

**ADAPTS TO ANY SIZE STEPS AND LOADS ITSELF INTO VANS**

## New-Style Wheelchair Walks Up Steep Stairs

"It overcomes the worst barrier for wheelchairs," says the inventor of a new stair-climbing chair that walks right up any flight of stairs, regardless of the size of the steps and without the assistance of anyone other than the person in the chair.

Ken Cox, Arlington, Tex., started work on his 10-wheeled chair 8 years ago when he heard about a design contest for a chair that could climb steps. He says there have been other such chairs introduced to the market but none have ever been successful.

Ken's chair is fitted with a "spider" wheel on either side made up of four powered wheels. To climb stairs, you back up to the bottom step until the back 8-in. dia. wheel makes contact. As it does, the wheel just above it swings down on top of the step and walks backward. As it comes in contact with the lip of the next step, the next wheel flips over the top, and so on. As the wheels walk up the steps, the chair reclines back at the angle of the stairway until the chair reaches

the top, at which point the chair straightens back into the upright position, riding on the bottom two small-diameter wheels.

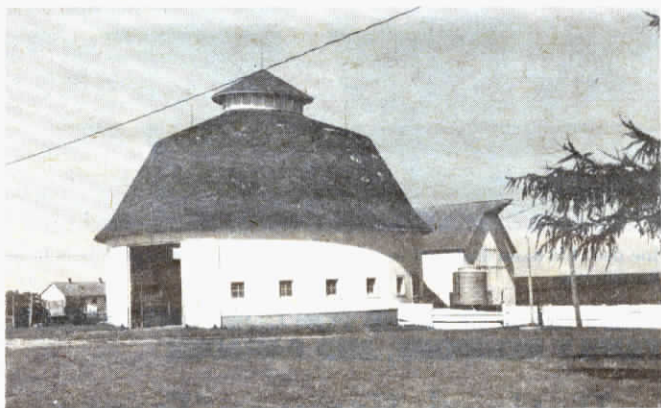
Ken's prototype chair is manually powered via two hand-cranked wheels but he's planning an electric powered production model. It'll be totally gear-driven, with no chains or sprockets, powered by a battery-driven electric motor, controlled by a single joystick and will be able to turn around in a 44-in. wide hallway.

"Wheelchairs haven't changed much since the 1930's. This design overcomes those obstacles that can't be bypassed by ramps or other special construction," says Ken, noting that the chair can also be used to load wheelchair passengers into vans without the aid of a mechanical lift.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ken Cox, Stair Master Wheel Chair Co., 2711 Marquis Circle East, Arlington, Tex. 76016 (ph 817 496-3080).



As 4-wheeled "spider wheel" walks up steps, chair drops from normal riding position to an angle that keeps the rider upright as the chair climbs the steps.



This round barn was erected on a farm near State Center Iowa in 1919.

### "WITHOUT RIGHT ANGLES" TELLS WHY THEY WERE BUILT

## 127 Round Barns Still Stand In Iowa

If you've ever wondered about the occasional round barn you see scattered around the countryside, you might be interested in a book written by an Iowa historian, "Without Right Angles".

The book, written by Lowell J. Soike, tells the story of round barns in Iowa. Much of the history of the barns in that state holds true for the rest of the country.

Most round barns are concentrated in the Midwestern dairy states. Iowa has 127 still standing but Wisconsin

has identified 180. Indiana has 154. Michigan has 25 and Nebraska 36 while an eastern state, Vermont, has just 24.

The majority of round barns were built during two periods of history — the 1880's and between 1905 and 1920. However the earliest recorded round barn was a 16-sided barn built by George Washington in 1793.

Round, or octagonal barns, have several advantages. First they were cheaper to build because they would hold more than a rectangular barn

### SEND 'EM TO HONG KONG

## You Can Sell Gallstones For \$100 Per Ounce

If you butcher cattle on the farm or have access to cattle carcasses, you can make extra money selling the gallstones found inside the gall bladder (a small sac attached to the liver) to an unusual business in the Far East.

Hong Kong businessman K.K. Poon pays \$100 per ounce for the stones, which are needed for research projects in the Orient.

Poon told FARM SHOW that only a small percentage of gall bladders actually contain stones so you need to open each bladder and check. The stones are brown in color and look like clay. They range from about the size of a pigeon egg, which would weigh less than an ounce, up to hen's egg size, which could weigh several ounces. Poon cautions that he needs only the stones, not the bladders

themselves.

Once you've found several stones, you should dry them in natural air, wrap them in plastic, and airmail them to Hong Kong. Don't let the stones get moldy as it makes them less valuable, and wrap them carefully so they don't break in transit.

Poon has been buying gallstones from throughout the world for more than 40 years. He also buys gallstones from hogs, sheep and goats but they should be kept separate and clearly identified. Fees are paid in U.S. funds.

For a free information packet that describes how to sell gallstones to the Far East, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mr. K.K. Poon, P.O. Box 71460, Kwloon Central Post Office, Hong Kong.

with walls of the same height. Second, the roof of the barn was much stronger than rectangular barns. Third, the round design also made it easy to feed out of silos built at the center, allowing for a circular arrangement of livestock inside the structure.

"Without Right Angles," which

lists the location and history of each of the 127 round barns still standing in Iowa, sells for \$9.45, including postage.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Lowell J. Soike, Office of Historic Preservation, E. 12th and Grand Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50319.