



This 1941 Massey Harris combine near Grand Prairie, Alberta, is a sentimental reminder of times gone by for its owner.

A Tribute To A Great Machine

Perhaps it's fitting that from its 8-ft. high perch along a busy highway, Dick Bacon's 1941 Massey Harris 21 combine can "see" a lot of country.

That's because the 68-year-old machine also saw a lot of country in its younger days, as it made its way around Alberta and the U.S. with a custom harvesting crew. Today the combine is a unique landmark near Grande Prairie, Alberta, a sentimental reminder of three generations of farming for its owner. It meant so much to Bacon that he literally put the combine on a pedestal.

The machine has a canvas table, a 12-ft. header, and can hold about 43 bu. of wheat, according to Bacon.

"It still has its original drive wheels. I kept it in top notch condition and if I couldn't get parts, I made them," he says. "I built the cab and put the straw chopper on it myself."

Dick's dad bought the combine new for \$2,200, and used it on the family farm near Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. When Dick turned 16, he started running the combine for his dad – doing so for 5 years until the farm was sold in 1947. At that point, Dick joined a custom harvest crew and worked the combine for 5 years from Oklahoma to Canada.

The final leg of the old combine's work

life began when Dick bought a farm near Grande Prairie, Alberta. He used it there for another 17 years, before retiring it in 1969.

"It was my wife's favorite combine – she ran it when the kids were small. Two of my sons operated it later," he explains. "Three generations of Bacons ran this combine. The reason I put it up on display was as a tribute to a great machine. These units were very well accepted and it was the first thing the American farmers would ask you... if you had a Massey Harris, then you had a job."

Before Bacon's combine was parked for the final time atop its pedestal (about 6 yrs. ago), he used it to cut wheat, just to show that it still worked. He drove the combine out to its final resting place on its own power.

To build the pedestal, he drove three, 8-in. pipes 12 ft. deep into the ground, and then welded the combine to them.

"It's not going to blow over," he chuckles.

For interested passers-by, Bacon hung a sign on the combine with the year and model, and a few facts about its history in the family.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dick Bacon, R.R. 1, Site 27, P.O. Box 2, Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada T8V 2Z8 (ph 780 532-6247; dfbacon@telus.net).

Fake Shrubs Catching On

Forget about fertilizing, pruning or watering yard shrubs. Fake plastic shrubs made in very detailed molds are gaining popularity and are now offered in garden centers, nurseries and big box chain stores.

"People are substituting them for live plants in outside landscaping because they always look good," says Steve Downs, National Tree Company.

National Tree has been making and marketing imitation Christmas trees for more than 50 years. In recent years, they have added a wide range of smaller bushes and topiaries (shaped shrubs).

"We use UV-stabilized polyurethane so they can be used outdoors or indoors," says Downs. "We also use metal cages or piping inside the shrub for shape retention. The molds are modeled closely after live plants to ensure a realistic look."

Prices range from \$9.99 to \$189 for larger imitation trees. Sizes range from 15-in. plants to a 72-in. arborvitae.

"We've been selling outside shrubs for the past 6 years," says Downs. "It has really picked up in the last two or three."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, National Tree Company, 2 Commerce Drive, Cranford, N.J. 07016 (ph 908 709-4141 or 800 280-8733; sales@nationaltree.com; www.nationaltree.com).



Fake plastic shrubs look real and need no fertilizing, pruning or watering.

Giant Flagpole Built From Old Radio Tower

By Jim Kniesel

Jim Kocourek built a 57-ft. flagpole with a circular stairway in his front yard that gets a lot of attention from friends and neighbors in Reedsville, Wis.

The flagpole started out as a 100-ft. radio tower that had been used to dispatch service trucks at a Deere dealership. The dealer said that if he could remove the tower, it was his to keep.

So Kocourek hired a crane operator and figured out the balance point of the big pile, which is about 20 in. around at its base. The balance point was at 33 ft., 6 in., so Kocourek attached the crane higher than that point to safely lift it off its base and set it down.

Once it was on the ground, Kocourek cut the pole in half for transportation back to his shop. Using the bottom half of the tower, he hired a metal fabricator, Schuette Mfg., to make 40 fan-shaped steps for the stairs out of 1/8-in. sheet steel. Kocourek welded them to the tower using a plywood jig to space them evenly. At the top, he added a crow's nest with a railing, then extended the pole 7 ft. to raise a 5 by 7-ft. American flag even higher. Then he sandblasted and painted the pole in the shop.

To create a solid base to hold the flagpole, Kocourek used a backhoe to dig a hole 5 ft. deep, 5 ft. long and 3 ft. wide, then built a metal frame 2 ft. square and suspended on 2 by 4's about 3 ft. below ground level. With four 2-in. studs placed in the framework, he poured about 5 yards of concrete into the hole, leveled the studs, then vibrated and cured the concrete.

The same crane that took the pole down was used to put it back up. The total cost of the project was about \$800, not including the labor of Kocourek and a friend working the better part of a week on the welding, painting and installation. Once bolted in place, the flagpole proved sturdy enough to support a person's weight and survive the strongest winds.

"Once in a while I go up there with a bottle of beer to look out over the countryside. On warm summer nights, that's a fun thing to do," says Kocourek.

He said it was probably a good idea not to include a railing in the plans because it discourages all but the bravest souls from climbing his flagpole. In fact, nobody has come to join him for a beer, even though he says the crow's nest platform would hold two or three people comfortably.

"Nobody else has been up there," he says. "Some people thought they were going to try it, but they never made it up."



Jim Kocourek's 57-ft. flagpole started out as a 100-ft. radio tower used to dispatch service trucks at a Deere dealership.

Now that he's reached new heights at his rural home, Kocourek plans to plunge to the deepest depths. Sitting in his shop is a 20-ft. submarine he has been building for three years. He's part of the Personal Submersibles Organization (www.psub.org), a private submariner group, and he's always dreamed of having his own underwater vessel. By 2010, he plans to be piloting the submarine in search of Great Lakes shipwrecks.

Contact: Jim Kocourek, 1479 S. County W, Reedsville, Wis. 54230 (ph 920 772-4271).

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