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231) Gold from carrots?

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A reader made me aware of a much older "revolutionary invention" that has never been explained scientifically -- Papp's engine. Google brings many descriptions of that extraordinary device. In 1968 Bob Said <www.rexresearch.com/papp/1papp.htm> wrote:

“. . . Let's take a hard, skeptical look at this engine. It was designed by a Hungarian-born inventor name Joseph Papp. He and financial backer Don Rosen, who have set up a firm called Environetics, Inc., to develop the engine, are saying mighty little about the details of what makes it work until their patent applications have been granted. But this much they will say:

The engine operates on a charge of gas blends, hermetically sealed inside each cylinder above the piston. A charge of low-voltage electricity, which can come from either a 12-V or 24-V source common to light aircraft, is used to create an electrical field in or around the cylinder. This causes the gas to change from its original form to a new form which requires more space. As it expands it does two things: pushes the piston down and creates --- they aren't saying how --- the conditions for returning to its original form. The heat generated by its expansion is absorbed by its contraction. When it is contracted, another charge of electricity causes it to repeat the expansion-contraction cycle, and so on ad infinitum. When this sequence of events occurs in an orderly phase among 4, 6 or any convenient number of cylinders, suitably connected to a crankshaft, you get useful work.

How much work? It's pretty much a paper solution at present, but the developers say any amount you want, from the amount necessary to drive a lawnmower on up through automobiles and airplanes to the amount needed to power a locomotive or a battleship. . . . Rosen stressed that what Papp has done is design a fuel, not an engine. The secret blend of gases is the key. Using a power source to move pistons and a crankshaft is old hat to reciprocating engine technology. And Papp's "key" can be applied to turbine technology as well. . . .

Moreover, any reasonably sophisticated reader will wonder about safe, tidy little scientific ideas like entropy, conservation of energy and one or two others. Because they are unwilling to divulge hard details on the concept until patent protection is complete, Papp and his associates leave us nibbling at these annoying problems. But then, the scientific community thought Edison, Marconi, the Wright Brothers and Robert Goddard were out of their minds, too. And look what they did for us. So don't scoff too soon. After more than two decades as reporter and editor for newspapers and magazines from coast to coast I have been exposed to more than my fair share of perpetual motion machines, miracle cancer cures, devices for communicating with poltergeists, methods of extracting gold from carrots and similar schemes. I do not recall one which caused my reporter's instinct for a good story to resonate more strongly than Papp's engine does. . . .”

Some interesting comments on this never-commercialized invention were made in 2003 by Eugene Mallove; his article is in the compilation posted at the above website. Even more interesting is the piece attributed to Richard Feynman. The posted articles are worth reading and thinking about. Was Koldomasov (see my units #216, #226, #229, and #230) inspired by Papp's work? It would be great if devices described at the iESi website could perform as outlined by promoters. Our polluted world is in urgent need for "clean energy" inventions. Such inventions should be explained and used immediately. Small scale applications, if they work, would be rapidly scaled up and used all over. Secrecy seems to be working against desirable things. Without secrecy the premature death of Papp would not prevent others from working on the fuel he invented.

In a long run, technology cannot develop without scientific understanding. I think that "tidy little scientific ideas like entropy and conservation of energy" should not be ignored by inventors.

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