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55 years and says he likes the 2 extendable ratchet wrenches he bought at **Harbor Freight**. "I bought a 1/4 by 3/8 wrench for \$14.99 and a 1/2-in. model for \$17.99. No problems. I use them every day at work and also on my farm. These wrenches come with a lifetime warranty. The ratchets have very fine teeth so I can use them in tight spots even with the handle fully extended."

Thomas Fargen, Plain, Wis.: "I like my 2016 **Stihl MSA 200 C** battery-operated chainsaw. At 67 years old I still enjoy cutting brush and a small amount of wood. I had a **Stihl 026** gas saw that was trouble-free, but I didn't like leaving it running while I moved around, so I traded it. This battery-operated saw make no noise and starts by

"This battery-operated saw make no noise and starts by just squeezing the trigger."

just squeezing the trigger. It's also much safer to use and cuts faster. The company claims the saw can be used for one hour per battery charge, but mine seems to run much longer."

Jeff Lang, Newport News, Va.: "Our **Watts** instant hot water recirculating system works as well as advertised (www.watts.com; ph 978 689-6066). It's quiet, easy to install, and maintenance-free. It came with all the parts needed to install it and has saved us thousands of gal. of water per year.

"A 24-hour programmable timer is used to activate the pump only when we need the water. It provides us with instant hot water for washing dishes and taking showers. That's important because we live in town and have to pay a sewage charge for every gal. of water that goes down the drain. So if we run the tap and have to wait for the water to get hot, we're paying twice for it.

"I like the 2003 **Ironton** cold water pressure washer I bought at Northern Tool (www.northern-tool.com). The Honda 5 hp. gas engine on it has been trouble-free. I always use clean, fresh fuel with **Sea Foam** fuel stabilizer and a lead substitute/additive in my small engines, so I've never had a carburetor fail.

"My **Ridgid** 4-gal. wet/dry shop vac is small but has a lot of vacuuming power. It's perfect for my needs and also works great for cleaning my vehicles."

Ben Gerlach, Cascade, Wis.: A **White 2-105 Field Boss 4-WD** tractor rates as Ben's "worst buy". "This tractor is hard to drive, with over-direct-under gear ranges and a confusing gearshift system. The parking brake locks up all the time, and the engine overheats even when pulling a slight load. As a result, all we can really do with this tractor is plant small grains. Very disappointing."

Alan Klar, Plymouth, Minn.: Alan's the satisfied owner of a 2015 **Deere 4066 R** tractor, which he uses with an **Erskine 725** front-mounted snowblower and a **Land Pride** 3-pt. mounted, 8-ft. blade. "This tractor has good comfort and visibility and a short turning radius, which works great for snow removal.

"We've used **Echo** power equipment including chainsaws, backpack blowers, and string trimmers for many years. All have required only routine maintenance."

Howard Stemen, Dickey, N. Dak.: Howard's the satisfied owner of a 9,000-lb., 2-post automotive lift made by **National Auto Tools** (www.nationalautotools.com; ph 866 563-5438). "This lift came as a complete

package shipped right to my door. It's handy for changing oil, servicing brakes, rotating tires and so forth. It cost less than \$2,000."

Delbert Hayes, Norwalk, Iowa: "We really like the 20-ton air hydraulic bottle jack we bought last year from **Harbor Freight**. It comes with a 4-ft. long air hose. We use a **Harbor Freight** 9-gal., 135 psi gas-powered air compressor to operate it. We've used this jack many times to fix flat tires on our combine, including one time when it was loaded with corn. We use the compressor to blow debris off the combine as we move from field to field."

Marrel Bush, Windom, Minn.: "Last summer I bought a used **Sears Craftsman** Nextec 3/8-in. drill/driver equipped with a lithium ion battery. I'm surprised at how much torque it has and how long the battery lasts on a charge. The drill comes with an integrated LED work light that illuminates your work surface, and I've used it a lot more than I expected. I use a **Ryobi** 1/2-in., 18-volt drill for bigger jobs. Both are good drills."

Darrel Olson, McGregor, Minn.: "My worst buy is my 2013 **Yard Machine** riding mower equipped with a Briggs & Stratton engine. The timing gear on it went out 3 years in a row. Now the mower doesn't work and is sitting in our garage."

T.W. Ojala, New Ipswich, N.H.: "My **Viking** orange and black boots chafe my shins and hurt my feet. They don't keep my feet warm, either."

Ruben Zahl, Neversink, N.Y.: "I like my **Black Diamond** Gizmo headlamp (www.blackdiamondequipment.com; ph 800 775-5552). This rugged headlamp is small,



tough and handy to use. I think one should be in every glove compartment. Ever try to change a flat tire or a fuse with one hand while holding a flashlight with the other? It comes with an elastic band and operates on 3 AAA batteries, and it weighs just 2.9 oz. A button on top is used to turn the light on and off. It makes a lot of light that lasts for 4 to 6 hrs."

Mike Zimmerman, Elizabethtown, Penn.: Mike nominates his 1974 **Deere 2630** tractor as his "best buy". "My father bought this tractor new and it's still an important part of our farming operation. It has a lot of power for its size and weight and is easy to operate.

"The only locking pliers I'll buy is the **Vise-Grip** brand (www.globalindustrial.com; ph 888 978-7759). I've tried using several other off-brand locking pliers without success. Either the threads strip out of the adjuster screw or they unlock too easily. If it isn't Vise-Grip, forget it."

Fred V. Gerber, Eckville, Alberta: Back in 1963 Fred purchased a **Gallagher** 110-volt electric fencer for \$800. He's still using it today. "This fencer has been working 365 days a year, 24/7, ever since I bought it. I use it on a wire without insulators that runs around my home quarter section. It produces a shock even when grass and bushes are touching the wire, and it even works in the rain. I've never spent a nickel on it."

Robert Vales, Swanton, Neb.: "My **My-D Han-D** propane tank heater is made simple and is easy to start (www.mydhandinc.com; ph 620 225-0263)."

Marlin Weaver, Fremont, Mich.: A 2015 **Cub Cadet** 2-stage snowblower equipped with a 208 cc engine rates as Marlin's "best buy". "It works great. I let it run out of gas

Tripod Hoist Lifts Loads, Pulls Brush

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

The Smartripod is a handy way to make a portable hoist. If you need a way to pick up heavy objects in out of the way places, it's ideal. The Finnish-built steel hardware bolts to 4 by 4's and then pins together. It gives you a 2,000-lb. lift capacity.

The Smartripod is distributed in North America by Pierre Ménard. I bought one and put it together last fall using 8-ft. posts.

It did everything promised. Essentially it stood up where needed and created a stable anchor point for lifting heavy objects. I used it to lift a 350-lb. chunk of granite onto a cart.

I also used it with Ménard's EZ-Gripper to pull saplings out of the ground, roots and all. Other devices for pulling saplings often strip the slick bark without grabbing the tree. That's not a problem with the EZ-Gripper.

The beauty of using it with the Smartripod is you can get in among other trees where you can't go with a tractor. Using it on a slope isn't a problem either as you can adjust the spread between the feet to create a stable lift point. I also tried it with a tractor loader, and it worked as promised.

Ménard imports the hardware and resells it in Canada and the U.S. for \$75 (Canadian). He has used his for a variety of purposes, including pulling an engine and loading a sawmill into a truck. He even lifted an entire car with his Smartripod.

Other suggested uses include pulling a water pump from a deep well, pulling stumps, or resetting stones in a cemetery.

The EZ-Gripper is priced at \$30 (Canadian). Ménard offers a 5-year, money back guarantee on all of his tools if not satisfied or if a tool breaks.



Smartripod hardware bolts to 4 by 4's that pin together to form a portable hoist.



Tripod hoist works great for a variety of uses, including pulling small tree stumps and roots.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Pierre Ménard, 4440 Chemin Robinson, Cookshire-Eaton, Que. Canada J0B 1M0 (ph 819 829-2501; vispieux@gmail.com; www.vispieux.com-tools).

last spring. When I put gas in it last fall, it started right up on the first pull."

Willard White, Clinton, Tenn.: "My 2016 **Polaris** 4-wheeler gets me wherever I want to go on my goat farm. I'm older and have asthma so I don't get around too well. This 4-wheeler really helps."



Enos Holloman, Ahoskie, N.C.: "I farmed with my **Deere** 60 tractor for many years before retiring about 10 years ago. Then I gave the tractor a new paint job and now display it at tractor shows and drive it in parades."

David Lees, Alexandria, Ohio: "My 2015 **Faver** commercial wood splitter works great. Well worth the money (www.favermfg.com; ph 419 345-3966)."

Rick Byrne, Tunas, Mo.: "I've been a loyal **Sears Craftsman** customer over the years, but the quality of their products has gone way down. My Sears riding mower has had problems ever since I brought it home. I have 3 different Sears chainsaws but I've been told it's not worth fixing them. I also own a lot of Sears cordless power tools, but the batteries seem to last only about a year. I will no longer shop at Sears."

Michael Eubank, Springfield, Tenn.: "I like my 2015 **LS 3033** 33 hp., 4-WD loader tractor equipped with a 3-cyl. Mitsubishi diesel engine and 4-speed shuttle shift

transmission (www.tractorusa.com; ph 252 984-0700).

"My **Deere** 3020 is a super tractor. No problems.

"I use my 2013 **Ferris** 2000 series zero-turn riding mower on 5 different 1-acre yards. It's an excellent machine."

Tavish Presswood, Canton, Ga.: Tavish likes Seth McGinn's **CanCooker** (www.cancooker.com; ph 877 844-2772). It's a 16-in. high, 10-in. dia. aluminum pot with 2 latches. A steam valve prevents pressure buildup while maintaining adequate cooking steam inside. Virtually any heat source can be used from propane burners to campfires and charcoal grills to the stovetop.

"It's the easiest way to cook great meals for 2 to 10 people," says Tavish. "It excels at making everything from low country boils to chicken wings and burgers. If you can boil water, you can make super tasty meals with this cooker in only about an hour.

"My **Remington** 770 rifles are worst buys. My .308's bolt handle broke off, and the .30-06 random-fired once while I was carrying it. The company said they could work on the rifles but couldn't guarantee how much I'd have to pay. They wouldn't sell the parts to me to take to my gunsmith."

Andrew Weaver, Woodhull, N.Y.: "It's one of the best saws I've ever had," says Andrew about his **Jonsered** 2166 chainsaw equipped with a 20-in. bar. "This saw starts right up and always runs great. I bought it to replace my 2012 **Husqvarna** 372 XP saw equipped with a 20-in. bar. I couldn't start the Husqvarna without pulling the rope 10 to 15 times, even in summer. When I finally did get it running it ran great, but if I made a few cuts and then shut it off and tried to start it again, I couldn't. The dealer installed a new