

Student Proves Welding Skills Making Milk Can Stools

Alicia Robinson had to come up with a welding project for her high school vo-ag shop class. She came across an old, steel John Deere tractor seat and a lidless 10 gal. milk can that her father, Ernie bought at an auction. Putting the two together, she thought, would make an interesting stool.

Both the seat and the can looked like they were more rust than anything else. With a wire brush on a drill and some emery cloth, she stripped off all the rust. Since the can had no lid, they decided to weld a 4 1/2 by 8 1/2-in. strip of 1/4 in. sheet metal to the top of the can and then attach the seat to that.

Robinson knew the difference in weight of the can and the sheet metal would make welding the two together a little tricky, but she felt welding was the best way to fasten them together. So she practiced quite awhile on similar materials at different amperages and using different rods before making the weld. "I used a 6013 rod for that, and everything worked fine," she said.

Once she'd welded the sheet metal to the can, she ground it down to fit the curve of the can top, so there were no edges sticking out.

Then she had to weld the seat to the top of the can. An integral part of the seat was an upside down "U"-shaped bolt that screwed into the bottom.

"We had to grind that down, so the seat would fit flat on the can. That didn't leave



Alicia Robinson welded an old Deere tractor seat to the top of a 10-gal. milk can.

much room to reach in under the seat to make the weld. I did a lot of practicing before I felt confident to make that weld," she says. After trying out several rods and welder settings, she decided to use a 6011 rod to weld the seat to the can.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ms. Alicia Robinson, c/o Ernie and Janice Robinson, 2659 Q Ave., Villisca, Iowa 50864.

He Turned "Antler Art" Into Thriving Business

By Heather Smith Thomas

Every spring, Jim Daine of Salmon, Idaho, spends weeks hiking through nearby mountains looking for elk or deer antlers. He later turns them into lamps, chandeliers, coat racks, and much more.

"Antler Art" started out as a hobby but has grown into a thriving business.

"When I came west from New York in 1988, I spent two winters in the Bitterroot-Selway wilderness area of Montana and Idaho. I was like a kid in a candy shop - there were all these elk wintering there and all these horns to find. I'd sometimes hike 20 miles a day," says Jim, who now works part time on his wife's family ranch.

"In 1998 I made a portable shop from an old 16-ft. travel trailer. During calving season, I tow it to the main ranch, next to the pen where the cows need watching, and work on my antler projects while checking the cows," says Jim.

The things he makes are inspired by the horns themselves. "I try to look at a horn and think what it might make - what it will create that someone will look at and think is beautiful."

Daine allows customers to trade horns in toward the purchase of his creations. "Some folks have kept antlers from game they've killed, and don't have them mounted; they just have the horns and no real use for them. I can do custom work from someone's deer or elk horns, and make them into something nice. A few people have had me do something specific with their horns. They had a good hunt, and now have a work of art they can keep forever. A big floor lamp might be the antlers from three hunts."



Elk or deer antlers can be turned into lamps, chandeliers, coat racks, and much more, says Jim Daine.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jim Daine, Box 1135, Salmon, Idaho 83467 (ph 208 756-6847 or 2841).

No-No Bird Feeder Keeps Squirrels At Bay

No wood and no plastic on the new No-No Bird Feeder means squirrels can't damage it, says Sweet Corn Products L.L.C., Bloomfield, Neb.

The collapsible all metal bird feeder holds about 2 1/2 lbs. of sunflower seeds and can feed 10-15 birds at a time. Snow and rain blow through the mesh and drain out, leaving the seed to dry without the caking and spoilage found with other more traditional designs. A locking metal cap slides away for refilling. A metal ring around the base provides perching space while clinging birds can hang on the mesh itself.

Ray Lush, general manager, designed the birdfeeder after visiting a wild bird show where he discovered that most feeders are bulky, difficult to ship and store, and are subject to squirrel and other pest damage.

"I wanted a feeder that could ship or store flat, need no assembly, be easily refilled and would last longer," says Lush.

With the aid of the Nebraska Technology Business Assistance office, Lush found a Chinese manufacturer who makes wire mesh egg baskets for Chinese farmers. After about 18 months and six prototype designs, he introduced his new bird feeder at the BirdwatchAmerica Show in Atlanta this past January. In the first two months, he sold more than 8,000 of the bird feeders through dealers and distributors around the country and



Collapsible all metal bird feeder holds about 2 1/2 lbs. of sunflower seed and can feed 10 to 15 birds at a time. Snow and rain drain through mesh to keep seed dry. Birds perch on metal ring around base.

another 8,000 within the next three weeks. Since then business has continued to increase.

Lush sells the feeders direct to customers for \$19.95 plus \$4 shipping and handling.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Sweet Corn products L.L.C., P.O. Box 487, Bloomfield, NE 68718 (ph 402 373-2211).

Ma & Pa Jean Makers Run Thriving Mail Order Business

If you're tired of wimpy blue jeans and overalls that wear out soon after they're broken in, you'll be interested in "Ma and Pa" jean makers Doug and Elaine Haga of Monmouth, Ore.

The Hagas take orders from all over the world for their durable, handmade jeans that they call "the toughest work jeans in America." Customers must agree, because demand for their product has been growing since they first started the business, "Pedee Jeans," in 1983.

Named for their small community, Pedee Jeans are designed to last twice as long as regular commercial jeans, thanks to their lock stitch construction and reinforced stress areas.

"Many of our customers are in the logging industry, so they're made to stand up to the toughest working conditions in the world," says Doug.

The Hagas say the tough jeans take longer to make, slowing down production. However, the couple long ago opted for quality instead of quantity, and that decision has kept their product in high demand.

They produce only a couple thousand items of clothing per year in their home's converted garage. Doug cuts the 14 3/4-oz. American-made denim while Elaine does the majority of the sewing.

"We have four main styles - a full cut, heavy duty work jean, a double-thick front jean, a street jean, and a safety jean with a Kelvar pad in the front panel. This is also known as a ballistic pad and is required by OSHA for commercial use of chainsaws," says Doug.

The Hagas also recently started making black denim jeans. To compliment their jean business, the couple also makes "hickory



Pedee Jeans are designed to last twice as long as regular commercial jeans, thanks to their lock stitch construction and reinforced stress areas.

shirts" (railroad stripes) and various jackets, coats and vests.

The couple also does custom work. They recently filled an order for 30 pairs of jeans from a special pattern for a customer in Japan. They once made a pair of jeans with a 72-in. waist for someone in a women's prison in Idaho. Doug says the longest inseam length they have ever made was 48 inches, noting that the average is around 32 inches.

Prices for the "toughest work jeans in America" are: 1) full cut, heavy-duty work jeans - \$33.95 U.S., 2) double thick front - \$38.95, 3) safety panel jeans - \$38.95. Shipping is extra.

A sales brochure is available upon request.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Doug and Elaine Haga, Pedee Jeans, 11155 Kings Valley Hwy., Monmouth, Oregon 97361 (ph 503 838-5955).