

Building holds collections of son and father

By Karen Krien

Thresher Show goers will not want to miss the David Clark Memorial Toy Museum at the Tri-State Antique Engine and Thresher Show this year. It is filled with toys, souped-up twin-engine tractors, trophies and other memorabilia.

When David was 7-years-old, he was diagnosed with Duchenne's Muscular Dystrophy. He continued going to school and graduated from high school in St. Francis. When he was in the second grade, he decided he was going to have a tractor show and charge \$5 to get in. While the "show" never entirely materialized, he continued to dream and plan his future.

David's Custom Toys

Following graduation, he formed his business, David's Custom Toys. He bought die-cast toy tractors on e-Bay to restore or customize them. Then he resold many of them.

In 2005, David went to the Ertl website and found a place to make suggestions for future toy tractor models. He suggested the 4366 like the ones on the Clark farm.

To his surprise, he got an e-mail back asking for information. David e-mailed back and forth with an Ertl representative for several week.

In May 2006, the Toy Farmer, a toy magazine, had an article on the 4366 which was named the National Farm Toy Show Tractor.

David was blown away, his mother said. The 4366 on display is in the smaller 1/32 scale and, if sales are good enough, it will be manufactured in the 1/16 scale in 2009.

David died suddenly on March 29, 2007. Last fall, Craig, his dad, and Dean, his grandfather, along with David's mother, Valerie, began erecting the 40- by 60-foot metal building on the Thresher grounds. Craig was David's biggest supporter and this was something he could do for him.

The plans were set with the items to be shown. However, in the spring, Craig had a heart attack and died. The building was done and Valerie, Dean and Phyllis, Craig's mother, were determined to have it open for this year's Thresher Show.

There are two pull tractors plus David's "Rooster Cruiser." Craig and David purchased the Rooster puller as a fixer-upper from friends in the Colorado Truck and Tractor Pullers Association in 2003. It is called a T-bucket Roadster two-wheel drive.



David Clark

Craig and David, Valerie said, spent many happy hours in the shop working on the "Rooster," as David called it. It has a 557 cubic-inch Keith Black Hemi engine and a 16-71 supercharger. The transmission is a SCS Series 30 Gearbox and the rear end is a truck rear end.

The Rooster made its debut in 2005. Because of his illness, David was unable to drive his puller, so his dad drove it for him.

He always got a kick out of watching his truck run, Valerie said.

The Rooster was driven by Craig in honor of his son's memory. The puller made its final pass at the second David Clark Memorial Tractor Pull, held in Goodland, in 2008

Bad News

The "Bad News" tractor puller is on display in the memorial building. Craig started tractor pulling in 1976. His first tractor had a carbureted 390 Ford engine mounted on a homemade frame with an old IH W-9 rear end. He won at his first pull in Sublette.

He graduated to a supercharged 460 Ford engine mounted on a re-worked frame and the same IH W-9 rear end.

In 1980, he switched engines to a single Chrysler 426 Hemi equipped with a Dyers 6-71 supercharger.

He built his first twin-engine tractor in 1981. The new tractor was too heavy to get into the 5,000 pound modified class. He had to build the tractor so that the front engine could be removed for the light class and replaced for the heavier classes.

Craig named the new tractor "Bad News" because when it showed up at a pull, it was bad news for somebody.

Later, he re-built the tractor completely. He put on two Keith Black Hemi engines on a brand new frame and switched the transmission to a SCS Series 40 gearbox.

The SCS featured interchangeable gears, a transmission brake and a brake and a reverser on the back. When changing gears on a SCS, the case was opened and the gears were switched out, changing the gear ratio.

There is no reverse gear on a SCS. To back up, the reverser is used and reverses the direction of spin on the drive-line. Technically, the tractor can go as fast in reverse as in forward.

In 25 years, Bad News placed in almost all events. It made it's final pass at the David Clark Memorial Tractor Pull on Sept. 30, 2008.

Stationary engines

For several years, Craig and David would bring their stationary engines to the show. Set up under a tree, the engines were admired by many. They enjoyed bringing their engines to the show and talking to others about them.

This year, they will be in the toy museum on display. However, they will not running as their owners were the only ones who operated them and they are gone. Seeing the engines, many people will remember the Clarks from year's past.



DAVID CLARK'S suggestion was taken and was made and featured on the cover of a magazine. His mother, Valerie, unpacks the tractor for display at the show.

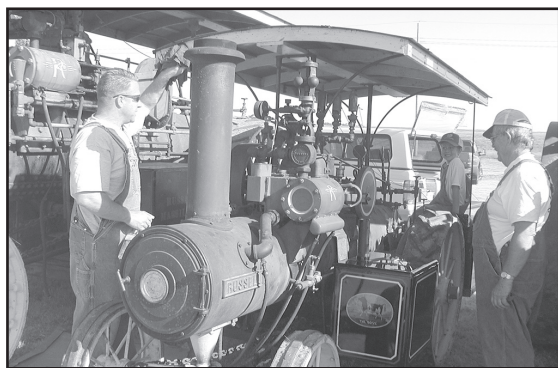
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