

Local International Harvester Collectors chapter members purchased an old dealership building for a museum.



## Classic IH Dealership Opened As Museum

By Bruce Derksen, Contributing Editor

For Ben Trapani, President of the International Harvester Collectors (IHC) and the 270 members of Local Chapter 17, purchasing the Bartlow IH Dealership Building in their hometown of Millville, Penn., was all about maintaining history.

"When I walked into the building in 2001, I was infatuated with it," says Trapani. "Back then, I never thought owning it could happen. Now, we've got work parties with anywhere from 2 to 15 guys fixing things up, doing projects, and making sure it's as close as possible to what it originally was."

He explains that the building was a prototype of what IH wanted every dealership from Maine to California to be. Like a McDonald's fast-food restaurant, when you drove by, you'd know exactly what it was.

The front section measures 80 ft., and the shop area is 65 by 65 ft. square. Recent projects, completed largely by chapter volunteers, include a small library and meeting room with a conference table, chairs and bookshelves.

In 2008, Chapter 17 decided to purchase the building from Mr. Bartlow, the son of the original 1939 dealer, and his son. To make this possible, they ran auctions, attended shows, sold t-shirts, and participated in Red Power Roundups, the gathering hubs for IH equipment, dealers, and collectors. Mr. Bartlow, Sr. was paid his half of the \$150,000 in full, and his son financed the remainder at a

friendly deal for the club members.

In 2009, the club took possession and finished paying for the property in 2019. It's now proudly open as a museum from May through October.

Over the years, they've maintained the original flooring and updated whatever was necessary, like the electrical system. Everything was done to maintain the authenticity of the time.

"Nothing has really changed," Trapani says. "If you walk into it now, you'd think you were back in 1950. Nobody took a saw to cut things up. It's the way it was, period. We kept it that way to uphold the history."

Three 1831 reapers make up a portion of the display along with a 1962 dozer that was originally used as the test model for the IH construction branch in Chicago. An 8-ft. tall talking robot named "Tracto" greets guests as they arrive to view tractors, memorabilia, signage, cream separators, and milking machines.

"It's been a large undertaking with a lot of effort from many good people to make this work," Trapani says. "It's a very unique building and we're extremely thankful for it."

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**FARM SHOW**



In the 1930's, inventor Adam G. Fahnestock moved to nearby Lancaster County and developed a mower based largely on the horizontal scythe. He received a patent in 1940 for his invention, which he dubbed the Kuts-Al & Trims mower.

## Rotary Mower Was Ahead Of Its Time

Dave Stehman remembers his father and grandfather mowing cemetery plots in small-town Pennsylvania using a manual reel mower. Although the mower worked reasonably well, a second pass with a scythe was usually necessary to cut the tough grassy spikes that remained standing.

In the 1930's, inventor Adam G. Fahnestock moved to nearby Lancaster County and developed a mower based largely on the horizontal scythe. He received a patent in 1940 for his invention, which he dubbed the Kuts-Al & Trims mower.

"It was years ahead of its time," says Stehman. "I feel it was the first rotary mower ever made. Everything patented after was patterned after his invention."

His original mowers were driven by either a Tecumseh or Wisconsin motor running horizontal shafts and gearboxes above the blades. Later models did away with the gearboxes as they didn't stand up well to the rough work-

load. Instead, they used a vertical shaft with a belt drive and pulley system.

"They didn't throw grass everywhere and ran very quietly. The 2-in. long high carbon steel flail blades were bolted to long bars that ran constantly. The Kuts-Al & Trims mower would cut evenly in one pass and take care of all the tough grass and weeds," he says.

Blades spun at approximately 6,000 cuts per minute, cutting right to the edge of the frame. No adjustment for raising or lowering them was possible.

The mowers were also self-propelled with semi-pneumatic wheels driven by a separate belt on the motor.

In recent years, Stehman began collecting and rebuilding the various models and owns several of the Kuts-Al & Trims mowers.

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Antique canning jars come in a variety of colors and ways of sealing them. Their color and beauty make jars functional antiques for display or storage.



## Canning Jars Valued By Collectors

"The thing that's attractive about them is that they can be found in so many places and they're reasonable in cost," says Douglas Leybourne Jr., about collecting old canning jars. His jar journey began about 40 years ago when he paid \$1.50 for a box of old, dirty jars at a farm auction.

There wasn't anything valuable in the box, but since then he's found many jars that fall into the \$100 to \$1,000 value range. He knows of 100 or so worth \$10,000 and just three or four valued over \$30,000.

Through years of collecting, his passion

and knowledge led him to author the Red Book - a guide to canning jars.

The jars with thread molds at the top for screw-on lids that are common today are generically called mason jars, based on "Mason's Patent Nov. 30th, 1858" that is embossed on jars made between 1858 and 1920. After the patent expired, more than 500 companies made their own version of the glass-blown jars.

Original zinc and clamp closures in good condition are difficult to find, and add to the value of a jar, Leybourne says. The challenge

is to know the difference between old jars and fake versions made in China and India.

"There's a part of the book that shows reproductions and also the clamps, closures, and lids, so people know which ones are real," he says. "If the price looks too good to be true, it is. There's no wear on the fakes. A 160-year-old jar is going to have wear and not be perfect. They were hand-blown into a mold, so they have bubbles, chewing tobacco, and other bits in the glass. And that's what makes them wonderful."

Just as there are many fakes out there, antique and vintage jars are plentiful, found in barns, basements, attics, and yard sales. Leybourne cites the case of an Indiana woman who bought an old jar at a yard sale. It turned out to be a Black Olive jar that sold for \$10,000 because only 25 are known to exist.

He loves the wide variety of colors and

styles, and though jars can be found online, he prefers to physically see and touch the jars and negotiate prices with sellers at shops and shows. Many shows have resumed and can be found at [www.fohbc.org](http://www.fohbc.org) (The Federation of Historical Bottle Collectors).

"The trend is up for values," he says. "They are a functional antique to display or store stuff in them. The thing I value most is the friends I've made through this hobby."

To learn more about collecting or find out what jars are worth contact Leybourne about Red Book No. 12, The Collector's Guide to Old Fruit Jars (\$45; 500 pages).

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