

# Reader Letters



I got tired of tailgaters and thought this sign on the back of my livestock trailer might help. (Joe Riccobuano, Pittsburg, Calif.)

I would like to ask your readers for help in the ongoing restoration of a Hamacheck stationary pea viner built in the 1930s.



We need manuals and whatever information some of your senior readers might remember about these machines. For the past four years we have planted two acres of peas and have had this machine in operation on the Fourth of July weekend. We need help to keep it running. The machine is in Central Wisconsin. (Jeff Lang, Newport News, Va.; jhunsch@gmail.com)

I read the article in your last issue about a fellow who raises and lowers his home-built shop door with a power drill. I found a cheaper way to do the same thing. I use a Harbor Freight 12-volt electric winch that I bought for \$46. I mounted the winch above the door in the center and ran the cable down the outside of the door. I fastened a length of steel tubing across the bottom of the door to give it support so it would not bend the panel. The winch is powered by a 12-volt battery which is kept charged by a battery "float" charger (also from Harbor Freight). You could use a 12-volt converter as well. (William Gitter, 895 Bett Thyatira Rd., Coldwater, Miss. 38618)

I'm an electrical engineer and I have a partial solution to the current energy crisis. To increase electrical efficiency, we need to convert households to three phase power. At factories, high-powered industrial machines use three phase power because it's 50 percent more efficient than single phase power. The reason we have single phase power is that when electricity was first delivered to the house, it was to power light bulbs, which don't need much power. Now we have refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, and other appliances that gobble up power. An air conditioner alone would consume 30 percent less power if it ran on three phase power. (Lloyd Woytaszek, Alpena, Mich.)

I wonder if your readers have ever seen a garlic bulb that weighs more than 4 lbs. Pictured is one of seven that I raised like this. To grow it, I just bought some regular elephant ear garlic at the local gro-



cery store and planted 12 of them last September. To my surprise, when I pulled them up this May, this is what I found. (Gene Martin, 977 CR 413, Buckholtz, Texas 76518)

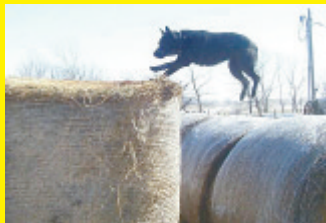
This is an old idea but it works. I recently had a gopher in my lawn. I tried smoke bombs but they didn't work. So I bought a pack of Juicy Fruit gum and cut each stick into pieces lengthwise, rolled them up and put them in the tunnels. No more new mounds. They can't digest the gum. (Charlene Patterson)

Enjoyed your roundup of the worst car engines ever in Vol. 32, No. 1. But you forgot the sorriest excuse for an engine that GM ever cranked out - the air-cooled flat six Corvair. Made of aluminum, they weren't even heavy enough for a boat anchor. The only way to cure the oil leaks was to completely drain and flush, stuffing the engine with floor dry, and then weld the engine shut so no more oil could be put in!

And how about the 4-cyl. in-line Chevy Vega with siliconized aluminum walls too hard for the rings to seat? In a Vega stuffed with a V-8 engine, most flat-rate manuals allotted several hours just for spark plug replacement. In fact, it was simpler and faster to take the entire engine out by crane. (David Nicholas, Martinsville, Ohio)

In Vol. 32, No. 3, a reader sent in an idea about how he hangs 3-pt. mounted equipment by rope between a set of posts to make it easier to hook up. While it may be an effective method, it's also categorically unsafe. There's no mention of a secure method to prevent rope or post failure. The swinging equipment might also prove a big temptation for kids. (Greg Burke, Columbus, Montana)

I'm part of the Australian Cattle Dog Rescue organization of Illinois. Our goal is to rescue dogs and place them into re-



sponsible homes. There are so many Australian cattle dogs that are turned into shelters because owners don't want to take time for them or they can't afford to feed them. While awaiting adoption, the cattle dogs live on a farm where we evaluate their temperaments and cattle driving ability, and also teach them basic obedience. All dogs are fully vetted, including neutering, deworming, vaccination, heartworm, and microchipped. Anyone interested in adopting an outstand-

ing cattle dog should contact us. The accompanying photo shows our own cattle dog, Smokey, who rides on our 4-wheeler and on my husband's Bobcat when he's feeding cattle. He'll hop down off the ATV to retrieve pop cans in the ditch and bring them back to us. He's very smart, as are most cattle dog breeds. (Diane Thompson, Peoria, Ill. ph 618 266-7065 or 618 315-8800; thompdh@msn.com; www.petfinder.com/shelters/1438.html)



The information published in the last couple issues about generating hydrogen from water is promoting a scam. All these products promote the same basic scheme - use electricity from the car's battery to break water down into hydrogen and oxygen, feed the gases into the engine, and increase gas mileage. It sounds good but it violates a fundamental law of physics. The First Law of Thermodynamics tells us that it's impossible to get more energy out of a closed system than you put in. Energy is needed to split water into hydrogen and oxygen. The source of the energy used is from the car's electrical system. The car's engine has to work harder to supply the electrical energy than it would if the system weren't in place.

Do some research on this topic and provide your readers with the truth about this hokum. There are lots of legitimate, alternative energy ideas out there. This is not one of them. (Joseph Ranagan, Sangerville, Maine; jranagan@wildblue.net)



We use wasted heat to dry the towels used on our dairy farm, by directing heat from an air vacuum pump into our clothes dryer. Heat from the pump goes through ductwork into the dryer's heating element manifold. The element had already failed so that was the only conversion needed. A 3-in. "T" is used on the pump's exhaust so as not to restrict the air flow. (Joe Flynn, 30496 550th St., Plainview, Minn. 55964 ph 507 876-2335 or 507 251-4313)



Here's a photo of a hitch attachment I made for my small tractor. I've never seen another one like it.

I welded two metal arms to the tractor's 3-pt. drawbar hitch in order to hook up to the upper link. This allows me to use a ball hitch without the drawbar spinning, which lets me hook up to a trailer without having to raise the hitch. Works great. (Joe Monroe, 7291 South 75 East, Shelbyville, Ind. 46176; jmonroe@svs.net)

I like to shoot skeet but wanted a better skeet throwing system, so I built one for the back of my pickup using sq. steel tubing to build a frame that mounts in the receiver hitch. It lets me sit on the pickup tailgate and shoot skeet without any fuss. My Clay King target thrower bolts on top of the frame. All I do is pull on the target thrower's string to release the thrower's spring-loaded mechanism that fires the skeet. I keep a box of skeet right next to me so I can keep firing as long as I want.

The target thrower was originally designed to mount on a spare tire that you lay on the ground, but I had trouble keeping it from moving around and staying in one place due to the force of the thrower. The frame provides a solid place to mount the thrower so it won't move. Another advantage is that I don't have to dig out my spare tire every time I want to shoot skeet. (Joseph L. Bellor, 2578 Reed Rd., Lapeer, Mich. 48446 ph 810 667-2854)



Here's a photo of a tractor I built from a Massey Harris 35 combine. I got the idea from a FARM SHOW story that was published many years ago, in which someone built a tractor from a Deere 45 combine. I chose the Massey Harris model because it's smaller and has a shaft on the transmission to hook 4-WD to, which I plan to add later on. I also plan to add a hood and a grill. I narrowed the combine by 2 ft., lowered everything and turned it all around to run like a regular tractor.

Some Massey Harris 35's had turning brakes but mine doesn't, so I'm now looking for another Massey Harris 35 combine. I hope to paint it this summer. My grand children and I have a lot of fun driving it. (Charles Macomber, 208 Fawn Rd., Gore, Va. 22637)



I came up with an easy-to-use, 4-wheeled "sprinkler cart" for watering my garden. The sprinkler mounts on top of a vertical steel bracket at the middle of the cart. I attach a garden hose to the sprinkler and through a metal loop at one end of the cart, and tie a rope to a bracket at the other end. Then I set the cart at one end of the garden, take the rope to the other end, and pull the cart down between the rows. I can pull the cart in either direction without getting wet. I built the cart out of sq. tubing and used threaded rod to attach the wheels. (Doug Pinder, P.O. Box 540, Lister, British Columbia, Canada V0B 0Y0)