Big 40-ft. long grill area spans 160 sq. ft. and has room for 600 chicken halves or 750 pork loins. "At one fund raiser last year we did close to 900 chicken halves," says Dave Smith.

40-Ft. Grill Feeds A Crowd

Once the Delphos Kiwanis Club's grill gets going, it cooks up a feast fast! The grill area spans 160 sq. ft. with room for 600 chicken halves or 750 pork loins. Dave Smith, a member of the Delphos, Ohio, club and spearhead of the group who built the big grill, says it was needed.

"At our biggest fund raiser last year, we did close to 900 chicken halves," he explains. "We used to borrow individuals' grills, and often they weren't in the best shape. We decided to build one for the club."

Smith says it took about $3,200 in materials and around 300 hrs. to design and fabricate the grill on a trailer. So far, they have used it at three community events.

The 40-ft. grill consists of four stainless steel "pits". Each is 4 ft. wide by 10 ft. long and 2 ft. deep. The trailer holds two pits with wing pits hinged at either end. End panels on each pit slide out for easy clean up of coals and ash.

The trailer and its pits are framed with 2-in. steel tubing. Angle iron was used on wing pits to reduce weight. The trailer has double trailer axles for a better ride on the road, easily handling 65 mph road speeds. Torsion axles keep a low profile, which is important for grilling.

When in transit or not in use, the wing pits fold up over the trailer. Currently set up with counter springs, it takes three guys to fold them into place. Smith intends to install hydraulic folding this coming year.

To set up the grill, the telescoping trailer hitch (a pipe-in-a-pipe design) is released and extended. The front wing pit can be folded into place over it. The hitch provides support and makes it easy to move the grill if needed.

Once the end wing pit is folded down, the grill racks are put in place. Each pit is designed to hold three, 3-ft. wide by 4-ft. long, twin layer, stainless steel grill racks. Handholds centered on each rack ride in notches on the rim of the pit. A pin extends out at one corner of the rack to rest on the rim of the pit.

"The design lets one person rotate the racks, so we do it more often for a better grilled product," explains Smith. "It dips about 19 in. into the pit. The coals are only about one layer thick on the bottom. Any more and the racks would get too hot."

Trailer holds 2 stainless steel "pits", with wing pits hinged at either end that fold up for transport.

Work tables with fold down legs at one end, were designed to attach at either end of the grill. One is designated the set-up table where chicken halves are prepared for grilling. As the first rack is filled, it's moved into a grilling position. Once the chickens have been grilled, the rack is carried to the serving table.

"The design keeps the prep area separated from serving for food safety," explains Smith. "Using all stainless steel makes clean up easy, and all the parts, including grill racks and tables, store in the trailer pits. It was a lot of fun to make and has made grilling at these events a lot easier."

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He Built A Double Drum Gold "Trommel"

Larry Deglow can go through 5 to 6 yards of dirt an hour with his combination gold "trommel" and sluice box setup. The Claresholm, Alta., resident looked at other existing units and came up with his own double drum design.

"The gold is in the fine stuff. This gets it out faster," he says.

The outer drum is a 30-gal. barrel with a 13-in. wide, 1/2-in. expanded metal screen positioned over the sluice. The inner drum is made of 3/4-in. expanded metal screen. The aggregate material is dumped in at the higher end of the barrel and mixes with water pumped through a 2-in. pipe in the center with 1/4-in. spray holes. The biggest material washes out the end of the drum while the smaller stuff drops into the outer drum, where it's screened again so that only 1/2-in. or less size material falls to the sluice.

Deglow powers his trommel with a 6 1/2-hp gas engine. An electric motor could also be used.

"The drive belt goes over the whole barrel to get good traction with the heavy material," he explains.

Mounted on wheels with a detachable sluice box, hitch and legs, it's handy for a hobby gold prospector to move around by hand or with an ATV. That's what Deglow does when he heads to nearby British Columbia to look for gold.

"I hook it up to a 1 1/2-in. water pump, and I'm ready to go," he says.

He built his first trommel in 2010 and refined it.

"It worked well last year," he says. "It's quiet, efficient and gets to the size you want fast."

Larry Deglow came up with his own combination gold "trommel" and sluice box setup. It can go through 5 to 6 yards of dirt an hour.

Outer drum consists of a 30-gal. barrel with a 13-in. wide, expanded metal screen positioned over the sluice.

Deglow has started to build them for other hobby gold prospectors for $1,800 (motor/engine not included). The complete unit weighs about 300 lbs. and is 64 in. long.

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Nick Reed's 9-ft. sq. star-gazing shed is built with a retractable roof. Roof sections are counterweighted and open easily on hinges.

Star-Gazing Hut Protects Farm Field Telescope

When Nick Reed wants to gaze at the stars, he takes a short walk to a field behind his home, opens the retractable roof of a small hut, and aims his Dobsonian telescope at the sky.

The Park Rapids, Minn., amateur astronomer designed the 9-ft.-sq. star-gazing shed and now builds them to sell for $2,495 plus delivery.

"One advantage of my design is that it's vented so the temperature inside is similar to the temperature outside so you don't have to wait an hour in cold weather for the telescope to cool off and the optics to adjust," says Reed.

"As an observer I like a wide open sky, and this works very nicely," Reed says. He can open the roof quickly for views just above the horizon in the east and west, and a good view of the southern sky. The wall on the north is taller to stabilize the building, but the sky from the North Star and above is visible.

The roof sections are counterweighted and open easily on hinges. The part of the floor where the telescope sits is isolated from the rest of the floor to eliminate vibration. The whole floor is off the ground, secured to 4 by 4-in. treated posts on cement blocks that are anchored to the ground with iron stakes.

The part of the floor where the telescope sits is isolated from the rest of the floor to eliminate vibration.

"I've had over 50 mph winds and no problems whatsoever," Reed says. His telescope also stays dry during the most humid days of summer.

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