

One of the items on my never ending 'honeydew' list is to organize the garage as I'm told it's mostly my stuff. No argument, it is mostly my stuff collected from grade school to high school to my radio days. Some of it is even before grade school. Here's a case in point; the picture included with this column is from the Rochester Post-Bulletin in 1956. My dad Elmer was among the winners at the Dodge Center AG Days tractor pull event.



TRACTOR-PULLING WINNERS NAMED—Sig Mogen, center, one of the DC-AG Days committee members, is shown with the four winners in Wednesday night's tractor-pulling contest at Dodge Center. Left to right: Leslie Bailey, Dodge Center; Elmer Kleven, West Concord; Mogen, Leroy Lafrenz, Hayfield, and Richard Welsh, Dodge Center. The winners will be presented with trophies and wrist watches tonight in the finale of the two-day event.



July 25, 1956 was the date of the second annual tractor pull which was the opening night feature of DC AG Days. There were four weight classes. The heavy weight division was for the weight of the tractor and driver together to be over 7000 pounds. The winner of this division was Leroy Lafrenz of Hayfield with a John Deere diesel 70. The next weight division was from 5501 to 7000 pounds. Elmer Kleven of West Concord won this with his Oliver Super 88. Third class weight division was from 4001 to 5500 pounds. Winner was Leslie Bailey of Dodge Center with his Allis Chalmers WD-40. The lightweight division, from 4000 pounds and under was won by Richard Welsh of Dodge Center. He and his Ford tractor weighed in at 3990 pounds.

Among the other contestants you might recognize some names. They include Harlan Fosness of Claremont; Emil Sowieja, Dodge Center; W.F (Bub) Urch, West Concord who also had a Oliver Super 88 diesel; Del Paulson, Dodge Center with a

Massey-Harris 44; Ray Gibbs, West Concord with a John Deere 60 and William Henslin of Dodge Center. Pictured above is the trophy my dad received for his win at the tractor pull.

DC AG Days was a big deal back then. It was a two day celebration that included not only the tractor pull but a county horseshoe pitching contest, a midget baseball game, a twilight parade, various horticultural, livestock, showmanship and cookery contests ending with the crowning of a DC AG Days queen.

My generation talks about the color of their tractors that they grew up with on the farm. The conversations/arguments were over red versus green but there were other colors of course. My neighbor Ernie Johnson always was partial to the orange. No, not the Kubota orange that has become more prevalent in today's world but the Allis Chalmers which was the original orange tractor. Persian Orange to be exact. And there were two shades of the Persian Orange, #1 and #2. That's probably only important if you are restoring an old Allis to its original color. Did you know Allis Chalmers started out with a dull green color in 1914? They went to orange in the early 1930's.

Much of our tractor talk though was about red and green. I was partial to green but not the 'John Deere' green which begins many arguments, uh I mean conversations! Many of you know if you've read some of my previous columns or if you knew the green we had on our farm, it was of course Oliver green.

Two of the earliest memories of tractors for me as a young lad were the 1954 Oliver Super 88 wide front that was used in the aforementioned tractor pull and the other was the 1959 Oliver 660 diesel narrow front. The Super 88 was a 47 horse gas powered tractor that was a workhorse on our farm for a number of years. The 40 horse 660 diesel was a utility tractor that stayed on the farm from 1959 until I sold it at my second farm auction in 1990.



We did have a red tractor back in those days so I could state the case of red or green. We had a Farmall Super 'M'. I didn't drive that one much but I do remember in the mid 60's pulling a 3 bottom plow with it and getting it stuck in deep mud on the Grover and Agnes Dengler farm. Tim Callister was plowing across the fence and he came and pulled me out. Before the land got tilled, a wet fall didn't begin to describe how wet it was. I mentioned a few months back that we bought a Farmall 'H' at the Phillip Carpenter auction that was across the township road next to the Ellington town hall.

We also had a different shade of green in 1973 when my dad purchased a German made Deutz. It was a lighter shade of green than either the John Deere or Oliver. Coincidentally, the Deutz-Fahr company of Germany purchased the Allis Chalmers Corporation in 1985. Deutz-Allis was sold to Allis-Gleaner Corp or AGCO in 1990. Interestingly enough, in North America, the Deutz-Allis tractors came in both Deutz-green and Allis-orange.

There have been many colorful tractors over the year. My other neighbor to the west back in the day, Louie Wenzel had the yellow Minneapolis Moline. There are also blue Ford tractors and blue New Holland tractors. Massey Ferguson had a different red from International. And this is only a partial list of what has come up in conversations over the years and still continue today. Well back to organizing the garage. I got sidetracked again by finding one newspaper article and the tractor pulling trophy.

The picture below is a 1953 Minneapolis Moline similar to what my neighbor Louis Wenzel had.

