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# Steam Dorks Fan Oakland

By Josh Keppel



Josh Keppel

Here you can see the belt that connects Pappy's flywheel to the A.O.K. fan.



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A few days ago, people driving down Mandela Parkway in [Oakland](#) might have been surprised to see puffs of steam rising from an old steam engine chugging along, sounding its loud steam whistle every so often.

The engine wasn't rolling down any tracks, instead it was stationary in the front yard of [Kinetic Steam Work's](#) workshop, where the group of steam enthusiasts were testing out their [1917 Case traction engine](#).

"Pappy" is the name of the engine, and it has been going through a two year restoration process by the volunteer group known in local circles as [K.S.W.](#)

On Sunday April 26, 2009, the group, led by [Zachary Rukstela](#), fired up the old engine to test it out before taking it up to [Chico, CA](#) in June for an old fashioned [Threshing Bee](#).



Steam Dorks Fan Oakland

[Rukstela](#) says, "Generally at K.S.W. we do some unorthodox things with steam, however, occasionally we do like to bring it on home and do the comfort events such as a vintage agricultural show."

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So far, [Pappy](#) has just been fired up and moved around the yard a little bit, or just sat idling. Rukstela says "It's very important to check all bearings on the engines gear works under load to insure moving parts are adjusted correctly."

So, the group decided to build a [Baker Fan](#) to create a load through wind resistance to more properly test the engines torque and bearing clearanceses.

[Andrew O'Keefe](#) was saddled with the task of building the baker fan, which turned out to be a piece of art in its own right, made of wood and metal. The group named the fan, the "A.O.K." fan after O'Keefe.

O'Keefe said this exercise was a necessary step in Pappy's restoration process explaining that, "because we've gone through a long process of restoring this engine, replacing all sorts of wear points in it that are designed to wear out, we need to put the engine under a load to see if those parts that we've replaced are acting properly."

O'Keefe summed it up in layman's terms by saying, "If you are just running in idle, it is like turning your car on and just sitting there in idle and a lot of cars will run in idle but won't get on the highway. So, what we're doing is trying to get the engine on the highway."

After some meticulous maneuvering to get Pappy into position, a 120-foot, six-inch belt was put on the flywheel on the engine and to a pully on the A.O.K. fan and then the group sounded the whistle and let 'er rip.

The engine barked, the fan spun, and all seemed well. There was a knocking sound in the engine before the fan was attached that the group worked on diagnosing, but in terms of the Baker Fan test, all was a-okay.

[Josh Keppel](#) thinks its funny that the nickname "Steam Dorks" was bestowed upon the group over the marine radio by the Harbor Patrol on the [Hudson River](#) in New

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*York last summer when the group was on their steam paddle wheel boat the Wilhelmina.*

Published at 7:58 PM PDT on May 6, 2009

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