



Northern Indiana Johnny Poppers put their unique tractors to work plowing, planting, and harvesting crops for charity.

They Put Their Johnny Poppers To Good Use

In 2008 the Northern Indiana Johnny Poppers Club found a way to have fun running their old Deere tractors and also contribute to worthy local causes by plowing, planting and harvesting crops that are later sold and the proceeds donated.

"Last year, we divided up \$21,000 between local food pantries, FFA chapters, Cancer Resources of Elkhart, and Cross Court Sports," says Stan Kulp, secretary of Johnny Poppers. They raised the money after harvesting and selling about 65 acres of corn and 15 acres of beans.

In the spring and fall, there are typically 30 to 35 tractors with equipment to plow, plant and harvest. Most of the tractors are 2-cylinder John Deere tractors that were built until 1960. A few members have tractors with 4 and 6-cylinders made in the 1960's, but everything is John Deere related. That includes one member's 1917 Waterloo Boy, the forerunner of all John Deere tractors.

Several area sponsors provide fuel, seed, fertilizer, and acreage to the group for free or reduced rates. That includes a business that

sprays weeds, so no cultivation is needed between spring and fall. The club honors volunteers and sponsors at an annual banquet.

"We primarily plant corn, but we've had a couple of fields for beans. This year we plan to do more beans because of fewer input costs," Kulp says.

The club has 98 members from Northern Indiana and Southwest Michigan and welcomes new members interested in John Deere tractors, equipment, and memorabilia. Dues are \$20/year, and members don't need to own a tractor. Members participate in parades and shows, and they produce a calendar and monthly newsletter. All share a passion for John Deere. Being able to raise money for local causes makes it even better.

"It's a chance to work our tractors while doing something good for the community," Kulp says.

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Hauger has 40 Gibson tractors in his collection.

Collector Focuses On Gibson Tractors

By Bruce Derksen, Contributing Editor

Carl Hauger came by his tractor collecting habit honestly as he grew up on a farm near both Moline, the home of John Deere, and the Farmall plant at Rock Island, Ill.

"My dad always had older machinery like most everyone in our area," says Hauger. "All the farmers nearby had either one or the other make of tractor."

Early on, he started collecting a few garden tractors, then expanded to full-size tractors.

"I bought my first Gibson from a collector

in Kentucky, and that purchase really sparked my interest," he says. "They're a fairly well-built tractor – they operate smoothly and aren't cumbersome."

This appeal resulted in Hauger growing his collection to 40 Gibsons, including four or five strictly for parts. Most are packed tightly in his barn, but he hopes to spread them out someday.

Gibson began building tractors around 1946 in Seattle, Wash., and later moved their



Bee designed and built an e-bike using wood and modern components.

She Built An Electric Plywood Bike

British university student Evie Bee combined modern manufacturing methods and materials with traditional construction techniques to build an e-bike from scratch out of plywood.

Bee based her design on an off-road motorcycle. She married it with e-bike technology, specifically a 36V 15Ah Downtube battery from YOSE Power and a direct drive 250W hub motor from Golden Motor that she mounted in the front wheel.

"Golden Motor makes one of the simplest kits to install," says Bee. "The controller is built into the motor, and all the connectors are gathered into a single block."

One set of components she didn't make was the forks and head tube for the front wheel. These were salvaged from a donor bike and were heavy-duty enough to handle a front wheel motor hub.

Other DIY and commercially-made wooden bikes vary greatly in design and species of wood. "After researching different types of wood, I decided to use plywood," says Bee. "It's less expensive and has incredible strength-to-weight characteristics, which vary between softwood and hardwood plywood."

To maximize strength and minimize weight, she went with poplar plywood for the center layers of the frame with strong and vibration-resistant birch plywood as exterior layers.

Bee used Rhino 3D software to design her frame, head case, seat, and other components.

Her first step was to print out full-scale pattern pieces on paper and transfer them to layers of cardboard. These were cut out and laminated to create a mock-up of the frame

and head case that allowed her to mount front and rear wheels and the donor bike forks and head tube. As metal components were fabricated, they were added to the mock-up.

Satisfied with the design, she used Fusion 360 software to create files for CNC machining to cut out the plywood layers and drill weight-saving holes in the alternating frame sections.

She laminated the inner layers of poplar plywood with wood adhesive and clamped them together between two layers of MDF board. Bolts, passed through the weight-saving holes, secured the laminated sheets in place for curing.

Two stainless steel layers (with matching dowel holes) were epoxied into the middle of the wood layers. Two more sandwich the head case top and bottom. The sides that are bolted into the frame were also layered in stainless steel.

Bee also made her own seat. She chose brass pipes and copper rods for the seat frame, topping it with a layer of foam on a backplate of polypropylene, and enclosed it in faux leather fabric.

The completed bike she calls her Electraply is an impressive piece of machinery and woodworking art.

Bee's web page includes other projects the young designer/maker has completed. Each is backed up with full documentation, as with the Electraply.

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manufacturing facilities to Longmont, Colo. All models were relatively underpowered and overpriced for how they were advertised, and as their competition grew, their numbers declined, making them highly sought after today. Production stopped in 1954 when Gibson declared bankruptcy.

Hauger's favorites include a Super D with a center-mounted steering wheel which he found still sporting a Western Auto sticker. This is notable as this batch of D's were technically Gibsons but sold through Western Auto, who put out a few tractors with yellow wheels.

"This tractor was never used in the dirt," Hauger says. "The story is that it was bought and used in a factory, sold to another collector who passed on, then sold again at the estate sale."

Another of his favorites is a 1948 SD with all original tires and paint. These models featured a side-mounted steering wheel and sported red hoods with yellow accents.

"Like any collector, I'm always on the hunt for more, although I'm pickier now," Hauger says. "They must be the right ones to add to my collection."

He's hoping to find models with white



Gibson Super D with center mounted steering.

fronts, especially the larger H and I versions that came with 4 and 6-cyl. engines, plus one of Gibson's experimental tractors that were sold by Montgomery Ward.

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