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Articulated Oliver 88 Has 3 Drive Options

Ollie Schaefer can run his Oliver 88 with front-wheel drive, rear-wheel drive or 4-wheel drive. The big 88 with 4 combine drive wheels, a bull nose front end, articulation and 2 transmissions is one of a kind.

"I wanted to modify an 88 like this for a long time, but I needed the right parts," says Schaefer. "When I finally had all the pieces, putting it together only took a few months."

The "right" pieces included drives from 2 Oliver 40 combines and an articulation unit from an asphalt packer powered by an Oliver engine.

"I wanted drives from Oliver 40's because they have a shaft from the engine forward through the transmission to the axle, and they would be geared the same," says Schaefer. "The 3-wheel asphalt packer has a large front wheel that rocks both ways and turns.

I figured it would make a good swivel plate to provide the articulation."

Schaefer struggled for several weeks to figure out how to mount the packer wheel assembly. The vertical unit would articulate fine, but left no room for a driveshaft. One day when moving stuff around in his shop, the wheel assembly fell over.

"I looked at it on its side and realized that was how it needed to be mounted," says Schaefer, with a laugh.

He started by jacking up the 88 and removing front and rear ends. A temporary angle iron frame between the 2 drives allowed Schaefer to start connecting the various components and leveling everything. It also reassured him that the cantilevered front end wouldn't sag.

"I connected the driveshaft on the 88's

motor to the input shaft on the transmission for the first set of wheels," says Schaefer. "After I had the swivel in place, I fabricated a driveshaft to connect the pto drive from the first to the input shaft for the transmission on the second rear end."

Once he had all the shafts in place, as well as the swivel, he removed the angle iron, replacing it with heavy steel mounts between the swivel and the axles.

"I replaced the monster hydraulic cylinders on the swivel with heavy-duty, 3-in. Oliver cylinders," says Schaefer.

Schaefer reversed the mount for the shift levers on the rear end. Normally they are designed to lean to the rear. Simply turning the levers around leans them forward enough for Schaefer to reach them from the driver's seat. That is important, as both drives have

to be in the same gear in 4-WD.

He mounted the hydraulic pump to the input shaft ahead of the rear-most transmission. It provides power to the hydrostatic steering as well as to auxiliary outlets on the rear of the tractor. Both the pto and the rear lift work on the 4-wheel 88.

The only real problem Schaefer has had is remembering which transmission is in gear. "I pulled up to the shed one day and put the front transmission in neutral," he recalls. "As I started to get off, the tractor lurched ahead. The rear was still in gear."

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Group Brings Wheelchair-Bound Campers Out To The Wild

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

It's not uncommon to see Percheron horses pulling a wagon filled with people for a ride at events across the U.S. In California, Access Adventure takes it up a notch. The nonprofit group gives people with disabilities the opportunity to take horse and wagon camping trips "on the edge of the wilderness," says Michael Muir, founder and director of the group. In addition, he teaches people with disabilities how to drive teams of horses.

"We have a unique niche to provide meaningful therapy and have some fun to improve the quality of lives," he says.

Muir personally appreciates the value of the program. He grew up riding horses and competing though he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis at 15. When riding became dangerous he discovered driving, won medals competing in international competitions and has been passing on that passion since. After retiring as president of the United States Driving for the Disabled organization, he moved back to his home state of California. He heard about the 2,070-acre Rush Ranch, owned by the Solano Land Trust, which was underused and in need of a caretaker.

Muir – the great-grandson of Sierra Club founder John Muir – offered caretaking services and much more. In 2005 he founded Access Adventure, and created programs to bring volunteers, horses and people to the ranch.

"We are advocates for preserving open space land and access. We are the bridge for people to get into nature, which is important because people in wheelchairs often don't

have that access," he explains. "Our doors are wide open for not just people in wheelchairs, but also for learning disabled children and older folks that can't climb in wagons."

Specialized Thormlea carriages, designed by Jerry Garner, hold 12 people or 5 wheelchairs secured safely with a special lockdown system. Garner also created a mechanical lift to give easy access to people in heavy power chairs. That allows people and the family/caregivers to have the opportunity to go on adventures they wouldn't have otherwise and to challenge their limits, Muir says.

As an example, he cites trips he has organized for people who are blind.

"It's interesting, because most of us see it as a visual experience," he says. "The experience is multisensory beyond vision. They feel the wind, hear the horses. I do an ongoing narrative of what I'm seeing."

He's witnessed the benefits of challenging people. Through his driver training program, two people who are quadriplegic have excelled in competitions.

From training and driving clinics to presentations for schools and organizations to camping trips and long-distance caravans, Access Adventure is open year round with volunteer help and funding.

"We are known for our long distance journeys," Muir notes. In 2001, he led a 10-month, 3,000-mile "Journey across America" with an international group of people with disabilities in wagons pulled by horses. He's led groups overseas and followed the 1,000-mile trail his great-



A nonprofit group called Access Adventure gives people with disabilities access to wilderness areas.

grandfather John Muir walked. Muir's next 2,500-mile caravan is set to begin Nov. 1 in California and end in Weirsdale, Fla. The organization's website includes dates scheduled for recruitment and candidate training for Paralympics equestrian sports along the route.

"This year we want to expand our veterans' program, especially for those younger veterans just returning from the Middle East," Muir says.

For more information about events or how to volunteer or contribute, check out the Access Adventure website.

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A mechanical lift provides easy access to people in wheelchairs.