



Steichen built his mechanical Tyrannosaurus Rex just for fun.

**STANDS 12 FT. HIGH, 28 FT. LONG**

## Life-Like Dinosaur Built In Farm Shop

Kids are both scared and fascinated by the big electric-powered mechanical dinosaur Roy Steichen built for the fun of it.

"It was just something different to do," says the Ulen, Minn., farmer. "I had the time and I had the scrap materials on hand. I built it in my 100-ft. long Quonset hut and the whole project took about a year."

The Tyrannosaurus Rex stands 12 ft. tall and measures 28 ft. long to the tip of the tail.

Built on a frame made of 4 by 4's with castor wheels on each corner, the dinosaur's body consists of 1/2-in. dia. silo bands with rebar running lengthwise along it. It's covered with canvas painted purple and white.

"I started using roofing tar on the head, but, after five gallons, found out it was too heavy so I switched to canvas," Steichen says.

"The gearbox out of a Maytag wringer-type

washing machine mounts in the head and turns it from side to side and also opens and closes the mouth. The gearbox out of a rototiller mounts in the belly and raises and lowers the arms and moves the tail from side to side. The entire body is turned by a hydraulic cylinder attached to the legs."

The dinosaur has teeth made out of swather cutterbar sections and Steichen sprays water out its nose using an air compressor and hose. A tape recording of "wild beast" sounds playing inside the dinosaur completes the illusion.

When unveiled recently, Steichen had a person dress up like a lion tamer to "tame" the creature.

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Ray Workman with his father's fully restored home-built tractor as it appears today.

### A FAMILY AFFAIR

## "Ol' Gertie" Rides Again

FARM SHOW reader Ray Roberts, Hillsboro, Ohio, recently told us about a friend, Russell Workman, who painstakingly restored a tractor his father had built back in the 1940's.

We checked in with Workman, 83, of Lynchburg, Ohio, and here's what we learned about "Ol' Gertie", a tractor that's become a legend in the area.

In 1940, Russell Workman's father, Ora, built a big, powerful tractor for his own use. Russell helped.

It was powered by a 6-cyl. engine and had a heavy-duty 4-speed transmission out of a 1930 "Imperial 80" Dodge truck, giving it a top road speed of 40 to 45 mph.

Workman used a junked 1928 REO Speedwagon truck for many of the tractor's main components, including differential, rear axle, brakes, radiator, steering gear, column and wheel. The rear axle was fitted with large spoked steel wheels adapted to fit the truck axle and hub. The front axle was fitted with wheels off a 1930 Pontiac automobile.

A hydraulic lift mounted on front to accommodate a "buck rake" used for moving hay stacks.

At 8 ft. long and 5 1/2-ft. high, the tractor was about twice the size and double the hp of many of the tractors of its day.

Called "Ol' Gertie" for a Gertrude who worked in the salvage yard where many of the parts were bought, the tractor was used for field work for about 10 years. It was parked in the woods at the Workmans' farm in the early 1950's.

In April 1994, Workman took a look at the rusted-out machine, which had literally sunk into the ground, and decided to restore it. He pulled it out of the woods with the help of a neighbor.

All that remained useable was the channel iron main frame (which had to be reinforced),



Here's what the tractor looked like when it came out of the woods.

differential and front axle.

Workman repowered "Ol' Gertie" with a 360 cu. in. V-8 engine and 4-speed transmission out of a 1971 Ford 1-ton truck. Front and rear wheels were purchased and rear wheels were fitted with 18.4 by 26-in. tires off an Allis Chalmers Gleaner combine.

It has rear fenders from an old Oliver tractor and steering gear from a 1955 International 2-ton truck. A hood was fashioned from sheet metal, much the same as the original.

The operator's seat is out of a school bus. (The original was built out of angle iron and wood planks fitted with a spring cushion out of a Model A Ford car.)

Restoration was nearly complete by the time Workman turned 80 in October 1994.

By this time, "Ol' Gertie" is a favorite around the area, appearing last June at the antique machinery show at the Highland County Fair at Hillsboro where she drew a lot of attention. **(Portions of this article excerpted from "Iron Will", Reiman Publications, 5400 S. 60th St., Greendale, Wis. 53129; ph 414 423-0100.)**

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## Hand-Carved Spoons Keep Retired Farmer Busy

Norm Klusman of Laurel, Ind., has an unusual hobby. He hand carves wooden spoons.

"As far as I know it's one of the most extensive collections around," says Klusman, a part-time farmer who started his hobby after retiring from the Soil & Water Conservation Service in 1993. He decided he needed something to stay busy.

Despite having no formal woodworking training, he has learned to turn out many different kinds of intricate wood carvings, from baskets cut and formed from a single piece of wood, to toys, jewelry boxes, and even shoes. But his love of spoons stands out. Spoons incorporating thistles, acorns, an eagle, flowers, a butterfly and Jacob's Ladder are carved from catalpa, basswood, and walnut cut from his own farm. He has



The idea for wooden spoons dates back to sailors pining for their sweethearts.

made 36 different varieties of love spoons, and each is one of a kind. Some are 2 1/2 to 3 in. wide and 10 to 11 in. long with intricate carvings on them of hearts, diamonds, and other designs.

He mills his own wood and even fashioned special left and right-handed carving knives from a steel bandsaw blade. The curved knife is used to gouge the left or right side of a spoon bowl.

"I display the spoons at county fairs and craft shows, Kiwanis meetings, and other locales. People really like them," says Klusman. "I take them with me in a specially-made, double-hinged box that I made from saffrafras wood.

"I carve the spoons using photos and home-made patterns as a guide. Each spoon takes 7 to 13 hours to complete if I'm in a good mood. I make spoons for others on special

order only."

One of his more unusual spoons is a wedding spoon. It divides at the handle into two pieces and makes two loops. The loops, symbolic of rings, roll around and tie a knot.

The idea for wooden spoons hails from back when sailors pining for their sweethearts carved ornate spoons from ivory as gifts. They caught on in the U.S. in the 1800's when coal miners and railroad workers carved the spoons as well.

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