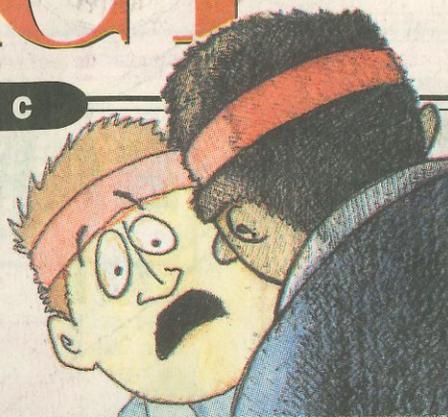


# IMPACT

SECTION C



## CALL US!

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## TURNING POINT

Last year, Gidget Demas used a wheelchair in the annual MS walk; this year, she'll be on foot. 5

## OPINION

Market's ups and downs (above) mirror those of the war in Iraq. 2

## WELL BEING

More men becoming anxious about their body image. 10

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Bill Cole (right) keeps a 1913 Frick steam engine — which looks like a locomotive and was originally used for plowing and threshing — parked on the lawn of his Lakewood home. Because the weather was cold this day, Cole didn't want to start the engine, which requires water to operate. Bill Hyers, like Cole a member of the Pinelands Antique Engine Association, holds a tiny steam engine (below), which actually works.



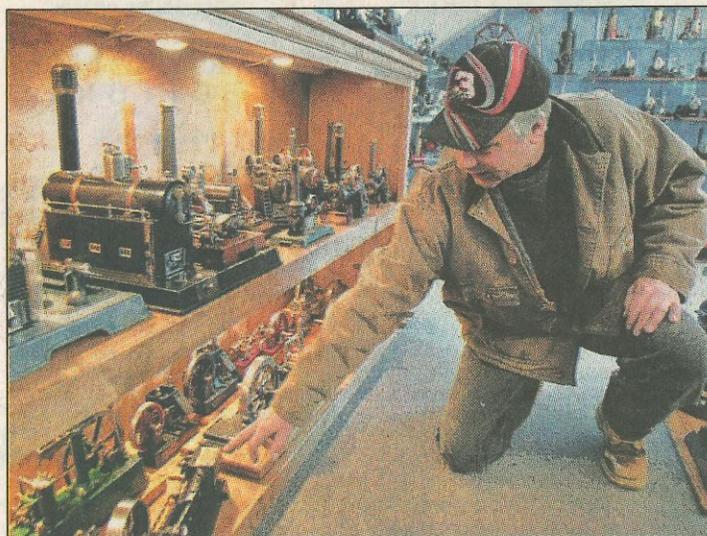
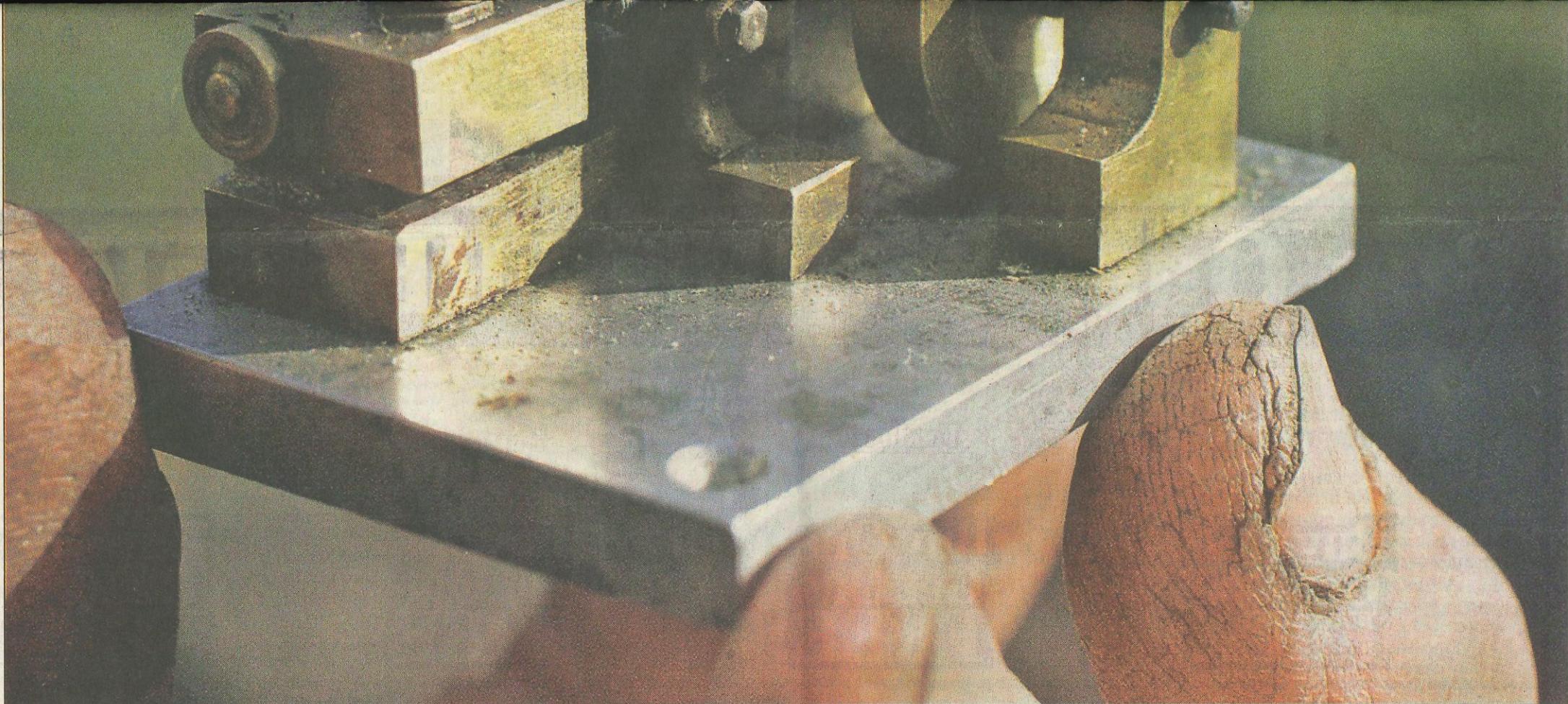
# THE LITTLE ENGINES THAT COULD

## VISIONS

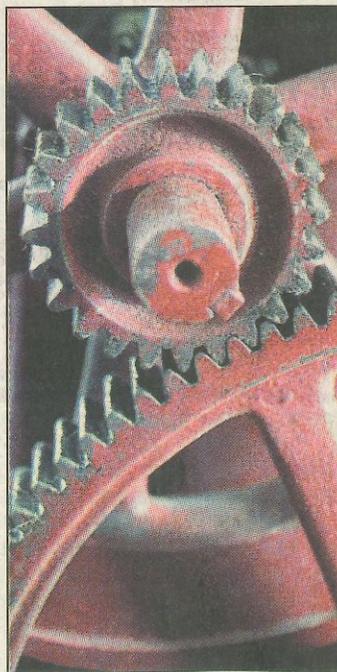
STORY BY SHANNON MULLEN STAFF WRITER

PHOTOS BY TIM MCCARTHY STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER





**Cole, 44, adjusts the air pressure on one of the miniature steam engines he displays in a room above his garage. He collects old toys, miniature engines, antique farm equipment and assorted other mechanical memorabilia. Gears (right) such as these are typical of many of these machines.**



Members of the Pinelands Antique Engine Association — who can fix just about anything — delight in collecting and maintaining all sorts of old things mechanical.

A highlight of Bill Hyers' trip to Florida this winter was watching a handful of men at an antique engine show transform a heap of old parts into a fully functional Model T, right before his eyes.

"They assembled the whole thing in 11 minutes, started it up and drove it away," the 65-year-old Dover Township resident marveled.

The story, which Hyers related a few weeks ago at the Pleasant Plains firehouse in Dover Township, brought smiles to the 30 or so men who had gathered for the monthly meeting of the Pinelands Antique Engine Association.

Another name for this group could be The Guild for Guys Who Know How Stuff Works. Nowadays, that is an exclusive club.

Totaling about 60 members, they are a resourceful bunch, these men, the kind you're glad you know when your car/truck/boat/farm tractor/lawn mower/refrigerator/furnace/you name it breaks down.

See **Collectors**, Page **C8**

#### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Today, the Asbury Park Press presents another in a series of monthly photojournalism essays on varying topics of local interest. This feature appears on the last Sunday of each month in the Impact section.

## Collectors delight in maintaining old engines

From Page C1

Among their number are auto mechanics, heavy-equipment operators, construction workers, building contractors, a few farmers, two retired airline pilots, at least one former lawyer and numerous volunteer firefighters. The majority of members are Ocean County natives, and quite a few, like club president Fred Clayton, 60, of Dover Township, have deep roots there.

Their specific interests vary. Some collect old farm equipment. Others have a weakness for antique automobiles. Many like to build scaled-down, working replicas of late 19th- and early 20th-century engines, the types that used to power everything from a tractor to a textile mill.

What the club members have in common is a fascination with all things old and mechanical.

For some, like Ray Weber, 64, of Holmdel, this has been a life-long avocation. A semiretired skilled trades supervisor for Ford, he fondly recalls the sputtering "hit-and-miss" engine in the old orchard sprayer his grandparents used at their farm in Marlboro when he was a boy. Today, his collection includes a 1947 International Harvester farm tractor. It's the same model he learned to drive when he was 9 years old, and now his 9-year-old grandson is driving it, too.

Others, though, developed this passion later in life. Bill Cole is a case in point.

It all started innocently enough for the 44-year-old Lakewood resident, who needed another pastime after he gave up racing cars at Wall Stadium three years ago.

The first thing that caught his eye was an antique, steam-powered mechanical toy. Just one toy. Now, Cole has so many items — old toys, miniature engines, antique farm equipment



“You’d be surprised how many people in this area collect this stuff. Within three or four blocks of here I know four or five different guys who collect engines, tractors, farm equipment — you name it. Rusty iron.”

**BILL COLE,**  
LAKEWOOD

and assorted other mechanical memorabilia — that he wants to build a 30-by-40-foot barn on his property to hold it all.

His house, by the way, is the one with the 1913 Frick steam engine — which looks like a locomotive and was originally used for plowing and threshing — parked on the lawn.

“That weighs about 16,000 pounds and runs like a watch,” he said earlier this month.

Inside his garage workshop there's a 1909 Stanley Steamer automobile, which Cole is restoring for someone, and several lumbering, century-old engines. One, painted a gleaming, fire engine red, is a thousand-pound, 6-horsepower hit-and-miss engine, used for sawing wood and grinding grain, that some farmer would have ordered out of the Sears Roebuck catalog in 1913 for \$135. (Cole has the catalog, so he knows.)

“You'd be surprised how many people in this area collect this stuff,” Cole said. “Within three or four blocks of here I know four or five different guys who collect engines, tractors, farm equipment — you name it. Rusty iron.”

Stepping into the room above Cole's garage is like walking into a museum. Glass shelves loaded with miniature engines and steam-powered mechanical toys cover the walls. Everything works as well as the day it was made. A 1908 recording of “Silent Night” rests inside a carefully restored Victrola. There are old carbide bicycle headlights, hundred-year-old spark plugs and light bulbs and a German-made slide projector from the 1860s lit with kerosene.

“If I could read German, I could tell you a whole lot more about it,” he said.

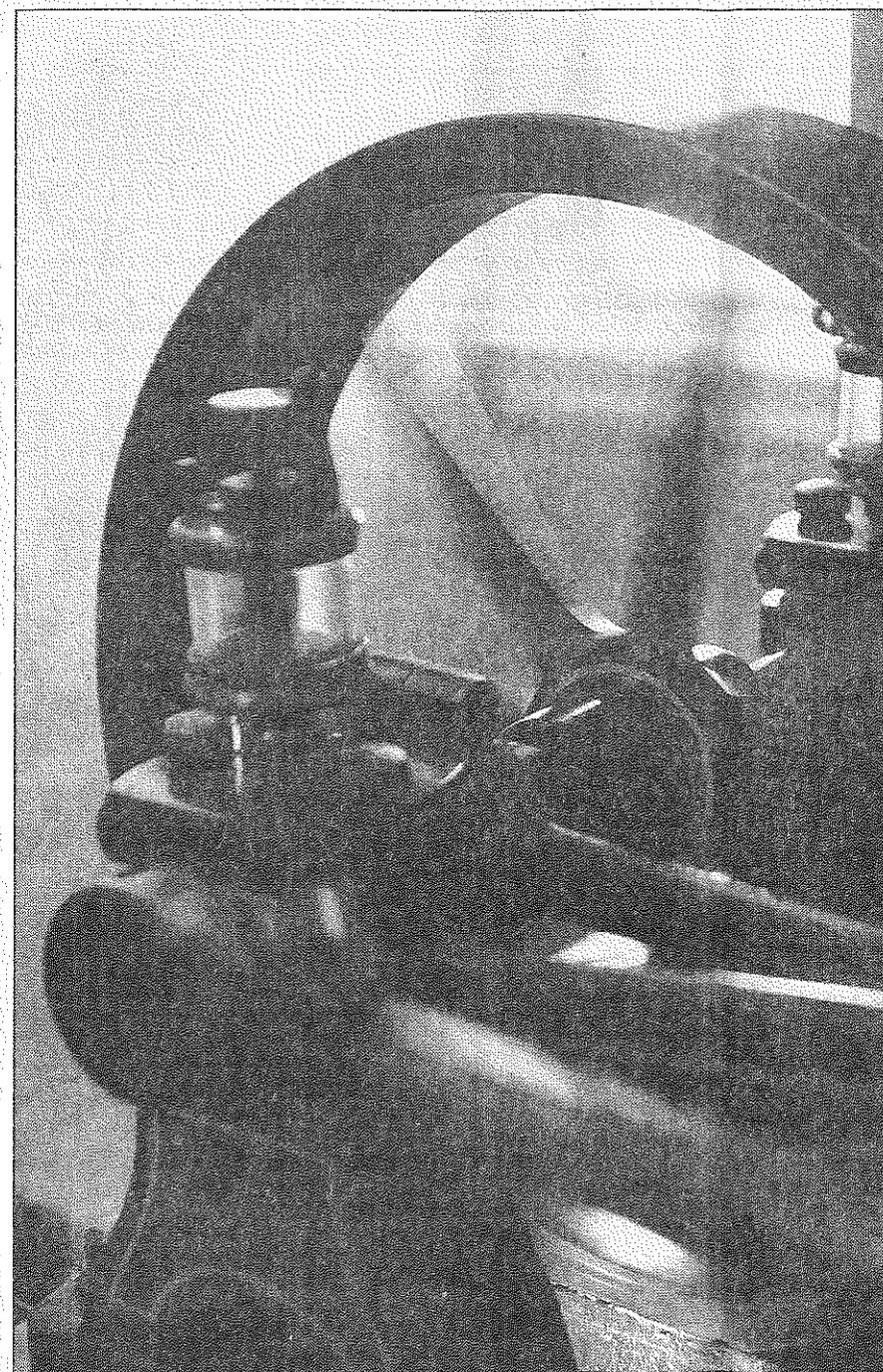
What captivates Cole and other association members about the old engines is their elegant simplicity and astounding durability. They had to be designed simply so a farmer could repair them in the middle of a field in foul weather, Cole explained. Properly maintained, they will run forever.

Conversely, what keeps these collectors awake at night is thinking about how much of this vintage material gets sent to the landfill every day.

The members of the Pine-lands Antique Engine Association are united in their determination to rescue as much of this history as possible, before it's too late.



TIM MC CARTHY  
STAFF  
PHOTOGRAPHER  
Bill Hyers (left),  
Dover Township,  
oils the single  
piston of an old,  
Waterloo Boy  
gasoline-pow-  
ered engine that  
was used as a  
power source for  
farm equipment  
such as a corn  
husker. This  
placard (below)  
appears on the  
side of the en-  
gine.



A device such as this (above) was used to operate a popcorn machine or a peanut roaster, both of which were commonly found years ago on wagons from which the snacks were sold on city street corners. This brass cap (right) is part of an early inboard motor for a powerboat.

