



Recreating History: Vernonia Family Brings an Old Farm Back to Life

By Scott Laird

Maybe you have noticed the old fashioned windmill that recently appeared on the east side of Highway 47, just south of

of Vernonia and take a look at the property owned by Jeff and Susan Ely, especially that old Star windmill the Elys recently installed.

The Elys have been purposely rebuilding a small-

and the group of us sat on the back patio the Elys constructed, soaking up the atmosphere. We talked about the history of the property and the changes the Elys have made as the sheep grazed nearby and goats nibbled on the trees. It was just about perfect.

The Elys moved their family to the Vernonia area from Hillsboro in 2006, purchasing the five acres from the Allens, on what was once known as the Seagret Farm and later as the Crawford Place. According to Allen, who bought the property in 1979, the land is part of one of the original handful of homesteads in the region and originally belonged to the Adams Family.

It is a historically significant piece of land and many families have lived or worked on parts of it over the years. Both Allen and Susan Ely tell similar stories of strangers stopping by to talk about past friends or relations who used to live there. "People stop here a lot!" says Ely. "It is not unusual. People have a lot of memories, anecdotes and stories about things that happened here, way back when."

Like most homesteads in the area, the property was originally logged and then farmed. Allen says he believes sheep were run there at one time. The property also had an orchard; the remnants remained when the Allen's owned the place.



Vernonia. Certainly, if you've lived in Vernonia for a while, you would have noticed the reconstruction of the historic old barn that sits on that same property across from the turn off to Timber Road in the area known as Treharne; the old barn that collapsed in February of 2007 and was later resurrected? Maybe you've noticed the handful of sheep and goats wandering and grazing the small pasture behind and beside the home on the same piece of property?

If you haven't noticed before, make sure you slow down the next time you drive in or out

scale family farm complete with livestock, large producing gardens and most recently the installation of the windmill. And of course, there is that magnificent barn that they revived.

Reviving the old farm is in part educational for the Ely's three children; Bradley, Meagan and Lauren all participate in 4-H and raise the livestock living on the property. The reconstruction of the barn was because the family needed a place to keep the livestock and store hay and machinery. It also provided an opportunity to preserve some history.

Plus, it all looks



really great!

I had the pleasure of visiting recently with the Elys, who also invited the previous property owners, Del and Kathy Allen, as well as Jack Finzel, who helped with the recent windmill installation. It was a beautiful fall evening

Allen says the somewhat modern, current home that now occupies the property is at least the third home that has been there; the Allen's did a major remodel to the home when they owned it. The Elys have since added a back porch and used pavers to build the patio and a fire pit. The Allen's still retain a piece of their property and pasture and live nearby in a home that Del says was built from old logging

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Family Loses Everything in Fire as Heroic Boy Saves Grandmother

A Vernonia family lost their rental home on East Bridge Street, along with almost everything in it on October 12. Fortunately their young son was able to save his grandmother and himself.



Seth Cutright, age 12, rescued his grandmother after a propane explosion. Cutright received burns to his hands and face but doctors say he should recover with only some scarring.

Roger and Julia Cutright, along with young daughters Hope and Faith were not home on the Friday afternoon just before 3:00 PM. Fortunately son Seth, aged twelve, was there when an apparent propane leak was ignited when Todd's mother Rose attempted to light a cigarette. After returning home from doing some work for an elderly family friend, Seth was there with his sixty-four year old grandmother when the room suddenly erupted into flames.

"The whole room was just on fire, just sort of exploded," said Seth in a recent interview on October 18. Seth finally came home to Vernonia from the



Photo courtesy of Judy Acton.

hospital the night before. "My grandma was on fire for a second and then it went out. And then I carried my grandma down the stairs and laid her on the grass and went to the neighbors and asked for help."

"He saved her life," said father, Roger. "If he hadn't been there she wouldn't have made it."

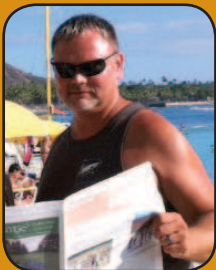
Seth and Rose were transported by Metro West Ambulance. Seth received burns to his hands and face. Rose remains in critical condition at the Legacy Oregon Burn Center.

Seth said he didn't have time to be afraid and just reacted quickly and did what he thought he needed to do.

Seth said doctors have told him he should recover from his burns but may have some scarring.

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