

LOOKS LIKE A PAIR OF RUNAWAY WHEELS

"Wonder Wheel" Is Big Hit At Parades

"Everyone who sees it in a parade wonders what makes it tick," says Willard Miene, Postville, Iowa, who built a "Wonder Wheel" by sandwiching a plexiglass bubble between two big flotation tires.

Miene built the "Wonder Wheel" almost entirely from used parts. The 66-in. high, 43-in. wide flotation tires are driven by a 48-volt electric golf cart motor mounted under the driver's seat. The motor, powered by four batteries, turns a 3-speed transmission and differential which Miene also removed from the golf cart. Inside the bubble cab is a CB radio, AM-FM radio, electric fan, and ice water-cooled air conditioner. Outside, a flashing red light, electric air horn, antenna for a fake cellular phone, and a pair of American flags sport things up.

"I built it because I like parades and wanted something different to show," says Miene. "When people first see me rolling by they wonder what it is and then start taking pictures. There's just enough room for me to sit inside the bubble, but because the

plexiglass is tinted people can see me only when I turn straight toward them. A pair of mirrors outside the bubble allow me to see the pavement ahead of each wheel.

A 66-in. dia. round steel plate bolts to the inside sidewall of each big tire. A 2 ft. long, 5-in. dia. length of steel tubing welds to the center of each steel plate. They slide over either end of a 4 1/2-in. dia., 4-ft. long fixed "axle" that makes a U-turn under the driver's seat. A 6-in. wide steel band is welded to the perimeter of each of the round steel plates. An 8-in. dia., 4-in. wide rubber wheel, driven by the golf-cart transmission, runs inside each band, driving the machine by friction. Miene fastened tire tread to the outside surface of the steel bands. A small rubber tire in front of the bubble cab keeps it from turning over as the wheels turn.

"The transmission has three forward and three reverse speeds," says Miene. "To turn right I pull on the right brake lever and to turn left I pull on the left. To stop, I remove my foot from the throttle pedal and pull



Miene rides inside a plexiglass bubble sandwiched between two big flotation tires.

back on both brake levers. Each tire weighs 800 lbs. so the entire machine weighs almost a ton. I use toggle switches to regulate voltage from the motor when I need more power for going up steep hills."

Miene fashioned his own air conditioning system by mounting an 8-gal. cooler full of crushed ice inside the machine. A 12-volt submersible pump inside the cooler circulates water through a 3/8-in. plastic hose that runs to a heater core (removed from an old combine) inside the cab. An

electric fan circulates the cool air. Water is recirculated back to the cooler. "It works surprisingly well," says Miene. "During one parade the outside temperature was 103 degrees, but inside my bubble it was a comfortable 71 degrees. The pump can run two to three hours before all the ice is melted."

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Willard Miene, P. O. Box 23, Luana, Iowa 52156 (ph 319 864-3750).

IOWA INVENTOR WAS YEARS AHEAD OF MANUFACTURERS

Is This The World's First Self-Propelled Combine?

It may never be known for certain who built the world's first self-propelled combine, but Iowa inventor Edward Hindahl made a strong claim for the honor with a combine he built in 1934.

Hindahl, who farmed near Mason City, passed away in 1983 but his daughters, Edna Jones and Melanie Gordon, sent FARM SHOW the following account of Hindahl's machine.

Hindahl, born in 1897, was always modifying new machines and building new ones out of old parts. Neighboring farmers considered him a genius mechanic who could solve just about any problem. He was never interested in patenting his ideas or "striking it rich" commercially.

In 1934 Hindahl set out to build the first-ever self-propelled combine by modifying a 1930 Gleaner Baldwin combine built in Independence, Mo. He bought the used machine for \$600 (it sold originally for \$1,600).

In a 1966 newspaper report, Hindahl told a reporter that he had three goals in mind in building the combine. The first was saving grain when opening up fields. Pull type combines resulted in grain loss on most fields.

His second goal was improved maneuverability. The machine steered like a skid steer loader with separate drives to each side, allowing him to make square corners and turn around in its tracks, which again saved grain.

The third goal was getting the cutterbar closer to the ground. The self-propelled machine provided more precise control and

better visibility of cutterbar so he could lower it down.

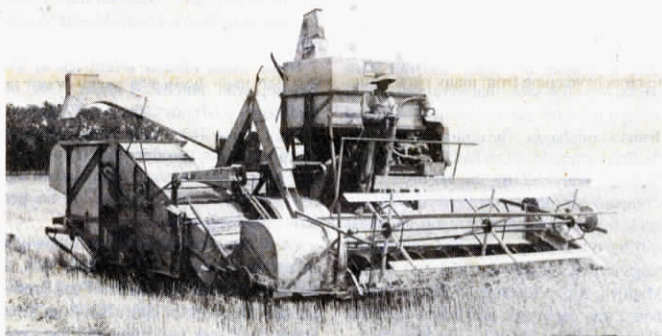
"Hindahl used a Gleaner Baldwin 12-ft. pull-type combine with a Model A Ford motor. Another Model A motor was used to propel it. Two Model T Ford transmissions were rebuilt into a single unit using the two clutches and brakes for steering, controlled by a single wooden stick lever. The specially-made drive wheels were 2 ft. wide in order to reduce compaction. Everything else on the machine was put together from various motors, chains, and other parts.

Hindahl said the difference between his machine and self-propelled models which were introduced by manufacturers a few years later was that they basically used a regular tractor to power their machines while he built a power unit from the ground up, specially designed to power a combine.

Engineers from major manufacturers visited Hindahl to see his machine and consult with Hindahl, who was only too happy to give them his advice on building a production machine. He used the combine himself from 1934 through 1953, before he retired it. The last appearance it made was at a Centennial Parade in Mason City in 1957.

Hindahl's daughters also have several of Hindahl's tractors, including two 1920 Moline Universals, a 1936 Case, an old Twin City tractor, and an antique Caterpillar. None are in operating condition. Edna Jones says they would like to sell them.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Edna Jones, Rt. 2, Box 34, Mason City, Ill. 62664 (ph 217 482-5945 or 3711).



Hindahl built a power unit to self-propel a 1930 Gleaner Baldwin 12-ft. combine.

"TROLLS" ENTERTAIN PASSERSBY

Carved Stumps Attract Big Crowd To Farmyard

When the power company cut down a string of six maple trees along the front of Allen Knudson's farmyard, which borders a busy road near Blue Mounds, Wis., he planned to cut up the stumps for firewood. Before he had a chance, local wood carver Mike Feeney asked him for permission to turn the stumps into eye-catching works of art.

The trees had been cut back by the utility company because they interfered with power lines. Knudson wanted Feeney to carve the stumps into squirrels or roosters but Feeney had other plans. Over a period of a couple years, he turned the stumps into a line of craggy-faced "trolls" using a small chainsaw to do most of the work.

Last summer Knudson enjoyed watching the expressions of passersby who pull over to get a closer look at the carvings. He's already had people from nearly every state and several foreign countries stop by. Many



A chainsaw was used to turn these six stumps into a line of craggy-faced "trolls". get out to have their pictures taken with the stumps.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Allen Knudson, 10436 Hwy. 1D, Blue Mounds, Wis. 53517 (ph 608 437-5067).