

## People Love His “Hayride Spreader”

Ed Lavigne of Buxton, Maine, converted an old Deere L51 manure spreader into a wagon to carry people on hay rides.

The rear part of the manure spreader was modified to include a set of stairs that can be raised or lowered from the tractor seat. The tractor driver reaches back and pulls on a lever on front of the spreader, which allows people to easily enter or exit the wagon. The lumber for the bench seats and body of the spreader was cut, milled, planed and finished on site.

“My family and I were fortunate enough to be on the maiden voyage of Ed’s creation. It provides an amazingly comfortable ride,” says Ed’s acquaintance Jason Beam. “Ed is a lieutenant on our local fire department and has been working with the deputy chief to offer rides to community groups and

neighborhood children. A favorite activity is to hitch up the spreader and take people for rides on trails through the woods.”

The original manure spreader was made mostly from wood. Ed replaced the floor with pressure treated 2 by 6 lumber. The sides were replaced with 1 by 12’s. Then he used 12-in. boards to make the seat and back supports on each side of the spreader, bolting the boards to a frame made from sq. tubing. He also added a tall metal bar on back to keep the spreader rigid and to enhance the look. The last step was to paint the spreader Deere green and yellow and to add a polyurethane varnish.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jason S. Beam, 58 Skip Road, Buxton, Maine 04093 (ph 207 282-8254 or cell 207 423-3459; jason.beam@casella.com).



Ed Lavigne converted this old Deere L51 manure spreader into a wagon to carry people on hay rides. A set of stairs can be raised or lowered from the tractor seat.

## Horseless Carriages A Big Hit At Parades

They top out at only 12 mph, but Leroy Holthus’s grandchildren love to ride in the two horseless carriages he’s built. And the carriages are a big hit when he drives them in area parades.

The rural Tecumseh, Neb., resident found a photo of a horseless carriage and decided to make it a winter project a few years ago. Despite not being able to use his left hand, Holthus likes to build things.

For the horseless carriage, he started with wheels originally used on old dirt bikes and wagon and buggy springs attached to a steel frame. The carriage body is made of Cyprus wood that he planed, sanded and clear coated.

“Cyprus was used for fences and gates to last a lifetime,” he says.

Old 11 and 12 hp lawn mower engines power the horseless carriages, though Holthus notes engines half that size would also work.

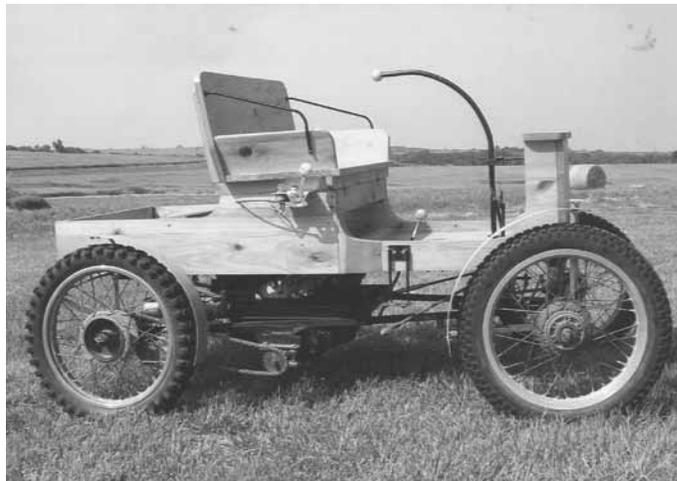
The carriages have 3 and 5-speed lawn mower transmissions controlled by slip clutches. Hand-controlled drum brakes came off go-carts. The most notable difference is how a horseless carriage steers.

“Driving with a tiller shaft is a lot more tricky,” Holthus says. “The first time, it’s a challenge to drive.”

But after driving his first carriage in a parade, the attention it drew made the challenge of building and driving it worthwhile. So, he built a second one with a curved front.

“These would be great for someone to advertise their business,” Holthus says. He’ll sell either carriage for \$3,500 and, he plans to add more to his collection.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Leroy Holthus, 62579 726 Rd., Tecumseh, Neb. 68450 (ph 402 335-0103).



Leroy Holthus’s grandchildren love to ride in the two horseless carriages he built. The carriage body is made of Cyprus wood that he planed, sanded and clear coated.



John Blume spends about 30 hours a week repairing old farm toys, many of which he gives away.



Last year he gave 80 toy tractors and 50 toy wagons to needy children through his local Operation Santa Claus chapter.

## He Repairs Old Farm Toys, Then Gives Them Away

John Blume gets more enjoyment out of the farm toys he fixes up and gives away than from the many toys in his collection. In 2011, he gave 80 toy tractors and 50 toy wagons to needy children through the Operation Santa Claus chapter in Manchester, Iowa. He also donated larger, higher value toys (up to \$300) to charity auctions and benefits for people with cancer.

The former Deere Dubuque Works employee had collected Deere toys and memorabilia for nearly four decades. Without a good way to display them, he sold them several years ago. But he and his wife,

Joyce, couldn’t resist picking up broken and discarded toys at flea markets and garage sales, and Blume started fixing them up about five years ago.

He is fussy and thorough – taking them apart and preparing them with his industrial sandblaster. If a plastic fender has a brown line, he discards it and replaces it with a new one. If someone brings him a tractor that needs a wheel, he replaces it for free. He buys any new parts necessary to make the finished tractor, wagon, combine or other type of toy look brand new. He typically spends about \$5,000 a year on parts and supplies.

“I like having part of my time in the items I donate,” Blume says. He typically spends about 30 hours a week working on toys.

They vary in how much work they need. “I have one here that looked like someone used the cab as a hammer,” Blume says, adding he is a patient person. “It took me over six hours to straighten it out.”

Because of some arthritis in his hands, Blume doesn’t work with the smallest scale toys. He likes toys in 1/32-scale and up. He isn’t fussy about the model. People who hear about his work often donate toys to him to fix up. Others hire him to fix their toys, and

he only charges enough to cover his costs.

But it’s the toys that go to children that drive Blume’s passion. People from Operation Santa Claus tell him the children love the farm toys. The charity is happy because his donated toys free up monetary donations they receive to buy winter clothing for the children. The organization provides items to as many as 350 children each Christmas.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Blume, 38292 Osterdock Rd., Colesburg, Iowa 52035 (ph 563 856-4002).