

Tricked Out Trailer

By Bob Goddard, Equine Humorist & Author

Our old horse trailer is a piece of junk. The walls are rusted, the floor is rotten, and the tire (singular form intended) has no air in it. In the glory days, this trailer was the proud centerpiece of our horse life. Now, it sits lopsided and neglected, deep in the backyard. I would shoot the poor thing to end its misery, but I'm not sure where to aim.

Ah, but where there is life, there is hope. Even as I go on-line to search for a junk collector to come and (somehow) haul this derelict away, I stumble across a website with this bold claim: "We do repair work on all horse trailers!" *All* horse trailers, it says. And they promise new floors, hitchwork, and electrical replacement along with a smorgasbord of repairs and upgrades.

As I continue my research I discover that more and more people are refurbishing their old horse trailers. And they're not just slapping on a coat of paint and a new set of tires. They're actually replacing floors and windows, restoring the hitchwork and rewiring the electrical system. They're even installing fancy lights and elaborate venting systems. It can get pretty involved. In fact, my sources tell me that insiders at Sundowner's Trailer refer to their trailer refurbishing service as "Trick My Trailer."

If I'm going to resurrect our old trailer, I want to go all the way and trick it out real good. And I don't mean like the cars that bounce up and down (good luck at the McDonalds drive up window) or sport those hubcaps that keep spinning when the vehicle isn't moving. I want it to do something spectacular and bizarre, but also useful.

If I could ask for anything, what capabilities would I want for my refurbished, tricked-out trailer? For proper



inspiration, I turn to the masters of imaginative invention: DaVinci, Dr. Seuss, Goldberg and, of course, Inspector Gadget. The giants.

I would like to see a device that encourages horses to load without a lot of fuss. One of my pet peeves is a horse who will not load. Just get in already. I know that experienced and enlightened horse handlers have an array of training techniques to make the job easier. However, I've also seen experienced and enlightened handlers use a broom. They pat the animal's rear until he gets so irritated from behind, he moves forward – and presumably into the trailer. I know from experience that annoyance can be a powerful motivator.

So why not equip the trailer with a mechanical broom that taps the horse's rear automatically? What I'm envisioning here is a broom attached to a trapeze extending off the top rear of the trailer. It could swing on a pendulum equipped with a reverse lock gear-sort-of-thing designed so that when the horse backs away from the trailer, the broom administers an irritating pat on the rear. To avoid it, the horse has to move forward. I can't see why this wouldn't work.

Sometimes a horse, baited by oats on the manger or the like, will get into the trailer

okay and then feel utterly betrayed once the butt bar goes up and the back doors are latched shut behind him. Often these horses will act out their resentment by kicking the trailer walls. It's what *I* would do.

The racket created by a horse kicking the inside of a trailer can be a little unsettling for those inside the tow vehicle. You're sure something horrible is happening back there. I think it would be fun to rig the trailer walls in such a way that every time the horse kicks them, the vibration triggers a short burst of a recorded rhythm harmonic to accompany the horse's natural beat. You know, like on a key organ. A funky blues or even something with a cool bossa nova would work nicely, I think. Now, instead of racket, the animal is making music.

Another major problem in trailering horses – and I don't mean to start a fight here – is other drivers. If you have ever towed a horse trailer, you know what I'm talking about. There is something about the presence of a horse trailer that makes nearby motorists think they are Dale Earnhardt. They drive up on your rear, they cut you off or refuse to allow you to make a lane change. And these drivers all have one thing in common: they are on the phone.

In place of the viewing window, I would like to see my trailer equipped with one of those expando arms with a mechanical grabber thing (like Robot's hands in *Lost in Space*) that could reach through an open window and snatch the phone. And then snap it in two. And then hand the pieces back to the offender. A second extendo arm could be equipped with a rubber hand to smack the driver along side the head for good measure.

Or I could just leave the poor thing to rest in peace.