

“Tanking” Down The Cedar River

When it comes to recreation, folks near Spalding, Neb., don't require anything fancy. Just give them a stock tank, a picnic table and a stretch of river to float on. They call it “tanking”.

Raymond Bernt, whose family farms along the Cedar River, got the idea for his business from a bar that came up with the idea in the mid-1980's. The 2 1/2 ft. tall tanks are very buoyant and nearly impossible to tip. As they float, they spin in a slow circular motion.

Bernt and two of his brothers are busy at least three days a week during the summer renting and hauling 8 and 10-ft. poly blue stock tanks.

“They are light and easy to handle,” Bernt says. “They stack together and the

picnic tables fold up so they are easy to haul on a trailer I made.”

Some customers prefer canvas armchairs, especially if a disability makes it difficult to sit at a picnic table.

The 10-ft. tanks are only used in the spring when the water is higher. Sometimes floaters need to get out and guide tanks through shallow water.

The tanks rent for \$48 and hold 6 adults in the 8-ft. tank. Bernt supplies life jackets and a pole to push away from shallow areas or overhanging limbs. He offers a couple drop off/pickup points for trips that average about 4 hours. He also rents canoes and paddle boats.

Besides renting vessels, the Bernt family makes “goat hot dogs” and a variety of



A Nebraska farm family rents out 8 and 10-ft. poly blue stock tanks for floating on a nearby river. Tanks are buoyant and nearly impossible to tip.

organic cheeses to enjoy while floating down the river.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup,

Raymond Bernt, Cedar River Recreation, 82228 499th Ave., Spalding, Neb. 68665 (ph 308 223-9643; rbernt@yahoo.com).

Miniature Bull Riding Is A Family Affair

The number of miniature bull riding events has grown rapidly since our story on the sport (Vol. 32, No. 4). Rodeo bull contractor Tim O'Neal has discovered raising mini bulls fits well into his operation.

O'Neal and his family run HOWL Rodeo Bulls out of Lander, Wyo., in addition to running a commercial Angus beef operation. About three years ago O'Neal's young son, Cole, got interested in bull riding. So he bought his first miniature bull.

“Now we have a herd of 30,” O'Neal says. To his knowledge he has the smallest bucking bull, King Kong, a 5-year-old, 32-in. Zebu. He buys bulls anywhere from 300 to 1,000 lbs. and has started running his own miniature cow herd.

Miniature bulls must be 32 to 48 in. tall. Typical breeds include Zebu, Lowline, Dexter, Longhorn and Scotch Highlands. Other than their size they're just like normal size bulls, O'Neal says. That includes their bucking action and varying

temperaments.

“If it fits the size parameter, we can find a home for it,” O'Neal says, explaining that the smallest, gentlest bulls work well for beginners, or Pewees, less than 9 years old. As young riders gain skills, they advance to bulls that buck more.

“They all think they're big. They act just like the big bulls,” he notes.

Training is similar for both. The family works with the small bulls in different types of chutes, and gets them used to riding in a semi trailer. He and other contractors supply 90 miniature bulls for the Northwest Miniature Bullriding finals in Helena, Mont., in November.

O'Neal contracts with about 30 Ultimate Miniature Bullriding (UMB) events each year. That's in addition to 40 to 50 full-size bucking bull rodeos annually.

The sport has expanded east as well. Iowa holds a World competition and one contractor lives in North Carolina. While



Miniature bulls are only 32 to 48 in. tall but buck just like normal size bulls.

the fee for contracting miniature bulls is less than regular bulls, it's a good addition to the family business, O'Neal says.

It's also rewarding and a way to secure the future of the sport.

“Kids are the future. We are a stepping stone and learning association,” O'Neal says of the UMB, for which his wife Joann is secretary. “We want to keep them learning

and help them out. Some of these kids are really improving. In 10 years, I think some of these 8-year-olds could go all the way. They are hungry young men. That's what makes it all worthwhile.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Howl Rodeo Bulls, 46 Mill Creek Rd., Lander, Wyo. 82520 (ph 307 349-6400; www.howlrodeobulls.com).

Giant “Big Red” Radio Flyer Wagon

“I built this big red wagon to look like a giant version of an old-time Radio Flyer Big Red wagon. It's a real hit at tractor shows, fairs and farm festivals,” says Paul Otto, Sanborn, N.Y.

Otto operates a one-man woodworking operation called Custom Woodwerks (www.customwoodwerks.com) that specializes in unique, handmade gifts and heirloom-quality furniture, so custom building products out of wood isn't anything new to him.

His “Radio Flyer Big Red” wagon measures 8 ft. long and 4 1/2 ft. wide. It's

built on a small farm wagon chassis, with the box constructed of white oak with stainless steel fasteners and hardware.

“I built the wagon to go with my antique restored Ford 2000 Industrial show tractor. The two make a nice looking combination,” says Otto, who also uses the wagon to give hay rides to neighborhood kids. “They love riding in it,” he notes.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Paul A. Otto, 2736 Upper Mountain Rd., Sanborn, N.Y. 14132 (ph 716 731-5610; paotto@adelphia.net).



Big red wagon looks like a giant version of an old-time Radio Flyer Big Red wagon. “It's a big hit at shows,” says inventor Paul Otto.

Chainsaw Art With A Personal Touch

Stanley Maroushek does something most professional chainsaw artists don't do—he makes custom carved sculptures that reflect a customer's background and interests.

“I listen to what the customer wants and add a personal touch,” says Maroushek.

He sent FARM SHOW photos of a chainsaw sculpture he recently finished for an Iowa farmer. It displays the farmer, his son, and their dog, with a brass plate at the base that says “Checking the Fields”.

“The farmer told me he had been looking all over the country for a chainsaw artist to do something that would reflect his history. Now he wants me to carve a little girl with a cat and place it next to this carving. It turns out when he was a kid his little sister

used to follow him around the yard, and she always had a cat with her.”

The cost for the first sculpture was \$4,000. A Minnesota man had him carve a 24-ft. high Totem pole, at a cost of \$5,000.

Another Minnesotan commissioned a 15-ft. tall carving of a forked ash tree. A cardinal perches on one fork and a bluejay on the other. Both had been school mascots when the farmer was growing up.

He carved a 15-ft. tall ear of corn out of a walnut tree for a farmer who used to sell seed corn. He made a 16-ft. high carving of Uncle Sam for a Chanute, Kansas man. And he carved a Pug dog for a Wisconsin farmer and put its name on a metal plate.

A Billings, Montana woman wanted

something for a bar she was opening up. She told him she likes pigs, so he made a flying pig with wings and named it “Pigasus”.

Maroushek, who started collecting wooden carvings when he was 7-years-old, now claims to own the largest wood carving art museum in the U.S. It's located next to a popular bike trail. The museum includes a chainsaw-carved lifesized Hobo camp, patterned after one he remembers as a child.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Stanley Maroushek, Slim's Woodshed, 160 1st St. N.W., Harmony, Minn. 55939 (ph 507 886-3114; slim_ws@harmonytel.net).

Stanley Maroushek makes custom carved sculptures that reflect the customer's background and interests.

