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### 8 More Gonzo DIY Projects: Backyard Genius Runners-Up

To create an incredibly cool car-crusher, oversize rocket or solar-pedal-powered contraption that the world had no idea it needed takes brilliance, determination and a healthy dose of crazy. That's what it takes to be a backyard genius. Here are the Popular Mechanics **Backyard Genius Award** runners-up, seven great projects that include everything from an indestructible target to a machine that prepares you for homemade space travel.

By Chris Sweeney

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### Hennepin Crawler: A Four-Person Rail-Bike

**Time:** 240 hours

**Cost:** \$1,500 to \$3,000

The Hennepin Crawler is an odd amalgam of antique, salvaged and homemade parts that was created by the California-based building collective Krank-Boom-Clank. The wheels, which are made from industrial drainage pipes, consist of a staggering 900 parts each, including 90 aviation wire spokes and a car hub. Each rider can shift through 15 gears, while the center seat is responsible for steering and yanking on the stage coach-style brakes. "We don't actually call them brakes," says Clifford Hill, 40, a graphic designer by day. "We call them slows, because, well, they don't brake that well." Fortunately, the roughly 750-pound machine only hits about 12 mph on roads and 6 mph when it's dropped on a railroad track. The team pulled some front-end steering elements from a '70s VW bug, the trunk off an antique Cadillac, and even threw on some parts from a razor scooter. "We're more about style and silliness over function," Hill says. "We want to inflict a bewildering beauty on an unsuspecting public."

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