

**Editor's Notebook**



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Editor & Publisher

**Stanley Thermos "Explosion" Causes \$88,000 In Damages**

A neighbor of mine recently went through a shocking experience that you might soon be seeing on national TV.

One morning a few months ago, Ron Greenberg was getting ready for work, filling his 2-year-old Stanley stainless steel thermos with coffee. All of a sudden, the handle broke away from the side of the thermos and black powder started shooting out like smoke. Greenberg told a local TV station it was like a smoke bomb going off. "It filled the whole kitchen and living room with a cloud of black smoke."



After the handle popped off the side of this Stanley thermos, clouds of black powder poured out like a smoke bomb.

The black stuff was very fine charcoal and it infiltrated throughout the Greenberg's house, aided by the furnace fan, which was running at the time. "Everything was black," says Ron's wife, Maureen. "The floors, furniture, walls and the inside of every cabinet and closet. It was unbelievable how it spread."

They called both Stanley and their insurance company and then brought in a professional cleaning company, which



Wood floors and carpet turned black with powder throughout the house. Photo shows partially cleaned floor in foreground.

worked on the house every day for weeks to clean up the mess. The final bill was a whopping \$77,000, plus \$8,500 for new carpet and \$3,000 worth of miscellaneous expenses, such as the cost of a hotel stay.

"We couldn't believe this could happen from an ordinary thermos. Stanley told us there had been a small group of 50 or so bad thermoses," says Maureen. However, when a local TV station ran a story on the thermos, they tracked down at least two other people who had had the same problem – and both lived within a couple hours of the Greenbergs. Stanley admitted after the story ran that the problem might be more widespread.



The fine black powder stuck to hands and feet like grease.

After initially refusing to pay the cost of the Greenberg's cleanup, Stanley eventually did reimburse the family's insurance company. CBS News is now considering doing a story on the thermos incident and a representative of the Consumer Product Safety Commission showed up recently to investigate. Meanwhile, if you have a Stanley thermos that you bought within the past couple years, check the bottom of the container. The defective models have the number "C02" or "D02" on the bottom.

We'll update this story in future issues as it becomes more clear how many defective thermoses are involved.

**Demand For Rare Breeds Grows**

Strong new markets are springing up for rare, antique varieties of plants and animals, such as heirloom tomatoes, colored potatoes, red wattle hogs, bronze turkeys, and so on. There's also money to be made serving people interested in "traceability" – i.e., knowing exactly where their food comes from. One firm that's capitalizing on these trends is Heritage Foods



Heritage Foods lets consumers pick their meat by breed. For instance, if they want Red Wattle pork like the one shown above, they can get it – and also get information about the farm where it was raised.

USA, an internet and mail order firm that buys specialty farm products from farmers and offers a range of more than 70 little-seen heirloom products to consumers. Company president Patrick Martins, co-founder of the company, recently told Time magazine, "Dozens of delicious American treasures with a long history are on the brink of extinction. We must eat them to save them."

At Heritage Foods ([www.heritagefoodsusa.com](http://www.heritagefoodsusa.com)), consumers can order the breed of pork or chicken or beef they want, and they can learn the exact origin of that meat. For example, if you want Berkshire pork or Red Wattle pork, you can order that meat directly and get information about the farmer who produced it. Farmers who sell meat and produce to Heritage foods receive a premium price. Demand is growing. Larry Sorell started raising rare animals as a lark but now supplies 25 Red Wattle hogs a month to Heritage, making it a profitable sideline to his Kansas grain farm.

Some people say the trend toward rare breeds is backlash against the trend of raising vast numbers of just a few breeds. For example, in the 1930's, 15 different breeds of pigs were raised for market. Today, six of those breeds are extinct and only three varieties – Hampshire, Yorkshire and Duroc – account for 75 percent of U.S. production. In the 1920's, some 60 breeds of chickens thrived on American farms. Today, one hybrid – the Cornish Rock cross – supplies nearly every supermarket. A single turkey breed also dominates – the Broad Breasted White. But it has been bred to the point where its breast is so large and its legs so short it cannot breed naturally any more. All breeding is done by artificial insemination.

Deer farming has become big business. According to Lapp, an Illinois buck recently brought \$48,000 at auction. Lapp plans to update the stud book every year. Sells for \$34.95 plus \$5 S&H. Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Elam Lapp, Whitetail Guide, 420 Weaver Road, Millersburg, Penn. 17061 (ph 717 692-4759).



Giant earth-moving machine moves slowly across a road on its way to an open pit mine.

**World's Biggest Machine?**

A friend of ours recently sent us this photo of what is said to be the biggest earthmover in the world. Built by the German company, Krupp, it's shown here crossing a highway enroute to its work site at an open pit mine.

The giant machine is 311 ft. tall, 705 ft. long and weighs 45,500 tons. It cost \$100 million to build and took 5 years to design and manufacture. The bucket-type digging wheel is over 70 ft. in dia. and fitted with 20 buckets, each of which holds more than 530 cu. ft. of material. It moves on 12 crawler tracks, which each measure 12 ft. wide and 46 ft. long. Each day it digs enough dirt to fill 100,000 large dump trucks with 40 yards of dirt apiece. It takes 5 men to run it.

**Words Of Wisdom**

Depend on the rabbit's foot if you will, but remember it didn't work for the rabbit. *R.E. Shay*

It's not that I'm afraid to die. I just don't want to be there when it happens. *Woody Allen*

I'm gonna live forever, or die trying. *Joseph Heller*

We have a criminal jury system which is superior to any in the world; and its efficiency is only marred by the difficulty of finding twelve men who don't know anything and can't read. *Mark Twain*

A man must keep a little back shop where he can be himself without reserve. In solitude alone can he know true freedom. *Michel De Montaigne*

Giving money and power to government is like giving whiskey and car keys to teenage boys. *P.J. O'Rourke*

We hope that when the insects take over the world, they will remember with gratitude how we took them along on all our picnics. *Bill Vaughan*

I like pigs. Dogs look up to us. Cats look down on us. Pigs treat us as equals. *Sir Winston Churchill*



A typical listing from the "Whitetail Guide".

**How To Raise Big Bucks**

Owners of game farms and hunting lodges, and anyone who raises domesticated deer, will be interested in this first-ever stud book for big bucks.

The "Whitetail Guide" was assembled by publisher Elam Lapp, who produces rural magazines and has also been raising deer for about 14 years. A total of 175 big-rack whitetail bucks are featured. Each listing shows a photo along with the animal's date of birth, semen availability, yearly point value, unofficial B&C score, a family pedigree, and the owner's contact information.

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**Peter Morgan, of Milwaukee,** says his great-grandfather rode a horse but wouldn't go near a train. His grandfather loved trains but was scared of automobiles. His father was happy driving a car but feared flying. And now Peter says he loves to fly, but he won't go near a horse.

**Talking Dog**

A guy is driving around and he sees a sign in front of a house: "Talking Dog For Sale." He rings the bell and the owner tells him the dog is in the backyard. The guy goes around the house and into the backyard and sees a handsome Labrador Retriever sitting there.

"You talk?" he asks. "Yep," the Lab replies. "So what's your story?" The Lab looks up and says, "Well, I discovered that I could talk when I was pretty young, and I wanted to help the government. So I told the CIA about my gift, and in no time at all they had me jetting from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders, because no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping. I was one of their most valuable spies for eight years running. But the jetting around really tired me out, and I knew I wasn't getting any younger so I wanted to settle down. I signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security work, mostly wandering near suspicious characters and listening in. I uncovered some incredible dealings and was awarded a batch of medals. I got married, had a mess of puppies, and now I'm just retired."

The guy is amazed. He goes back and asks the owner what he wants for the dog. "Ten dollars," says the owner. The guy says, "This dog is amazing! Why on earth are you selling him so cheap?" "Because he's a liar. He didn't do any of that stuff," the man replied.