

"TO SEE IT LIFT UP WAS AWESOME"

Volunteers Move Dairy Barn 143 Ft. By Hand

In a new twist on old-fashioned barn raisings, 328 volunteers helped Herman Ostry, Bruno, Neb., relocate his barn by picking it up and moving it 143 ft., 8 in. They did it in front of an audience estimated at between 3,500 and 4,000 who had gathered to celebrate the town's Centennial.

The volunteers grabbed steel poles that Ostry and his sons had placed underneath the barn, which is 56-ft. long, 28-ft. wide, and 27-ft. high. As spectators cheered, the volunteers lifted the 60-year-old structure, moved it several feet and set it down. They repeated the feat five times over a period of 20 min. Included in the move was a 90° turn so the front of the barn faced east toward a highway, instead of south. Since the barn weighs 18,640 lbs., each volunteer had to lift about 53 lbs.

The "biggest traffic jam in Bruno's history" delayed the scheduled 10 a.m. start for 45 min. Cars packed an adjacent field and the crowd got bigger when hay wagons pulled behind tractors arrived from town.

"We lifted the barn twice for practice before we moved it," notes Ostry. "To see it lift up was an awesome feeling. Many people

didn't believe it could be done."

Ostry was faced with either razing the old barn, which was located in a water-collecting hollow, or moving it to higher ground. "I wanted to do something different for the Centennial and moving the barn with human muscle power seemed like a good idea," says Ostry. He enlisted the aid of his son Mike, who had taken engineering classes at a community college, to design and engineer the move.

Using 3/4-in. sq. tubing, Mike designed a combination lifting and support system for the walls and interior rafters. He welded together a series of 2-ft. wide rectangular grids, then removed a strip of siding about 12 in. from the base of the barn so the lifting grids could extend through the walls. He welded support braces, also made out of 3/4-in. sq. tubing, to the grid base (both inside and outside the barn) and anchored the braces to the vertical studs. One lifter stood inside each grid, both inside and outside the barn. Another strip of siding was removed at eye level so lifters inside the barn could see out.

The Ostry's also planned for safety.



Photo courtesy Omaha World Herald

Herman Ostry recruited 328 volunteers and built lift supports all around the base of the barn using 3/4-in. sq. tubing.

Volunteers had to be from 5 ft. 6 in. to 6 ft. 2 in. tall and sign a combination application and liability form taking full responsibility for their physical condition and releasing the Ostry family, the village and Centennial officials of responsibility in the event of injury.

The volunteers included women, a 13-year-old boy, a 90-year-old man and a man with an artificial leg. All volunteers took orders from Ostry, who used a loudspeaker

to make "lift" and "stop" commands.

Each lifter was presented a blue ribbon and a certificate of appreciation. The tubing was cut into 1-ft. lengths and sold as souvenirs.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Herman Ostry, Rt. 1, Bruno, Neb. 68014 (ph 402 543-2333).

FOLLOWS THEM AROUND LIKE A DOG

By Wally Schulz

Charlie The Rooster Is One Of the Family

An elderly Wisconsin farm couple has an unusually smart rooster that doesn't seem to know he's a chicken. Charlie the rooster thinks he's a member of the family.

Fred Stoppel and his wife, Florence, are 76 and 77 years of age and have been farmers all their lives. They say they've never seen anything like the crossbreed rooster that was born on their farm about a year and a half ago.

"I first discovered him laying wet and half dead in the farm yard when he was only a few days old. I took him into the house, wrapped him in a towel and laid him on the furnace register," says Florence, who nursed the chick back to health in a short time. "I took him back out to the mother hen but she disowned him. So I took him back into the house and put him into a bird cage. At the time we thought he was female so we named him Charolette. When we discovered Charolette was a male, we named him Charlie."

The rooster follows the family wherever they go. When Florence burns the trash or gets the mail, Charlie's always close on her heels. When Fred and Florence get up at 4:30 a.m. and turn the lights on in the farm house, Charlie starts to crow because, say the Stopples, he knows it's close to breakfast time.

"I feed him table scraps. He loves both raw and fried hamburger. I also feed him chopped corn. He really goes for split grapes and bread soaked in milk, which is what I fed him as a chick," says Florence.

When the family talks to Charlie, he replies with a peculiar chicken chatter, acting as though he understands what they are saying to him. He even performs tricks.

"Charlie crows for me when I put him up on the clothes line post. He crows only once and then I put him down," says Florence,

noting that the rooster gets along well with all the farm animals and pets. The dog won't touch Charlie even though he chases the other chickens in the yard. He and Charlie are buddies. "The cats have adopted him, too. When it gets cold and wet outside, Charlie goes inside and sits with them. They get along great together."

Charlie follows Fred all over the farm when he's doing chores. Fred has to keep an eye out when operating machinery so he doesn't run over him.

Charlie is a mixed breed and sports beautiful plumage that's similar to a pheasant. "He knows he's a pretty boy and often just struts around the farm yard. Our grandchild-

ren can't wait to get to the farm to give him handouts."

Fred and his sons often tease Florence, asking if she's going to cook Charlie for dinner some Sunday but everyone knows that won't happen. "If anything ever happens to Charlie, we'll really grieve," she says.



Florence says Charlie's favorite food is hamburger. The family dog leaves the bird alone and the cats act like they've adopted him.