



For Immediate Release

Burritt on the Mountain Celebrates 20 years of the McCurdy Barnyard

The Barnyard Bash Fundraiser | Party for the Animals Concert | Barnyard Birthday Bonanza

“We are celebrating a momentous occasion this month at Burritt on the Mountain. The McCurdy Barnyard is turning twenty,” said Leslie Ecklund, CEO of Burritt on the Mountain. “And we are celebrating with 3 special Barnyard Celebrations.”

We know that Dr. Burritt had many goats and kept them at his estate on Round Top Mountain for the purpose of producing milk. It is suspected that his interest in housing animals sparked the idea for the addition of a barnyard to the Burritt on the Mountain property. In 2000, Butch Damson and the late Dr. Lewis McCurdy formed a planning committee to add a barnyard to the Burritt landscape to help in depicting farm life in the 1800s. Hoping to attract families and children to the Museum and Historic Park, the McCurdy Barnyard was founded in 2002.

In the beginning - some animals were donated, while others were purchased. In keeping with the life cycle of animals on any farm, many have come and gone along with their “Bushy smiles,” but their stories and the love for those animals lives on. Susie, our mule, however, has been a part of the Burritt family since the founding of the barnyard in 2002. Susie came to live in the newly founded barnyard when she was 8 and she continues to enjoy visitors and “work” in the barnyard even now at 28 years old. Many families in the 1800s kept mules because they were hard workers and work better than most horses in hot weather. Mules would have been the “engines” on the farm for that time. For many years Susie provided the “power” for heavy lifting, pulling and even transportation in our barnyard, but today her work consists of greeting visitors and letting them admire her as they learn about the many duties that a mule performed on an 1800s farm.

“Taking care of the medical needs, vaccinations, medications, etc. of all our barnyard buddies is a big responsibility, and we have been so blessed to have McCurdy Animal Hospital taking care of each one of our residents for the past twenty years,” said Leslie Ecklund. The late Dr. Lewis McCurdy was part of the original barnyard planning committee and continued to take care of all our buddies until his passing.

“Dr. Blaine O’Reilly has continued this generous care, and I would like to thank him and his entire team for continuing to ensure that the McCurdy Barnyard is an important part of the Burritt experience,” Ecklund said.

Countless children, visitors and staff have learned from, appreciated, and taken care of our Barnyard Buddies over these twenty years. They are loved, well-fed and pampered every chance we get. Since they live the “good life” here, almost all live well beyond the life expectancy of a typical barnyard animal.

Today, you can find visitors and children wandering throughout the barnyard, some for a first-time visit, but many for a repeat visit to see their favorite barnyard friend. “Getting to see visitors react to all of our animals, whether they’re a young child getting a first meeting with an animal from their favorite storybook or an older visitor reminiscing of a time they enjoyed on a farm, always makes my day,” said Meghan Laury Tucker, Burritt on the Mountain’s Historic Park Manager. Our goal is to provide a glimpse into farm life in a way that evokes curiosity and shares the rewards that farm life brings. “All of us here on staff appreciate how much our visitors care about all of our Barnyard Buddies and check in on them with each return visit,” she said.

We couldn’t let this big anniversary go by without celebrating and of course a little fundraising for the barnyard, so there are three wonderful ways for you to participate and celebrate with us.

The Barnyard Bash Fundraiser & Southern Supper - Thursday, September 29th from 6:00pm to 8:30pm

The Burritt Barnyard Bash - Fundraiser & Southern Supper featuring Solid Blue Bluegrass Band, will be held Thursday, September 29th from 6:00pm to 8:30pm. This event begins in the Burritt Barnyard with appetizers at the Grazing Station, then moves to The Bendickson Family Pavilion for a Southern Supper at the Feeding Trough. A full cash bar will be available at the Watering Hole. Tickets are \$120 per person. Please RSVP by Friday, September 23rd to Gina Hurst at gina.hurst@huntsvilleal.gov or 256-512-5570 or purchase your tickets online at burrittonthemountain.com.

Barnyard Birthday Bonanza - Saturday, October 1st from 10:00am until 4:00pm

Don’t miss Family Fun in the Barnyard as you wish all our Barnyard Buddies Happy 20th Anniversary on Saturday, October 1st from 10:00am until 4:00pm. We will celebrate with animal themed crafts, barnyard games, and the fun side of barnyard chores like churning butter, learning to lasso, and milking Boxy our faux cow. Activities throughout the Historic Park will let families tour the barnyard and meet and get to know our farmyard friends. Come on down to the farm, and learn all about the food, work, and friendship that our animals give us. This day full of Barnyard Fun is included with general admission.

Party for the Animals Concert - Thursday, October 6th, Gates open at 5:00pm, Concert at 6:00pm

Party for the Animals - Special Concert Fundraiser with Kaleidoscope featuring a full horn section, will be held on Thursday, October 6th. Gates open at 5:00pm and concert begins at 6:00pm. A full cash bar will be open for this special event. We will feature food specials to share, \$20 Charcuterie Trays and \$20 Assorted Wrap Trays. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at burrittonthemountain.com. Enjoy a famous Burritt sunset view at 6:30pm. Tables will be set at The View to sip a cocktail or dine on snacks, but outside chairs and blankets are welcome for the concert.

About the Burritt Barnyard Animals

In the Burritt Barnyard we depict a small family farm of rural North Alabama in the 1800s. Much of what we show would have been part of daily life on the farm of small land-owning farmers or share cropping families. Chores, animal care and gardening reflect the seasonal nature of life on the farm. Our barnyard staff spends their time caring for the animals and maintaining their shelters, while historic interpreters help visitors get to know the animals and understand their role on the farm.

The animals in the Barnyard are representative of the animals that families living in our houses would have kept during that time. For example, we know for certain that the Chandlers raised hogs on their farm. Naturally, we were very excited to acquire our American Guinea Hog, Sweet Pea, 4 years ago. She is the breed of pig that most southeastern farmers would have kept in the 1800s, and they were close to extinction 30 years ago. The rest of our Barnyard Buddies consist of Alpine goats, Border Leicester sheep, and Susie our bay mule. In addition we have a small flock of Barred Rock, Rhode Island Red and California Tan chickens. Our barnyard cat, Shirley, has recently retired to help supervise in the office of the McCurdy Animal Hospital.

For more information on our Barnyard friends or to help with care in the barnyard please keep an eye out for our monthly historic park programs for a Step Back in Time with our Historic Park interpreters. See the farm chores, craft skills, and household tasks that the families who built our houses used to do year-round. Every day features different work around our historic homes. Check our topic for the week and look in our Welcome Center for each day's demonstrations and times. Activities are subject to change due to weather and staffing.

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