

The Salem Leader  
Educationally Speaking  
Justin Harter  
06/09/08

## **Manly Mower Moments Part II**

Avid readers will remember my column from late last summer when I discussed my vain attempts at mowing my lawn. It started when I brought home an old push-mower my Dad kindly gave me. The unfortunate thing was that this lawnmower was *literally* two years older than me. Needless to say, when I pulled it out of the trunk of my car and tried to start it, it pattered enough to cut six blades of grass before winding down to a smoky end.

Shortly that same day as my failed attempts at getting the old gas-powered push mower to move and several kicks and choice words later, I ventured to Lowe's for an emergency mower. Times were desperate and the grass was literally getting thicker the longer I sat around not mowing it. Being a newly minted homeowner, I was being purposefully frugal with my money and refusing to let anything take the best of my wallet. In doing so, I walked out of Lowe's with an old fashioned (almost Flintstone-esque) roller-clipper style mower that required no gas, no electricity, no charging, no maintenance. I literally opened the box, assembled the handle and started cutting.

For the remainder of the summer and fall, the grass bowed to my every rolling cut. I defeated it at every corner of my lawn. Then, springtime rolled around. And, anticipating my neighbors' desire for pristine lawns, I got an early start on spreading weed killer, seed and fertilizer. So much so it looked like a brand new lawn! A really, really, thick lawn. Yep. *Really* thick.

I was high-on-the-land. Up until the grass became so enraged with me cutting it that it grew in so lush and thick that I could no longer push my ancient clippers through the grass. My attempt at pushing the blades through the grass was like pushing a cinder block on a straight path through mud. Week by week, my mower left more and more grass un-cut and I was forced to continually raise the cutting blades to a point I wasn't really cutting the grass anymore – I was just combing it.

Short of taking a machete to it, I once again was in an urgent mad-dash to Lowe's. I opined to myself, loathing the fact that I would be forced to buy a polluting, gas-guzzling gas-powered mower that would get increasingly more expensive to use. Something about paying roughly \$20 a month to mow my lawn didn't sit well with me.

While perusing the mowers at Lowe's and walking to the very end of the store where the cheap ones were on display, I noticed an electric mower sitting on the very end that was about \$40 more expensive than the cheapest gas-powered

mower. I immediately picked it up and sat it back down. Then I came back with a cart and picked it up again. Then, I rolled my new mower over to the extension cords and bought another 75-footer to add to my existing 50-foot cord. I paid for my new lawn-mowing accessories and headed home with my new lawnmower in tow.

After getting home, assembly was even easier than my old clipper-style mower. I just snapped the handle in place, removed the packaging and plugged it in. This mower literally has nothing to it. It's just a shell with a blade and a mulching/bagging attachment. Cutting the grass with my new electric mower renewed my manliness. Assuming, of course, you ignore the fact that a giant blue and yellow cord trails me wherever I go and that occasionally I have to stop mowing long enough to go move the cord so I don't run it over. Oh, and sometimes I turn too quickly and the cord comes unplugged producing embarrassing results. But other than that, dang, it's a sweet mower. And since I power my home using 100% green energy by purchasing my electricity from new wind farms built in northern Indiana, my mowing is still eco-friendly and carbon-neutral.

I now mulch the grass while simultaneously cutting it and it's producing such fantastic results that my neighbor across the street (with the sod lawn) should be jealous. I could even start mowing other people's lawns for money. Assuming, of course, they're willing to pay for the electricity, have numerous outdoor electrical outlets and the furthest point of their lawn is 125 feet or less from the outlet.