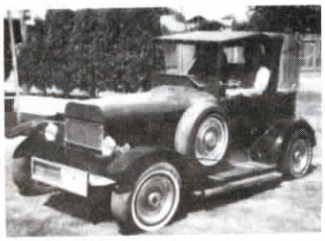
Reader Letters

Our daughter built this combination cat and dog house at her school shop. It was patterned after an idea she first saw in your magazine a year or so ago (Vol. 14, No. 4). The top insulated loft is for cats, who can jump up from the ground to a ledge in front of the entry hole. Kittens use a ramp that goes up the side of the house. The dog stays in the bottom half of the house. She really enjoyed the challenge of building the pet house and her classmates were anxious to help her.

We wanted to let you know that when you publish your magazine, students and housewives also look at your articles. ***(Larry & Sue Kalina, Roy, Mont.)***



It took me five winters to build this one-of-a-kind car. It consists of a Model T Ford body and a 16-in. Model A Ford pickup box mounted on a 3-in. steel pipe frame. It's powered by a 6-cylinder 232 cu. in. Rambler car engine and has a 3-speed transmission. It has an American Motors Matador car rear-end, older Ford cross-spring front axle, an International Scout radiator, Toyota car seats, Honda motorcycle park lights, cut-down Chevrolet El Camino grille, and a boat steering wheel. I made the front bumper from 1 in. sq. steel tubing and the rear bumper from chrome. It has a Volkswagen gas tank and the tail lights are from a Matador. I had a convertible top made for it that folds down.

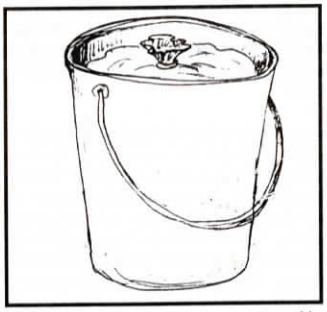
I had it inspected by the state patrol. It has a vehicle inspection number stamped on the door post and is licensed and titled as a 1984 home-made 2-door convertible so I was able to get regular car insurance for it. ***(Edwin W. Ruff, 940 Ironwood Dr., Moses Lake, Wash. 98837).***

I am 86 years young and in the spring of 1933, I made a self-propelled hay baler. I took the rack and cab off a long wheelbase International truck and mounted a stationary John Deere baler on back and put a seat on each side so my children could tie the bales. I powered it with a Model A Ford motor, adding a governer. I mounted a 5-ft. wide pickup on the side and powered it from the right rear wheel with corn binder drive chain. I had a platform across the back of the feed table to stand on to hand-feed the baler with a pitchfork. I made 85-lb. bales, putting out as many as 1,100 in one day. Engineers from John Deere, Case and IH found out about it and came out to follow me around the field, taking a lot of pictures. They were out there every couple weeks. I had pictures of it until my home burned down, a fire in which I also lost my 18-year-old daughter and my wife. The companies didn't come out with a pull-behind baler until 1937 and it only made 45-lb. bales. ***(M. Albert Wakeman, Rt. 2, Box 363, Roscommon, Mich. 48653)***

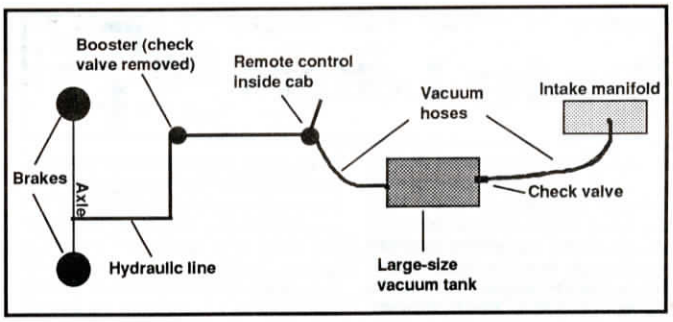
I do not have automatic header control on my 1977 MF 750 combine so I attached a CB antenna to the top of the feederhouse. The antenna runs up through a flat piece of metal. I wrapped a piece of tape on the antenna. When the tape lines up with the metal, the platform is at the correct height. Works very well. ***(L. Devere Roth, Rt. 2, Box 34, Gridley, Ill. 61744)***

Enclosed is a photo of a 1936 Model C Case combine, which was the first truly one-man operated combine on the market. It took a 10-ft. cut. I had one like this myself back then and bought this one to restore. ***(Edwin Bredemeier, Rt. 1, Box 13, Steinauer, Neb. 68441)***

I'm seriously concerned about the potential safety hazard of an idea featured in FARM SHOW's Vol. 15, No. 5. A photo showed a wire unloading bracket that fits on the carrier bracket of an ATV. While this looks like a neat idea, I'm concerned about the potential hazard of unwinding a roll of wire that close to the operator. Having rolled and unrolled a large quantity of barbed wire while growing up on a farm in North Dakota, I can assure you that it can be dangerous. I suggest that anyone who tries this idea should construct a screened barrier between the roll of wire and the operator. The guard should be at least as tall and wide as the operator. ***(Wesley W. Gunkel, professor, Cornell University, Dept. of Ag Engineering, Ithaca, New York)***



Here's a handy way to transport water without spilling when you don't have a closed container handy. It's especially handy when you're carrying long distances - to livestock or perhaps to fill the radiator of a machine in the field, etc. Lets you haul water in a large bucket by lining the bucket with a plastic garbage bag. Fill the bag with water, then secure the top with rubber band or twistie. Even if the bucket leaks, you won't lose any water and it won't slop out if you have to carry it in a wheelbarrow or the back of a pickup. You'll still have a full bucket when you get there. ***(Heather Smith Thomas, Box 215, Salmon, Idaho 83467)***



In Vol. 15, No. 5, a reader wrote a letter about a way to put brakes on a grain-hauling trailer built out of a converted truck (with the cab and engine cut off). I have converted and built many trailers, both gooseneck and tag-along, from old trucks and have come up with a cheap and easy process for activating brakes.

I use the same hydraulic brake system already on the truck, by merely bolting the existing vacuum booster back onto the frame above the axle or axles, eliminating the actuating mechanism in the booster slave cylinder unit. Then I run heavy vacuum hoses from the trailer up to a vacuum control valve mounted on the dash, steering column or floor of the towing vehicle and from there to the intake manifold on the engine. This method alone works but can be a bit slow reacting and tricky to operate. But by adding a reserve vacuum tank with a check valve to the manifold side, the system has enough volume to handle the brakes normally and becomes much more effective. A tank with several gallons of volume should be used.

To convert the booster (now mounted on the trailer) from foot pedal operation to remote vacuum control requires different methods, depending on the equipment. For instance, some trucks only require you to remove the actuating rod and add a couple O-rings. Others require jamming the control box itself onto the booster.

Vacuum control valves are available from many truck and trailer suppliers. Diesel-powered towing equipment also requires a vacuum pump. ***(A. Beaudoin, Christopher Lake, Sask. S0J 0N0 Canada)***

In Vol. 15, No. 5, you had a story about a problem with paint jobs on Ford and GM pickups. Well, I have a 1988 Chevy van with 35,000 miles on it. I bought it with 12,000 miles and had the warranty transferred. I have a rust problem on the left side rocker panel where the running boards were put on (as an aftermarket package). Now GM claims that when the screws were put in to hold the running boards in place that voided their 6-year, 100,000 mile rust warranty. However, there's nothing about that in their printed warranty material. In fact, recently I purchased a 1992 Chevy pickup and the dealer put screws in to hold the rear mud guards on and said it would not void the warranty.

Is there any way I can get information about problems other owners may have had with this model? ***(Floyd Smith, Rt. 2, Box 136, Conde, S. Dak. 57434)***

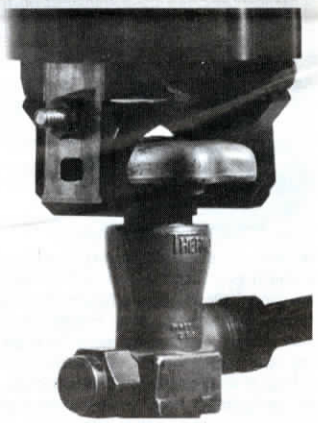
Editor's Note: Contact the Center for Auto Safety, 2001 "S" St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20009 (ph 202 328-7700). They keep tabs on problems with vehicles and work to force recalls of vehicles with significant problems.

Many home or farm shops have M.I.G. or T.I.G. welders which means the owners have a tank of CO2 or argon handy. These gases work great to keep paint in cans fresh. Next time before closing the lid on a can of paint, add 4 to 5 sec. of regulated C02 or argon to the can and seal it inside. Both C02 and argon are heavier than air so they form an innert layer over the paint, reducing or even eliminating the "skinning over" of the remaining paint in the can. ***(Paul Jaecques, 1027 S. Delphos, Kokomo, Ind. 46902)***

I always read the many and varied articles in FARM SHOW with keen interest. However, the story in Vol. 15, No. 6 concerning the skid steer loader built out of an old Honda car left me failing to comprehend. My question is about the "4-cyl. engine with the 1,250 cu. in. engine". Is this part of Honda's inventory? It sounds just too awesome to be operated with the human hand! Please tell me the proof reader was caught napping. ***(Eugene G. Johnson, Rapid River, Mich.)***

Editor's Note: That should have read 1,250 cc's (cubic centimeters), since the car is foreign and therefore metric.

Thanks for publishing my "worst buy" complaint in your Best & Worst Buy section of Vol. 15, No. 5. The problem was with my Vermeer baler. Soon after your report appeared, a representative from Vermeer Manufacturing called and said they had a "fix" for my baler. The update kit consists of a spiral roller with a knife. He was sure that would solve our problem starting bales. ***(Herman Dougherty, Bogard, Mo. 64622)***



Anyone who's ever forgotten to turn off the valve on a compressed gas tank and later found that expensive gas had been wasted will be interested in this new "valve alarm" that clamps onto the valve on top of any compressed gas cylinder.

The "valve alarm" is secured by a wing nut and becomes an extension of the original valve knob. The alarm is activated whenever the valve is open. It comes in two models. On one model a red LED light flashes at two-second intervals, and on the other a signal sounds at one-minute intervals. It saves you money by eliminating waste and also reduces health and safety hazards. If a farmer is busy he'll often shut off the controls at the torch, but forget to shut off the valve on the cylinder. When he comes back later he finds the gas is gone. Leaking gas can also be dangerous. Concentrations of acetylene, hydrogen or propane as low as two percent in the air can result in an explosion.

The new alarm can be used on oxygen, acetylene, carbon dioxide, hydrogen, nitro-