

Editor's Notebook



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Editor



Eddie Velo had an idea for a maneuverable, lightweight loader to clean out turkey barns. An entire new industry was launched after the creation of this first machine.

My Connection To The Inventor Of The Skid Steer

I grew up in Pelican Rapids, a small town in Northern Minnesota where there are a lot of turkey growers, including my father, Bill. One of his fellow producers and friends, Eddie Velo, was responsible for the creation of the first skid steer in 1957. People in town would tell stories of sitting with Eddie at the local bowling alley sometime in 1956, looking at sketches and notes he had made about a new kind of "mini loader" that he could use on the upper floor of one of his double decker turkey barns. The upper floor had a low ceiling and posts spaced every 8 ft., so the machine had to be light, maneuverable, and low to the ground.

In 1957, Eddie took his basic idea to Cyril and Louis Keller who ran a fabricating shop in nearby Rothsay, Minn. He told them he'd pay them a fair price if the loader worked. If it didn't, he would just pay for materials and the men would be out their time. The first prototype was a small, 3-wheeled machine with car wheels, a 6.6 hp. Kohler engine, and a transmission from a Plymouth. The digging teeth on the loader bucket were cut from jail bars from an old jail that had been demolished. Left and right drive wheels operated independently, controlled by levers.

Once the design proved its worth on Velo's farm, the Kellers started making them to sell. Eventually, Melroe Manufacturing Co. bought rights to the machine and paid the brothers a royalty. Both of them joined the company and it took off rapidly.

I asked my dad if his friend Eddie ever got rich from having the initial idea for the Bobcat skid steer. "If he did, no one could ever tell. Eddie wasn't one to worry about things like that. He made a deal with the Kellers to build one machine and went back to work. He was a smart guy who never stopped moving and getting things done," he told me.

Old Man Selling Watermelons . . .

At the watermelon stand, the pricelist read: 1 for \$3, 3 for \$10.

A young man stopped by and asked to buy one watermelon. "That'll be 3 dollars," said the old man who owned the stand.

The young man then buys another one, and one more, paying \$3 for each.

As the young man walked away, he turned around and grinned. "Hey old man, do you realize that I just bought 3 watermelons for \$9. Maybe business is not your thing."

The old man smiled and mumbled to himself, "I sold him 3 watermelons when he only wanted one and he thinks I'm the one who needs business lessons."

This Noxious Weed Doubles As A Health Food

When FARM SHOW writer Jim Ruen saw an ad offering "U-Pick" burdock roots for sale, he decided to find out what was going on. He has plenty of those noxious weeds around his Minnesota farm and was hoping he might discover a new market for them. "Actually, I would pay someone to come and pick mine," he jokes.



Burdock roots aren't just a noxious weed, says Jim Ruen.

Jim called the woman who had placed the ad and learned that she didn't get any takers. She used the root herself for health reasons, and thought maybe others might be interested as well. She noted that burdock roots are available at the local food co-op and encouraged Jim to call the store's produce manager, Jason.

"He said they buy their roots from Harmony Valley Farm, Chaseburg, Wis.," Jim says. "Jason worked there for several summers and had been on the burdock digging team. Digging them is the challenge, which may be why Harmony Valley may be the only source for the roots in the upper Midwest. Jason noted that the roots grow as deep as 2 ft. so harvesting them is not easy."

After doing a little research, Jim learned that burdock roots can be fried, boiled, or dried to be powdered and taken as a supplement. Several studies have shown it has anti-inflammatory properties and detoxifies blood and promotes circulation. It might even inhibit some cancers, in particular pancreatic.

"We decided to try some burdock at home. My wife, Wendy, found a simple recipe for roasting it by dicing it and coating it with a little olive oil. It tasted surprisingly good, with a nutty flavor. Given all the health benefits it's supposed to have, we may try it again," says Jim. For more info and recipes, go to www.happyvalleyfarm.com.

Nothing Runs Like A Deere

When did Deere & Co. start using the motto, "Nothing Runs Like A Deere", and how did it happen?



Snowmobile helmets were the first products to feature the famous tagline. It was discarded later but a copywriter named Bob Wright, who worked on the snowmobile line, kept the line in mind just in case. When the tagline was later brought to the attention of Deere's primary marketing team, it became the backbone for the snowmobile line starting in 1971. When Deere stopped making snowmobiles in 1982, the tagline lived on. (*Tri-State Old Iron Association Newsletter*)

Liberty Quotes

"How do you tell a communist? Well, it's someone who reads Marx and Lenin. And how do you tell an anti-communist? It's someone who understands Marx and Lenin."

Ronald Reagan

"Liberty is to the collective body, what health is to every individual body. Without health, no pleasure can be tasted by man; without liberty, no happiness can be enjoyed by society." Thomas Jefferson

Taxation with representation ain't so hot either."

Gerald Baarzan

"There ain't no ticks like poly-ticks. Bloodsuckers all." Davy Crockett

"Government cannot make man richer, but it can make him poorer." Ludwig von Mises

"Liberty is not collective, it is personal. All liberty is individual liberty." Calvin Coolidge

"Freedom has cost too much blood and agony to be relinquished at the cheap price of rhetoric." Thomas Sowell

"By a Declaration, liberty is born. With courage she is nourished, and with unceasing commitment she is guarded." Eric Schaub

"Every man who says frankly and fully what he thinks is doing a public service. We should be grateful to him for attacking most unsparingly our most cherished opinions." Sir Leslie Stephen

"If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable." Justice William J. Brennan



Timbers from the Mayflower were used in the 1600's to build this barn in Jordans, England. You can still visit it today.

Mayflower Ship Survives

After transporting 102 pilgrims to the new world in 1621, the Mayflower ship returned to England where it sat unused for several years after Captain Christopher Jones, who was also part owner of the ship, died at age 52. He had been weakened by the rigorous trips across the Atlantic. Jones' widow, along with the other owners, put the ship up for sale as salvage after it fell into disrepair. Timbers from the ship were bought from the shipbreakers yard for use in a barn in the village of Jordans in southeast England. It's still standing there today.

Points To Ponder

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away." Henry David Thoreau

"I wasn't worth a cent two years ago. Now I owe two million dollars." Mark Twain

"Happy is he who owes nothing." Roman Proverb

"Being tolerant does not mean that I share another one's belief. But it does mean that I acknowledge another one's right to believe, and obey, his conscience." Viktor Frankl

"To know what is right and not do it is the worst cowardice." Confucius

"The content of your character is your choice. Day by day, what you choose, what you think, and what you do is who you become." Heraclitus

"It is morally as bad not to care whether a thing is true or not so long as it makes you feel good, as it is not to care how you got your money as long as you have it." Edwin Way Teale

"If we were all to be judged by our thoughts, the hills would be swarming with outlaws." Johann Sigurjonsson

"Reputation is character minus what you've been caught doing." Michael Lapoche

"A socialist is somebody who doesn't have anything, and is ready to divide it up equally among everybody." George Bernard Shaw

"I am not afraid of storms for I am learning how to sail my ship." Louisa May Alcott

News Flash: Minnesota's worst air disaster ever occurred early this morning when a 2-seater Cessna 152 plane crashed in a small town's Norwegian cemetery.

Search and rescue workers Ole and Sven have so far recovered 826 bodies and expect that number to climb as digging continues into the night.

Ole had not been able to hear well for many years. He finally went to the doctor and got fitted with a set of hearing aids that restored 100 percent of his hearing.

Ole went back to the doctor a month later. "Your hearing is still perfect," says the doc. "Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again."

Ole replied, "Oh, I hafn't told dem yet. I yust sit around and listen to da conversations. I f' changed my vill tree times already!"

Sven said to Ole, "I found dis pen. Is it yours?"

Ole replied, "Not sure. Let me see dat."

Ole tried it out and said, "Yup, dat's my pen."

Sven says, "How do yew know?"

Ole replies, "Dat's my handwriting."

Sven pulled out this new thermos at work and Ole asked, "What's dat Sven?"

"Dat's a new kind of termos. Keeps hot tings hot and cold tings cold. It's great!"

The next day at work, Ole whipped out his new thermos and Sven said, "Nice termos. What yew got in dere?"

Ole proudly said, "A cup of coffee and a popsickle."