

HALF THE SIZE - DOUBLE THE ENTERTAINMENT

THE CENTENNIAL SPECIAL

By Angie Lato

It's no surprise that Vic Pankoski has spent much of this summer dividing his time between various events around Saskatchewan. He began debuting, or more correctly "reintroducing" his custom built Volatile around the province this spring.

Originally built in 1980, Vic dubbed it the "Anniversary Special" for Saskatchewan's 75th and first introduced the Volatile to Saskatoon at Pionera that same year. Now, 25 years later, he's polished off the old girl, given her a tune up and face lift complimentary of the occasion, and fittingly renamed it the "Centennial Special".

The 3HP Fairbanks Morse engine was acquired in 1979 for a mere \$15. Dated 1917, this classic engine spent its working life powering the machinery in a Blacksmith shop. After a winter of restoration, it was decided the engine should provide the power to transport itself around. A plan was devised and all the materials gathered.

A '54 Ford reversed rear axle provides the front wheel drive. A model "A" Ford transmission provides three speeds and reverse. A fabricated cone clutch engages the drive train, while Caterpillar bearings support the articulated steering in a GM steering gear box, Massey Harris chains and sprockets. And finally, 15" Dodge dual wheels all around. An impressive cast indeed.



Vic is also the past president and a lifetime member of the Threshermens Club, has since gone on to build two 1/2 size John Deere tractors. The Model "D" took ten years to complete while Vic was still being employed and traveling. Once retired in 2002, Vic gave his full attention to the Model "G" and had it completed in only ten months. Vic's Inspiration to build these tractors came from a gentleman out of Nebraska, Jewell Niemann. "He built the prototypes and then published a book outlining the major components needed, some drawings and guidance on how to put it all together." That was enough to peak Vic's interest and get him started.

Having showcased the Volatile in this year's Pionera in Saskatoon, the Vintage Machinery Show near Prince Albert and "Those Were The Days" in North Battleford, Vic is ready to take a well deserved break and in a few weeks will travel overseas. Vic has recently traced his family lines to the Ukraine and his trip there will be a rare opportunity to meet some of the younger generations of his extended family. This welcomed invitation will give Vic a chance to go back for a visit and rediscover his own heritage. With his keen eye for spotting the possible in what seems unimaginable, who knows what machinery or agricultural interest will capture his eye. His wife Natasha will most assuredly tell you that this is a man who will always find some new and challenging hobby to keep himself busy.

