

Cowboy sculpture is 12 ft. high, 9 ft. long and contains 244 horseshoes.

MAKES DETAILED SCULPTURES OF COWBOYS, WESTERN SCENES

Artist Specializes In "Horseshoe" Art

Drive by Benny Van Cleve's Minnesota farm and you'll see a cowboy sitting tall atop a saddle on a rust-colored horse. Pull in the driveway and you'll see a laborer leaning against a cactus.

Has the Old West moved to the Midwest? Nope. You're seeing the handiwork of Van Cleve who, besides being a farrier and horse trainer, also creates unique western sculptures using horseshoes, sheet metal and pieces of iron.

"I like to go in the shop and putz around. I built the cowboy first with the idea of standing him up in the garden next to the road with his arm waving to passersby. After I finished him, I decided to give him a horse," says Van Cleve, who has a good supply of horseshoes — he keeps the worn ones he takes off horses.

The cowboy and horse sculpture stands about 12 ft. high and is about 9 ft. long. The cowboy contains 244 horseshoes, all of which are welded together. His vest, boots and 25-gal. hat are formed from sheet metal.

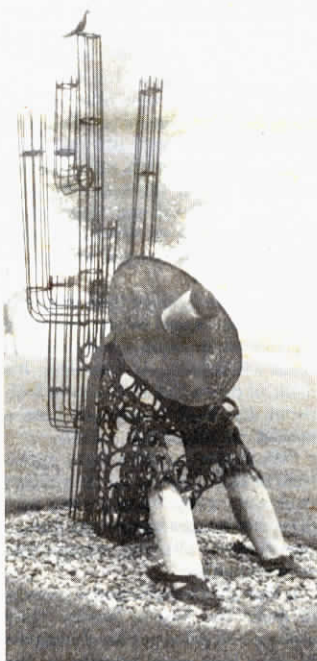
The rust colored horse (the horseshoes are untreated and unpainted) is made from 540 shoes and sports a sheet metal saddle, and a tail and mane made of baling wire.

In December Van Cleve adds blinking tree lights to dress up the lone rider and his horse for Christmas.

The laborer leaning against the cactus consists of a 12-ft. tall cactus, made of re-rod bent to shape, and horseshoes. The man, also made of horseshoes, has a 4 ft. dia. sombrero, and boots made out of auger tubing.

Besides the large sculptures, Van Cleve also makes smaller scale, more detailed cowboys and other western scenes using horseshoes, scrap metal and sheet metal.

His pride and joy is a 6-horse team



This "horseshoe man" is taking a siesta against a re-rod cactus.

pulling a stage coach. The 5-ft. long rig has horses made of flat iron and detailed with reins made of wire. The coach is complete with spoked wheels, curtained windows, luggage on top and two riders — one who's even carrying a double-barrel shotgun. Van Cleve notes that it's these extra details that take the most time.

Besides making the sculptures for himself he's also made life-size sculptures for friends and neighbors.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Benny Van Cleve, 27540 Natchez, Elko, Minn. 55020 (ph 612 461-2031).

FARM SHOW

Ag World

Editor's Note: Most of what goes into Ag World stems from story ideas sent to us by readers. This special section of FARM SHOW touches on the lighter side of farming and ranching — everything from human interest stories, to unusual hobbies, to unique things farm families are doing for fun or profit.

If you've read or heard a good Ag World type story you'd like to share with others, send it to: FARM SHOW, Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044.

GROUP SETS UP MACHINERY, LABOR SWAPS

Local Farm Task Force Brings Change To Town

"The satisfaction of working together is so great everyone wonders why we ever quit," says Tom Broeckelman, member of a "task force" set up in Quinter, Kan. to provide support among farmers and business people in the spirit of old-time threshing bees and barn raisings.

The group, which now numbers about 50 members, got its start when a local farmer's machinery was foreclosed upon. To help him, machinery swaps were set up and other farmers began to look at the idea as a way of cutting costs. The group was soon formed to handle the mechanics of such swaps. Now, there are 25 to 30 farmers who've set up such machinery swaps and the group — called the Community Economic Task Force — meets every two weeks.

"There's a sign-up book in the town hall where farmers list equipment available for swaps. Farmers look through it and, if they see a possible match, they work the swap out among themselves. They can use a flat-rate book of average custom rates to help figure out a fair arrangement," says Broeckelman, who adds that even farmers who aren't in financial trouble have gotten involved.

One swap took place between two farmers, one of whom had a new planter and one who had a new disk. The one farmer does all the planting on both farms and the other does all the disking.

"So far there haven't been any problems," says Broeckelman, who is

one of several members of the Task Force who's not a farmer. He publishes the local newspaper, the Gove County Advocate. He, too, worked out a swap recently when he drove truck for a local farmer and the farmer helped him out by hauling away a pile of unused equipment from behind his building.

Everyone agrees there's a new attitude in town. "Before the task force, if a farmer's tractor broke down, everybody knew about it but waited for him to ask for help. Now he gets 10 offers of help the same day it happens," says Broeckelman.

At regular meetings, the group focuses on helping members facing foreclosure or other problems, and discusses current laws and what needs to be done to change some of them. However, the group doesn't plan to picket or demonstrate like other more radical farm groups. Broeckelman says it's more like a support group that lets them talk about their problems and helps them realize they're all in the same boat.

"There are usually a couple businessmen at the meetings. They also offer to swap their services, such as a local CPA who offered to help farmers with their books," says Broeckelman.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Community Economic Task Force, Gove County Advocate, Quinter, Kan. 67752 (ph 913 754-3651).