

Gravity-Powered Dog Door

Dan Fink, Masonville, Colo., wanted a dog door that would let his new puppy go in and out *except* when he was driving out of the yard in the morning. He knew that if the puppy saw him leave, she would follow.

"I had to find a way to lock the dog up for a few minutes while I leave," he says. "I first built an electric timer and solenoid latch on the dog door, but she learned to hit it with her nose and get out."

A neighbor suggested trying gravity power so Fink started experimenting. The front door already had a hinged flap dog door on the outside. Fink rigged up a solid sliding door on the inside, tying it to a water bottle. A rope runs from the top of the plywood door, through a pulley, and down to the bottle.

A small plastic bucket that holds a quart of

water sits on a nearby bookshelf. A plastic tube is tied to it so the end is submerged at the bottom of the bucket. Before leaving in the morning, Fink sucks on the tube to begin siphoning water and puts the end in the water bottle. When the bottle fills up, gravity pulls it down, opening the door.

Adjustable hose clamps on the tube allow him to adjust the length of time it takes to fill the bottle, from 2 to 30 minutes.

"It's never failed, not even once," he says, noting that it is much more reliable than the computers he works with daily. "Gravity won't let you down."

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Water bottle is tied by rope to a sliding door. When bottle fills up, gravity pulls it down, opening the door and allowing Fink's dog to go outside.

Home-Built Traffic Control Tower

Last May, Mark Friebe had an open house on his property on South Bass Island in Lake Erie. About 500 people live on the island, and 130 of them showed up to view a new airplane hangar and air traffic control tower that Friebe built in his back yard.

The octagon-shaped tower looks just like the real thing. It's 30 ft. high and mounts on top of an old 10-ft. dia. above-ground fuel tank. The tower has a flat roof and eight walls that lean out at seven degrees. There's a spiral staircase inside and a large 4 by 4 1/2-ft. window on each side.

Inside the tower you'll find a bar with six stools and a TV for entertaining friends. An adjacent enclosure connects the tower to a new house that Friebe built. Both the tank and the enclosure are covered with slabs of native limestone.

The hangar is located about 50 ft. away and measures 32 by 40 ft. There's a 10 by 40-ft. home-built, hydraulic-operated one-piece door on one side of the building.

To help put up the buildings, Friebe converted an old 1963 IH 303 combine into a multiple purpose rig that he can use either as a forklift, man lift, or crane. The crane has a reach of 33 ft., just enough to reach the top of the tower with building materials and supplies. It was used to lift an octagon-shaped steel ring on top of the tank, which serves as

a base for the tower room. The crane was also used to lift the hangar's trusses in place. The man lift can be raised up to 20 ft. high and was used to weld the steel base to the tank.

"It took three years to build everything, but my wife and I love it now that it's done," says Friebe. "We had to haul all of the building materials we used from the mainland on boats. The view from the top of the tower is amazing. On a clear day you can see up to 17 miles away including several other islands in Lake Erie as well as the mainland. You can even see the world's tallest rollercoaster - 420 ft. high - located at Cedar Point near Sandusky, Ohio."

Friebe says he decided to tackle the project after his family sold their truck farming business in Ohio. "During the winter we often go ice fishing on the lake and the only way to get there is to fly. We built the house first, and after we were done building it I told my wife that I wanted to build a hangar for our airplane and our boat. I was able to get an easement that lets me land the plane right in my back yard."

He bought the limestone in big slabs up to 2 ft. thick by 5 ft. long and made a machine to break the rocks into pieces. It took 17 tons of rock and 13 tons of mortar to complete the project. "I laid some of the stone myself



Mark Friebe built this airplane hangar and octagon-shaped air traffic control tower in his back yard. Tower is 30 ft. high and is covered with slabs of native limestone.

but also got a lot of help from nephews, friends, and relatives."

Friebe pre-constructed the base for the tower using coil steel that he got at work. He cut the steel to a width of 17 in., then bent a 2-in. lip on both sides to end up with 13-in. channel iron. A rented truck-mounted crane was used to lift the base onto six 1 1/2-in.

dia., 4-ft. long anchor bolts at the top of the tank, and it was then welded in place. The "forkbine-crane" was used to lift the tower's ceiling joists and windows into place.

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AC Collection Boasts 50 Useable Tractors

Collecting, restoring and showing Allis Chalmers tractors and equipment is a passion for Marion Klutzke of West Lafayette, Indiana. It shows in the number and rarity of the units he owns.

Seventy-three year-old Klutzke has 50 useable tractors and all the AC combine models ever made, plus a Model 10 continuous round baler (one of 1,500 made), and a model 303 square baler. It is one of the larger AC collections around.

He began his collection in the early '70's when he bought what continues to be the oldest member of the collection - a 1934 WC that has all factory options available, including the original magneto and Firestone tires.

"I have every model of WC that was made from 1934 to 1947. The only one I'm missing is 1933," he says. "A lot of what I have is what I used when I farmed. Allis Chalmers was taken over in 1985 and I retired in 1993. I still hobby farm just enough to exercise the equipment and myself."

Klutzke says his rarest tractor is a D17 diesel Wheatland model. There are less than a

dozen of these in existence, he says.

A big recent find was the 40-in. Cat AC Model 40 combine. The rest of his combines include the model 100 self-propelled, model 90 pull-type, models 72, 66, 60 and 40, and the "All Crop Harvester" made in 1936.

He also has a model 66 combine with a corn head that is one of 1,150 made in the 50's and 60's.

Klutzke once cooperated with another collector in Phoenix, Arizona in order to find a cotton picker. In exchange, he found a mounted corn picker for that fellow.

He has restored everything in his collection himself and hosted a "Wheat Harvest Days" event for the first time this year on the July 4th weekend. He harvested 22 acres that averaged a 75 bu./acre yield, which was a challenge for the old combines. Klutzke plans to host the event again next year.

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1967 D-21 with 5-bottom plow.



1955 WD-45 runs on gasoline or propane.



1938 All Crop Harvester



622 Cotton Picker