

Air-Powered Whistle Sounds Like A Steam Engine

Seeing all those rigs at truckstops with big, expensive 5-bell horns on them got trucker JR McLaurin Jr., Gibson, North Carolina, thinking about putting one on the 1976 Kenworth W9KW he restored and uses to haul grain.

"What I really wanted for it was a whistle that sounds like an old-time steam engine," he says. "But anything like that out there right now costs \$500 or more."

So McLaurin went to his shop to make one. He figured if he could design a set of whistles that he could operate with the same 120 psi air source that powers his air brakes, he could just run a line to it from that and keep the cost down.

He spent hours on the Internet researching the exact tones a steam engine whistle should emit, and then decided a group of four or five whistles would do the trick.

Brass tubing is expensive, so he used 3/4-in. PVC tubing. He says plastic tubing has a couple of advantages over using copper or brass. "It's much less expensive. And it's easier to work with," he says.

He recently sent FARM SHOW a prototype that sounds almost exactly like a steam train whistle, with a big full sound. He plans to mount a final version on his truck soon.

He would also be willing to make whistles for other truckers or even pickups, SUVs, vans or cars. They would have to be powered by a 12-volt air source and small pressure tank. You could even use it on tractors or combines in the field to signal other workers, he says. Or around the farm shop, where you probably already have an air source you could tap into easily.

He hasn't gotten as far as establishing a price, but would love to hear from anyone



McLaurin used pvc pipe to make a whistle that sounds like an old steam engine. Requires 120 psi.

who'd like to buy one.

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Woman Treasures Signed Tablecloth

Ironing her tablecloth is one of Leila Seidell's favorite jobs because hers is no ordinary tablecloth. For nearly 50 years, people have been leaving their autographs and best wishes on the white damask tablecloth and doing so with her blessing.

"The first time I gave people a pen to sign their name, they protested. 'Oh not on this nice new tablecloth,'" she recalls. She had bought it for just that purpose but she never thought it would last so long or become so important to her and her family.

The original event was a birthday party she hosted for a brother-in-law in 1954. Her two older sisters had signed quilts so Seidell decided to ask people to sign her tablecloth. Each signature was then embroidered to make it permanent and she added the year. Eventually she shifted from embroidery to embroidery ink over the name. In more recent years she has just used a pen. At first, only people who ate a meal were asked to sign. But now, at 91 years young, she has loosened her meal restriction. Anyone who simply stops by to visit can sign the tablecloth.

"My children and a few others have signed it more than once," allows Seidell. "I had three boys and they signed it first when they could just print their names and again each year until they had good handwriting. One great niece couldn't print yet, so I let her draw a picture. Later on she signed it, too."

Seidell's tablecloth is covered with more than 660 names of visitors from as far away as Mexico, Central America, Europe and even Australia. A special treat for her occurred during a visit more than 20 years ago to a missionary her church supported in Asia. One of the mission workers heard her say she was



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from Port Huron and mentioned visiting the area while he was in college.

"He remembered a lady with a tablecloth he had signed, and I told him that I was that lady," she recalls. "It has been quite a conversation piece. It always brings back beautiful memories. Every time I iron it, I see the names and think of the memories I have with them and the day they signed it."

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Oregon rancher Harry Hegardt began a breeding program in the early 1960's to try to recreate the original Tarpan, or European wild horse. It went extinct in the late 1800's.

Extinct Tarpan Recreated

Building on work of earlier horse breeders, Lenette and Gordon Stroebel have nearly recreated the extinct Tarpan, or European wild horse.

It's believed by many that most modern horse breeds descended from the Tarpan, which were found in Russia and Europe thousands of years ago. Some of the earliest prehistoric cave drawings in Europe depict this wild ancestor of the modern horse.

Wild Tarpans could still be found in Eastern Europe during the early 1800's, but the last known one died in 1879. The last captive purebred Tarpan died in 1887 in Poland.

When the Polish government realized what had happened to the Tarpan breed, it began seizing farm horses that exhibited Tarpan traits. These were released into a game preserve called the Bialowieza Forest. The horses interbred and their offspring today are known as Tarpans.

Oregon rancher Harry Hegardt began a breeding program in the early 1960's to try to recreate the original Tarpan. He bred the Polish Tarpan to mustangs. When he died in 1990, Lenette and Gordin Stroebel bought what was left of the herd and are now continuing Hegardt's work.

"Over the years, Harry had used a number of mustang stallions to increase the gene pool and enhance the traits he wanted," Lenette says.

Tarpans were, for the most part, mouse gray in color, with sturdy dark colored hooves that

don't need shoes. They were smaller than most modern horses, with a rounder, more muscular physique. Tarpans displayed a dominant dark dorsal stripe that extended from the mane to the tail. They also had finger-striping on their forelegs and cobwebbing on their foreheads. Most of the Stroebel Tarpans have those markings.

Another notable Tarpan characteristic is a stand-up mane. Many of the Stroebel Tarpans have it but not all. Lenette says she's confident that most will have erect manes before long.

The Stroebels maintain a herd of 30 to 40 Tarpans. Lenette says they are good saddle horses and, for the most part, are gentle and easily trained. They've sold several horses, mostly geldings for riding. "They're smooth and sure-footed, so are great for trail and pleasure riding," she says.

Concerned about the narrow gene pool in their Tarpans, the Stroebels continue to watch for wild mustangs with Tarpan-like traits. They are in the process of incorporating a breed registry which would use microchips and photographs to identify registered animals. They've already started implanting microchips in their horses. They'd like to talk to anyone with an interest in the Tarpan.

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