

Outhouses Are Now “In”

The time has come for outhouse appreciation, says Dottie Booth of Jamison, Penn., who started preserving the history of outdoor privies 14 years ago. She has since made a business out of her hobby, selling photographs of picturesque outhouses on posters, note cards, playing cards and various other outhouse-themed products.

People who buy Booth's items often share amusing anecdotes so she wrote a book called "Nature Calls: The History, Lore and Charm of Outhouses" that features personal accounts as well as historical fact, outhouse trivia, frequently asked questions, and photos of outdoor biffies. The subject is treated seriously, not as "bathroom humor."

"The book includes pictures of outhouses from around the world, in places like India and Greece. There is a chapter in the book about presidential and celebrity outhouses, too," Booth says. "There are also a couple of pictures of two-story outhouses in locations like Minnesota and northern Maine where deep snow would sometimes make the first floor inaccessible in winter. The seats on the top level were staggered with the seats on the lower level so that the same pit could be used."

Most outhouses had two holes (seats) but there were also four-seaters and six-seaters, according to Booth. In fact, since writing the book, she became aware of an eight-hole outhouse that accommodated a large group of farm workers who often needed to use the facilities all at the same time when coming in from working in the fields.

Outdoor latrines are a part of every family's history, and most older people have at least one funny story about them, according to Booth. For instance, some people remember using corncobs instead of paper.

Booth is a member of the Outhouse Preservation Society that was established in 1994 and eventually led to the establishment of "The Outhouse Museum," which opened last summer in Liverpool, Nova Scotia. The museum boasts over 3,000 artifacts and collectibles pertaining to outhouse lore.

Outhouses are even catching on as lawn decorations. Individuals are either preserving original outhouses or building new ones to use as storage sheds.

"There are people paying a lot of money - as much as \$6,000 - to buy original outhouses through auctions and on Internet sites like eBay," says Booth.



Dottie Booth has made a business out of preserving the history of outhouses. She even wrote a book on the subject that includes pictures of outhouses from around the world.

Booth's book sells for \$12.95. She welcomes additional photos and stories from readers.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dottie Booth, Nature Calls, Ltd., 1538, Springfield Court, Jamison, Penn., 18929 (email:

ntrcallz@aol.com) or The Outhouse Museum, Rossignol Cultural Centre, Box 940, 205 Church St. Liverpool, Nova Scotia, Canada B0T 1K0 (ph/fax 902 354-3067; email: rossignolcc@auracom.com, website: www.outhousemuseum.com).



"People really enjoy riding in it and can't believe how comfortable it is," says Dale McPeake, who converted a 1997 Chevy Tahoe into this 12-passenger "fun bus."



The 20-ft. long vehicle seats two in front and five down each side on 8-ft. long wooden benches. A blue vinyl canopy covers entire passenger seating area.

12-Passenger “Fun Bus” Built Out Of Chevy Tahoe

If you've ever considered turning your farm into a tourist destination as a part-time source of income, you'll be interested in this 12-passenger "shuttle bus" built by Dale McPeake, Scotts Hill, Tenn., out of a 1997 Chevy Tahoe.

The 20-ft. long vehicle seats 12, five down each side on 8-ft. long wooden benches. He uses it to haul people around his farm. It has 2-ft. high rails made from 2 by 4's that extend along the sides and back. A swing-out door on back, along with fold-out steps, provides access. The Tahoe's two original front bucket seats are still in place, with a TV-VCR set between them. A blue vinyl canopy covers the entire passenger seating area. The vehicle is powered by the Tahoe's original Vortec 350 cu. in. gas engine.

"People really enjoy riding in it and can't believe how comfortable it is," says McPeake, who uses the rig to give joy rides to family and friends and for guests at weddings and other local events. "It's built with quality workmanship and is definitely one of a kind. When the vehicle is full of people it looks something like a scene out of the Beverly Hillbillies. We run all over the country with it."

The Tahoe had been rear-ended in an accident and had a bent frame. He first removed the Tahoe's sheet metal, including the front bumper and grill, and then cut the vehicle in

half behind the driver's seat. He cut a 1990 Chevy 1/2-ton pickup in half to lengthen the frame by 10 in. Angle iron was used to build a frame that supports a plywood body. The bed was made out of 3-in. channel iron cross members, and 2 by 8's were used to make the floor. The vertical supports for the canopy are made out of 1 1/2-in. dia. exhaust pipe. The canopy is strapped to a frame made out of the same pipe.

The bus's hood is made of plywood and has a hood scoop on top of it made out of cedar 2 by 4's with LED lights located inside the scoop. There are about \$1,000 worth of LED lights strung along both sides of the vehicle and across the back. Between the headlights there's a Chevrolet emblem outlined in red that lights up with blue neon lights at night. A curved Lexan windshield extends from the hood up to the canopy.

"When people first see it they ask 101 questions about it," says McPeake. "The LED and neon lights make quite a display at night. Because the windshield is curved outward, the wind shoots right around the bench seats as I drive. It runs very smooth on the highway. This summer I plan to drive our family in it to the Smoky Mountains."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dale McPeake, Box 185, Scotts Hill, Tenn. 38374 (ph 731 549-9712).



Swing-out door on back, along with fold-out steps, provides access. Note TV-VCR set between rig's two original front bucket seats.