

Editor's Notebook



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My "Best & Worst Buys"

Here's a list of purchases I've made in the last year. Some are pretty good and some not so good. I'm an editor, so I haven't bought any farm equipment lately!

Battery-Powered Chainsaw – I don't use a chainsaw that often but when I need one, it's always a hassle getting it started if it's been sitting for a year or so. I finally decided to try Stihl's 36-volt battery-powered saw and I couldn't be happier. I use it for cleaning up the yard and cutting down smaller trees for firewood. It only has a 14-in. bar but that's plenty to get a lot of work done. The saw is also lightweight so it's easy on my back. And I can cut for about an hour before recharging, and it's got a lot of power. One big benefit is that it's quiet and only runs when you pull the trigger. Easy on the ears.



Air Hawk Cordless Mini Compressor – I bought this primarily for use at our family lake cabin where we are always pumping up inflatable toys, bike tires, garden tractor tires, trailer tires, and more. I had low expectations but I've been amazed at how well it works. You set the pressure you want, turn it on, and it'll stop by itself. I never planned to use it on car or truck tires but it works so well I pumped up a flat car tire with no problem, although it took a couple minutes. It has a rechargeable battery that lasts for about a half hour of continuous use but seems to recharge quickly. I paid \$54.97 for it at Amazon.com.



Columbia Men's Granite Ridge Waterproof Hiking Sneaker – These are the best outdoor shoes I've ever owned (\$65 at Amazon.com). They're comfortable yet built much stronger than ordinary tennis shoes without being stiff like most hiking shoes. What I really like is that they're waterproof so if you go outside early in the morning, or step in water, the moisture simply rolls off. Mine still look like new after a year of regular use.



"Breathable" Lumbar Support Back Cushion – I spend a lot of time in the office and in my car. This back support (\$15.99 on Amazon.com) helps maintain my posture and eases fatigue. It has an elastic strap that goes around the back of the chair or car seat so it's easy to position. I have 3 of these simple yet effective supports.



Oil Vanish – This oil stain remover is supposed to make it easy to remove oil and grease stains in concrete. I tried it on my garage floor and all it did was smear the floor and make a sticky mess. I followed directions on the can but couldn't get it to work.



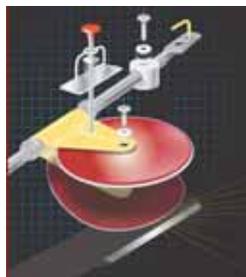
Tick Tubes – With all the tick-borne diseases around, I figured I'd give this new product a try in my yard. I bought a box of 24 tubes



for about \$75 that treat up to 1/4 acre. They consist of 1-in. dia. biodegradable cardboard tubes filled with cotton batting soaked with the insecticide permethrin. The idea is to spread the tubes around in the early spring when mice are making nests so that the deer ticks - which are carried around by mice - die when they contact the permethrin. I'm not sure if these do anything or not because I learned after I bought them that they're more of a long-term solution. You have to kill the ticks before they lay eggs and that pays off the next year. I guess we'll see if we have fewer ticks next year but at \$75 it's a pretty expensive treatment, especially when it's so hard to measure the results.

Bringing An Invention To Market

I was reminded recently how hard it is to bring an idea to market after George Cathey, Collierville, Tenn., contacted us about his idea for an on-the-go mower blade sharpener. It's designed to attach to the underside of mower decks to quickly sharpen blades without removing the blades. Cathey tells us he's already been interviewed by the producers at the TV show Shark Tank. The problem? Right now he



Mower deck sharpener mounts under deck and sharpens blade in seconds without having to remove it from the machine.

only has rough prototypes and a design on paper. "The idea is to keep mower blades sharp all the time without having to remove them from the mower. The power of the rotating blade does the work of sharpening," says Cathey. The sharpener attaches to a long metal rod that runs from the driveshaft hub, through the discharge chute, and hooks over the top of the deck. An abrasive disc is sandwiched between a pair of metal plates that pivot up and down on the rod. A spring-loaded knob on top of the deck pushes down against the sharpener to engage the blade. "A couple seconds is all it takes to sharpen a blade," says Cathey.

He knows it will take a substantial investment to engineer a commercial system for market so he's talking to manufacturers, hoping to find one to take it on.

Contact: George Cathey, Memphis, Tenn. (ph 901 355-7601; gc@georgecathey.com).

Liberty Quotes

"Experience has shown that even under the best forms of government, those entrusted with power have, over time, perverted it into tyranny." *Thomas Jefferson*

"No man shall rule over me with my consent. And I will rule over no man." *William Lloyd Garrison*

"Violence, naked force, has settled more issues in history than has any other factor, and the contrary opinion is wishful thinking at its worst. Nations and peoples who forget this basic truth have always paid for it with their lives and freedoms." *Robert Heinlein*

"Watch out for the fellow who talks about putting things in order! Putting things in order always means getting other people under your control." *Dennis Diderot*

"The man who craves disciples and wants followers is always more or less of a charlatan. The man of genuine worth and insight wants to be himself, and he wants others to be themselves also." *Elbert Hubbard*

"The use of force to achieve equality will destroy freedom, and the force, introduced for good purposes, will end up in the hands of people who use it to promote their own interest." *Milton Friedman*

"There is, as far as I know, no example in history of any state voluntarily ceding power from the center to its constituent parts." *Charles Hardy*

"Madness is rare in individuals but in groups, parties, nations, and ages, it is the rule." *Friedrich Nietzsche*

"Constant experience shows us that every man invested with power is apt to abuse it, and to carry his authority as far as it will go." *Charles-Louis de Secondat*

"The liberty of the individual is the greatest thing of all; it is on this and this alone that the true will of the people can develop." *Alexander Ivanovich Herzen*

"You see these dictators on their pedestals, surrounded by the bayonets of their soldiers and the truncheons of their police. Yet in their hearts there is unspoken fear. They are afraid of words and thoughts! Words spoken abroad, thoughts stirring at home, all the more powerful because they are forbidden. These terrify them. A little mouse - a little tiny mouse - of a thought appears in the room, and even the mightiest potentates are thrown into panic." *Sir Winston Churchill*



One of the inventions on display last year at the Invention Convention in Colorado was this simple chicken waterer. Photo on left shows the 3 pieces. Photo at right shows them put together.

A Place To Find New Ideas

We don't very often have the space to publicize farm shows or other events (although we have a comprehensive list of farm shows at our website) but when a request arrives in the mail with an invention attached, it gets our attention. Carol Parker runs the Invention Convention which is part of the Food & Farm Forum in Montrose, Colorado. She sent along details on the show, which is January 26-27, 2018 at the Montrose County Fairgrounds. In addition to a complete program of speakers, which include famed livestock expert Temple Grandin, farm inventors will compete for a top prize of \$500. One of the ideas from last year was a 3-piece chicken waterer designed by John Mercer of Montrose. It consists of a 5-gal. bucket with large holes cut in the sides; a 5-gal. water jug; and a piece of 3-in. dia. plastic pipe with a hole drilled in the side of it. To assemble, the jug is filled 3/4 of the way with water and the piece of pipe is placed on top. Then the bucket is placed upside down on top of the pipe and everything is flipped upside down. The water will stay very clean because the chickens can't get into it with their feet.

For more details on the show - or to get information about exhibiting an invention - go to www.foodfarmforum.org or call ph 503 709-8558.

Points To Ponder

"Obviously crime pays, or else there'd be no crime." *G. Gordon Liddy*

"They said it couldn't be done, but sometimes it doesn't work out that way." *Casey Stengel*

"Nothing can be more readily disproved than the old saw, 'You can't keep a good man down.' Most human societies have been beautifully organized to keep good men down." *John W. Gardner*

"Some luck lies in not getting what you thought you wanted but getting what you have, which once you have got it you may be smart enough to see is what you would have wanted had you known." *Garrison Keillor*

"In questions of science, the authority of a thousand is not worth the humble reasoning of a single individual." *Galileo Galilei*

"The strongest man in the world is he who stands alone." *Henrik Ibsen*

Ole and Lena were worried about how poorly their young son Sven was doing in school. After Sven brought home a report card with four F's and one D, Ole appeared to be deep in thought for quite a while before he finally said, "OK, Sven. I tink I know vhat da problem is. I tink yew are spendin' too much time on dat one subject."

An Idaho potato farmer hired Ole to grade his potatoes. "All you have to do," the farmer told Ole, "is to toss the big potatoes into that bin and the small potatoes into that other bin."

After about half an hour, Ole went looking for his employer and announced that he was quitting. "But why?" said the farmer. "It's not hard work and I pay very well."

Ole replied, "Yeah, dat's right. Da verk is easy. But I can't stand making all dose decisions!"

Lena went away for the weekend to a business conference. During a break, she decided to call home collect.

Little Ole picked up the phone and heard a stranger's voice say, "We have Lena on hold. Will you accept the charges?"

Frantically, little Ole dropped the receiver and ran outside screaming, "Dad! Dey've got mom and dey vant money!"

One day Sven was taking a walk down a country road and he noticed his neighbor, Ole, kept lifting a pig up to a tree to eat apples, one after another.

"Hey Ole," said Sven. "Vhy don't yew just put a bunch of apples on da ground. It vill save yew time."

"Don't be a dummy, Sven," replied Ole. "Vhat's time to a pig?"