Spring 8-1-2010

Newsletter 42 Issue 2 - Summer 2010 - Nuts and Bolts

Tractor Museum
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, TractorMuseumArchives@unl.edu

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May 1st open house
by Jeremy Steele

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Thirty tractors paraded around the tractor test track for everyone to enjoy. After the parade, kids on pedal tractors navigated through the crowd as they lined up to enjoy food from Hy-Vee. As far as I know, the only complaint was from Allis Chalmers (museum cat) after Thermal Thunder, (modified pulling tractor) woke her up from a cat nap.

Nearly 70 people attended the 1:00 presentation. Trent Wiles, from John Deere provided an excellent program. He also presented a plaque to the Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory for 90 years of tractor testing.

The event was a tremendous success. A special thanks and job well done goes out to the activities committee of the Friends.
Paul Corcoran recently made a donation for the restoration of the 1948 Co-Op E3 tractor. He wanted to share with you his story behind his donation, or more precisely the story for his late father behind the donation.

Popping the clutch
by Paul Corcoran
1968 Nebraska Ag Engineering grad

My father, Leo Corcoran, a graduate of a University of Nebraska agricultural short course about eighty years ago, was an owner of a Co-Op E4 tractor. My recollection, which may not be exactly correct, is the tractor was a 1951 model that he purchased in 1953. He used the tractor for nearly three decades, and although he had mostly retired, the tractor was still his pride and joy at the time of his passing in 1981.

My father farmed south of St. Edward, Nebraska, and purchased the tractor in Fullerton. It was a wide front end tractor. One important reason he chose this tractor was for the live power take off, a unique feature of the time. My dad custom baled hay with an Allis Chalmers round baler, also a relative novelty of the time. Prior to his purchase of the E4 his newest tractor was a 1947 John Deere B. As you may or may not know, when baling with an Allis Chalmers baler the operator had to stop for every bale to let the twine wrap the bale and then have the baler kick out the bale. Without a live PTO, and with the ‘47 B, this meant stopping the tractor to take it out of gear, re-engage the clutch to let the twine wrap and kick out the bale, release the clutch and put the tractor back in gear, and then proceed; all a rather inefficient operation that was a source of clutch wear and tear.

The E4 with the live power meant just stopping the tractor, waiting for the twine to wrap and the bale to kick out, and then moving on; a much more efficient operation although still requiring one clutch engagement. I remember using the tractor many times well into my college years at the Ag Campus Ag Engineering department. I am not a large nor tall person and I could not stay in the tractor seat and both use the clutch pedals and apply the brakes at the same time. In fact, it was near my limit to use both together and I clearly remember pulling back on the steering wheel with most of my strength to clutch and brake together. The tractor brakes were weaker in reverse than forward, and it was beyond my strength to hold the tractor on an uphill slope while holding the clutch at the same time. Therefore, if I was pulling a load uphill and did not choose a low enough gear at the bottom, I was going to be in trouble; and this happened more than once.

The first time or two, when I realized I could not hold the tractor with the brakes while also holding the clutch pedal, I learned to pop the clutch and let the engine stall before rolling too far backwards. Then it became a normal procedure to let the engine stall, set the brakes, then push in the clutch and shift to a low gear, then in a single not so fluid motion kick the brakes off and let the clutch out before rolling backward. If you ever stalled a tractor going up a hill with a four wheel wagon behind you probably know that rolling down the hill while steering a four wheel wagon backward without hijacking the wagon is beyond normal human skills. Thus my need to stall the engine, set the brakes, shift to a lower gear, and together kick off the brakes and pop the clutch.

Thank you for the opportunity to share some of my memories about my father and about his Co-Op E4 tractor. We sold the tractor at auction after he passed on and I’ve since tried to follow the history of the tractor. I’m sure it continues to satisfy a worthy owner in the St. Edward vicinity.
The tractor you see in the photo is a EIMCO Diesel it was taken in 1955 or 1957. It was being operated by Bob Becker, a student from Albion, NE. You would never know from the picture, but the tractor was stuck. Somehow it got caught between gears during the tractor parade. I could have taken that picture because that is where I was standing, but I didn’t. I was either a student or new instructor. My instructorship started in 1957.

The EIMCO was not an ag tractor, it was used in strip mines in Nevada and Utah. Notice how the operator sat far forward to see. We had a bunch of these “dogs” tested during that time, notably the Wagner Diesel and the Shepherd Diesel. I remember one small manufacturer from North Carolina couldn’t get the power they wanted. They boosted the pump, flames evolved from the engine. It was destroyed in the test. We definitely needed the Nebraska Tractor Test. I was proud to be part of it.

Also in the picture you can see a few pith helmets. These were worn by Tractor Test employees. Les Larsen got a good deal on them from surplus. It was almost like being in Bermuda.

**Do you have a story?**

This issue we have stories from Paul Corcoran and Rollin Schnieder. We are looking forward to receiving others as well. If you have a story to share and a picture to go with it, send them to the museum and they will be considered for upcoming newsletters.

**Larsen Tractor Museum - P.O. Box 830833 - Lincoln, NE 68583-0833**

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**Director’s comment**

by Bill Splinter

We keep finding interesting new facts about the tractors in our collection. Everyone is familiar with the Caterpillar Challenger that incorporates a rubber track, rather than the steel tracks that have been around since the early 1900’s. Brought out in 1987 it opened up a whole new opportunity for farmers to have the advantage of a steel track and the capability of driving it on paved roads. This concept was soon followed by Deere and by Case IH. Having a rubber tread allowed them to be tested on the Tractor Test concrete track.

However did you know that the Oliver Cletrac HG was the first to have a rubber tread? Jerry Kohl has his HG track fitted with rubber cross bars so that it can be driven on paved roads in tractor parades. But in 1947, 40 years earlier than the Challenger, the Oliver Cletrac HG was fitted with a rubber track. The tractor was called the “rubberband” tractor. Unfortunately it was found that the tension in the rubber track did act like a rubber band and could not be properly held and it allowed the belt to stretch. The program was halted and the HG continued to be mounted on steel tracks.

Jerry Kohl driving his 1948 Oliver Cletrac HG

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**About last issue’s cover**

by Rollin D. Schnieder

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**It’s official**

by Jeremy Steele

Last issue the announcement was made, but this issue we have the plaque to prove it. Heritage Nebraska recently recognized the museum as a Hidden Treasure. Heritage Nebraska is a statewide non-profit organization celebrating history through advocacy, education, outreach, preservation and stewardship. They help the public understand the importance of their built environment and heritage.

The museum was presented with a plaque at Heritage Nebraska’s annual meeting in Fremont, NE.

**Hidden Treasure**

Jerry Kohl driving his 1948 Oliver Cletrac HG

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**Big 12 Faculty Fellowship**

Y’all, there’s nothin like a’ll southern drawl every now ‘n’ then. That is what I remember most about Beth Tebeaux, from Texas A & M University. Beth had a way of making herself at home at the museum. She spent two week researching the museum’s archives in 2008 and another week in 2009. Recently, museum staff was reminded of Beth’s stay by receiving in the mail three copies of her first research article published in the Journal of Technical Writing & Communication.

Beth’s article studies the history of one of the most critical, unresolved problems in mechanized agriculture: Tractor operators do not read the operation manuals, particularly the safety warnings. Her article tracks the emergence of warnings in tractor operator manuals found in our archives. It describes efforts of manufacturers to alert operators to dangers associated with tractors, and concludes with a summary of current research on tractor safety and the problem that remains unresolved: how to change the culture of farmers who use these implements, critical to agriculture production, to encourage them to read and follow safety practices.

Beth has a second article stemming from her research at the museum. It will be published soon in the Journal of Agriculture Safety and Health. Research at the museum performed by Beth was a result of participation in the Big 12 Faculty Fellowship Program. This program offered Big 12 faculty the opportunity to travel to other Big 12 institutions to exchange ideas and research. Participants in the Big 12 Faculty Fellowship Program were encouraged to consult with faculty and/or students, offer lectures or symposia, or utilize unique laboratory facilities for innovative teaching or extension activities.
Friends are there when you need them most. They celebrate with you when things go good. They are understanding and supportive when times are tough. This past year, the membership/fundraising committee worked to better position the Friends of the Museum. The committee, chaired by Don Edwards, held several meetings to examine Friends membership categories and benefits, dues and donor levels.

The committee discussed and reviewed membership categories of other museums and organizations. They recognized ways in which the Friends membership categories could be improved. The committee developed a proposal for 2011 that was approved at the July 15, 2010 Friends board meeting. The proposal recognized five membership categories and established annual dues for each. The most notable changes in the proposal included raising Individual Memberships from $15 to $25 and lowering the dues for Family Memberships from $50 to $35.

The proposal made memberships more affordable for families with children. The proposal also provided memberships to museum volunteers. Memberships will be awarded to volunteers who provide 25 hours of service and students who provide 10 hours of volunteer service. The committee wanted to recognize and reward current volunteers and their service and also provide encouragement for others to volunteer as well.

The Affiliate Organization Membership category was recognized in the proposal as well. This type of membership becomes available to all organizations and businesses that wish to support the museum. The committee recognized a number of organizations and businesses that may be willing to support the mission of the museum. The Affiliate Organization Membership provides them with this opportunity. Below are the five categories and amounts for dues.

### Membership categories, dues

*by Jeremy Steele*

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### Benefits set for 2011 memberships

*by Jeremy Steele*

Membership is an investment in the museum’s mission to be the premier steward of advancements in agricultural technology through the development of collections, exhibits and programs for public benefit.

A standard benefits package is recognized for the Friends membership categories. 2011 members will receive a membership card for access to museum resources and discounts on registration fees along with items available through the museum gift shop. Additional benefits include free subscriptions to this newsletter and an annual calendar of activities for shows and exhibit openings.

Student members will be eligible for scholarships. Individual and family memberships are eligible to arrange after hours utilization of the museum for events such as family reunions, birthday parties and special tours. Below are details concerning membership benefits.

#### *Standard Benefits Package for Friends Membership*

- Membership card to present for access to museum resources and discounts**
- Free subscription to newsletter and a free calendar of activities
- **(Resources may include museum collections, web sites, technology, and equipment. Standard fees may apply. Discounts may be available on for sale items and fees for the utilization of museum resources.)**

### Student Membership

* Standard Benefits Package for Friends
  - Plus: Research and educational opportunities
  - Eligibility for available scholarships
  - Eligibility for the tractor restoration club
  - Eligibility to serve on board of directors

### Individual Membership

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  - Plus: Research and educational opportunities
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### Family Membership

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### Honorary Life

* Standard Benefits Package for Friends
  - Plus: Research and educational opportunities
  - Eligibility for after hours tours
  - Eligibility to serve on board of directors
  - Recognition plaque displayed in museum
  - Framed certificate of appreciation

### Affiliate Membership

Certificate for display at remote location
- Holder for brochure distribution at remote location
- Free subscription to one newsletter to the organization
- Free calendar of activities for display at remote location
- Up to 25 members of the affiliated organization may receive a membership card and its benefits

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**Dedicated volunteers and students to receive free memberships and benefits. Family membership dues reduced from $50 to $35.**
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The E4 with the live power meant just stopping the tractor, waiting for the twine to wrap and the bale to kick out, and then moving on; a much more efficient operation although still requiring one clutch engagement. I remember using the tractor many times well into my college years at the Ag Campus Ag Engineering department. I am not a large nor tall person, and I could not stay in the tractor seat and both use the clutch pedals and apply the brakes at the same time. In fact, it was near my limit to use both together and I clearly remember pulling back on the steering wheel with most of my strength to clutch and brake together. The tractor brakes were weaker in reverse than forward, and it was beyond my strength to hold the tractor on an uphill slope while holding the clutch at the same time. Therefore, if I was pulling a load uphill and did not choose a low gear, I had to stop for every bale to let the twine wrap the bale and then have the baler kick out the bale. Without a live PTO, and with the '47 B, this meant stopping the tractor, let the twine wrap and kick out the bale, release the clutch and put the tractor back in gear, and then proceed; all a rather inefficient operation that was a source of clutch wear and tear.

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Museum visitor research
by Jeremy Steele

According to research in the museum field, visitors can be categorized as explorers, facilitators, experience seekers, professional/hobbyists or rechargers. These categories of museum visitors have different motivations for visiting and learning within museums. For my graduate research project, I am attempting to develop a museum visitor survey for these categories. Recently, over a 10 day period, I needed to convince nearly 500 museum visitors to take a survey. Thanks to Big Bud, the world's largest tractor, I was able to accomplish this task.

On July 16, I set out to perform museum visitor research at Heartland Acres Agribition Center located in Independence, Iowa. The museum is the current home for Big Bud. The huge tractor is a huge attraction. Since April, nearly 20,000 people have visited this museum to sneak a peek at Big Bud.

Over a 10 day period, I surveyed visitors within this museum. Many were on their way to see Big Bud. I asked if they would be willing to take my survey and help me graduate from the University of Nebraska. After they reminded me that Iowa State beat Nebraska last year and ensured me that the Iowa Hawkeyes were going to do the same to Nebraska in the Big 10, most were willing to take 5 minutes out of their day to complete my survey.

As I collected surveys, I could see each category of museum visitor within the museum. The Explorers took their time through the museum. They looked things over and read many of the signs. They paid attention to details and hoped to discover new and interesting facts. They enjoyed learning throughout the museum. Facilitators were there mainly for others. They had children with them or other people they cared about. Facilitators wanted those with them to have a valuable experience. The visit was for the interest of others. By far the largest group of visitors was experience seekers. They were there to capture a unique experience in seeing the Big Bud. They wanted to say that they have been there and done that. I recognized Professionals/Hobbyists being interested in the way exhibits were designed. They were comparing the museum with others that they were familiar with. They also were collectors themselves. They compared what the museum had with what they have or would like to find. Rechargers were perhaps the smallest group. They visited the museum to get away from the business of life. They considered the visit to be a stress reliever.

Though I could see each of these categories of visitors within the museum, I could not measure them or determine what it was about the museum that visitors valued the most. The survey I am developing is designed to be an instrument that museums can use to determine what category visitors belong to. It will help museums become more valuable to each category of visitor.
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A publication of the
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by Jeremy Steele

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The event was a tremendous success. A special thanks and job well done goes out to the activities committee of the Friends.

Super Fair August 5 - 14 / Lancaster Event Center / Lincoln, NE

SUPER FAIR AUGUST 5-14
The 2010 Lancaster County Super Fair is August 5 through August 14. All antique tractor owners are invited to show and parade tractors each day of the fair.

DISPLAY LOCATION *NEW INFORMATION*
The antique tractor display will be located just south of 85th and Havelock in the grass rather than on the street south of the carnival.

SETUP DATES
Tractors can begin arriving at the Lancaster County Event Center Monday August 2. The fair starts August 5.

FREE TICKETS
Tickets will be required to enter the fair. Tickets are free and can be picked up prior to the fair at the Lancaster County Event Center or during the fair at any U-Stop or Russ's in Lincoln. They will also be available at the gate.

PARADES, TENT AND BBQ
Parades will be held each day at 6:00 p.m. A 10’ x 20’ tent will be provided for tractor exhibitors. In addition, a free BBQ will be held for exhibitors on Saturday August 14. We are looking forward to seeing you at the 2010 Lancaster County Super Fair. Please call (402)472-8389 with any questions.