



Gayhart Swenson's Old Tool Shed Antiques store is packed with all kinds of old tools. Photo at right shows a wide variety of plumb bobs in every shape, material and price.

Amazing Store Specializes In Old Tools

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

When I walked through the door of Gayhart Swenson's Old Tool Shed Antiques in Genoa, Wis., I thought I had died and gone to heaven. The 1867 building is jam-packed with old tools. They covered the walls, floors and countless tables and counters of the store in this little town tucked alongside the Mississippi River.

Swenson and his son Rick buy and sell old tools that they have rescued at auctions, estate sales and face-to-face. Like his tools, Swenson has a few years behind him, but that gave him the time to accumulate an encyclopedic knowledge of old tools. I was stumped every time I turned around, but Swenson was happy to explain what the tool was and how to use it. Many tools had a story that went with them.

Look around the shelves and floor space and you can find everything from \$5 plumb bobs to a \$2,400 foot-pedaled scroll saw. Speaking of plumb bobs, Swenson had 120 at last count, in every shape, material and price. He estimates his hammer count is well over 1,000.

Wood planes number in the dozens from tiny routers a couple of inches in length to handmade, multi-blade units designed to carve a single decorative face. I picked up an old, adjustable dowel cutter for trimming ends of chair stretcher bars and such. I also picked up a plumb bob and a few other things. My most expensive purchase was a small table scroll saw at \$35.

Swenson offers much, much more than just woodworking tools. You can find everything from fire-hose nozzles to rope winders and even kitchen tools.

Two things really impressed me at the Old Tool Shed. The first was the quality of the tools. Everything looked first rate, clean and in good order. The second was the price. Swenson's is a place where you can find something of value for a couple dollars or a couple hundred.

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The driver rides in a wheelbarrow on this go-cart. Adjustable electronic speed controls limit how fast kids can go.

Wheelbarrow Go-Cart

All the parts on Lionel L'Heureux's electric go cart – except for a new wheelbarrow – came from items destined for the dump plus a few steering parts donated by friends.

"I used wheelbarrow handles to extend the frame and put lawn tractor tires over the steel wheels on the back," he explains, noting that the driver rides in the body of the wheelbarrow. The front tires and wheels came off a power wheelchair, and L'Heureux had a machinist friend make modifications to the power wheelchair wheels and fit them to the scooter's original front wheel bearings. The wheelbarrow seat has a foam pad cushion and seat back from a power wheelchair; and with rear suspension, the ride isn't too bad.

"It's like riding a hardtail motorcycle," he says. With a steering wheel from an old hot rod, L'Heureux added to the go kart's classic roadster dragster look. He created a dash out of a stainless steel trash can lid and added a horn and signal lights.

"The nice thing is that it's electric (24V) with adjustable speed controls to limit how fast kids can go," he notes. Depending on his grandchildren's ages he slows it to a walking pace or up to 10 mph. It also brakes automatically when they let up on the throttle.

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**FARM
SHOW**



After Bernie and Jean Smith retired and moved off their British Columbia farm, they made this detailed 1/64-scale version of the farm in their basement.

He Built A 1/64 Replica Of His Own Farm

Bernie and Jean Smith may have retired and moved off their farm in Golata Creek, B.C., to live in town, but they haven't totally left it behind. They have a detailed 1/64-scale version of the farm in their basement.

"It's a labor of love. Who said, you can't take it with you?" laughs Bernie.

He first had the idea of building a "coffee table-sized" model while the couple was still farming. After retirement, when he had time to work on it, he realized he needed more than a coffee table to display the farm which was 3,300 acres in size.

They upsized to a 3 by 6-ft. piece of plywood mounted on folding table legs. The display is based on a 1999 aerial photo of the farm and measurements of all the buildings are scaled down to 1/64.

Bernie built most of the buildings out of 1/8-in. plywood. He recreated the farm's log building by splitting wooden dowels, and cut the thin corral boards from 2 by 4 spruce lumber.

"I made the crude stuff, and my wife painted it up and made it look good," he says. She also "landscaped" by gluing gravel and grass and creating trees from scratch. She spent three days "planting" the garden with tweezers.

Bernie repurposed a few items to get the look he wanted. He made a tin roof from a soup can to represent a grain bin. For the smooth-walled hopper bins, he inspected dozens of cans at a grocery store before he found the perfect style - a smooth Hershey's chocolate can.



Display is based on a 1999 aerial photo of the farm, with measurements of all buildings scaled down to 1/64.

He twisted two black wires from an old telephone cord to make power lines, and he wired the scene with real wiring to add lights in the exact places they were on the farm.

The Smiths spent five winters in their garage workshop, building the model farm. They searched hobby shops for miniature livestock, people and greenery. Bernie has especially enjoyed buying toys that match the equipment he had on the farm.

"We're still looking for a few pieces of machinery and a boat," Bernie says. "We just try to match the right models for the equipment, and have spent a lot of time to make it look like the farm really was."

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