

# Reader Letters



My dad bought a new Allis Chalmers Roto Baler in 1950. Loading the bales onto a wagon required a man on the ground and one on the wagon. With 3 sisters, I was the only extra hand he had, so we built a 16-ft. long "stone boat" that could be loaded by one person. It could carry 54 bales at a time, sliding along the ground. We once hauled 1,440 bales in a single day using it.

The runners were made out of 2 by 10-in. oak planks with the front ends curled up like a sled. The bed of the stone boat was made from 8-ft. long 2 by 4's that were bolted across the runners. Stakes at either end held the bales, which were stacked 3 across on the bed. Chains attached to the front of the runners were hooked to a clevis on the tractor.

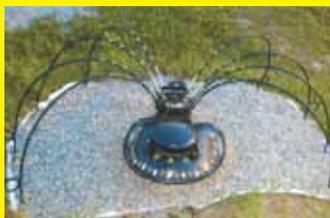
The stone boat slid across the ground smoothly, especially after pulling it down gravel roads which wore the edges down until they were smooth like glass. Best of all, there were no flat tires. (Gerald Wood, 3451 Youth Monroe Rd., Loganville, Georgia 30052 ph 770 466-0048)



I bought an IHC 210 self-propelled 16-ft. swather with a broken crankshaft at an auction for \$125. I repowered it with a 251 cu. In. Chrysler engine out of a 132 Cockshutt combine. I used the complete frame and radiator, switching it to 12-volt. It only required machine shop work to the Chrysler flywheel for mating to the swather drive. I have swathed forage and cereals with it every year since 1998 without major problems. (Erling Brakefield, Wynyard, Sask.)



I made a big wind direction finder for my yard that's easy to see. I mounted a steel drive wheel from an old binder - complete with bearings - on top of a pillar of blocks, and then attached an



elevator flap from a Cessna 150 plane. The flap and wheel turn freely as the wind blows.

I also made a garden spider using 8 tines from a dump rake and a steel seat. The head of the spider is made from an electrical box and a knotter off an old grain binder. (John Richards, Seabright, Ontario)

When painting wheels, I use a plastic "for sale" sign because it's flexible and will slip between the wheel and the tire, making it easy to paint a wheel with the tire on.

In my shop, I installed heavy 24-in. wide shelving on the walls, about 8 ft. off the ground to store lots of stuff up and out of the way. (A. Calvin Coulter, Champlin, Ky.)

I make eave troughs out of 4-in. sewer pipe. If you cut a 10-ft. pipe in half, you have 20 ft. of trough. The ends fit together and they're a lot tougher than most commercial troughs, which are made out of lightweight metal. It also means you don't need as many hangers, which I make from 4-in. shelf brackets. You can use endcaps cut in half on the ends. I don't install downspouts. The water runs straight off into a rain barrel. (John Johnston; bald@eagle.ca)



When my dad tried to plow up an alfalfa field with his Farmall Super M in the 1950's, he could not pull his 3-16 plow so he hooked up a Super H to help out. He would hook up two chains with a rubber tire in between to smooth out the pull. It was a "poor man's" substitute for a 4-WD tractor, which did not exist at the time.

I remembered this idea the other day when my neighbor called and said his Steiger was stuck with a 36-ft. disk. He brought out another 4-wheel drive tractor but couldn't get it out. I said I'd bring out a couple chains and a truck tire. The little run you can make before the chain tightens was just enough to get the big tractor out - thanks to the elasticity of the tire. To illustrate, this picture shows a couple Farmalls with a car tire in the middle. (Gary Swenson, Yankton, S. Dak.)



Over the years, I've owned many different battery chargers of various degrees of quality, but by far, the best charger I've owned is one that I made using plans designed by George Wiseman of Eagle Research (www.eagle-research.com). George sells a manual (for around \$20) that describes how to build and operate this basic battery charger, which costs less than \$5 if you scrounge some of the materials. It can recharge sulfated batteries, is automatically current-limiting, and has automatic voltage adjustment. It can charge and maintain the charge of various voltage batteries at the same time.

A friend of mine who is an electrical engineer was amazed at how simple and efficient this was to build and operate. He



I used to watch city workers with rakes and shovels cleaning the edges along sidewalks and then running a sweeper over them. I figured there had to be a better way so I built my new skid loader-mounted Edge Master power sweeper, which is designed to edge and sweep in a single pass. It can clean and edge 100 ft. of sidewalk in less than 2 min.

It has a 60-in. wide rotary broom with 1 1/2-in. wide steel brushes at each end of the broom that do the edging. The edgers are chain-driven by individual hydraulic drives. You can use one at a time or both if the sidewalk is a standard 60-in. width.

The unit mounts on the loader with quick-attach brackets. A cylinder mounted to the quick-attach plate can offset the broom, edger and bucket to either side, the width of a common curb. Non-marking rollers on the underside of the bucket protect the sidewalk.

The rotary broom is mounted inside a steel bucket. As the broom rotates forward, it picks up and deposits dirt, clippings and other residue into the



bucket. Dumping the full bucket is simply a matter of raising the entire unit and tipping it forward while rotating the broom. Material falls forward over the broom.

I expect the Edge Master to retail in the neighborhood of \$10,000. You can see a video of it in action at FARMSHOW.com. (Glenn Crumney, 101 North Main St., Baxley, Georgia 31513 ph 912 366-9500; gtire@hotmail.com)



A few years ago you ran an article about the self-propelled, side unloading feed mixer I built by combining parts from a military semi tractor and a pull-type feed mixer (Vol. 35, No. 2). The mixer is made entirely from used equipment, and any parts like chains or sprockets were all purchased online at surplus prices.

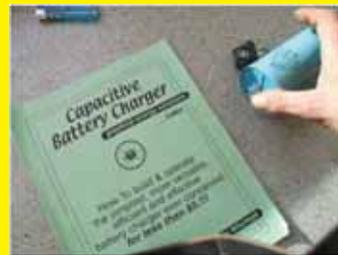
The mixer's Detroit 4-71 diesel engine recently went bad so I replaced it with a military surplus Allis Chalmers engine. The mixer was originally chain-driven, but I wanted something more reliable so I bought a pto from Beiler Engine & Mfg. (ph 717 529-6595) and bolted it onto the

engine. Works great.

I also re-mounted the mixer's cross conveyor on rollers that ride on a short metal track. A switch in the truck cab activates an electric actuator that drives the rollers. I can move the conveyor in or out up to 1 1/2 ft. By retracting the conveyor all the way I can go down an aisle and dump feed off to one side, without driving over feed that has already been dumped on the other side of the aisle. (Jay Boldt, 7120 Co. Rd. C, Manitowoc, Wis. 54220 ph 920 323-0987; boldtdairy@lakefield.net)

told me that he hadn't learned anything like this in college and was so impressed that he built one for himself. I've used it on multiple batteries over the years, and it has never failed to bring them back to a full state of charge.

Before spending a lot of money on another battery because you think it might be bad, try this charger to see if you can rejuvenate it. (Brad Miller, Ridgeville Corners, Ohio ph 419 267-5679)



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