

“Fold-Down” Steering Wheel

A few years ago Glenn Buxengard reversed his Allis Chalmers loader tractor and mounted a cab on it so he could use it with a snowblower. The only problem was that he could hardly get in to sit down.

“I had to back my body into the cab and straddle my legs over the steering wheel before I could sit down. It was like getting into a skid loader,” says Buxengard. “I thought that if I could fold the steering wheel down to only a couple of inches wide, it would be a lot easier to sit down.”

So he cut the tractor’s steering wheel in half and built a folding wheel. He welded a square block and drilled 1/2-in. bolts to it, and cut 2 notches into the steering wheel hub. He also welded a pair of 1/4-in. square pulley keys to a pair of 1/2-in. dia. metal rods, which form the inside edge of both halves of the steering wheel. The keys fit inside the notches and are held in place by a spring-loaded latch, which uses a pair of 1/2-in. collars with set screws.

“Once I sit down, I flip the wheel’s 2 halves up, shove the keys into the notches, and use the latch to lock them into place,” says Buxengard. “To fold the wheel down I lift up on the latch so the keys slide down out of the slots, which allows me to raise the 2 halves into a full wheel that I can then lock



When Glenn Buxengard reversed his Allis Chalmers loader tractor to mount a cab on it, he could hardly get in to sit down. So he cut the tractor’s steering wheel in half and added a folding mechanism.

into place. It works quick and is foolproof.”

After he cut the wheel apart he had to smash some hard rubber away from a metal rod that ran inside the wheel, allowing him to weld both rods to the wheel halves. After he welded the rods in place he used automobile body putty, mixed with a small amount of hardener, to fill in the exposed area. Once the putty hardened, he filed it down smooth to make it look like the rest of the steering wheel. Then he painted the entire wheel black. “Over the years I’ve found a lot of uses for body putty, and have used it to repair steering wheels and even to make shifting lever knobs,” says Buxengard.

“All the work in the middle of the wheel



Steering wheel folds down to only a couple of inches wide.

has to be done before the 1/2-in. rods were welded to the wheel halves,” notes Buxengard.

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Find Tractor Info Fast With This Smart Phone App

If the Guinness Book of World Records handed out awards for the most knowledgeable young female tractor enthusiast, Rachel Gingell would be the likely recipient. “I’ve loved tractors ever since I was very young, and I’ve spent the past 10 years learning more and more about how they work and what they’re worth,” Gingell says.

Rachel has parlayed that desire for knowledge into an entrepreneurial career that includes developing a smart phone app called Tractor Guide. Gingell says the app allows users to quickly discover the year older tractors were manufactured. They do so by entering the model and serial number of the tractor in the app on their iPhone or iPad. The app shows when that tractor was built.

Gingell says the idea for the app came to her while she was attending a farm auction on a bitterly cold day. “I was fumbling through a tractor price guidebook with gloves on and said to myself, ‘there has to be a better way.’ I put together the outline for

the app, worked with a designer for layout and a developer to program it.” Now anyone can find the manufactured dates on 12 major tractor brands and 10 lesser brands on their phone. The app is getting good reviews and she’s encouraged by its success.

Rachel is no stranger to tractors, tractor mechanical issues and tractor restoration. At a young age she’d help her dad at his equipment dealership. In junior high, she told her dad she’d used her last \$25 in savings to buy half ownership in an old Allis Chalmers tractor. She and her dad worked more than 2 hrs. to load the unresponsive relic with the loader locked to the ground. The owner saw how hard they were working and told Rachel “you can just have it for getting it out of my shed.” Gingell eventually sold the rig for \$650. She kept her end of the bargain by paying her dad \$25 for hauling the tractor home.

Gingell’s skills go far beyond phone app development. At age 16, she graduated from auctioners school and also attended college.



Rachel Gingell’s smart phone app allows users to quickly look up the date a tractor was manufactured.

She has a website for fundraising auctions called ‘She Sold It’ that’s doing well. In her spare time she restores old tractors, writes a tractor repair blog, and does videos on tractor repairs. She learned that skill while working with her father, Dan, who’s made tractor repair videos for several years. Over the years Gingell and her dad have sold hundreds of tractors online because of short videos they do on tractors for sale.