

## Corn Husker Statue Heading To Smithsonian

Although hand corn huskers move down the field with all the grace and rhythm of a trained athlete, those who still practice the disappearing skill don't usually attract much attention. Soon, however, visitors to the nation's capital will be able to see a corn husker captured in bronze, celebrating the art and skill of this manual labor turned sport.

The four-foot high, 300 pound, bronze cast of a young man husking corn in a



1941 competition **Marion Link was the model for the corn husker sculpture.** will be on exhibit at the Smithsonian's American Art Museum in Washington, D.C. The statue captures and holds for all time the movement and dogged determination that once stripped the nation's fields of its golden ears of corn.

True corn huskers are few and far between today. However, 141 of them did compete in the 2001 National Hand Corn Husking Contest held near Redwood Falls, Minn. Contestants came from nine states, and the competition included categories for youth, a women's open class, and one for those over 75 years of age.

Hand corn husking contests provided great entertainment throughout the Corn Belt in the Depression years. Contestants were judged not only by the amount of corn picked, but also by how clean it was. Deductions were levied for husks and missed ears.

The model for the corn husker sculpture was an Iowa champion corn husker named Marion Link. Link was competing in a contest near Nevada, Iowa attended by Christian Peterson, then Iowa State University (ISU) artist in residence. Peterson sketched the muscular farmer as he moved smoothly down the field. That night he made



**Link posed for the final sculpture after getting artist Peterson to agree to change the face so he wouldn't be recognized.**

his first copy in clay. Later, he asked Link to pose for the final sculpture. The shy young man did so only after getting Peterson to agree to change the face so he wouldn't be recognized.

The National Art Museum, which is currently undergoing extensive remodeling, recently acquired the statue, which sat in storage in an Iowa hotel for the past 18 years. When the museum reopens, more than one million people a year will see it.

Contact FARM SHOW Followup: Judy Lambert, President, National Cornhuskers Association, 6691 N 300 E, Urbana, Ill. 646990 (ph 219 774-8322).

## Big Treehouse Result Of 20-Year Hobby

Anyone who is able to remember the excitement of climbing a tree as a kid will understand the attraction of the "Big Treehouse" near Marshalltown, Iowa.

Built over the past 20 years by school principal Mick Jurgensen, the treehouse reaches some 50 ft. up into the trees around Shady Oaks Campground, operated by Jurgensen's family. It has 12 levels and more than 6,000 sq. ft. of deck space. More than 500 ft. of walkways link the top level of the treehouse with the ground.

The Big Treehouse began with six pallets of lumber in the summer of 1983, after Jurgensen completed his junior year in college. He started with a ladder and a deck on the west side of a tall maple tree. Railings, furniture, and lighting came later.

Jurgensen spends much of his free time on his hobby, adding to the tree house every year.

Some levels feature picnic tables. Others provide great views of the surrounding countryside. Some promise bird watching and others are just right for quiet meditation. One

has cabinets, a refrigerator and a microwave.

This year, for example, he added another level at the top, accessible only by ladder.

As the treehouse grew, so did the interest of travelers staying at the campground. Regular tours are conducted through the tree house and people from every state in the country and more than 50 other countries have signed the guest book. "I'm not finished with it yet," says Jurgensen. "I have a lot more ideas on how to make it bigger and better."

If you'd like to see the Big Treehouse, you'll need an appointment for a guided tour - and tennis shoes. Tours are \$2 per person. Call Mary Gift at the Shady Oaks RV Campground to make a reservation.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Shady Oaks RV Campground, 2730 Shady Oaks Road, Marshalltown, Iowa 50158 (ph 641 752-2946; E-mail: bigtreehouse@mchsi.com; Website: www.marshallnet.com/mcbigg/treehouse.html).

## 1966 Volvo Car Driven A Record 2,000,000 Miles

In 1966, Irv Gordon bought a cherry red Volvo P1800 car. The New York native drove the car back and forth to work - a 125-mile daily round-trip to his job as a science teacher. His long commute and his passion for taking road trips caused him to log his first 250,000 miles in less than 10 years. The engine never failed and the car required only routine maintenance. Gordon lived two blocks from the ocean and drove through salt and snow each winter, but the body never rusted. So he kept driving it.

He hit 500,000 miles in the late 1970's and celebrated his one-millionth mile in 1987. He retired in 1996 and took a part-time job. With more time on his hands, he made driving his pastime.

Gordon would drive to Cincinnati for coffee, to Denver for lunch, or to Montreal for dinner. He'd drive to Volvo dealerships and car clubs to meet other Volvo lovers. He drove to Mexico. He took the car to Europe and drove through Holland and Germany. In Sweden, he drove to the factory where his P1800 was built.

Last March 27, Gordon reached a milestone no other individual has accomplished in the



**Irv Gordon has driven more than 2,000,000 miles - a world record in this 1966 Volvo car.**

more than 100 years of the automobile: driving two million miles in the same vehicle.

Amazingly, the 35-year-old car still has the same engine, radio, axles, transmission, and of course, the same driver. He is the only person who has ever driven the P1800.

The two-millionth mile was driven in New York City on Broadway, driving up to 44<sup>th</sup> Street in Times Square, where he was the honored guest at Volvo Cars of North America's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary party.

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## Million Mile Car

Four years ago FARM SHOW published a story on a "million mile car" owned and driven by Stanley Dvorak of West Point, Neb. (Vol. 23, No. 1). At the time, his 1967 Dodge Monaco had 1,077,000 miles on it. The car had virtually all of its original equipment, including the 383 cu. in. gas engine.

We recently contacted Dvorak and learned that he retired the car in 1999, about a year after our story.

"The car had 1,086,000 miles on it and was still in good running condition. However, shortly after the story in FARM SHOW a woman ran into me in town and smashed into the car's rear quarter panel. Now the car is parked inside a shed about 125 miles away at a friend's implement dealership in Greely, Neb. He starts the car up every so often and drives it around the



**Stanley Dvorak's 1967 Dodge Monaco has 1,086,000 miles.**

parking lot just to keep it in operating condition. The car doesn't have insurance or license plates so he never drives it on the road."

Dvorak recently decided to put the car up for sale at an asking price of \$7,500.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Stanley Dvorak, 322 N. Farragut St., West Point, Neb. 68788 (ph 402 372-2635).



**Mick Jurgensen's big treehouse reaches some 50 ft. up into the trees and has more than 500 ft. of walkways.**