Local man's collection becomes passion

BUSINESS

Erl McLaughlin has 35 restored antique tractors

By ANN BLOOM For the Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — For most people, having a collection of something is a hobby. For Erl McLaughlin it's a passion. McLaughlin collects and restores antique tractors.

"It's gotta be a passion," he said.

McLaughlin has 35 tractors in his newly expanded warehouse on Sunrise Road. He's been collecting and restoring tractors since 1983. All the tractors are nonmotorized, and horse-drawn with a few dating back to the Civil War.

Each tractor has a story. "There's a million stories at Sunrise Iron," he said. "Most all my tractors run, and I've painted them and put decals on them with colors and font so they look finished. It's dirty, hard, expensive work to make them respectable and put them on display — (they) need

McLaughlin said he got into restoring tractors because the winters are long and cold in Wallowa County. He has 600 acres of cropland, all irrigated, but since he doesn't run cattle and doesn't spend time feeding them in the winter, he needed something to do in the winters.

Sunrise Iron has also expanded to include antique sewing machines, washing machines, an assortment of



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Erl McLaughlin recently expanded his Sunrise Iron Museum by 72 feet so it's now 40 feet by 300 feet west of Enterprise. Inside, he has more than 100 years worth of tractors and other farm implements many of which he's restored over the past 40 years while not farming. He reopened the expanded museum Saturday, Aug. 6, 2022.

antique vacuum cleaners, butter churns, lithographs depicting turn of the century domestic activities and agricultural motifs. Besides a way of broadening his horizons, McLaughlin said the additions to his collection keep the women and girls who come to see his collection from "not being totally bored, just partially bored," he said with a smile.

McLaughlin held an open house earlier this month featuring a new addition that adds 72 feet to his warehouse. The addition enabled him to show off tractors that had been in storage and a spiral staircase that provides a bird's eye view of everything.

"I'm indebted to my good friend, Al, for letting me store stuff in a building east of Joseph, on a no cost basis," for the last 20 years, he said. The building is now 40

feet by 300 feet. It is the third expansion McLaughlin has added to the structure to accommodate his "really cool stuff," he said, and "when the time is right," there will probably be another addition.

The open house was "above average (in attendance). Even with the price of fuel. I met a lot of people, down to earth people. People were pretty impressed," he said.

The tractors in McLaughlin's collection hail from British Columbia, Troy, Idaho, Baker City and Ellensburg, Washington, and other places throughout the United States and Canada. He said the group of collectors is not large, but it can be competitive. Collectors may share information on where to get parts for a tractor they are restoring, but not where to get a rare or unusual tractor they don't have in their collection. That information is not shared. He does appreciate tips from people if they know of an antique tractor that he may be interested in. "People need to help

me," he said.

He has been contacted by the producers of the show "The Pickers." He put them off before, but says he may encourage them to see his collection if they contact him again.

The rarest tractor in McLaughlin's collection is a 1915 10-20 Three Wheel Case B. It's the only tractor in his collection that he doesn't operate, due to its

IF YOU GO

Sunrise Iron is open any day of the year for tours. Owner Erl McLaughlin asks that anyone interested in a tour call ahead to set one up. He can be reached at 541-263-0755. Admission is free, although donations are welcome to help with ongoing projects.

rarity, but it is fully restored and is operational.

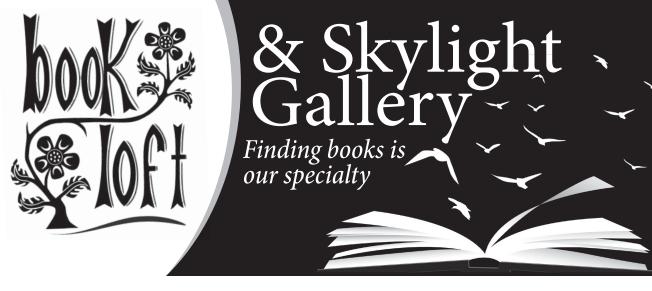
"It's only two of any in existence. The other is in Harrisburg, Virginia. The serial number (located on a plate on the tractor) authenticates it," he said.

A lot of people may put out the money required to purchase an antique tractor, but few want to put in the required hours it takes for the restoration, McLaughlin said.

"(The tractors) just set out in the elements and the weeds grow around it. (The people) get it home and there it sets. They get overwhelmed," he said, adding there are a lot of hours required to make a tractor presentable.

McLaughlin sees the educational value in his collection as a way to preserve a piece of agricultural heritage. He explained that not that long ago 98% of the population was involved in agriculture to feed 2% of the population. Now, he said, the numbers have flip-flopped.

"I just am trying to provide this stuff a good home and extend its life," McLaughlin said. "It was used to raise food to feed (people) and their neighbors. It's important to me."



CLUES ACROSS

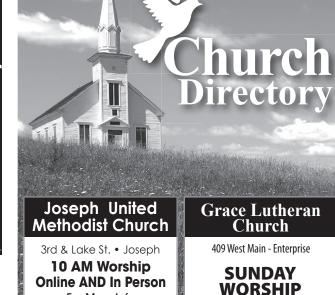
- 1. Encyclopedia contents, casually
- 5. What comforters cover
- 9. Bracelet bangle
- 14. Hen's house 15. Warhol who said,
- "Making money is art" 16. Camel's rest stop
- 17. Polish, as prose
- 18. Name within "Constantine"
- 19. Camera giant 20. Obstetrician's quote for
- assisting in childbirth? 23. slicker
- 24. Like some museum tours 28. Not outdoors
- 31. Pitcher's gift
- 32. Outback bird 33. Orthodontist's quote for
- making an appliance?
- 36. Brief moment
- 37. Pizzeria hot spot 38. Small battery size
- 39. Employee benefit 40. Toddler's break
- 41. Bookbinder's quote for attaching the exterior?
- 45. Wedding words 46. Blvd. relative
- 47. Went the distance 48. Appetizer whose name
- is French for "sofa"
- 50. Alphabetize, e.g. 51. Electrician's quote for
- getting electricity flowing?
- 57. Pesto herb 60. Provo's place
- 61. Affirm
- 62. Lime or rust
- 63. Make cookies
- 64. Horse hair
- 65. Bread ingredient
- 66. It goes down in the winter 67. Calligrapher's supplies

- 17 20 33 37 40 45 48
 - 16 18 19 26 29 30 31 32 36 42 53 55 52 58 59 62 63 64 65 66

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Chilled
- 2. Connection point
- 3. Light weapon in fencing 4. Frame job figure?
- 5. Decimal system
- 6. Contest submission
- 7. WWII turning point
- 8. Coordinate, as a Mac and iPhone
- 10. Caribbean country where Vodou is a recognized religion
- 11. Pose a question
- 12. Kia model
- 13. AOL alternative
- 21. "Veni, ____, vici" 22. Fairy-tale fiend
- 25. Gobi or Sahara
- 26. Come into sight
- 27. Dropped out of sight, say 28. Having a twist

- 29. Sparks' setting
- 30. Squish with a shoe 31. Miles away
- 34. Roof overhang
- 35. Singer Carly _ Jepsen
- 39. Deli meat on rye 41. Juliet's surname
- 42. At an end
- 43. Attired
- 44. Heavenly strings 49. Etching solutions
- 50. It goes down the drain
- 52. Massages 53. List shortener: Abbr.
- 54. Tennis legend Lendl
- 55. Hit on the head
- 56. Woolly mothers 57. "Man!"
- 58. Lumberjack's chopper: Var.
- 59. "Chandelier" singer



Online AND In Person

For More Info 541-432-3102 JosephUMC.ORG Pastor Beth Estock

Enterprise Christian Church

85035 Joseph Hwy • (541) 426-3449 We have 'In-person worship" @ 9:00 am (Guidelines observed) Sunday School at 10:30

Parking Lot Radio/Facebook @ 9:00

David Bruce Pastor, Enterprise Christian Church

Lostine Presbyterian Church Discussion Group 9:30 AM

Worship Service 11:00 AM Childrens program during service Blog: dancingforth.blogspot.com

> 541.398.0597 Hwy 82, Lostine Stephen Kliewer, Minister

Wallowa **Assembly** of God

702 West Hwy 82 Wallowa, Oregon 541-886-8445

Sunday School • 9:am Worship Service • 10:am Pastor Tim Barton Visit Us on **f**

Seventh-Day Adventist

Church & School 305 Wagner (near the Cemetery)

P.O. Box N. Enterprise, OR 97828 Church 541-426-3751 School 541-426-8339 Pastor David Ballard 503-810-9886

Worship Hour 10:30 a.m. - Noon

Summil www.summitchurchoregon.org

Cloverleaf Hall • 668 NW 1st St. • Enterprise, OR 97828

at 9am

phone (message): 541-426-4633

web: gracelutheranenterprise.com

St. Patrick's Episcopal Church

100 NE 3rd St, Enterprise

NE 3rd & Main St

Summit Church

Sundays at 10 am

at the Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise

Pastor: David Pendleton

541-426-3439

Worship Service Sunday 9:30am

Christ Covenant Church

Pastor Terry Tollefson Church Office: 541-263-0505

Family Prayer - 9:30 AM **Worship - 10:00 AM**

723 College Street, Lostine

Enterprise Community Congregational Church

Join us at the BIG BROWN CHURCH

Sunday Worship 11:00 am Bible Study: Sundays, 9:30 am

Interim Pastor Rev Dr. Craig Pesti-Strobel 301 NE First St. • Enterprise, OR Find us on Facebook! 541.426.3044

