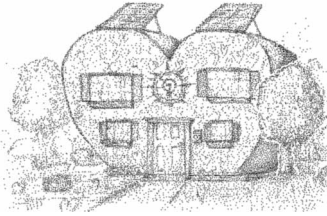


Home & Heart



Kathleen Jarschke-Schultze

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I freely admit that I was kicked out of the glee club in the sixth grade because I couldn't carry a tune. I sing only for my family at our annual No Talent Show, for Bob-O, and to my dog. So, with apologies to the Angels, the Chiffons, and all those great girl groups of the Fifties and Sixties...

The Hydro's Back

[Spoken in a soft, breathy voice]

The creek went away and we hung around
And got our power from the wind and sun
And when the clouds came and no rain fell
We knew that things weren't very nice.

[Begin singing to the tune of "My Boyfriend's Back"]

The Hydro's back and we're generating power,
Hey-la, hey-la, the hydro's back
The batteries are charging each and every hour,
Hey-la, hey-la, the hydro's back.

The water's so high we're usin' nozzle number two,
Hey-la, hey-la, the hydro's back
So look out now 'cause the amps are coming through,
Hey-la, hey-la, the hydro's back.

Hey, the creek is finally flowing,
And the turbine's really going.

The creek's been gone for such a long time,
Hey-la, hey-la, the hydro's back
Now it's back and things'll be fine,
Hey-la, hey-la, the hydro's back.

Hey, every day I can do the laundry,
What to turn on next is my only quandary.

What made you think we always needed blue skies?
Aah-oooh, aah-oooh
The wind turbine's quiet now, but our amps are on the rise,
Aah-oooh.

Wait and see!

The Hydro's back, it's gonna save our reputation,
Hey-la, hey-la, the hydro's back
So our Genny DC can take a long vacation,
Hey-la, hey-la, the hydro's back.

Yeah, my hydro's back...

The Drought Has Ended

We had a couple of intermittent inches of rain this fall. Then we had wonderful snow. Right here at Chateau Schultze, we got about six inches (15 cm), and it stayed for a week. Our water year is at normal for this date, and the mountains all around us have visible snowcaps when the clouds clear away.

Our creek started slowly. Then you could begin to hear it whenever you went outdoors. It is a wonderful thing to live around free-flowing water. The water level in the creek rose steadily. After the anemic water flow all last winter, two years' worth of fallen leaves were finally flushed down the creek. We have had to take the walk through the meadow and up the creek to clean the hydro intake many times. This is not a hard job at all. Emma, the Airedale, loves going with us.

Our Hydro

The hydro unit is located in the creek just below our house. We use an Energy Systems & Design Stream Engine. It is about 80 feet (24 m) from our battery bank and power room. Most of the 900 feet (274 m) from the intake to the turbine is 6 inch PVC pipe now. As it nears the turbine, there is 5 inch and some 4 inch PVC pipe.

It used to be all 4 inch and 3 inch pipe when we first started using hydropower in this creek. Every year while the creek is at its lowest (sometimes dry), Bob-O replaces sections of the smaller pipe at the upper end with larger pipe. This has resulted in more power being generated by the turbine.

The head or vertical fall of the water is about 32 feet (9.75 m). That is not going to change by any significant amount. So Bob-O improves what he can, when he can. After the creek had been running awhile, the water level rose enough to allow us to turn on the second nozzle of the turbine. That increased our generated power by 8 amps at 24 VDC, almost doubling the turbine output at the time.

One Saturday, Bob-O built a new, larger base for the hydro unit. That gained us another half an amp. It allows the water to exit the unit more freely through a larger area as it flows back into the creek.

It is wonderful to have the hydro back. Bob-O and I look forward to it every year, and this year especially. The weather the last few years has been kind of wacky, and is getting drier overall.

Electronic Varmint Repeller

I received an e-mail message from a reader, Paul Baxter (a fellow ham radio operator), who had read the sad news that Vermin-X pest repellents (see *HP84* and *HP86*, *H&H*) don't work on modified square wave inverters. He writes, "A solution is at hand however, since Ramsey Electronics sells much the same thing in kit form. The best thing about this model is that it runs on 12 VDC." If any of you get a Rat Blaster Varmint Repeller kit and try it, do let me know how it works.

Tarp Woodshed Update

When the six inches of snow was falling, Bob-O or I had to go out every so often, depending on the rate of snowfall, and clean the snow off the roof of the woodshed. The snow had to be coaxed off the tarp roof. It did not readily slide off.

We cleaned the snow off the roof from the inside by using the long, brush end of a shop push broom. We started by pushing up on the roof about a foot in from the eave to clear that snow. Then we moved the broom up towards the crest of the roof another foot or so and repeated the process.

We found out later that this periodic roof clearing had saved our woodshed. We have some friends nearby who had the same idea of using a tarped canopy for a woodshed. Unfortunately, they were caught on the far side of Siskiyou Summit when the snowstorm hit, and could not get home for several days. The canopy collapsed under the weight of the snow. They came home to a pile of bent steel and torn tarping.

So I will certainly be keeping an eye on my tarp woodshed and the weather till spring. Then one of my first fair weather projects will be to put a metal roof onto the pipe steel roof supports so that the roof can shed itself of snow. The roof has a good pitch—it just needs the right type of roofing material.

I am afraid to actually tally up how many projects I have either going on now or in my mind as having to be done come spring. Part of a birthday poem I once wrote for my sister said:

*Keep moving ahead, never look back,
For work ahead, there's never a lack,
Nose to the grindstone, shoulder to the wheel,
We all ante up and take a chance on the deal.*

Hey, deal me in.

Access

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