawba Valley Scottish Society

We invite you to either join the Catawba Valley Scottish Society or renew your membership, and help support the rich heritage of Rural Hill as we seek to preserve and sustain the 265 acres which was the original homestead of Major John and Violet Wilson Davidson and dates back to 1760.

The Catawba Valley Scottish Society, Inc. is a volunteer, non-profit 501(c)3 corporation. Individual memberships are \$30, Couples Memberships are \$55 and Family Memberships are \$65 annually. Membership fees support the restoration and maintenance of Historic Rural Hill, its education programs and annual events.

Find details at www.ruralhill.net.

Membership provisions include:

- 10% Discount on all merchandise
- The Rural Hill Piper Newsletter
- Invitations to Members socials and special receptions