

Iowa Farmer Builds Working Replicas Of Old Farm Equipment

"Can you keep this a surprise?" asked Doris Christensen of Chariton, Iowa, who recently emailed FARM SHOW about her husband Ronald's homemade working replicas of old farm equipment.

"Over the years, Ronald has built a variety of machines without any particular scale and without using any blueprints. He just looks at the original equipment or at photos. Then he finds some wheels and scales the rest of the machinery around the wheel sizes," says Doris. "He finds most of the parts at swap meets, flea markets, etc, and does all of the work in his welding shop. We often take the machines to shows and parades. He's quite proud of what he's built, and so am I."

Here's a quick rundown on the machines Ron has built.

Hoist Wagon - It's patterned after a Deere flare box wagon made in the 1950's and has a plywood box that measures 36 in. long by 54 in. wide. The box is raised and lowered by a 12-in. hydraulic cylinder. It's fitted with the wheels and axles off a riding mower.

Moldboard plow - This 2-bottom moldboard plow is patterned after a Deere ropetrip plow made in the 1940's. The 8-in. moldboards are off a plow built for a garden tractor. The cutter blades were cut down from a field cultivator. The two front wheels are off a side delivery rake, and the single rear wheel is off a Lincoln welder.

Manure spreader - It's patterned after a 1953 Deere H spreader and has a box that measures 36 in. wide by 72 in. long. The 15-in. wheels are off a horse spreader and the 500 by 15 tires are off a Deere B tractor. The floor chain parts and various sprockets were salvaged from an Allis Chalmers round baler, Kelly Ryan elevator, and International Harvester endgate seeder. The beaters were made from scratch.

Waterloo Boy - Ronald patterned this tractor after a Model N Waterloo Boy, which was

manufactured from 1918 to 1924. It measures 96 in. long by 45 in. wide by 46 high and is powered by a 1-cyl. Associate gas engine built in Waterloo, Iowa (the real tractor was fueled by kerosene). The Peerless transaxle transmission has four speeds forward and one reverse. The body is made with 3-in. channel iron and 14-gauge plate material. The rear wheels are off a manure spreader, and the front wheels are belt pulleys off a pair of threshing machines. The seat is from a horse-drawn mower. The radiator was built from scratch.

Horseless carriage - Patterned after an 1899 Packard, Ronald's horseless carriage is powered by a 5 hp Tecumseh engine and has a Peerless transaxle transmission. There are three forward speeds and one reverse. The body and seat were made from 3/4-in. thick oak plywood, while the chassis was made with buggy springs and 26-in. bicycle tires. A bicycle horn and ornamental lanterns serve as the lights.

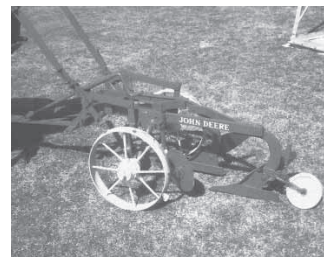
International Harvester mini baler - It's patterned after stationary balers built in the 1930's that use blocks and wire tires, and makes bales that measure 10 in. wide by 18 in. long. The unit is belt-driven with gears from a pump jack. "The Waterloo Boy is used to belt-drive the baler," says Doris.

The axles, as well as the rest of the baler, were made from angle iron and plate steel. The baler rides on 10 by 18 by 7-in. wheels off a riding mower.

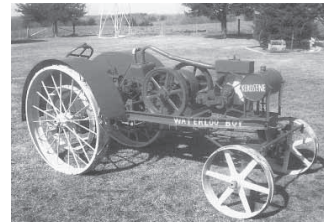
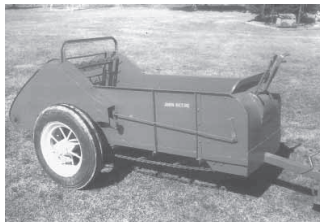
Deere miniature baler - It's built much the same as the IH baler except that power is supplied by a 5 hp Briggs & Stratton engine.

"Ron sometimes sells the bales he makes at a local pumpkin patch fall festival," says Doris.

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Ronald Christensen has built a variety of machines without any particular scale and without using any blueprints. They include this hoist wagon and moldboard plow.



His manure spreader is patterned after a 1953 Deere H model. Tractor is a replica of a Model N Waterloo Boy.



Horseless carriage is built after an 1899 Packard, and IH mini baler is patterned after stationary balers built in the 1930's that used blocks and wire tires.



Walter Rodler can tow this gazebo to different spots in his farm yard. It rotates on a 10-ton semi tractor axle.

Rotating Gazebo Always Provides Fresh Views

When Walter Rodler stopped renting out his portable merry-go-round due to liability concerns, he found a new use for it. He built a gazebo on it. Now he can tow the gazebo to wherever he wants and never get tired of the view. If the sun is in his face, all he has to do is spin the gazebo around so the sun is at his back. If he doesn't like the view, he pulls it to a new location.

"My father-in-law and I built the merry-go-round using a 10-ton hub off a semi trailer axle," explains Rodler. "We mounted it on an old Chevy axle."

When he decided to turn it into a gazebo, he attached two one-ton trailer jacks to stabilize it.

"I reinforced the original bed before covering it with wood for the gazebo floor to

make it 8 sided with a diameter of about 12 ft.," says Rodler.

The old merry-go-round had a pipe railing with eight uprights. Rodler used the railing posts as starting points for his 8-sided gazebo.

All the wood was home sawn and from his own woods. Three stools made from yellow birch and about 20-in. high are attached to the floor of the Gazebo. They sit around a table in the center that is attached to the axle of the base hub and doesn't rotate, but sits just above the floor. By pushing on the stationary table he can rotate the gazebo from the inside.

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Wildlife Jewelry Popular With Hunters

Park Diamond of Maple Grove, Minn., specializes in a unique, but popular service – the creation of custom-made "wildlife jewelry."

According to jeweler and goldsmith John Jack Mely, the company does brisk business in custom made, hand-carved "elk's tooth" and bear's claw or bear's tooth items.

"We've done well with promoting wildlife jewelry in outdoorsman magazines all over the U.S. and in Canada," Mely says. "Hunters usually supply their own animal teeth or claws from their hard-earned trophies. We work with them to design the setting they want. Our work is so unusual that they've really caught on."

According to Mely, the two back, bottom teeth in an elk's mouth are actually ivory and although they are continually growing, they're kept ground down by use.

Besides being referred to as "elk ivories," these teeth are also called whistlers or buglers. Each animal's are a unique size, shape and color, and because they're soft, they can be carved.

"We shave off the top several millimeters and shape them slightly, then fabricate the gold setting," Mely explains. "Every piece of elk jewelry that Park Diamond makes is hand-carved, with a simple design that ensures attention is drawn to the beautiful ivory. We can create any type of men's or women's elk jewelry, from a two-toned ring, in which the elk head is hand-carved in white gold and placed in a setting of yellow gold, to tie tacks, money clips, pendants, earrings, etc. The possibilities are endless."

Bear's tooth or claw pendants are cleaned, polished, gold capped and hung on a chain. "They're beautiful when we're finished with them, Crystal Mely says.

She adds that people from all over the continent mail animal teeth or claws to them,



A Minnesota company does brisk business in custom made, hand-carved "elk's tooth" jewelry.

along with their finger size or design requests, and the company calls them back with an estimate. Once the item is made and paid for, it can be mailed back to them.

"We've been making quite a few elk's tooth rings for women – we just scale the design down a little and make a smaller version for the gals," Mely says.

In the event that someone wants one of these natural pieces of jewelry but isn't a hunter or doesn't have access to the animal ivories, Park Diamond can obtain them from a local taxidermy shop for an added cost of \$25 to \$60.

Depending on the finger size and ivory size, custom made, hand carved elk's tooth rings cost between \$800 and \$1200. Earrings range from \$350 to \$450 per pair. Pendants of various sizes run between \$300 and \$550.

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