

## Editor's Notebook



**Mark Newhall**  
Editor



Jim and his wife, Wendy, were harvesting greens from this garden bed in early March this year on their Minnesota farm.

down to a flat surface. A retainer at one end holds a 10-ft. length of conduit in place as you draw half of it around the arc, leaving 16 in. straight for a sidewall. Slip the other end of the conduit in the retainer and repeat to make a 4-ft. wide hoop with two 16-in. sidewalls.

"We use 3 hoops on 8-ft. beds to make low tunnels. The metal conduit hoops protect our plants and extend the Minnesota growing season.

"When the weather turns cold after plants are in the ground, we toss a row cover or a sheet of plastic over the hoops. When the garlic has only a few weeks to go, we stretch clear plastic over the top of the hoops to keep off rain.

"Our most productive use of the hoops is to cover fall planted crops. This past December 1st, we harvested the last of fall-grown spinach and lettuce, having eaten salads from the hoop-covered bed for the previous 4 to 6 weeks.

"Two layers of plastic over the hoops and a layer of frost blanket do their job over winter, no matter how cold it gets. By early March the lettuce and spinach, as well as carrots, onions and beets, are usually taking off.

"This year we were picking lettuce and spinach by late March. By the middle of April, we were having trouble eating all the greens being produced. By late May, we will be picking young carrots, beets and onions.

"Robinson sells the bender for 4-ft. hoops for \$59.99. He has other benders for narrower and wider hoops. Check them out at [www.lostcreek.net](http://www.lostcreek.net) or call 903 497-1158."



Brent Lenz bought this Ford Escort in 1994 and drove it until an escaped prisoner destroyed it while running from the police.

### 635,000-Mile Ford Escort

*I love stories about high-mileage vehicles. Thanks to Nancy Leasman of Long Prairie, Minn., for sharing this story.*

When Brent Lenz bought his new 1994 Ford Escort, he just wanted a dependable car to get back and forth to work at his electronics repair shop in downtown Long Prairie, Minn. What he didn't expect was that the car would still be going strong at 635,000 miles.

Brent paid \$14,000 for the 4-door hatchback. He babied the car, and the miles added up thanks to the longer drives he often took to make repairs at peoples' homes. He averaged about 25,000 miles per year, never missing scheduled maintenance.

The weight of his tools in the trunk, and the fact that he often pulled a camper, added extra wear. So along the way he replaced the brakes, struts and rear springs. At 112,000 miles a valve seat let loose so he installed a rebuilt head. The car required no transmission work whatsoever until it got over 600,000 miles.

One afternoon during the summer of 2019, Brent made a quick stop at his repair shop between calls and left the car running. An inmate who had escaped from the local jail hopped into the car and started to take off just as Brent came out and grabbed onto the door handle. The momentum of the car spun Brent around, knocking him to the ground.

"I was in shock, lost my breath and couldn't even think straight," he says. Once he pulled himself together, he called the police.

Brent learned only 2 or 3 hrs. later what happened to his Escort. The thief drove the car through low land, gathering up willow refuse in the undercarriage, damaging the quarter panels, exhaust system, control arm on the passenger side, a rear wheel, and pushing in the front end which destroyed the bumper and cooling fan. The car was found in a community about 40 miles away, where it had been abandoned. It was



Lenz babied the Escort, never missing scheduled maintenance.

considered to be a total loss. It was still drivable but limped along like an old soldier.

Brent's work tools, valued at over \$3,000, were in the car when it was stolen and have not been recovered.

He went online, looking for a similar vehicle, and found a 1998 Escort that was roughly the same color. It had only 87,000 miles on it with no rust, and the interior was pristine.

Over the next months Brent spent odd moments prepping and painting the car to look like the old one. He likes to think the car has another 500,000 to go, but he still plans to get his original Escort running again so it can be his back-up car.

### Liberty Quotes

"Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth." *George Washington*

"At the heart of western freedom and democracy is the belief that the individual man is the touchstone of value, and all society, groups, the state, exist for his benefit. Therefore, the enlargement of liberty for individual human beings must be the supreme good and abiding practice of any western society." *Robert F. Kennedy*

"The burden of government is not measured by how much it taxes, but by how much it spends." *Milton Friedman*

"The best way to understand this whole issue is to look at what the government does: it takes money from some people, keeps a bunch of it, and gives the rest to other people." *Dave Barry*

"In the current political vocabulary, 'need' means wanting to get someone else's money. 'Greed', which used to mean what 'need' now means, has come to mean wanting to keep your own. 'Compassion' means the politician's willingness to arrange the transfer." *Joseph Sobran*

"If the right to vote were expanded to 7-year-olds, its policies would most definitely reflect the legitimate concerns of children to have adequate and equal access to free french fries, lemonade and videos." *Hans-Hermann Hoppe*

"People who make careers out of helping others - sometimes at great sacrifice, often not - usually don't like to hear that those others might get along fine, might even get along better, without their help." *John Holt*

"The threat of people acting in their own enlightened and rational self-interest strikes bureaucrats, politicians and social workers as ominous and dangerous." *W.G. Hill*

### Points To Ponder

- "A little lie is like a little pregnancy. It doesn't take long before everyone knows." *C.S. Lewis*

- "The obscure we see eventually. The completely obvious, it seems, takes longer." *Edward R. Murrow*

- "Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple." *Dr. Seuss*

- "Worry is the interest paid by those who borrow trouble." *George Washington*

- "Truth does not change because it is, or is not, believed by a majority of the people." *Giordano Bruno*

- "Wise men learn from the experience of others; most men learn from their own experience; and fools learn not at all." *Proverb*

- Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds." *Albert Einstein*

- "I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed." *Booker T. Washington*

**Ole went into the doctor's office**, all bent over and hobbling like an old man. Within minutes he came back out into the waiting room, miraculously standing up as straight as could be.

A man in the waiting room who had been watching him said in amazement, "My goodness, what happened? It looks like you're cured!"

Ole said, "Vell, da doctor yust gave me a longer cane!"

**Lena won first prize at the local supermarket** which was a free oil portrait by a well-known local artist.

As the painter was in the final stages of the portrait, Lena requested that a large diamond necklace be painted on the picture. The artist was puzzled until Lena confided, "In case Ole should live longer den me, I vant his next vife to go crazy looking for da diamonds."

**Ole got caught in an automated speed trap** that measured his speed using radar and photographed his car. He later received in the mail a ticket for \$40 and a photo of his car.

Instead of payment, he sent the police department a photograph of \$40.

Several days later, he received a letter from the police that contained another picture, this time of handcuffs.

Ole immediately mailed in his \$40.

### Long-Time Senior Editor Retires

It's the end of an era here at FARM SHOW as long-time Senior Editor Bill Gergen retires this month after 33 years of chasing down new products and inventions on farms and at shows across the country.

I first met Bill in 1978 when he was an editor at *Farm Industry News*. That magazine focused primarily on commercial new products so I would frequently see Bill at shows, talking to just about every exhibitor. He really kept me on my toes because I knew that Bill wouldn't miss a thing and I didn't want to get "scooped" by missing something. Each time we would have a chat, Bill would tell me how much he liked FARM SHOW and that he wished he could write more farmer invention stories like we did. In 1988, we were able to offer Bill a job and he joined our staff.



Bill Gergen recently announced his retirement after 47 years in the business.

Over the past 3 decades Bill has written thousands of stories and traveled hundreds of thousands of miles tracking down the best "made it myself" ideas from farm shops across the U.S., Canada and Europe. Anyone who has met Bill knows he's a kind, hard working person who always does his best to get the story right. Publishing has been a tough business in recent years and many magazines have died. One reason FARM SHOW has survived and continues to thrive is because of Bill's ability to search out latest new ideas and maintain relationships with many of our readers. We get a lot of calls from those guys telling us, "I need to talk to Bill about my new idea."

Bill loves to travel and we expect to hear about his upcoming backpacking trips to Colorado, Utah, and other points out west. We're going to miss him around here.



Jim Ruen bought one of Loy Robinson's Hoop Benders 11 years ago to make low tunnel hoops for his extensive gardens.

### He's Still Using His Hoop Bender

Speaking of members of our staff, Contributing Editor Jim Ruen of La Crescent, Minn., doesn't just write about new products and ideas. He puts many of them to work on his southern Minnesota farm.

"Getting a hoop bender from Loy Robinson at Lost Creek Greenhouse was a best buy. It has been 11 years since I bought one after writing about it (Vol. 33, No. 6), and my wife and I are still using the hoops that I bent back then and many more that I've bent since.

"You can make hoops from pvc pipe and other materials but, as far as I'm concerned, 1/2-in. metal conduit stands up best. Heavy snow is no problem, nor is the sun beating down all summer.

"The bender consists of 2 tubes in the desired arc bolted