

Brief answers
to short questions

Sheila's Shorts

By Sheila Miller



'Wood' you know?

The question:

What is the address of Ronald Jester, the author of an article on burning wood that appeared in the January 31 issue of Lancaster Farming?

Russell Weidman
Wayland, N.Y. 14572

The answer:

Agriculture Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19711

Combining talents

Combining crews in the Midwest conjure up images of bygone days when other 'cowboys' ate prairie dust and earned their calluses driving north from Texas to Missouri.

Of course in the early days of the Midwest, the drives were done with horses and the harvest was Longhorn cattle heading for the stockyards. Now the drives are made sitting on combines and the harvest is acre upon acre of grain. About the only things that have remained constant are the heat, dust, and long days of sitting.

Combine crews are the drifters of modern day, following the grain harvest north into Canada, working night and day to reap the bounty before Mother Nature proves fickle and destroys her own creation with too much or too little rain or a similar catastrophe.

Sound romantic, inviting, ready to hop on board? To most of us, the idea of joining a combine crew would be about as inviting as . . . having a tooth pulled without novacaine. But there are some brave souls remaining who think this type of career is for them.

One of these individuals is Mitchell Fernsler of Lebanon. He writes

I am interested in any information you might send me on working for a combining crew in the grain belt. I am planning to move to the Midwest and hope to find a job in this line of work.

For some insight into this type of employment, you don't have to leave your home county, Mitchell.

As a matter of fact, if you contact one of the 'help wanted' advertisers in Lancaster Farming,

you'll find a wheat-and-fall-harvest-from-Texas-to-Montanna employer is based almost in your backyard — Newmanstown.

David Barry, R1 Newmanstown, 717/949-2363, is one individual who hires people for his combine crew.

I spoke to David's mother last Tuesday since David was in the southern states on business. She explained that David was a 'pardner' in a crew last summer

and now owns his own traveling combining business. He'll be pulling out of Newmanstown on May 10 with a caravan of combines.

She explained crew members live in a house trailer while on the road, it's steady work, and employees receive a bonus at year's end if the harvest quota is reached. The only stipulations are each employee must be 18 years old or

over and able to drive a grain truck or tractor. Single people are preferred.

She recommended you contact her son either at 7 a.m. or p.m. since he's out the rest of the day readying the combines for the long haul ahead.

Happy trails, and be sure to stock up on ice water, suntan lotion, and a 10-gallon hat.

Cut firewood now for next winter

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Balm April weather is a good time to cut and stack your firewood for keeping cozy on cold, blustery days next winter.

This would also be a good time to buy fresh-cut firewood for burning next winter — if you can find it — says John F. Kundt, Extension forestry specialist and associate professor of horticulture at the University of Maryland

Kundt notes greenwood from all species of trees should be dried for seven to nine months in order to burn well in stoves and fireplaces. The advantage of dry wood is more heat — not necessarily less creosote in your chimney flue

He explained wood which is either green or wet often uses one-third or more of its potential heat energy to drive out moisture when burning.

You can aid the drying process by cutting logs into ready-to-use

lengths and splitting all pieces which are more than five inches in diameter

Stack your wood loosely in long tiers not more than five feet high. Keep the lower layer off the ground by laying it on lengths of pipe, railroad ties or scrap lumber.

You could also dump your firewood in a loose, rounded heap. But, again keep it from direct contact with the ground. Stacking firewood in an old livestock or tobacco barn or toolshed is also acceptable, provided there is good

ventilation.

However, do not store firewood in or near your house, or in a building attached to your house, Kundt cautioned. This precaution is necessary in case the wood is harboring insects which could cause damage or become a nuisance in your home.

If possible, locate your outdoor tiers or piles of firewood in a sunny location, exposed to breezes. Cover their tops with a plastic film or other waterproof material.

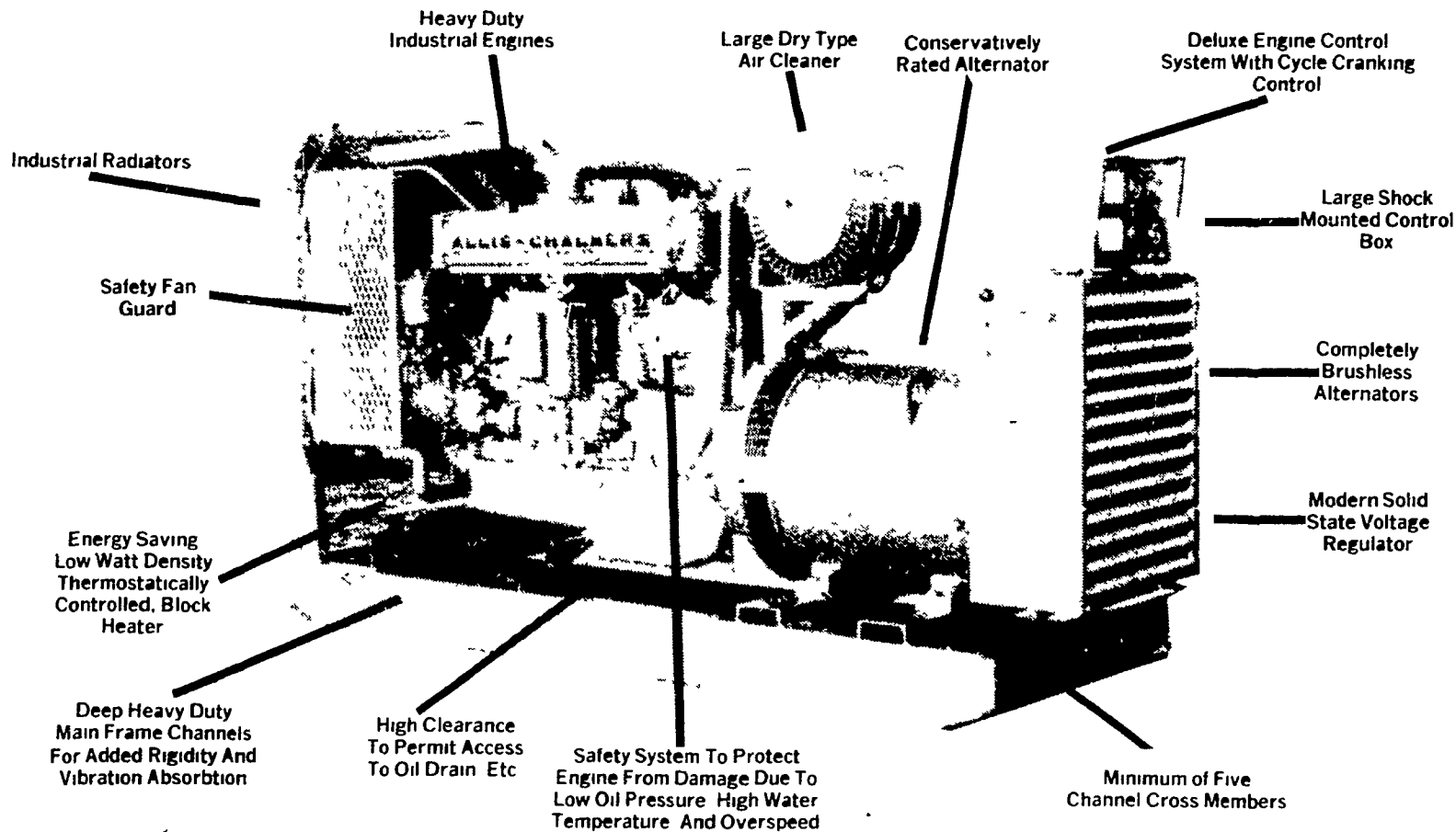


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