

RUTLAND HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Quarterly

Volume 53 No. 2

2023

MAC STEEL



On the cover: Mac Equipment and Steel Co.

Closing after 39 years on **March 31, 2023**.

Photos were taken on the last day of business, March 31, 2023 and on May 11th and 12th, 2023.

Visit us on the web at <https://rutlandhistory.com>

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All photos and text: David Zsido

Layout: Barbe Giffin

Special Thanks and Best Wishes to The Mac Family.

The **Quarterly** is published by the Rutland Historical Society, 96 Center Street, Rutland, Vt 05701-4023. Copies are \$2 each plus \$1 per order. Membership in the Society includes a subscription to the **Quarterly** and the **Newsletter**. Copyright 2023 The Rutland Historical Society, Inc. ISBN 0748-2493.

About our author:



Dave Zsido was born in Proctor. He graduated from Mount Saint Joseph Academy and Norwich University. He worked for Central Vermont Public Service Corporation for more than 38 years. He has been a member of the Antique Truck Club of America since 1984 and served as the Chairman of the Board (Pro-Tem) of the organization from August of 2017 to December 31, 2020. He has been an avid collector of antique trucks; antique truck memorabilia; and trucking history for some forty years. He has also authored seventeen previous 'Quarterlies' for the Rutland Historical Society.

Introduction:

The story of Mac Equipment and Steel was initially developed and published with Volume 47 No. 3 of the 2017 "Quarterly". The issue can be accessed on the Rutland Historical Society website. This current segment captures some final reflections of this family operated business at the time it ceased operations on March 31, 2023. It will be centered on a visit with Israel Mac and a final walk around the expansive yard as somewhat of a 'farewell tour'. Over the many years, beginning in 1964, Dave Zsido had made numerous visits to the vast yard. These visits weren't necessarily made in search of anything specific. However, they provided opportunities to view the vast array of rusty artifacts from the past in this giant 'outdoor museum'. Nonetheless, on one visit he brought home a few large steel equipment wheels, which he used for ornamental purposes outside his home. On another occasion, Josh Mac gave him a stack of the Howe Scale Company's safety posters, which Dave passed onto the late Joseph Giancola. He also returned home one day from the yard with nearly a dozen heavy wire galvanized milk crates, which came from a dairy in Saratoga, NY. Dave put them to good use to store automotive parts, such as, carburetors, instruments, tail-lights, and the like, most of which had been rescued from Glen Garage of the Butterfield Estate. This was located just slightly north of Mac Equipment and Steel at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Route 7.

OFFICE

* Prices Subject to Change
Without Notice *

SCRAP PRICES

* Based on Current Market Value *

ALUM - per pound

AESD - 40
Siding - 50
Cast - 25
Exhaust - 50
Rings - 70
Oil Sump - 30
Radiators - 80
Dirty - 0

STAINLESS - per pound

Clean - 30
Dirty - 0

LEAD - per pound

Batteries - 0
Pipes - 50
Wheel weights - 0

BRASS - per pound

Red - 2.50
Yellow - 2.00
Shots - 2.00
Dirty - 80
Clean Rods - 1.70

COPPER TUBE - per pound

#1 - 5.00
#2 - 5.00
Dirty/Boozy - 1.00
Off/Alum - 1.00
Backward

COPPER WIRE - per pound

Bare/Bright - 3.70
#1 Bare - 3.50
#2 Bare - 3.00
#1 Remelted - 1.70
#2 Remelted - 70
Copper - 40
Alphak - 1.70
Shipping wire - 2.70

COPPER SHEET - per pound

Bright/Red - 3.70
#1 - 3.70
#2 - 3.00
Lead Sheet - 2.30

STEEL - per TON (based on)

#1 Flat - 250
Cast Iron - 250
Pipe/Structural - 250
#1 Scrap - 180
#2 Scrap - 120
TIN - 120

ELECTRIC MOTORS - per pound

MOTOR BLOCKS - 170 per TON

* HOURS *

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12:45pm - 3:30pm

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MAG
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**PLEASE
ANTICIPATE
YOUR NEEDS**

31 Mar 2023
sign listing the
current prices paid
for scrap metals

Shortly before the end of March in 2023, word began circulating of the pending ceasing of operations at Mac Equipment and Steel. The Mac Family, consisting of Israel and “Cookie” Mac and their son, Josh, had made the extremely difficult decision to back away from the stress of running the seventy-year-old business, and pursue other more relaxing interests. One of the reports about the closure was televised on Channel 3 WCAX during one of its news broadcasts.

About one week prior to the planned March 31st closing, Israel Mac and his wife, Cookie, were featured as ‘Super Seniors’ in an interview with WCAX reporter Joe Carroll. During the segment, Israel looked back on the seventy-year history of the business, since it was established by his father, David Mac. He touched briefly on his family’s history during the period of the Holocaust, when his father and mother, Sonia, were imprisoned in notorious Nazi concentration camps. They lost loved ones and family members, who were unable to escape, and were tortured and killed. In the aftermath of World War II, the couple settled in Rutland, and David immediately began his business.

Learning about the planned closure, Dave Zsido had decided to visit the yard on the afternoon of March 31st. He hadn’t anticipated that there would be much activity taking place, but as he pulled into the yard, he encountered a considerable number of vehicles. Contractors and craftsmen, who had learned of the imminent closing, were making their final purchases of new metal products. This included new sections of channel iron, box iron, sheet metal, and similar products. The requests for new material kept Josh and his staff hustling in and out of the large blue storage building. Josh did take a few minutes to step back inside the office/scale house to allow Dave Z to get a photograph of him with his father in front of

the framed portrait of David Mac, which had been hanging on the wall for perhaps twenty-five years.



31 Mar 2023 Israel (Irving) and Josh with a photo of David on the wall behind them.

Understanding the pressure that both Israel and Josh were under to satisfy the needs of their customers, Dave Z left the office and took a very brief visit to the westerly portion of the scrap yard. After completing his short tour, he chatted again with Israel, who welcomed Dave Z to return at some point in the future under calmer conditions.

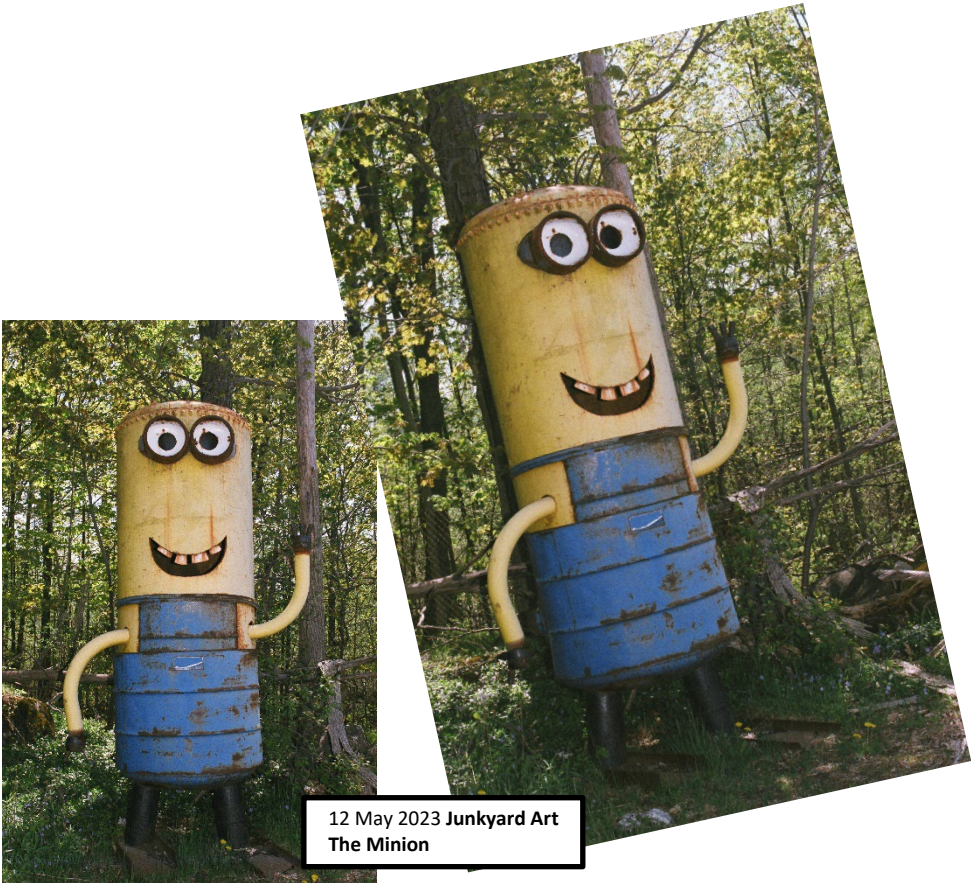
Just over a week later Dave Z stopped back, and once again found Israel behind his desk as usual. Dave Z arrived with his 35 mm camera loaded with a roll of film - thirty-six exposures.

The two men talked for a considerable length about some of the early days of the business. David Mac had purchased what had been the sixty-eight acres Clark Farm in 1953, seventy years earlier. For many years, one of the closest neighbors was a small restaurant, which was directly across Route 7 from Mac's driveway. This restaurant was known as The Ledges Restaurant, which sat back a short distance from Route 7 among a tree growth. This eating establishment stayed in business until 1982. Shortly thereafter, it was sold to Burke's Garage, which was relocating from its former Willow Street location. Burke's Garage was the local American Motors – Rambler dealership. The old restaurant building was razed, and new structure facility was developed. The auto dealer moved into it in 1985. However, the auto dealership was only there for a brief period as American Motors ceased automobile production in 1987. For many years that followed, Rutland Autoworks occupied the northerly end of that building. Then during the fall of 2022, it ceased operations.

Probably for most of the Mac Equipment and Steel Company's history highway traffic, which zipped along Route 7 past the entrance to the yard, paid little or no attention to the fact that the scrap yard was even there. Moreover, the yard was screened by a tall bedrock embankment and tree growth. However, about a decade ago extremely large 'junkyard art' creations began appearing alongside the entrance to the facility.

According to Israel, his son, Josh, developed the concept of creating the artful statutes from pieces of scrap metal. Since the placement of the first piece of 'Junk Yard Art', during the past several years, some new creations were pieced together and added to the collection.

Without question, these pieces of junkyard art have established themselves as unique landmarks on the northerly edge of North Main Street. Israel also noted that a young granddaughter played a role with the development of one particular piece. One of her favorite cartoon characters is the Minion.



Therefore, Josh put the plan into motion with an employee, Jed Danyow, who provided the artistic talent with his welder. Jed also created the giant Robot, which is holding the Mac Steel sign. He also created the large Praying Mantis.

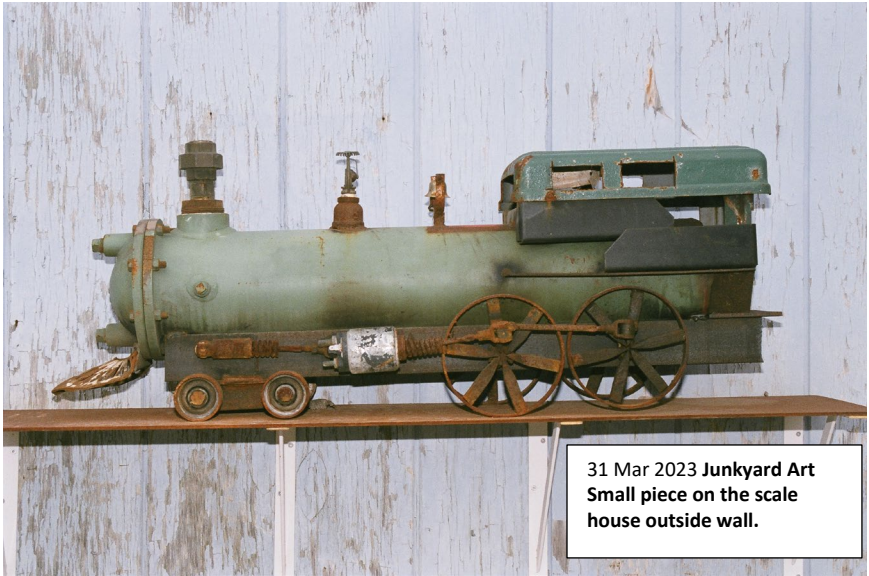


31 Mar 2023 Junkyard Art
Robot Sign Holder at the
front gate



12 May 2023 Junkyard Art
Praying Mantis

On a much smaller scale, he also developed a locomotive, perhaps less than three feet in length, which is on a shelf at the entrance to the office/scale house.



31 Mar 2023 Junkyard Art
Small piece on the scale
house outside wall.

Israel's favorite junkyard art piece is the Band.



12 May 2023 Junkyard Art
The Band

In that group of heavy metal musicians, the trombone player is Israel's top choice. He noted that quite surprisingly over the years, several brass musical instruments have been turned in for scrap. Josh decided to set many of these pieces aside, saving them from being recycled. The band of musicians and the huge Tyrannosaurus were the workmanship of Steve Mestyan.



Two other large colorful pieces include a large Sunflower plant and an accompanying silver Watering Bucket. Israel noted that surprisingly these objects were brought to the yard as scrap when the Diamond Run Mall closed.



12 May 2023 **Junkyard Art Sunflower and Watering Can**

Unquestionably, this sizeable menagerie of 'Junkyard Art' has played a role in perhaps slowing traffic down a bit on that stretch of North Main Street.

As Dave grabbed his camera and was heading for the office door to take some final photographs of the artistic pieces in the scrap yard, he was cautioned by Israel to be watchful of ticks. He noted that just the other day, a visitor, who had been touring the yard, removed a dozen ticks from himself when he returned.

As Dave entered the yard, he once again noticed the group of antique farm tractors neatly positioned as if they were working a field in a farm setting.



31 Mar 2023 **Field filled with old farm tractors**

Further along, at various intervals, perhaps as many as six pickup trucks from the 1950's had been placed on pedestals, resembling statues in a park of scrap iron. The pedestals were either strong frames comprised of steel girders or simply steel dumpsters.



11 May 2023 **c.1947 Dodge truck on a steel staging**



11 May 2023 c1959 Chevy pickup on a steel dumpster



11 May 2023 c1949 Dodge van ready for take-off

Several different truck manufacturers were represented. Along the southerly and northerly lines of the yard were several dozen automobiles, which may have been produced from the 1930's to the mid-1950's. These vehicles did not exhibit any signs of vehicular damage resulting from motor vehicle crashes. It appeared that they simply were worn out mechanically and were driven to the yard with their engines providing a final burst of power. Many of these automobiles have rested in the same position without turning a wheel for decades, perhaps fifty years or more. As Israel had explained, they were scattered along the south and north fence lines. As scrap was accumulated over the years, it trapped them where they had been parked, making them inaccessible. Ford, Chevrolet, Hudson, Buick, Dodge, and even a Cadillac were included in the dozens and dozens of rusty old automobiles. Of the total number of old cars, Ford sedans from the late 1940's to early 1950's far outnumbered the other makes.



11 May 2023 A group of battered vehicles including Ford and Chevrolet



11 May 2023
A Group of
Fords from the
late 1940's



11 May 2023 old vehicles
hiding in the trees including
and old Cadillac at far right



11 May 2023
c1951 Hudson
sedan

There were dozens of Fords with their flathead V-8 Ford engines. This was an engine concept that Henry Ford had introduced in



11 May 2023
The remains of
a 1930's
platform truck

1932. More than likely these Fords were sold new by the local dealership, Babbitt Motors, Incorporated, which had been located at 170 South Main Street in Rutland, the present Trolley Barn location. Several of the old vehicles somewhat resemble large planters as they have been overpowered by vegetation.

One pickup truck has a large tree growing through its pickup bed.

An old Ford has a sizeable tree protruding through the back window of the sedan. The thought passed through Zsido's mind that it would be interesting to look inside many of the old cars.



After reasonably considering the growth of grass and brush encircling many of these vehicles, he decided it would be wiser to avoid the potential picking up some unwanted ticks. In other areas of the yard, there were still large mountains of sorted scrap metal, brake drums, large coils of rusty steel wire, and much more.

However, the real eye-catching pieces of rusty 'junk yard art' were the automobiles.



11 May 2023
A small pile
of old
equipment
wheels



11 May 2023
coils of retired
telephone wire



11 May 2023
A stack of old
highway signs



11 May 2023
Plenty of
folding chairs



11 May 2023
A large side panel from a
fire truck lays in the grass



11 May 2023
A large old
piece of
industrial
equipment



11 May 2023
the old wheel has
been stationary
for some time



31 Mar 2023 Small narrow-gauge rail cart



11 May 2023
An early 1950's
Pontiac hubcap
in the grass



11 May 2023
A huge mountain
of old brake drums



11 May 2023
An old Coca
Cola cooler

31 Mar 2023
Knoll covered
with old cranes



31 Mar 2023
old link belt crane



31 Mar 2023
A Ford rack truck



31 Mar 2023
Another Ford
Rack Truck



31 Mar 2023
An International
container truck



31 Mar 2023
International
platform
truck



31 Mar 2023 Pair of tracked excavators



11 May 2023 A Komatsu tracked sitting idle in the yard

In leaving the yard of the Mac Equipment and Steel Company on that afternoon Dave took a final glance at the schedule paid for various scrap metals. Israel noted that during its prime, the Company employed ten to eleven workers. For the past ten years the number of workers remained somewhat constant with seven employees. The business relied on a small fleet of heavy-duty trucks, including four platform trucks and one roll-off carrier. As the gate to the yard shut later that afternoon on March 31, 2023, the sign which had always stated “CLOSED” then carried a new meaning.





Editor's Note: When setting this Quarterly up for publication, the website for Mac Steel had the following message:

After a brief hiatus and a restructuring of the business, Mac Steel will open Monday, October 2 under the new operating name MacScrap as a full service scrapyard.

Our new business hours are Monday - Friday, 8am - 3pm.
(Closed 12noon-12:45pm.)
Scrap purchasing closes at 2:30pm.

Any remaining new steel inventory will be sold at cost.

The Rutland Historical Society is proud to present our Quarterlies.

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News from Nickwackett

THE RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2023

First and foremost, The Rutland Historical Society would like to thank the City of Rutland for their tremendous support this past year.

The Department Public Works Highway Operation Manager, Dan MacIntyre, and the Rutland City Associate Engineer, Ted Gillen, were instrumental assisting us with the unforeseen relocation of our mailbox and the replacement of the crumbling and dangerous entrance walkway to our front door and sideways all the way around the Fire House. Their immediate reaction to our request was deeply appreciated. We have had our door refinished by Mike Knowles, and Angela Hinchey is our gardener for our heritage gardens. We are now ready to greet all of our visitors in proper fashion.

The Rutland City Fire Department has been a wonderful neighbor and we greatly value the watchful eye they supply to our grounds and building throughout the year. The Rutland City Recreation and Parks Department has kept our grounds clear and mowed.

It has been a year of unexpected, profound, and permanent change. In May, Jim Davidson passed away. With his passing, the Rutland Historical Society lost a founder, mentor, and friend. We acknowledge Jim's intense endeavor to save Rutland's history. We want to thank Helen Davidson for the decades of support and encouragement she has gave to Jim and the Society. Their goal was to have Rutland's story available to everyone. We genuinely intend to continue their mission as we move forward without their guidance.

The Society acquired a painting from the Baptist Church auction last year. Restoration of the painting of Reverend Hadley Proctor, Rutland's first Baptist minister, painted about 1830, is ongoing. We look forward to having the good Reverend back in Rutland, hopefully within the next year.

Once again, we have been fortunate that many people with amazing amounts of talent have volunteered at the Nickwackett Fire Station. I personally wish to thank each and every person on our team. They have worked tirelessly in the background to keep the website growing, the archives accessible, and the Society running during this past year.

In January of 2023, we had an opportunity to obtain the Rutland Herald archives. We will be sifting through the mountains of history of the Herald for a very long time. We also received local collections or archives from RRMC; Laurel Glen-Bowman Mansion; Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War; the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 1; the Crossroads Arts Council; Downtown Partnership; and Lakes Region Youth Orchestra this year. We thank all of the donors of this precious material.

Needless to say,Carolynn Ranftle, Susan Carroll, and their team of archivists have been very busy scanning, cataloging, and storing items. Very special thanks to Clifford Giffin who has taken on the monumental task of scanning the Rutland Herald negatives. So far, he has scanned 8,000 of them.

Our Acquisitions Chair, Ron Hemenway, was instrumental in not only logging all of these donations in, but also coordinating the release and transfer of our ancient collection of Rutland County Court Records to the Vermont Archives in Middlesex to be added to the rest of the collection of later records held there. Thanks to Tom Giffin for the needed muscle that this effort took to accomplish!

Since Jim Davidson vacated the chair at PEG-TV, Michael Dwyer has continued our public access segment of Historically Speaking brilliantly.

The Society is continuing to serve as many inquiries as possible, and we endeavor to keep up with the overwhelming demand on social media platforms. We are available for inquiries via email, Facebook, and regular mail. Corey Kennedy attends to the Facebook page and Doreen McCullough, oversees our website.

We realize that technology is not a panacea. We are open on Saturday afternoons and also by appointment for in-person research and visits. In addition, we have had a number of people from California, Minnesota, and Michigan this year looking for their heritage. If you would like to set up an appointment, please send an email to president@rutlandhistory.com. We will do our best to accommodate your needs.

Our website is www.RutlandHistory.com. Please take a look. We are continually adding items of local interest and have greatly expanded with much of the new information. Yearbooks for the pandemic years (2019 – 2022) have been uploaded for the Rutland area yearbooks to Internet Archives. Our on-line records are available and free to all. If you find that you need help, we will be happy to help you navigate the collections.

If you are not yet a member, we invite you to join us as a member and become a volunteer. Membership entitles you to a Rutland Quarterly which provides glimpses of Rutland's history written by Rutland's historians. We eventually add the Rutland Quarterlies to our website for everyone, but as a member, a hard copy and first glance is yours. We have had some amazing writers and glimpses into Rutland in days gone by. The latest Quarterly was a history of the Municipal Swimming Pools.

We are extremely excited for 2024 and we hope that you come in for a visit this coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara L. Giffin, President
Rutland Historical Society

We hope that you are enjoying your Quarterlies

We appreciate your support.

Gift memberships are a great

HOLIDAY STOCKING STUFFERS!!!

\$10.00 Regular

\$8.00 Seniors (62+)

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Additional donations are always gratefully accepted.

We thank all of our sponsors and our new life members.

We could not do it without you!

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