

He Built His Own Backyard Roller Coaster

Jeremy Reid likes the adrenaline rush he gets from roller coaster rides so much that he built his own. The 444-ft. long track rises to a height of 17 ft. above ground with a drop of 20 ft., thanks to the hill it's built on. The tightest turn has an 18-ft. radius and an angle of 50 degrees. The single-seat-carriage coaster reaches a top speed of 20 mph during the 1 min. ride.

"I've always been fascinated by roller coasters and always excited to ride," says Reid.

Now an engineer at Tinker Air Force Base near Oklahoma City, Reid started working on his roller coaster while studying engineering in college.

"You have to have a good background in physics and engineering to build one safely," says Reid. "You have to be very careful and know a lot about strength of materials, physics and the dynamics of a ride."

To help him in his design work, Reid wrote several computer programs to calculate data for the track profile and to demonstrate the aerodynamics of his design. He built the entire track out of pressure-treated southern pine. Over the course of construction, he used 2,900 board feet of lumber, 7,000 screws and nails, and other parts that came to \$5,500 in costs.

A 1-hp electric motor powers a 3/4-in. pitch



Jeremy Reid, an engineer, wrote several computer programs to calculate data for the track profile and to demonstrate the aerodynamics of his design for the roller coaster he built in three years. Lumber, screws, nails and other parts cost about \$5,500.

roller chain that pulls the cart to the release point atop the biggest drop. The wooden runners of the carriage slide on metal strips on the straight coaster rails. On curves he used a hard plastic, as it was easier to cut. The only part of the construction he needed help with

was to lift several of the largest supports into place.

The project, which he started in 1997, took Reid about three years to complete. "I have people asking for rides all the time but, mostly

for insurance reasons, only myself, my dad and my brother have ridden on it," says Reid. "If you build your own, you have to be very careful. There are a number of ways a person can get hurt."

Old Scrap Finds New Home As Art

Old steel wagon wheels, Harvestore unloader chain, disc blades and pipe are all fair game when Wallace Keller gets busy with his welding torch. They might just become a 1,500-lb., 24-ft. long reptile or other creature that Keller sees in them.

"Ideas just come to me," he says. "I look at different parts and see pieces of an uncompleted critter."

For example, mower guards and combine parts sort of suggest bird beaks, while two milker buckets welded back to back suggest the body of a bird. When Keller puts it all together, he has what he calls his dairy roosters.

He started making junk into art after being forced to retire in 1992 after a heart attack. After a few years, his kids suggested selling things. Today, he sells about 200 pieces a year at art fairs and to collectors and folks who just stop by his home. Best of all, he says, he can justify picking up just about anything at an auction or flea market. He also visits the scrap bins at local implement dealers.

He has made cannons out of pipes and various machine parts and a 6-ft. tall skeleton out of pipe wrenches. He makes turtles out of upside down waterers from dairy barns. Perhaps his most popular creation has been the

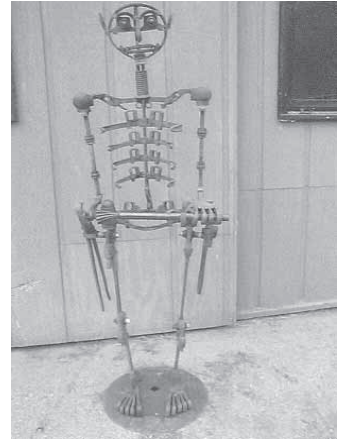
"Tin Man" fashioned out of hot water and water softener tanks, pipe and electrical conduit.

His artwork more than pays for itself. The Plumber sold for \$350, and a dragon went for \$500. He makes "mosquito" bodies out of rocker arms from Chevy 350 engines, nuts for eyes and Fiskar hand trimmer handles for wings. He makes 30 of them at a time and sells them for \$12 each.

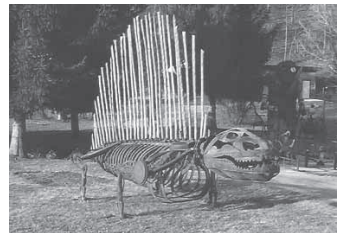
His most expensive project yet at \$800 was a sign for a nephew's horse farm. The farm's name is "top of the world", so Keller decided to make a 5-ft. diameter globe. He found disc blades to match the curve of the globe, and cut and bolted them in place to replicate the continents. He then added equator and longitude lines.

What Keller enjoys most of all is meeting people who stop by his home or his booth at art fairs. "I had a family with three little kids stop by to have their picture taken with the tin man," he says. "I have met some really super people."

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Wallace Keller sells about 200 pieces a year at art fairs and to collectors. "Tin Man" (above left) was made from hot water, tanks, pipe and electrical conduit. Plumber (above right) sold for \$350.



Keller says one of the best things about his hobby is that he can justify picking up just about anything at an auction or flea market.

Gazebo Built Around Farm's Well

When the hip roof over the well in his backyard rotted out, Walter Murray, Bostic, N.C., decided to tear it off and put a 52 by 72-in. table on top complete with slide-out drawers on both sides.

Then he built a 10-ft. dia. gazebo around the well that has inward-facing benches around the sides, a ceiling fan, and fluorescent light bulbs. A cupola graces the roof. The gazebo is painted tan with a gray roof to match the colors of Murray's house. Even the well's brick color matches the color of the brick on the house.

"It makes a great place for family get-togethers. Everyone thinks it's real nice," says Murray. "The benches have room for about

15 people."

The well is about 30 years old. It measures 30 in. in dia. and has a 57-ft. deep submersible pump and pressure tank. After building the gazebo, but before building the benches, Murray poured a concrete floor.

"There was a lot more work to it than meets the eye, but I'm proud how it turned out," says Murray. "I used lengths of string to get the posts perfectly straight and to space them exactly apart. The table slides to the side when we need access to the well."

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