

School Bus Garage

When Lloyd Siemonsma, Sioux Falls, S. Dak., was offered the chance to get a used school bus body for free if he would take it off the chassis, he started thinking of ways he could use it. He decided to turn it into an extra garage.

The truck salvage company he got it from wanted to get the bus body off so they could put a box on the chassis. Siemonsma cut off the body just behind the windshield and cut the sides off just below the floor line. He added a piece of 2 by 2-in. angle iron to the front edge of the cut floor at the opening to take the weight of heavy equipment going over

the edge into the bus garage.

A canvas curtain with a heavy-duty industrial zipper can be used to close off the opening to keep out blowing snow.

Siemonsma uses the bus garage to house his 4-wheeler and a skid steer loader. He likes it because the windows let in light during daylight hours and the rear door can be used to bring in supplies when the front area is blocked or the curtain closed.

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"Tractor" Built Out Of Old School Bus

"It was a lot cheaper than a conventional tractor and works almost as well," says Michigan farmer Andy Alexander, of Vestaburg, about the "tractor" he built from an old school bus. The rig cost him only \$1,600 - \$600 for the bus and \$1,000 for new tires.

Alexander started with a 64-passenger Ford school bus equipped with a 391 cu. in. V-8 gas engine and automatic transmission. He removed everything except for the frame and hood at the front of the bus, then moved the rear axle and wheels forward and cut off the rear of the frame. The rear axle was originally equipped with a rubber-mounted suspension system. Alexander removed the rubber mounts and modified the axle to make it solid. He welded a 1/2-in. thick steel plate onto the back of the bus frame and also bolted it to the back of the axle. The plate is equipped with an adjustable drawbar and a pintle hitch as well as a pto shaft that's driven by a hydraulic pump. The bus didn't have any tires on back so he mounted new 9.00 by 20 dual snow grip tires.

It really comes in handy around my farm and saves a lot of wear and tear on tractors and pickups," says Alexander, who made the conversion three years ago. "The 108-in. wheelbase is about the same length as the wheelbase on an IH 1086 tractor. I built it to pull automatic bale wagons. However, I also use it as a fast tractor to pull gravity boxes and hay and silage wagons, as well as to haul round bales or implements on my tandem axle trailer. I use the pto to unload silage wagons into my silo. By hooking hydraulic hoses up to the pump I can use it to raise disks, plows, etc., so that I can pull them

for transport. It doesn't need a license or insurance because it has a fixed rear axle and because there's room for only one rider. It can go up to 65 mph, but to be legal I don't go over 35 mph on the highway.

I was recently injured in an airplane accident so I haven't had time to finish it. However, I want to add a steel roof and plexiglass windshield, rear fender, weights on back for more traction, fifth wheel hitch, automatic hitch, and a winch and gin pole so that I can use it like a wrecker truck to haul machinery. I also plan to equip it with a side-mount hitch so I can use it to safely pull my silage chopper on the highway.

The hydraulic pump is chain-driven off a sprocket that I mounted on the side of the transmission. I mounted a hydraulic reservoir and a pair of hydraulic valves and controls next to the driver's seat. I also strapped on a 70-gal. gas tank off an old Army truck.

The pto ran in the wrong direction so I made my own gearbox to reverse it and to keep the pto from turning too fast. I use the bus's air brakes to control the pto and an air shifter off a semi truck to turn the air on or off. I use the bus's air brake lever to operate the air-over-hydraulic brakes on the tandem axle trailer I pull with it.

"I welded running boards onto a steel frame that bolts onto the bus frame. By removing four bolts I can remove the running boards as well as the rollbar so I can work on the rear end."

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Schoolbus Holding Pen

"Your readers may be interested in how we use an old schoolbus as a holding pen for hogs that are sorted out and waiting for the trucker to arrive," says Dave Snobelen, Kent Bridge, Ontario.

"We only use it for hogs leaving the farm so disease risk is reduced. The trucker never comes into the barn.

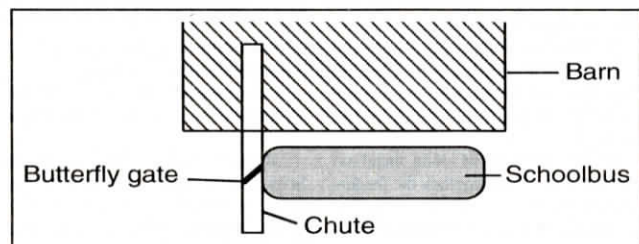
"A loading chute comes out the end of the barn. A load-out platform is positioned at the end of the bus. We drive hogs out of the barn into the bus by closing a sorting gate in the chute that directs them into the bus. To load a truck, we

drive them out of the bus back into the chute and out the loading platform onto the truck.

"There's a feeder and waterer inside the bus as well as a fan for use in summer.

"This is the second farm life for this bus. Previously we used it as a livestock trailer. The only modification we made to it was installing a plywood floor."

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School Bus Hunting Shed

Martin Dykgraaf, McBain, Mich., turned an old school bus into a deer hunting shed that he keeps on his 40-acre property.

He removed the wheels and axles from a Ford 66-passenger bus and cut it in half, first removing the middle window on each side of the bus. He used 2 by 4's and sheet metal to close up the end of the bus, putting the window back in and adding 4 in. of insulation. The floor is covered with a couple of old rugs. A propane heater is used for heat.

"It's airtight so it stays nice and warm," says Dykgraaf. "I keep the windows closed until I see a deer, then I reach up to let the window down and shoot. The bus has cornfields on three sides, and I keep apples, oats, shelled corn, green tomatoes,



molasses, etc., on the ground near the bus so deer stay around it all summer. I mounted the bus on railroad ties so that it's about 16 in. off the ground. I used the other half of the bus to make a hunting shed for my neighbor."

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