

# Reader Letters



With wood fires, pitch buildup is a problem that's easy to control. I keep a bag of rock salt near my wood-burning stove and, every week or two, throw a handful into the fire. All the crystals turn to dust and blow out. I've never had a chimney fire or a fireplace fire in 30 years. It's safe, effective and cheap. I wish I'd written in about this sooner because there are too many chimney fires. **(George Guoan, Standish, Mich.)**

Mike Brose submitted a "worst buy" about his Whirlpool top-load washing machine because it wasn't cleaning properly and was leaving soap film on the clothes, due to a sensor that isn't allowing enough water to be used (Vol. 49, No. 6).

I can't recall where I read this tip, but it has worked for at least five years. Before putting your clothes in the machine, add one quart of water. This tricks the machine into thinking there are more clothes than there are, which solves the problem. I would suggest that Mr. Brose give it a try.

There was an article in Vol. 49, No. 5, about a "Post Protector." In the mid-1970s, while I was employed at a telephone co-op in Pekin, Ind., we had to remove many old power poles to which our cables had once been fastened. All of these poles had been in the ground for many years. Not one had rotted in the ground or at ground level. They'd all been treated with a generous coating of roofing tar.

When I built our deck in the early '80s, I treated each post with a heavy coating of roofing tar from the base to about 6 in. above grade. Every now and then, I test each post at ground level by sticking my pocketknife into it. Not one post has shown any sign of rot. **(Bill Ridgway, Salem, Ind.)**

To Mr. Lareth May, don't give up on your Milwaukee blower (Vol. 50, No. 1, "Best, Worst Buys"). Blowers draw a lot of amps at once, like a car or truck starter. I use Ryobi tools and get only about 10 to 15 min. of battery time with my blower. I have four batteries and keep extras. When I use the blower, I usually need to change the battery once. I use Ryobi's high-capacity 9Ah and 12Ah batteries, which help a lot.

As a guy, I like reading about ideas and

business stories from the ladies. There's plenty of information for guys and gals. Ladies, keep submitting ideas.

The "Best/Worst Buys" section is the best place for us to share information about good and bad products and services. It can range from minor inconveniences to losing a few hundred dollars, or even a dangerous product that can injure or kill someone. It's essential to have an unbiased source of information on what to buy. The government and the media will never be as dependable a source as FARM SHOW, and this is a way to reward good companies and punish bad ones with our dollars. **(Ben Parks, Austin, Texas)**

This is a suggestion for Melvin Graves (Vol. 50, No. 1, Letters). If there's still a spark, try squirting gas or starting fluid immediately into the carb intake. If it pops a bit, the issue is fuel delivery. Disconnect the fuel pipe and check the flow. Once it starts again, run with the gas cap loose and see if it's a venting problem. This is very common on small engines with small tanks. On a tractor, it would be worst with a full tank and minimal volume, and best with a low tank and lots of air volume. **(Kevin Johansen, Mound, Minn.)**



In freezing weather or during a power outage, open a sleeping bag and place it under the top sheet, liner side up. Then add a warm quilt on top. This helps retain the heat that would otherwise escape through the mattress. Two people in a bed helps, too.

Sleeping bags come in various lengths and strengths, and not all open into a square shape. I just ordered another rated for 0 degrees, for when it's 16 degrees and the power goes out for days. **(John Rochester, Charlotte, N.C.)**

Melvin Graves reported that his Combinder 140 tractor dies or quits after 5 min. to 1 to 2 hrs. of operation. Based on his description and the comment that "the gas in the carb starts when it wants to," it appears the fuel tank cap is too tight, causing a "vapor lock" that stops fuel flow. Try loosening or replacing the fuel tank cap and/or venting it.

I had a Freightliner Cascadia that ran out of fuel/quit while driving down the road in the middle of the night, 30 miles from anything open, at -20 F. I knew I had plenty of fuel, and the gauge on the driver-side tank showed more than 3/4 of a tank. What wasn't apparent was

that the passenger-side fuel tank vent had frozen/blocked, creating a vacuum. The driver-side tank was empty; the fuel couldn't cross over because of the vacuum in the other tank. As I opened the cap, there was a sucking whoosh, and a few moments later I was able to restart and run without any further problems. **(Dan Tucker, Wasilla, Alaska)**



I use No. 10 by 1/2-in. sheet-metal screws in my boots for ice. 3/8-in. screws might be better, but my soles are thick. **(Fritz Groszkruger, Dumont, Iowa)**

In a letter in Vol. 50, No. 1, Scott says that an old refrigerator with a lightbulb on the inside keeps a hydrant from freezing in subzero weather. I believe it should've said "incandescent" or "heat" before "lightbulb." It's not as cold on the east side of Virginia, but a fellow learned the hard way that an LED lamp won't work for heat in the pump house. **(Linwood Windsor, Va.)**

I would like to see future magazines include a page dedicated to collections for sale or wanted. Some examples: old toys, kitchen utensils, beer or beverage memorabilia, oil cans, etc. It would be necessary for the submitter to include their full address and/or phone number, as some people, like me, don't have a cell phone.

I'd also like to see more information on gardening, kitchenware, and food preservation recipes for retirees. **(Lena M. LaValle, Frederic, Wis.)**

This is in response to K.L. Morgan's Massimo UTV 500 side-by-side worst buy in Vol. 49, No. 6.

The first mistake was buying it at Tractor Supply or any other big-box store. I advise buying a powersports unit from a dealer with a parts department and good mechanics.

I've been a Massimo dealer for seven years, and we haven't experienced the problems Morgan described. Units sold in stores likely haven't been field-tested before purchase. We field-test all our units over hills, on rough roads, and in Louisiana mud. When we sell them, they're ready to work.

We repair all types of powersports equipment and have just as much trouble with Honda, Polaris or Yamaha units. Most Massimos have the same motor as the Yamaha Rhino. **(Mike Tarver, Good Buys, Many, La.)**



In Vol. 49, No. 5, Tony Foale describes a counterbalance system for an older drill press without a rack-and-pinion on the table. Since I use a number of different-sized vises on my table, including a hefty cross slide, I needed a more flexible system. I added a steel tubing extension to a sidewinder-style implement jack to gain clearance between my hand and the table, allowing me to raise and lower it. I still tighten the clamp to stabilize the table during drilling, but it works great. **(Les McEwan, Altamont, Manitoba)**



I've been making ice cream at home for 50 years, and I've made a lot of it, likely thousands of gallons. It's a popular item at local fundraisers.

My one frustration has been the puny motors that come with White Mountain ice cream makers, which are my favorite. They don't last, so I rigged up an alternative.

I use two Masterforce drills from Menards. The first runs at a slow speed. I wrapped a strand of 12-ga. copper wire around the trigger to slow it down. To stop it, I just remove the battery.

When the ice cream is ready to be finished, I go to my second drill. Usually, I need to hand-crank for about 2 min. when it has thickened and expanded to the top of the container.

The drills make fast work of the job. So far, 6 quarts in 6 min. is my record.

I make about 20 flavors, but some are getting hard to find. Pistachio and Bubblegum are no longer available from Watkins Products. If anyone knows of alternatives, I would love to hear from them. **(Roger Gutschmidt, Box 311, Gackle, N.D. 58442; ph 701-269-0537).**

## Easy Way To Send Your Ideas

How often do you see an idea when you're out and about and say, "Hey, that should be in FARM SHOW?" Next time that happens, just take out your phone and send us a photo or two. Just text them to us at **952-465-5019**. If you want to leave a voice mail explaining what you're sending, this phone is dedicated to FARM SHOW stories so it's on and available 24/7. No need to worry about disturbing anyone. Call or text day or night with your ideas, comments or suggestions.



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