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## Old WD Allis Makes Super Road Grader

Heavy truck traffic on his quarter-mile long gravel driveway means commercial logger Mark Lofgren needs to do quite a bit of road maintenance.

After years of using a rear-mounted tractor blade to grade the road, Lofgren decided he needed something better.

Specifically, he really wanted to find an Allis Chalmers D grader. Since none were readily available, Lofgren decided to build his own.

He had a lot of help and guidance from Chester Lewis Sr., Big Fork, Minnesota, a retired Allis Chalmers dealer. Lewis had an old WD Allis that he'd bought and rebuilt enough to get it running. Lofgren bought it from him, and also a set of WD or WC frame rails from Lewis's collection of old Allis parts.

He removed the front end from the WD and welded the extended frame rails to the existing frame. He then attached the front end to the extended rails. The tractor now has a 14-ft. wheelbase, just like the Allis D grader he wanted.

Underneath the extended frame, he mounted a pivoting blade he built himself. "I cut the 24-in. circle the blade pivots on from a sheet of 1/2-in. plate steel. I couldn't find a piece of steel with the right curve that was thick enough and big enough to make the moldboard for the grader blade, so I welded three 10-ft. lengths of 1/2-in. by 4-in. strap iron together to make one. I bought

a new cutting edge for it and bolted that on," he says.

He built the mounting frame for the blade from 2-in. square steel tubing.

Lofgren says the existing low-volume hydraulic pump and reservoir were sufficient to control the blade. He used two 2 1/2 by 16-in. stroke hydraulic cylinders to raise and lower the blade. "I can raise the blade 14 in. off the ground, or grade 2 in. deeper than the surface."

He can control either side or both at once using spool valves mounted on the frame, with levers he positioned on the WD's left fender, within easy reach from the seat.

"The hydraulic pump works only when the main clutch is engaged, but since the WD has a hand clutch, too, I can stop and shift gears while raising or lowering the blade," he says.

Blade angle must be adjusted manually. He says this could be done hydraulically, too, but the manual adjustment is easy enough and doesn't take that much time.

"It was a fun project to work on and didn't take that much time or money," he says. He notes that his WD grader looks a lot like a factory built D grader, with the exception of the arch over the blade on the D. "It's much easier to use than a 3-point blade and does a much better job on my driveway," he says.

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## A Toolbox Christmas

If the sound of your shop tools has always been music to your ears, then you'll love "A Toolbox Christmas", a new music CD that contains all your favorite Christmas carols played on hand and power tools.

With this truly unique collection of recordings, maestro Woody Phillips explores the full range of the workbench's symphonic potential, from the marimba-like 2 by 4's used to play Jingle Bells to a table saw duet featured in "Joy to the World". A power planer provides the counterpoint in "I Saw Three Ships", and in "Pat A Pan" you'll hear the familiar sound of a pneumatic nailer. Tchaikowsky's "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy" features an ensemble of antique hand drills, mandolins, anvils, T-squares, levels and pipes.

The CD contains real music, pleasant and

stirring to hear, and not just a collection of shop noise. To keep it civil and harmonic, Phillips blends the shop sounds with cello, dulcimer, flute, mandolin or oboe. At appropriate times there are other familiar sounds like a tape measure retracting; duct tape tearing; a little ball bearing rolling around in a spray paint can; and even the cheerful jingle of a sack of 10-penny nails.

A Toolbox Christmas CD sells for \$12 (cassette tape is \$8), plus \$2.50 shipping. California residents, add 8% sales tax.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, A Toolbox Christmas, Gourd Music, P.O. Box #585, Felton, Cal. 95018 (ph 831 425-4939; toll-free 800 487-4939; E-mail: neal@gourd.com; Website: www.gourd.com).



Everything Randy Thompson needed to restore this 1957 Allis Chalmers motor grader was available through catalogs and local supply stores.

## Restored Motor Grader Works Like New

Randy Thompson had always wanted a motor grader. With several field roads to maintain, he had plenty of use for one around his Georgia farm but he couldn't justify the cost. Then, in 1999 he was offered a beat-up 1957 Allis Chalmers Model D grader if he'd just take it off a neighbor's property.

"It was in sorry shape," he says. "It had been used to scrape manure out of poultry buildings and when the poultry operation shut down several years earlier, the grader was left in one of the buildings. Poultry manure is extremely corrosive to metal and destroys tires, too."

Despite its appearance, the grader had previously been well-maintained so the gasoline engine was in good shape. Tires and wheels were shot, though, so Thompson had to trailer it home.

He replaced all six wheels with new original equipment he was able to order from a supply firm in Albany, Georgia. He also found original 8.25 by 20 motor grader tires.

It needed a seat and he found the original was identical to the seat John Deere used on its 40 and 420 tractors, which are easy to find. "It just bolted in place, so it was no problem at all," he adds.

In fact, everything he used to restore the grader was available through catalogs and local supply stores. And that includes the

decals. "I was surprised at how easy it was to find everything I needed," he says.

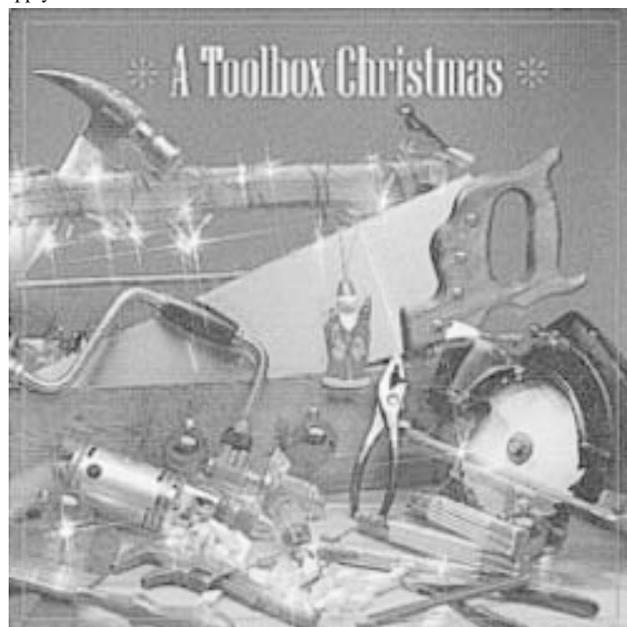
He was also surprised by the price of the decals. "Some of the original decals were more than \$100. But I wanted it to look right, so I bought them."

The most difficult and time-consuming part of the restoration was cleaning and painting the old machine. He cleaned the old paint and rust off the rest of the machine by hand, mostly with a wire brush. He painted it himself, too.

As restorations go, Thompson's grader was a good deal. He figures he spent less than \$1,500 for paint, parts and decals. It was time consuming, though. "I probably spent between 100 and 200 hours."

While he wanted the restored motor grader to look like new, he also wanted to use it—and he knew how difficult they were to steer. For this reason, he salvaged the power steering from a Deere 4400 combine and installed it on the grader. "Everything went into place easily, with no major modifications needed to the grader or the steering unit," he says.

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