

Alpenrose cleans out its 'attic' and with it, so much history

It's not often you get a chance to buy a piece of your childhood.

A valuable, collectible piece of your childhood. Perhaps even a piece you lingered over, on a school field trip to the museum at Alpenrose Dairy. Back when schools had field trips. Back when you were still in school.

A moose head. A horse-drawn hearse. An automated viola. An automated no-man band. An arrow-head collection.

First, an important disclaimer: Alpenrose Dairy isn't going anywhere. It's not closing down, it's not struggling, it's not selling property.

"I always get those questions," says Carl Cadonau Jr., who is co-president of Alpenrose with his cousin, Rod Birkland. "People say, 'When are you going to sell out?'" They tell Carl the property is too valuable to be used for a dairy operation.

"Well, my grandfather started it in 1916. We only have a few more years to our 100th anniversary. We have kids working here."

They're not closing, even

though "it's a tough business in a big business climate like we're in now, fighting large companies and co-ops. But we have a niche, and we've been blessed."

"And I don't want to be the one to pull the plug."

Kids are still all over Alpenrose, exploring Dairyville, playing Little League baseball.

In decades past, school buses would lumber onto the grounds and students would spill out. They'd tour the museum at Alpenrose, filled with bizarre and wonderful objects.

"Most of that stuff came to us from a

gentleman by the name of David Newman," says Carl. "He had a museum in Seaside."

David gave many pieces to Alpenrose in the 1960s. "Then over the years we've added."

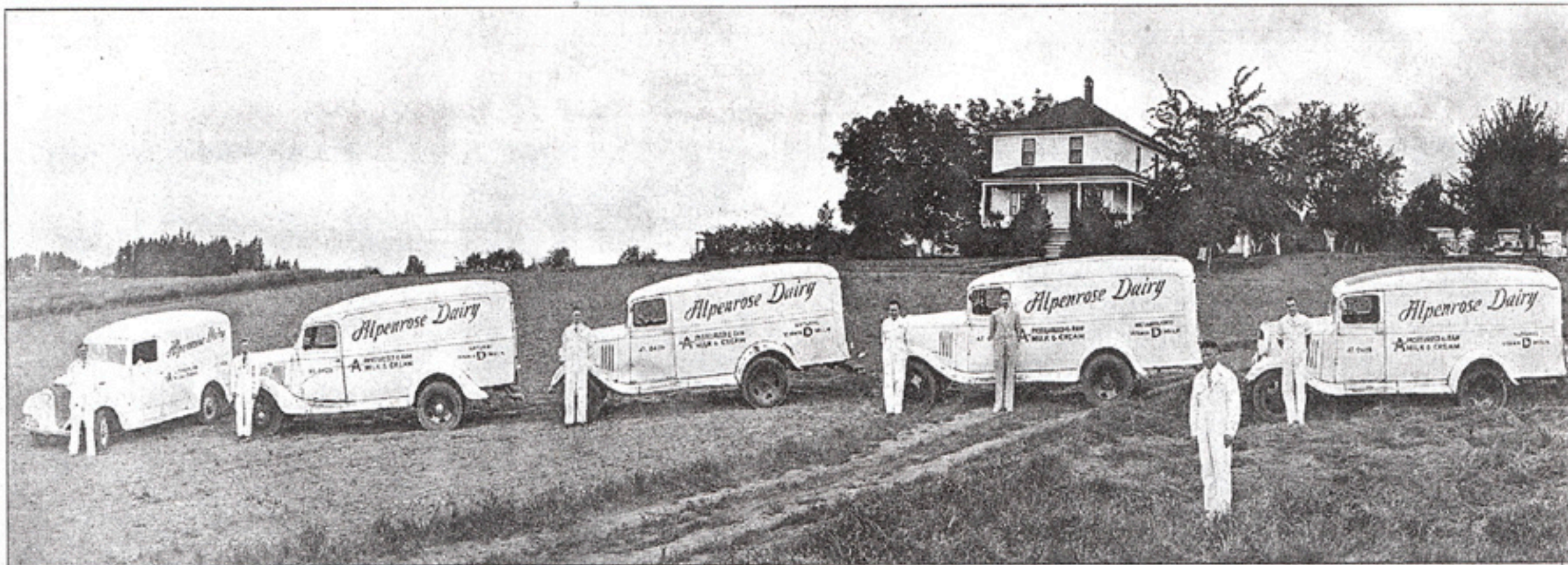
Dolls. Cameras. Genuine Edison phonographs, complete with records or cylinders.

And all those music boxes. Some were giant, taller than a man and wider than a piano.

There were automated dolls, too. You could wind up a French doll and her arms, legs and head would move.



MARGIE BOULÉ



ALPENROSE DAIRY

Most folks around here have a memory or two about Alpenrose Dairy, even if they don't go as far back as this historic image. A lot of memories will be auctioned this week when the Alpenrose Dairy Museum's contents go up for sale.

There were vintage tricycles and surrey carriages.

And then there was the horse-drawn hearse. Built around 1900, painted black, with windows on the sides so the coffin could be seen.

But over the years, people started to lose interest in the quirky collection. Fewer visitors found their way to the museum.

Then, in the 1990s, the school tours stopped. Funding cutbacks. Soaring insurance rates.

The folks at Alpenrose began opening the museum a few days each summer. And then, about five years ago, they closed the doors for good.

The dolls didn't blink. The music boxes remained silent. Worse, the pieces began to deteriorate.

"The temperature and moisture content of the air is not right," Carl says. A few bubbles appeared on wood veneer. A doll or two began to mildew.

"We just felt it was time that somebody else enjoyed them."

So Carl called another family business in Portland: O'Gallerie, an auction house. When company president Tom O'Grady heard about the objects in the museum, "I was very excited," he says.

Pieces in the Alpenrose collection have attracted attention from potential buyers all over the U.S.

Like the horse-drawn hearse. "I've been doing this for 32 years," Tom says, and it's the first time he's ever sold a hearse.



A horse-drawn hearse, circa 1900, is part of the museum collection being auctioned off.

ALPENROSE DAIRY/O'GALLERIE

"There's a gentleman from Virginia very interested in that."

The O'Gradys have owned O'Gallerie since 1972, says Tom's brother Peter, who is vice president. "My dad (Dale O'Grady) bought this place when I was 8.

"My mom thought he was crazy. He quit his job as a loan officer and started learning to auctioneer in the shower. I remember that."

Soon they moved to bigger locations and began importing fine antiques from Europe.

Running an auction house is hard work, "but it's kind of addicting," Peter says. "Every day is different."

About a year ago, they sold a local man's collection of motorcycles. "He never married, he just bought motorcycles and put them in his basement without riding them. There were Harleys and BMWs with 300 miles on them, from the 1960s."

Peter remembers the sale of

the estate of a former professor whose students "bid to the moon" for their mentor's possessions.

"And one time a couple brought in an art glass lamp they'd purchased at a garage sale for \$40. . . . It ended up selling for \$9,000.

"It was like 'Antiques Roadshow.' It's fun when that happens."

Another time, "We had a collection of game trophy mounts. The woman's husband had passed away, and he'd collected them his whole life, going on safaris."

The woman always had hated the trophies. "They kept them in the basement and she didn't like to go down there."

After her husband died, she brought them to O'Gallerie. "She got a big check for those," Peter says. "She told us if we hadn't taken them, she was going to have a big fire in the backyard, she was so anxious to get rid of

them. She was a proper little lady. . . . you wouldn't have imagined she would have those kind of thoughts."

There's only one game trophy Alpenrose sent to O'Gallerie, but it's a piece of history. "The moose head was my grandfather's," says Carl Cadonau.

Henry Cadonau was the founder of Alpenrose. He bagged the moose in 1961, Carl says.

"Grandpa would go hunting once a year, with George Teufel from Teufel Nursery. That's the only thing he did away from the dairy. If he wasn't hunting, he was at the dairy working."

Henry's hunting trips were so important to him, "one year we had a fire down in one of our barns. The barn was still smoldering, but Grandpa left to go hunting. That's how much he loved it."

Cadonau family members each selected one item from the collection to keep before most of the museum's contents were taken to O'Gallerie for an auction, to be held Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, divided into three lots. The last preview will be held today, from noon to 5 p.m. (details: www.o-gallerie.com).

While the collection will be disassembled, Carl hopes the pieces will be appreciated and perhaps restored.

"There were a few tears," he says, "but I feel good about it. Somebody else will enjoy them."

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