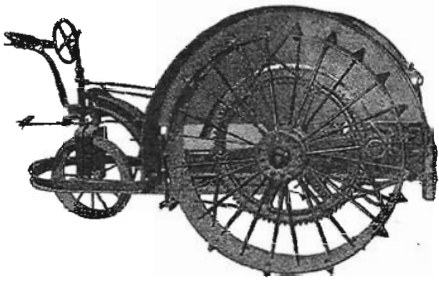


Friends of the Lester F. Larsen Tractor Test and Power Museum



Judy L. Ray – Editor Newsletter #13 August 2002

To collect, preserve, research and interpret the traditions and technologies of agriculture.

Open House Successful

The museum's open house was held May 4th with a good attendance of new faces that didn't know it existed. We not only need to get the word out, we need to have volunteers to keep the building open, especially on Saturdays.

New Board Member

Our newest board member Russ Tooker, is filling his father, Norm Tooker's vacancy. He and his wife Julie and son Garrett live near David City and he also farms near Silver Creek. He grew up in Ralston and attended UNL 1979-1983 where he studied Agronomy Crop Production. He could watch the tractor test track from his dorm room in Burr Hall. Until a few years ago he used JD A's and B's to run belt-heads for irrigation wells. One of his favorite green tractors is a 1961 JD 3010. He is an enthusiastic addition to our group and is not afraid to help when asked. We welcome him to our midst.

Nebraska Ag Shows

Aug. 24-Sept. 2 <http://www.statefair.org/>
Nebraska State Fair, Lincoln
Sept. 7-8 <http://www.ci.clay-center.ne.us/>
Old Trusty Days, Clay Center
Sept 10-11-12 <http://www.huskerharvestdays.com>
Husker Harvest Days, Grand Island
Sept 21-22 www.farmandranchmuseum.com
Farm & Ranch Museum Harvest Festival, Gering, NE
Oct. 12-13 <http://www.stuhrmuseum.org/>
Grand Island Stuhr Museum
Antique Tractor, Engine & Vintage Auto Show

From The President

We hope that the summer is going well for all our members and that many of our farmers and ranchers were blessed with needed rains.

We continue to have visitors for the Larsen Tractor Test and Power Museum and receive favorable comments about the museum. We need volunteers to help operate the museum. Should you be able to help, please contact one of us. We were represented at the recent Camp Creek Show in Waverly, NE and our next activity of this type will be at the Nebraska State Fair, August 24-Sept. 2. Please make it a point to visit with us there, and contact **Charles Borcharding (402/421-2034)**, who is providing leadership in this activity, if you can help. You can choose morning or afternoons. Please call.

Our next Board Meeting is October 15, 1:30 p.m., 225 Chase Hall. Hopefully all board members can be present. We also welcome visitors and comments at any time.

The annual meeting of the entire membership will be January 14, 2003 at Chase Hall at 1:30 p.m. New officers will be elected at this meeting.

– **Earl Ellington**

Editor's note:
Earl will be retiring from UNL October 25th.

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Officers:

President: Earl Ellington
V. President: Charles Borcharding
Secretary: Glenn Hoffman
Treasurer: Shirley Trauger
(2007 Rd 22, Exeter, NE 68351)

Board of Directors:

Past Pres.: Robert Kleis
Vern Anderson
Leonard Bashford
Harold Borman
Charles Fenster (Gering, NE)
Richard Goodding
Lawrence Hermann
Jerry Kohl
Mark Lynott
Bill Overturf (Oak, NE)
Ervin Rolofson
John Smith
Russ Tooker
Dale Vanderholm

Ex-Officio:

Louis Leviticus
Susan Norby
William Splinter

Membership

Each January begins a new membership year. Please continue your membership and send your annual \$10 made to the "Friends" of the Tractor Museum to the address on this newsletter. Donations can be made to Larsen Tractor Museum or via University of NE Foundation or to the "Friends" Fund. Please let us know if you do not wish to receive the 3 yearly newsletters.

CURATOR/INTERIM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Following is my report on activities.

Items received/to be received.

We have received several items from various sources. Yunji Kim, our graduate student, will enter them into the collection when she gets to them. On some of the items we have an interesting provenance due to the help we received from the donors. We are also promised a Fairbanks Morse 1.5 horsepower engine, which looks good but needs some magneto work. The single unit Hand Corn Planter is now on display and elicits a lot of comment. We are currently in possession of 4 scythes and I am endeavoring to trace their date of manufacture as close as possible so we can make a selection of which to display.

Museum arrangement and displays.

I hope you have all seen the cleaning and rearrangement of the displays, the signs, etc – all work by Yunju who deserves our commendation. Notice also the painted walls, new arrangements in the "utility room" and in the office, which Judy has been working on. Credit for the outside plantings goes to Gail Ogden and Judy – who also try to keep the many weeds under control.

Workshop and garage area

I have been working hard (but am not finished) to improve the conditions in that small area. We now have two steel cabinets dedicated to "flammables" and electric tools, and some of the older cabinets are outside and will be disposed of. Nuts and bolts and all the other "pieces" are slowly being arranged and rearranged into some semblance of order so that items can be found when needed. We will get more steel cabinets in to replace some of the cabinets in the garage area and add to the tool room. We have moved the second Fordson out of the Garage so we can use the forklift inside and clean out our "attic". We have cut away much of the unneeded electrical conduits and can now start to find out what else is hidden in the dirt. (We did find a complete skeleton of a squirrel which went to the curator of zoology of Morrill Hall).

Helpers

Jerry Kohl has been a steadfast source of help for us and for a time we had help from one of the Grad students of BSE, Todd Cole. However, it is very hard for Jerry and me to get to everything that needs doing, accomplished in one morning per week. I don't know what the solution is, but we need more muscle more often. On days that I am alone there is practically nothing I can do because if any small mishap should happen, I am on my own.

- Lou Leviticus

True Stories From The Past

-Lou Leviticus

We've talked a lot about tractor history and I thought it would be nice to talk about some horror stories. At least, that is what they appear to me. Two are personal experience and they show how stupid even highly intelligent people like me can act.

First story:

It was in Israel, on a Kibbutz, and I was in charge of the machinery. We had a ramshackle tractor shed where the tractors were stored. Open on one side, covered with corrugated tin and with a back of the same material. It was very thin corrugated iron and tended to blow around in a strong wind, but it was the only material we could afford.

One morning I got up early and went out in the dark to start the Farmall H. I opened the fuel tank valve and after groping around for the crank, managed to get it in the hole and into the daw on the belt pulley. Now the day before, someone else had been driving the tractor, but had omitted shutting the ignition and had left it in gear as well. We used to let the carb run dry, but always took the tractor out of gear.

I kept those tractors in pretty good shape and when I turned the crank half a turn, the H started and pushed me forward through the corrugated wall. I told you the stuff was rather thin! Luckily I am a little guy. There was a horizontal beam, but it was just above my head. The tractor came to a standstill against the beam. The only damage was to the wall, the upper part of the tractor radiator and to my self-esteem!

Second story: (taken verbatim out of the August-September issue of *Farm & Ranch Living*)

"Most every hay field on the ranch where I grew up was on a hillside writes this farmer from Colorado. "We had several tractors, none in great shape. Overhauling or replacing them would have been expensive, so we managed with what we had."

"The tractor in the worst shape was a Case. Under the rust and grease, you could see it was originally yellowish orange. I think it was made in the late 1930's. It had a crank and the rod from the steering wheel ran forward over the engine cowling and down in the front of the radiator to a single wheel. One of this tractor's many problems was that you couldn't get it out of second, so it was always in gear."

"Because of that, you had to park it downhill. To start it, you'd crank it, jump out of the way and climb on the back to drive. Dad and my uncle used it to mow hay so it had a mower on it as well. One day, while being cranked, the tractor lurched into a deep wash. Back then we dumped a lot of junk in there, not just to get rid of it, but to slow down erosion."

"Dad figured it was best to leave the Case in the gully. As far as I know, it's still there today."

Third story:

It was the first time that I was to drive a crawler tractor, a Cat D4. I was being "trained" by a young pioneer in the Hills of Ephraim in Israel. He taught me about starting and about the other controls, but didn't go into details about the innards and I wasn't wise enough to ask. We were on the top of a hill and the road was gently sloping downward, circling the hill for about half a mile.

After a successful start I was proudly driving along with my "teacher" sitting on the tank to my left. Then he told me to stop, jumped off and opened a gate on the side of the gravel road. From there two tracks ran down toward a shed about 30 feet away. I duly pulled the left lever and put on the left brake. The D4 obeyed and we started going down that fairly steep hill. The path curved slightly to the right just before the shed.

I was going down smoothly and proudly when I pulled the right lever to go around that curve, but of course the tractor went to the left, characteristic of the clutch and brake system of crawler tractors of those days on a slope, as I found out later. By the time I had stopped the D4 I was well through the wall of the wooden shed and sitting inside with a mess of straw, birds nests and other debris.

My "teacher" was standing nearby with tears in his eyes and slapping his knees.

Restoration Clinics

The Membership and Finance Board of the Museum has plans in place to feature restoration clinics this Fall and Winter. Information and registration forms will be available at the display area at the State Fair, Old Trusty Days, and the Husker Harvest Days at Grand Island. The cost is \$35 for non-members and \$25 for members. All four classes will be on a Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Instructors to be announced.

October 19, 2002	Trouble Shooting
November 16, 2002	Electrical Systems
January 18, 2003	Fuel Systems
February 15, 2003	Expert Painting

All workshops are at the Lester Larsen Tractor Museum on East Campus of UNL.

Judy's Corner Websites

Yesterday's Tractors

<http://www.ytmag.com/>

Missouri Valley Wrench Club

<http://home.neb.rr.com/mvwcnews>

Nebraska History

<http://www.nebraskastudies.org>



**From the museum archive: Nebraska Tractor Test Lab in late 1940's – early 1950's.
Wouldn't it be nice if we could make it that way today? ☺**

**Friends of the Lester F. Larsen
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P.O. Box 830833
Lincoln, NE 68583-0833**

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

**If you have not paid your 2002 dues, this will be your last newsletter.
You will have a red mark on your address.**
