



Peterson seeded the message of daughter Susie's wedding along with his winter wheat crop last fall. The letters really showed up when the crop turned golden this summer.

## FATHER SEEDED WHEAT IN HUGE LETTERS SPELLING OUT ANNOUNCEMENT

# Giant Wedding Gift Slowly Grew Into View

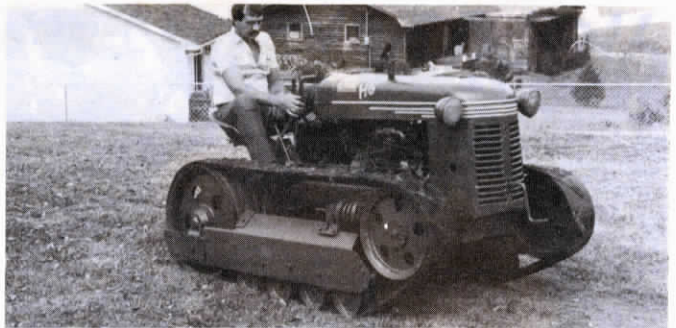
When Susie and Tom Oml of Brookville, Kan., got married last December, they didn't know that one of the best gifts they would receive wouldn't show up for another 6 months.

The couple was married on December 21, 1991, but the giant wedding announcement created by Susie's father Dan Peterson of Burdick, Kan., didn't show up until early this summer. That's because Peterson seeded the message along with his winter wheat crop last fall, creating huge letters out of growing wheat that really didn't show up the way he'd hoped until early this summer.

Peterson said he wanted an unusual way

to announce the wedding and since Tom does custom wheat harvesting on the side, it seemed an appropriate way to advertise the event. However, after planting the wheat on October 11 last fall, dry weather delayed emergence of the crop so that on the wedding day in December, the wheat was just starting to stick up through the ground. Even when it did fully emerge, Peterson says the contrast between the green crop and the ground wasn't as good as when the crop turned golden this summer.

The aerial photo was taken by Steve Mann of Mann's Studio in McPherson, Kansas.



About 200 rubber-track Cletracs were made. Most of them were later converted back to steel tracks.

## BUILT AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II

# Rubber-Track Dozer Beat Caterpillar By 40 Years

Caterpillar has gotten a lot of publicity about its Challenger 65 and 75 rubber tracked tractor, but they weren't the first to build one, say Ronnie Ratledge and Steve Norton, Maryville, Tenn., who possibly owns the only complete working Cletrac tractor equipped with rubber tracks.

Ratledge and Norton, who do tractor restoring, bought the tractor two years ago from a collector and restored it to like-new condition. One of the tracks was broken, but a friend of theirs was able to repair it.

"The Cletrac HGR was produced in limited quantities at the end of World War II for use on ships and carriers to move planes, artillery, etc., but the war ended so they tried to market them as a farm machine," says Ratledge. "The company also produced a steel-tracked version called the HG. As far as we can tell there were about 200 rubber track Cletracs made. Most of them were later converted back to steel tracks because of problems with the rubber tracks. The inside surface of the tracks is like a giant triple V-belt. Dirt and stones would get between the belts and drive wheels and tear up the belts from the inside out. Tensioning was a problem, too. The company that made the undercarriage for the Cletrac tractor went out of business long ago and we haven't been able to find anyone who can make new tracks for it.

"We're pretty careful with the tracks because they're dried out and brittle. The tractor really goes fast. It would probably do 30 mph in third gear if we really opened it up, but that's too fast for the old tracks. It

even goes fast in low gear. We never pull heavy loads or drive the tractor on gravel, and we put a rubber mat on the ramps whenever we load the tractor onto trucks."

According to Ratledge, Oliver purchased the Cletrac company in 1944 and continued building the rubber tracked HGR version. However, they also could never get the tracks to work right. "The three major rubber companies at the time tried to make a new rubber track for the tractor without any success. They didn't have the technology for making synthetic rubber that's available today. Oliver finally gave up and paid the owners to have all units in the field converted to steel tracks. That was the end of the HGR."

Ratledge and Norton researched the history of their Cletrac and discovered that the original owner traded it in for a steel-tracked crawler. The dealer used it to move machinery around the dealership until the late 1950's when he sold it to a packing plant which used it to haul beef carcasses around the plant. The tracks broke while they owned the tractor, but they were able to find replacements for it. They kept it until 1985 when they traded it in for a skid steer loader. The rubber tracked tractor sat outside on the dealer's lot until the collector bought it.

"We'd like to hear from anyone who has more information about the Cletrac HGR tractor," notes Ratledge.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ronnie Ratledge, 2915 Canster Drive, Maryville, Tenn. 37801 (ph 615 977-0830).

## Dairy Cows Heat His Farm House

M.W. DeGroot, Eel River Crossing, New Brunswick, heats his home by recovering waste heat from the milk tank in his 140-cow dairy barn and transferring it through an insulated underground pipeline to a 1,500-gal. hot water storage tank in the basement of his house. Cold water from the house is returned through another insulated pipeline back to the barn where it's heated up again by running through the milk cooler.

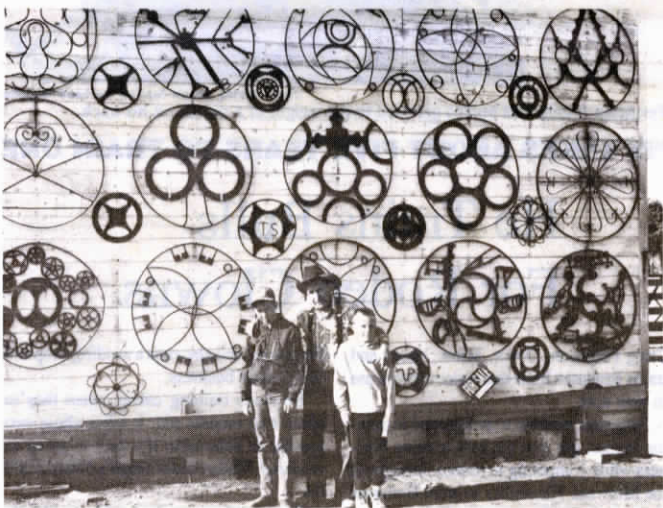
Hot water moves from the milk cooler in the barn through a 6-in. dia. insulated pipeline to the house, which is about 100 ft. away. When the house requires heat, a circulating pump on the bottom of the 1,500-gal. storage tank pumps hot water through a radiator mounted inside the furnace ductwork. The 3-stage fan on the oil furnace that formerly heated the home then blows

through the radiator, sending heated air up through the house. A circulating pump in a second water line returns cooled-down water back to the barn.

"I don't even use the old fuel oil furnace any more," says DeGroot, who has heated with his milk-heat system for 10 years. "In extremely cold weather I can get additional heat from a 15 kilowatt electric heating unit mounted in one of the ducts but we rarely use it. We also use the system to provide domestic hot water."

DeGroot spent about \$10,000 to build the unique heating system. He and his family did all the work themselves.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, M.W. DeGroot, Eel River Crossing, Restigouche County, New Brunswick, Canada E0B 1P0 (ph 506 826-2305).



Rosebrook uses steel wagon wheel rims as frames for most of his creations.

# Rural Artist Makes "Junk" Masterpieces

A 94-year-old retired cowboy and welder who now spends his time creating artistic masterpieces out of old junk, says his goal is to save as many old parts and tools from foundry melting pots as possible.

Rodney Rosebrook, Redmond, Oregon, uses steel wagon wheel rims as frames for most of his creations, enclosing designs made out of spockets, hay teeth, wrenches, flywheels, and virtually any other antique parts he can find.

Rosebrook spent his working days as a cowboy, welder and blacksmith. After retirement, he started to assemble designs as a hobby. When people who saw them started making offers to buy them, his business was launched. He even started taking special orders for people who had parts they wanted assembled into a special design.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rodney Rosebrook, South Canal St., Redmond, Ore. 97756.