

## His Silver Saddles Shine At Shows, Parades

Back in the 1940's and 50's, when Hollywood stars rode horses decked out with sterling silver saddles and tack, a saddle-maker named Ted Flowers in Indiana decided to make his own silver saddles. But he used German silver (nickel silver) that looked the same but cost a lot less.

About 10 years ago, leather-worker Bob Glessner discovered and purchased Flowers' old dies and started making silver saddles. "When I build a full clad silver saddle, not a lot of leather shows through," Glessner says, explaining that it's like building two saddles because everything has to be backed with leather.

It takes about three months to complete a saddle and tack.

"I also do a lot of restoration work," Glessner says. Because he has the dies, he can make parts for people who own Flowers' saddles.

Following Flowers' style, Glessner offers six full-clad styles that include diamonds, horse heads, Indian heads and other designs. He customizes them with initials and other items at the customer's request. He also offers custom saddles with varying amounts of silver.

Cost for the full-clad silver saddles starts at just over \$11,000, averaging about \$15,000.

Glessner's customers have show horses and ride in parades, and his saddles have even appeared at the Rose Bowl. With more interest in developing new parade classes for horses, he's seeing renewed interest in silver saddles.

Contact Glessner for a catalog of saddle styles or about saddle restoration.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Loon Creek Leather, LLC, Huntington, Ind. (ph 260 356-0726; www.looncreekleather.com).



Leather-worker Bob Glessner makes silver saddles, as well as saddles in a variety of styles.

Marlin Swanson and the 1/2-scale working model he built of a 1940 Allis Chalmers 6-ft. windrower. He pulls the mini windrower behind his 1/4-scale Allis Chalmers tractor.



## 1/2-Scale Allis Chalmers Windrower

Back in 1940 Allis Chalmers came out with a 6-ft. windrower. The company made only 500 of them, but recently Marlin Swanson of Amery, Wis., found one laying along a rural roadside. He immediately realized the machine was rare, so he cut away the weeds and took photos of it. Then he built a 1/2-scale working model.

The pto-operated windrower model mounts on 2 wheelbarrow wheels and is equipped with a ground-driven reel and a 3-ft. long sickle and canvas. Swanson pulls the unit behind a 1/4-scale Allis Chalmers tractor that he built from an old Jacobson garden

tractor. The tractor's engine belt-drives a shaft, which leads to a gearbox that operates the pto. A long lever is used to raise or lower the conveyor table.

"I made it mostly from parts that I found in my scrap pile," says Swanson. "I used maple wood to build the reel and old steel shelving to build the back part of the windrower. The sprockets were salvaged from the insecticide attachment off an old corn planter."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Marlin Swanson, 1221 95<sup>th</sup> Ave., Amery, Wis. 54001 (ph 715 268-8464; jswanson@amerytel.net).

## Sewing Machine Porch Railing

"I made these beautiful hand railings from the wrought iron legs off some old foot-powered Singer sewing machines," says Thomas Gerrier, W. Farmington, Maine.

Gerrier found sewing machines in dumps or at yard sales to make the two 8-ft. long railings. "I'm putting in a campground, and the photo shows one of our shower and toilet buildings. These old sewing machines date back to the 1930's and beyond, and are a part of our past."

He uses the sewing machine's wrought iron support legs as well as the belt-drive wheels. First, he welds the legs together and spray paints them, and then he welds them to an angle iron bar top and bottom. He uses the wheels and Singer name plate to fill in the spaces between the legs. Then he screws both ends of the railings to 2 by 4's (cherry



Visitors love the look of unusual porch railing.

wood) to close up the end spaces to make them safe for kids.

He also uses the legs off old Singer sewing machines to make drop-leaf tables. He takes the machine off and puts a coffee table on top.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Thomas Gerrier, P.O. Box 90, W. Farmington, Maine 04992 (ph 207 778-4344; pjttus@yahoo.com).

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## Big Jake Named World's Tallest Horse

At 20 hands, 2 3/4 inches, Big Jake has been named the world's tallest living horse by the Guinness Book of World Records. The 9-year-old Belgian horse lives at Smokey Hollow Farm in Poynette, Wis., a fifth generation operation that breeds draft horses and runs competitive hitch teams.

"His new mission is to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House charity," says Jerry Gilbert, spokesperson for the farm.

Big Jake was born in Nebraska and weighed 240 lbs. — 50 lbs. more than average Belgian foals. Owners of the farm purchased him for his quality genetics, not his size.

Over the past few years they recognized his potential to break the height record. Guinness sent guidelines, and owners spent a month to line up the necessary witnesses and officials to record Big Jake's height (6 ft. 10 3/4 in. to the withers).

He maintains a healthy weight between 2,600 and 2,700 pounds and eats 40 lbs. of hay and 8 gal. of oats with added nutrients each day.

"He loves attention and loves his neck scratched. There's no mean streak in him," Gilbert says.

Contact them to discuss fees and



Standing 6 ft., 10 3/4 in. at the withers, Big Jake has been named the world's tallest living horse by the Guinness Book of World Records.

transportation costs to have Big Jake attend events, alone or as part of a hitch team.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Smokey Hollow Farm (ph 608 635-2046; www.smokeyhollowfarm.com).

## He Makes Birdhouses From Boots

The historic Perryvale General Store in rural Alberta is known for a unique product — birdhouses made out of boots. They're made by Bob Penner, whose daughter, Rhonda Pederson, owns the store.

The 77-year old started making the birdhouses about 8 years ago, giving many to family members and friends. They were so popular he sold them in the store. Unfortunately, he recently had to stop making them due to health concerns.

"People would give me their old boots and I'd make one birdhouse for them and sell the other one," Penner says.

To make the boot birdhouses, he takes both ends of one end, so that it could be partially bent inwards, and then pushes the can into the toe of the boot.

"Putting a can inside holds the leather up and keeps the toe from collapsing," he says. "It's a little tricky to do, but it makes more room for the bird's nest. I used a small nail on the back of the can to hold it in place."

The top section of the birdhouse is a wood insert with tapered sides and no bottom. It slides down into the boot, providing strength and rigidity to the boot walls. The top edge of the boot is nailed to the wooden insert.

"Before installing the insert, I cut the bird's



Bob Penner makes birdhouses from old boots. The top section of the birdhouse slides down into the boot, providing strength and rigidity to the boot walls.

entry hole in the wooden front with a large wood bit. Then I simply used an Exacto knife to cut the leather to match the hole underneath, and then put tacks around the edges of the hole to keep the leather from fraying."

Penner has made about 30 boot birdhouses, and has sold some of them for \$40 each. It takes him about 8 hours to make one, he points out.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bob Penner, Suite 326, 15 Erin Ridge Rd., St. Albert, Alta., Canada T8N 0R3 (ph 780 459-3494; jrthebad1@shaw.ca).