



Last fall, disabled veteran Jan Williams went pheasant hunting in this "wheelchair cart" developed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

"Wheelchair Cart" Pushes Ahead Of Any ATV

Disabled hunters can easily get out into the woods to hunt with this new 2-wheeled wheelchair cart that's designed to be pushed by any 4 or 6-wheel ATV.

The cart is being promoted by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources at Bourbonnais, Ill. Charlie Pangle, who heads a program for physically challenged hunters for the DNR, demonstrated the cart for the first time last fall at a public hunting site. "It allows hunters who use wheelchairs to be transported to hunting areas," says Pangle. "Reaction to it has been so positive that 15 carts have been ordered by a state veterans group for use at various state public hunting sites."

The cart is made entirely of lightweight

aluminum which makes it easy to transfer from one location to another. The front part has two caster wheels while the back part bolts onto the front of the ATV. There's a flexing action between the cart and vehicle. "The hunter's ride is actually a bit smoother than that of the ATV," notes Pangle.

An assistant is required to drive the ATV. Another assistant walks next to the cart/ATV and carries the hunter's gun. (Illinois state law says that a loaded gun can't be carried in a moving vehicle.)

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Perhaps the most unusual collectible in the museum is this 100-ton electric power plant. The steam-powered engine has an armature flywheel that's 16 ft. in diameter.

He Built His Own Farm Museum

By C.F. Marley

When Ben Winter, Altamont, Ill., retired in 1979, he wanted to do something meaningful with his time. So he started collecting antique farm machines of various kinds. Now, 21 years later, he has some items in his collection that would make even the Smithsonian Institute envious.

For example, he has 15 steam-traction engines – the kind used in the old days to power threshing machines – along with various kinds of gas tractors. Some of the steam-powered tractors are 26 ft. long, 11 ft. high, and

weigh 18 tons, and it takes up to 1,000 lbs. of coal and 150 gal. of water just to fire them. The machines date back as far as 1906. Most of them are in working condition.

Perhaps the most unusual item in Winter's collection is a 100-ton electric power plant that was used for some 50 years by Pet Milk Co. at its plant in Greenville, Ill. Ben didn't want to see the power plant destroyed so he spent about \$8,000 to move it to his place. The steam-powered engine has a 24-in. bore and a 42-in. stroke and has an armature fly-



Robert and Rick Lichfield have been building chariots for 32 years. They say chariot racing has experienced a rebirth in recent years and now draws thousands to state meets.

Ben Hur Never Had A Chariot Like This

Chariot makers Robert and Rick Lichfield, a father and son team from Brigham City, Utah, have been building chariots for 32 years. The sport, which is thousands of years old, has experienced a rebirth in recent decades and now draws thousand to state meets in 11 states and upwards of 10,000 people to the world finals each year.

"It's a lot more fun than sulky or flatback racing," says Lichfield. "When a team breaks out of the gate, nothing stops them. The horses are 16 to 17 hands high and weigh 1,200 to 1,400 lbs. each and are bred for quick speed in a quarter mile."

Many chariot racers cross a quarter horse and a thoroughbred, though horses of all breeds are raced. "Today we even have people putting mini-chariots on miniature horses," notes Lichfield.

He describes chariot racing as a hazardous sport, citing a woman driver who was thrown out of her basket and run over when a driver behind her ran his horse up and into her chariot. Two weeks later she was back at the races and later won a division championship.

Standard chariots are about 4 ft. wide and weigh 50 to 80 lbs. They sport aluminum wheels and tubing, with fiberglass baskets. Chariots, harness and driver must have a minimum weight of 275 lbs. at race time.

While the basic design remains unchanged from the days of Ben Hur, the Lichfields have designed a unique safety system of braces to connect the tongue, basket and axle. No holes are drilled in the tongue. Instead, stainless steel clamps go around the tongue. Braces from one set hold the double tree. The second set holds seven stainless steel braces, five of which go to the basket and two go to the axle.

Helmets are standard, as are safety ropes running from the neck yoke to the harness. "You want to prevent the tongue from gouging into the ground," explains the chariot maker, who first raced back in the 1930's, "or it can catapult you 300 feet."

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wheel that's 16 ft. in diameter.

Ben has collected and preserved other antiques, too. There's a phonograph, manufactured by Victor in the late 1800s, which used cylinder-shaped records. There's also a model scale version of one of the first cars ever made; a piece of coal that was dug up 1,100 ft. below the earth's surface; manual typewriters; wringer-washing machines; and silage shredders. There's also a 4,600-piece pencil collection, dating from 1938 to 1998. Some of the most unique pencils include one that has an eraser on both ends and one with two erasers on the end of it making a "T" shape.

One of his most unique non-farm items is a pipe organ with 222 wooden pipes and 222 metal pipes. It came from the Lutheran church he and his wife Elsie attend.

The 50-acre site also hosts a 3/4-mile miniature railway track, along with miniature steam railroad trains that really work.

During the summer months Ben pilots a 12-ft. steam engine and cars, giving rides to children who come to visit.

Ben and Elsie's museum is open year



Winter stands beside a 12-ft. dia. rope pulley off a 150 hp. steam engine. At one time it was used by a grain elevator to run a generator, grain mill, and line shaft.

around by appointment only.

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