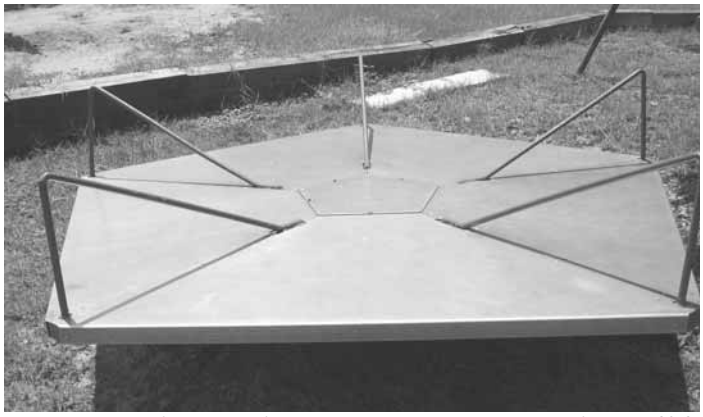

Merry-go-round spins on a mobile home axle. Earl Wagner welded a crisscross of 2-ft. I-beam sections to the end of the axle and buried it 6 ft. deep.

Merry-Go-Round Spins On Mobile Home Axle

Earl Wagner says the $500 he spent on a merry-go-round for his grandchildren was well worth it.

It started with half an axle used for moving mobile homes. "I was setting up mobile homes and I realized it could be used as a merry-go-round if I stuck it in the ground," he recalls.

He welded a crisscross of 2-ft. sections of I-beam to the end of the shaft, and buried it about 6 ft. deep, cemented in place with six bags of premixed concrete.

He framed the deck from the hub to the five corners with 1/2 by 3-in. steel and welded 1 by 2-in. square tubing on top of that. Most of the cost was for welding services and the 1/8-in. aluminum he pop-riveted for the deck. After eight years of use by six grandkids – and some adults – it looks like new.

He recycled mobile home anchors to make handles. Wagner beefed up the merry-go-round with rebar underneath for added stability.

"My grandkids love it. They like to lay on it and look at the sky," Wagner says.

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Wagner framed out a steel deck and then pop-riveted 1/8-in. thick aluminum onto it.

Made out of an old loader bucket, this portable barbecue grill rides on steel wheels and has a tongue on front for pulling behind an ATV.

Loader Bucket Converted To BBQ Grill

When Lloyd McConnell replaced an old loader bucket with a new one, he hated to toss the old one. So he decided to make a barbecue grill out of it that measures 60 in. long by 28 in. wide.

"I jury-rigged an axle for it and mounted it to steel wheels," says McConnell. "I wouldn't want to pull it at road speed, but it's perfect for taking to the creek for a picnic.

"I made an axle out of the upset ends of 2 3/8-in. oil well tubing," says McConnell. "I tacked the upset ends in the wheel hubs and made bearings for them with 2 7/8-in. tubing."

The bearings consist of 1-in. wide collars of the 2 7/8-in. tubing welded to the 2 3/8-in. tubing to either side of a free moving 10-in. length of the larger pipe. McConnell tapped the sleeves and put in grease zerks for lubrication. With the collars snug up tight to the bearing sleeve, very little grease escapes.

Initially, McConnell slipped the opposite ends into a pipe sleeve and welded them in place. This made a solid axle. When he realized that meant they couldn't turn independently on curves, he cut a short length out of the center of the sleeve. He also added a spacer where the bearings would mount to the bucket.

"I wanted a little clearance between the axle and the bottom of the bucket," says McConnell. "I welded short pieces of 2 by 4-in. channel iron to the bottom ends of the bucket and then welded the bearing sleeves to them."

McConnell added a tongue to the grill, using 3 by 3-in. square tubing. He butt welded it to the bucket/grill and reinforced it with 1 1/2-in. angle iron braces.

"I mounted the tongue so when it's hooked to my ATV, the grill is level," says McConnell. "I also added a couple of homemade jack stands to one end for added stability when it's not hooked up."

The jack stands are simple pipe in pipe affairs that can be pinned at the appropriate height. McConnell tacked feet on the ends of the jack stand pipe for more stability in sand or soft ground.

"I had some old shaker screen that fit close enough," says McConnell. "With a couple holes cut in the bottom for air and drainage, it works great. I can put a bunch of salt cedar in it, and with a layer of ash, it will hold coals for several days."

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Brent Carlile turns old-style radios and vacuum cleaners into unusual birdhouses. "They're a lot of fun to make, and it's saving a piece of the past," he says.

Birdhouses Made Out Of Old Vacuums, Radios

Brent Carlile's "Electrolark" birdhouses attract finches – and attention from folks who have never seen a vacuum cleaner used as a birdhouse.

"I'm always scrapping out appliances and I wondered if the vacuum would make a good birdhouse," Carlile explains. "I opened up the front, unscrewed the back side, and took the innards out."

The inner diameter narrows from 10 in. to about 8 in. so he cut a round piece of scrap wood and wedged it in the middle of the canister to create a house on each end. Carlile admits he's not much of a painter, but he painted birds and "ELECTROLARK" on the exterior before screwing a metal plate on the bottom to attach it to a pipe bracket and mount it on a pole.

So far residents in the Montrose, Colo., vacuum home have included finches and sparrows.

While ELECTROLARK vacuums have been his favorite birdhouses so far, Carlile has also repurposed old-style radio/phonographs. He guts the inside, adds dividers for four nesting areas and drills holes and installs plastic pipe for the entrance holes. He cut up a piece of metal from a tent frame to create perches.

Carlile plans to make more radio birdhouses in the future, but will first coat the wood with an exterior sealer so they last longer.

Both styles of houses are easy to clean by unscrewing the radio roof or opening the ends of the vacuum cleaner.

Favorable comments and his past successes have Carlile considering making birdhouses out of other items.

"I hate to see all this stuff scrapped out," he says. "It's a lot of fun making the birdhouses, and it's saving a piece of the past."

He's not sure what other items he'll repurpose for avian housing, but admits he has his eye on an old blender and a television.

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