

Editor's Notebook



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First-Of-Its-Kind Zero Turn Mower

Contributing editor Jim Ruen spotted Cub Cadet's new zero turn mower at the National Farm Machinery Show in Louisville. It's the first zero turn conventional riding mower with a mid-mount deck. Jim was impressed.



New mower turns in its tracks thanks to a just-patented steering system.

"It gives you the advantages and comfort of a conventional tractor along with the ability to make 360° turns like a front-mount mower," notes Jim. "Cub Cadet patented a new technology that made the zero turn possible. It synchronizes the front steering with independent transmissions on each of the rear wheels so when you crank the steering wheel, one rear wheel speeds up and the other slows down or reverses to make the tight turns. There's never been anything like it."

Powered by either a 20 or 25 hp Kohler OHV twin cylinder engine, the mower comes with a 46 or 50-in. deck.

His Dodge Pickup Has Almost A Million Miles

Ray Melhuish, Hugo, Colo., has more than 983,000 miles on his 2002 Dodge 2500 3/4-ton, 4-WD pickup equipped with a Cummins 6.2-liter diesel engine and 6-speed manual transmission.

"I have a custom horse hauling business and use this pickup to pull a 5-stall, 24-ft. stock trailer. So it hasn't been babied,"



Melhuish sometimes drives as much as 200,000 miles in a year, delivering horses across North America.

says Melhuish. "I deliver horses to breeders, buyers and sellers, and even race horse trainers. I've hauled horses to every state and province in Canada and also to Mexico. Yet my pickup has no rust - the body and paint work are all original."

Melhuish changes engine oil about every 3,500 miles and the transmission oil every 50,000 miles. He replaced the factory clutch at 100,000 miles and again at 600,000 miles. He also replaced the transmission at 650,000 miles. The engine's head was totally rebuilt at one point, and the fuel injector pump has been replaced three times. "I use exhaust brakes so I redo the brakes only about every 300,000 miles. I bought the pickup with a 5-year or 100,000-mile warranty so that didn't cover me for long."

He attributes the outstanding longevity of the pickup partly to its factory quality, and partly to having a good mechanic. "I'm usually gone for three to six weeks at a time, and when

I get home my mechanic uses a computer to check everything out. He's the best diesel mechanic I've ever met (Don Otto, D & L Services, Limon, Colo.).

He uses Rotella T synthetic oil, which is recommended by Dodge.

Melhuish says that when he started his horse hauling business 10 years ago, he used to change vehicles every two years or so. However, when Dodge switched to a new engine with their 2003 models, he decided to keep his 2002 model. "I don't like changes, and I was apprehensive about the computer systems they were building into the new engine so I waited to see how they would work out. I'm glad I waited, because I haven't been very impressed with Dodge pickups made from 2003 on. The owners I talk to seem to have many more problems than I've had.

"I think the Dodge 2002 model was the last of the good Dodges before they tried installing fancy stuff to quiet the engines down. Now they're all having problems. My mechanic says it's because they doubled the pressure coming through the injector pump to make the engine run more quietly. My daughter sold her 2002 model and bought a 2004 model. She had trouble with it and also bought 2005 and 2006 models, but she had trouble with them, too. And all she uses her pickup for is to drive to work."

Melhuish plans to drive the truck until he reaches the 1 million mile mark. "Then I plan to park the pickup until my 5-year-old grandson is old enough to drive it. He'll be able to drive a vintage Dodge truck."

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Gardening With Liquor

Giving houseplants diluted whiskey, vodka, gin or tequila stunts the growth of a plant's leaves and stems but doesn't affect the blossoms, says William Miller, director of Cornell's Flower Bulb Research Program, who says home gardeners looking for a way to keep their larger, top-heavy flowers from tipping over are most interested in the idea.

Miller worked primarily with daffodils and tulips. He got the idea from a gardener who had discovered gin would keep her paperwhite narcissi from growing too tall and flopping over. Miller began experimenting to see if alcohol truly would work as a growth retardant. Beer and wine did not work due to sugar content. But the harder distilled drinks did. Solutions greater than 10 percent killed the plants. The ideal mix is 4 to 6 percent alcohol, mixed with water. The stems were stunted 30 to 50 percent in growth but the flowers were just as large and fragrant as usual.

Miller plans to continue his research with other flowers as well as some tall-growing vegetables, like tomatoes and peppers.

Liberty Quotes

"A democracy is always temporary in nature; it simply cannot exist as a permanent form of government. A democracy will continue to exist up until the time that voters discover they can vote themselves generous gifts from the public treasury. From that moment on, the majority always votes for the candidates who promise the most benefits from the public treasury, with the results being that every democracy will finally collapse due to loose fiscal policy, which is always followed by a dictatorship. *Sir Alex Fraser Tyler (1742-1813)*

"Liberty is worth whatever the country is worth. It is by liberty that man has a country; It is by liberty he has rights." *Henry Giles*

"This freedom, this liberty, this beautiful and terrible thing, needful to man as air, usable as earth." *Robert Earl Hayden*

"The greatest glory of a free-born people is to transmit that freedom to their children." *William Havard*

"All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing." *Edmund Burke*

"Liberty is not a means to a higher political end. It is the highest political end." *Lord Acton*

"Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities because it has been said it is the quality which guarantees all others." *Sir Winston Churchill*

"In the fight between you and the world, back the world." *Frank Zappa*

"Whenever you find you are on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect." *Mark Twain*

"Politicians are the same all over. They promise to build a bridge even where there is no river." *Nikita Khrushchev*

Videos Prevent Feuds

One way to prevent family feuds after you've passed on is to act now with a video camera - while you still can. Simply make a video of yourself explaining your will and why you made the decisions you did. You can soften the blow to your loved ones and express your affection for them, while making your end-of-life wishes clear.

This is especially important for newly diagnosed Alzheimer's patients who may want to create messages while they're still able to articulate their thoughts.

A peace-loving grandmother in Victoria, B.C., recently turned this idea into a business called "Legacy Films." Barbara Strachan films people who want to leave something gentler behind than the cold, hard language of their legal will.

Making this type of video provides an opportunity to emphasize how you want your remains dealt with, give reasons for your decisions, give advice to surviving relatives, and can even be a way to patch things up with estranged family members.

This "voice from the grave" allows you to make it clear who's to receive what in terms of property and possessions and, more importantly, why. If done properly, it can allow the bereaved to avoid arguments over aspects of the will that they may not otherwise have fully understood.

"If the family members have not visited with the writer of the will recently, they may wonder if the person was fully mentally alert when making the decisions," Strachan says.

There are dramatized examples on Strachan's website at www.familyvideolinks.com.

The Early Days Of Computing

Nowhere has the wonder of invention paid more dividends than in the world of computing, as this news photo from 1956 illustrates. It shows a forklift hoisting a 2,000-lb. IBM 4.4 mb hard disk drive into an airplane. It consisted of a stack of 50 24-in. disks and you could lease one at the time for \$35,000. To make a comparison, today you can buy flash drives that weigh only an ounce or so yet hold up to 4,000 mb or more!



Photo from 1956 shows a forklift loading a computer hard drive into an airplane.

My Youthful Drug Problem

I had a drug problem when I was young:

- I was drug to church on Sunday morning.
- I was drug to church for weddings and funerals.
- I was drug to family reunions and community socials no matter the weather.
- I was drug by my ears when I was disrespectful to adults.
- I was drug to the woodshed when I disobeyed my parents, told a lie, brought home a bad report card, did not speak with respect, spoke ill of a teacher or the preacher. Or if I didn't put forth my best effort in everything that was asked of me.
- I was drug out to pull weeds in mom's garden and flower beds and cockleburbs out of dad's fields.
- I was drug to the homes of family, friends, and neighbors to help out those who had no one to mow the yard, repair the clothesline, or chop some firewood.

The drugs from that time are still in my veins. They affect my behavior today in everything I do, say and think. They are stronger than cocaine, crack or heroin.

A woman invited her husband's boss to their house for dinner. All during the meal, the woman's 3-year-old girl kept staring at the boss, who was sitting right across from her. The girl hardly ate any food. She just stared at him with eyes wide open.

The man checked his tie, felt his face for food, and patted his hair in place, but nothing stopped her from staring at him. He tried his best to ignore her but finally it was too much for him. He asked her, "Why are you staring at me?"

Everyone had noticed her behavior so the table went quiet for her response. The little girl said, "I just want to see how you drink like a fish!"