

IN THIS ISSUE:

GE  
Elec-Trak

Featured Collector  
Bob Simmons

The Red-E  
Tractor Company

# LAGC

Lawn and Garden Collector Magazine

Volume 5 Issue 3

\$5.99

May/June 2011



CUB CADET

Celebrating **50** Years





# ELEC-TRAK: Bringing Good Things To Life

Part 1

by Kate Goelzhauser



**ABOVE LEFT:**

George and his daughter McKendra demonstrate his GE 15 Industrial model with forklift attachment.



**ABOVE RIGHT:**

George operates the GE E20 while his wife Sarie takes a ride in the loader.

**BELOW:**

George lines up his impressive collection of GE tractors at his home in Lyle, TN.

**In 1968** General Electric started research and development on lawn and garden tractors and introduced the Elec-Trak in 1970. In production for only four years, a little over 33,000 units were built during that time. Long before the green revolution, these tractors used no gasoline, just six very large, deep-cycle golf cart batteries. There are four batteries under the back seat and two under the hood. A 36-volt system, the tractors were creamy-yellow in color and were manufactured in Schenectady, New York in a rented warehouse near the GE plant.

George Beckett of Lyle, Tennessee started collecting GE Elec-Trak tractors about three years ago. George tells the story: "When I was in high school I saw the Elec-Trak in Popular Science Magazine and thought 'now there's something brand new...and these things might even sell!' I was always interested in alternative energy and in the 90s I started thinking more seriously about it. I started researching different things and discovered the tractors had turned into a cult following for some of the off-the-grid people because they're

eco-freaks, which my wife Sarie and I have turned into."

"There is no pollution when using the Elec-Trak; you can recharge them with solar panels, they require no gasoline and they are easy to drive. Additionally, they are much quieter than the gas powered mowers. It was with that realization that I thought; 'I need to get one of these.'" George and Sarie are also in the process of building a solar powered home. Last summer they built a barn on the property, which is where all their tractors are stored, safe and sound. They also built a workshop with a small 1000-watt array of solar panels on the roof where George recharges all his tractors. "We have a couple of hundred acres but our building site is almost a mile from the nearest electric pole," said George. "It's a lot of fun, it's an adventure and it'll be really nice when it is done."

Like most collectors, George dabbles on the tractors when he can, usually on the weekend and evenings. With help from a good friend of his who is a former GE engineer, he restored the first one.

*for George  
"the  
ultimate  
E-T  
owner,  
Don*





"He took me from the front of the tractor all the way back," explained George, "and he taught me all about capacitors and resistors, the whole guts of the tractor and how to maintain it."

Here is how an electric tractor works. There is a built-in charger with a timer, which are both located under the hood of the tractor. The owner plugs the unit into a 120V outlet, sets the timer and the next morning it's ready to go. Charge time depends on how low the batteries are. It also has a built-in "PTO" on it, which is an outlet you can plug electric powered attachments into. For example, the mower decks had two to three separate electric motors for the blades and you would plug the deck into the PTO outlet and it would run off the tractor batteries.

On a standard power charge you could cut about three acres of grass. There was also an optional auxiliary power pack that you could add. This power pack was a metal box that you could add to the back of the tractor that held three additional 12-volt batteries providing 55-60% more run time. With that extra power pack, it could cut almost five acres of grass. Not bad for an electric tractor.

George has one of every Elec-Trak model ever manufactured, except for the E16. He even has a little push mower GE made called an E1. GE began their tractor manufacturing with the model ER8-36. It was a riding mower that looked a lot like a go-cart, using very small wheels on the front and back. It was a single function machine and it ran on three 12-volt batteries with a mower deck under it. Basically all it did was cut grass. It would mow about an acre of land, and had a nice, tight turning radius, which was really good for smaller city lots.

Although fairly new to the hobby, George already owns an impressive collection of GE Elec-Trak machines. "The E20 is my most favorite piece in the collection. It's been fully restored and it was the top of the line of the Elec-Trak models. It is a very powerful tractor and built rock solid. I use it all of the time with a front-end loader." It's no easy life for these Elec-Traks! He uses the E12S to cut the grass; the I5 has the forklift attachment and is used around the barn for heavy jobs.

"I've been a workaholic my whole life. I work hard and travel a lot. This is the first time in my life that I have taken time to spend on a hobby and my wife thinks that it's pretty great. She has already asked for her own electric tractor which she is planning to paint pink! I got her a New Idea version of GE's Elec-Trak and she will have it in time to use on the farm this spring."

(continued on page 46)

## THE ELECTRIC TRACTOR STORE

Parts, service, buy & sell GE Elec-Trak, New Idea and Wheel Horse electric tractors, accessories and parts

**THE LARGEST SOURCES OF ELEC-TRAK PARTS NOW COMBINED  
IN OUR NEW LOCATION IN CENTRAL VIRGINIA**

New, used, NOS, OEM and reproduction parts available

Reproduction parts made from original drawings

Many items not yet listed on our website

Call to check availability



Jim Coate  
540-941-1005

Waynesboro, Virginia  
[www.ElectricTractorStore.com](http://www.ElectricTractorStore.com)

## ELEC-TRAK PARTS

PROVIDING PARTS FOR GENERAL ELECTRIC,  
NEW IDEA & WHEEL HORSE ELECTRIC TRACTORS  
ALSO BUYING ELECTRIC TRACTORS, PARTS,  
ACCESSORIES, MANUALS, ETC.  
CLEAN POWER SUPPLY  
EPHRATA, PA



**HAROLD  
ZIMMERMAN**  
PH: 717-859-4234 FAX: 717-859-4824

## Frazer Rototiller Parts

Part Numbers 5000 thru 5970

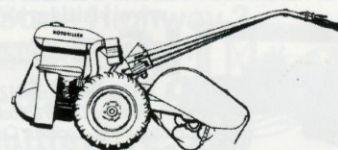
Models B1-6 thru B1-7RA

[www.frazerrototillerparts.com](http://www.frazerrototillerparts.com)

email: [frazerparts@aol.com](mailto:frazerparts@aol.com)

I Accept: PAYPAL, CHECK, MO

Michael Blaughter  
124 E Foster Pkwy  
Ft Wayne, IN 46806  
(260) 744-1020





**BELOW:**

A "NOS" E-15 is an example of the large-framed GE tractor. This tractor was never used. It was found in a warehouse with the original batteries still in it.



**ABOVE:**

This "NOS" E8 is an example of GE's small-framed tractor which was also never used and found in a dealer warehouse.



"The farthest I traveled to get a tractor is Albany New York. These tractors are so unique and differen that I have no desire to collect other brands. They were futuristic in 1971 and they are still futuristic in 2011, forty years later. A lot of them have ended up in landfills, but surprisingly there are a lot still around and most people who do collect them have at least 3 or 4. They just seem to jump in your truck!" Most of the tractors he has found have been in the northeast: Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio – that's really Elec-Trak country.

George has launched a new web site about his collection and it includes a lot of reference materials on the tractors and their unique accessories. Visit [www.myelec-traks.com](http://www.myelec-traks.com) to learn more about these unique tractors. Sarie was a custom wedding gown designer for many years and is now home schooling the last of their four daughters. She also sells organic baby items on her own website [www.terrabambino.com](http://www.terrabambino.com).

In upcoming issues we will take a look at each of the individual models of the GE Elec-Trak that George has in his collection as well as some of the unique attachments created for these machines. 🚗

ADVERTISEMENT



**30th Anniversary**  
**ANTIQUE FARM POWER**  
**STEAM & GAS SHOW**  
**AUGUST 11, 12, 13, 14, 2011**  
**4-H FAIRGROUNDS • LAGRANGE, INDIANA**

**ANTIQUE STEAM & GAS ENGINES, TRACTORS, MACHINERY & TOOLS**  
Featuring: Steam Plowing - 125 HP Erie Stationary Steam Engine - Threshing - Sawmilling - Antique Tractors & Gas Engines - Garden Tractors - Trucks - Flea Markets - Arts & Crafts - Toy Show - Model Engine Area - Trading Post - Entertainment - Farmstock (Fun Only) Tractor Pull Sat. 9 AM - Good Food & Camping on Grounds - Motels Nearby - Ladies Programs Sat. - Many Other Items and Activities

Northern Indiana Garden Tractor Club Exhibits  
Hosting the 6th Annual Amigo Garden Tractor Reunion  
Vintage Garden Tractor Collectors of America  
MI/IN Regional Meet

**2011 SHOW WILL FEATURE**  
**B.F. AVERY &**  
**LESSER KNOWN CLASSICS**  
**SPECIAL SHOW AREA & TENT**

EXHIBITORS WELCOME - ALL EXHIBITORS RECEIVE A PLAQUE.  
FEATURE EXHIBITORS RECEIVE A SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S BUTTON.  
**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CALL 888-277-3184**  
[www.visitlagrangecounty.org](http://www.visitlagrangecounty.org)

**LCVB** LaGrange County Convention & Visitor's Bureau  
2012 Show: August 9-12, 2012  
Featuring Co-Op & Cockshutt  
Hosting the Int. Cockshutt Club Summer Show & the Hoosier Co-Op Jamboree

Admission: \$4.00  
**EVERYONE WELCOME!**



# Coming Soon!

A new children's farm book.  
This is a **MUST** for tractor collectors young and old alike.

## Big Red & Old Red

Written by Jane Aumann  
and Cindy Ladage  
Illustrated by famed tractor artist  
Charles Freitag

Enjoy reading about the new tractor that comes to the farm. See just how Dad's Big Red tractor fits in with Grandpa's trusty Old Red tractor.

Will the new and old work together?  
Wait and see!



Read more about this highly anticipated book in the next issue of Vintage Tractor Digest.  
For questions please write Cindy & Jane at Roots & Wings, P.O. Box 55, Nokomis, IL 62075