



Artistic 36-ft. gate displays two identical tractors, pointed in opposite directions.

“Tractor Pull” Gate

By Janis Schole

When one of Sten Nielsen’s field entrances needed a new gate, he decided to create something that he and others could enjoy. The result is an artistic 36-ft. gate featuring a tractor pull silhouette.

Nielsen, who is a trained welder, said he had a picture in his head of what he wanted to make. But he thinks nearly anyone could do what he did.

He fashioned two identical tractors, pointed in opposite directions. Each is inside one of the two frames that form the gate panels. Two sections of chain are used to tie the gate closed – each is welded to one back tractor wheel, giving the impression of the two tractors “pulling” on each other.

The tractors are made entirely from scrap metal Nielsen already had around the farm. The tractor shapes brace the frame of each panel. Each tractor hood is made from a piece of heavy tin and the steering column from a length of 5/8-in. sucker rod. Miscellaneous iron and rod make up the remainder. Three strands of barb wire (not shown in picture) run from rings positioned down the front of the tractor, across to holes in a vertical piece of flat iron welded near the outer edge of each panel’s frame. Nielsen placed another strand of barb wire below each tractor, running between the front and back wheels. The un-

painted barb wire fills in the larger, otherwise open spaces around the tractors.

Nielsen also used four steel wheels off a Case side delivery rake.

The tractors’ vertical exhaust/muffler pipes extend a few inches above the panel frame’s top pipe. He did this on purpose, placing a hole in the top, so that they could be used as lift hooks to hang the panels from his front-end loader when mounting the gate.

The main gate posts, as well as two additional posts for bracing, are made from 15-foot sections of six-inch hollow steel pipe. All are cemented into the ground 10 feet down. Between the two steel posts at each end of the gate, Nielsen welded five bars made from one-inch sucker rod. This bracing stabilizes gravity’s pull on the main gate posts from the weight of the panels.

The outside vertical ends of each panel have pipe hinges built right into the frame, complete with grease zerks. Nielsen was thinking ahead when he added this feature, and points out that, “big gates tend to seize up over the years.”

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Unusual mailbox looks like a “Paint” horse and is complete with rope mane and tail.

Farm Wife Loved Husband’s Mailbox Gift

By Janis Schole

As a surprise present, Carolyn Bell’s husband Scott made her a “horse mailbox” that she loves. The Bells raise Paint horses, so he painted the “mail horse” to look like this spotted breed.

Scott says the total cost for the project was about \$50 and he spent a week working on it for a couple of hours each night...without Carolyn ever finding out. He started with a plain new mailbox and used a horse pattern

he got at a local craft store to do the rest.

The legs and head were cut from wood and then bolted on. The mane and tail are made from frayed jute rope that has been glued on. The eyes and white body spots are painted on with model paint. Scott lacquered the whole thing so the paint would stay on longer. If he were to do it over he’d use real horsehair for the mane and tail because they wouldn’t deteriorate in the weather. He used



Bob Blin of Marion, Iowa, displayed his unique collection of antique “Mall” chain saws at the recent Farm Progress Show near Amana, Iowa.

SOME OF THEM DATE BACK TO 1949 AND WEIGH UP TO 50 LBS.

Antique Chain Saws

“People often tell me they’ve never seen saws like these before and are surprised at how big they are,” says Bob Blin of Marion, Iowa, who displayed his unique collection of antique “Mall” chain saws at the recent Farm Progress Show near Amana, Iowa.

Blin exhibited eight different models dating back to the late 1940’s. All of them were made by the Mall Tool Co. of Chicago, Ill., which sold its products through Montgomery Ward Blin has an old 1947 Montgomery Ward catalog with a lot of information on the saws.

“Mall was a big company back in the old days. There are other people who collect antique chain saws, but I don’t know of anyone else who collects just Mall models,” says Blin.

Two-cycle, rope-start gas engines power all of his saws. His oldest and most unusual one is the Model 7, which was designed to be used by 2 people. It has a 36-in. long bar with a 3/4-in. pitch chain and has handles on both ends. The saw was made in 1949 and weighs about 50 lbs.

Blin, who operates a small engine repair shop, takes the saws to various shows.

“I get most of my information from people I meet at the shows. One guy told me that he used these saws to clear air strips during World War II. Another guy said that he used them in the 1940’s to clear power lines for the Rural Electrification Association.

“Using these saws was hard work. In fact, in the early days the manufacturers didn’t even mention the saw’s weight. Later on, as they started using aluminum and the saws got lighter, the companies did start to talk about

their light weight.”

“Chain saws date back to 1905 when a 2-cyl. marine-type motor was tested on a cutting chain at Eureka, California. There were a lot of different manufacturers during the early to mid 1900’s. Mall wasn’t the first company to make chain saws, but it was one of the larger and more popular chain saw manufacturers. I don’t know how many different models Mall made, but they made many more than what I’ve got. Remington bought out the company in 1957. I don’t know what happened to them after that.”

Blin’s collection started by chance. In 1982 he started his own small engine shop and also worked part time for a tree service business that sold and repaired saws. He worked on several different brands and got interested in the older models.

Oilers were optional on the early models. “If you didn’t order a saw with an oiler you had to have an assistant use an oil can to oil the chain. That’s all he did,” says Blin. “Later models had an oil reservoir so you ran out of fuel and oil at the same time.”

All of his saws are designed so that the gearbox and cutterbar can be quickly detached and replaced with various attachments including outboard motors, flexible shafts, generators, water pumps, drills, grinders, etc. “With the outboard motor attachment you could actually use the saw to power a boat.”

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pink stick-on letters for their name, since that’s Carolyn’s favorite color, but plans to replace them with glued-on wooden letters which show up better.

The box has a wooden plate screwed to its underside and a steel plate screwed to that. Another plate is welded onto the post arm and the mailbox can be easily installed or removed with a center pin, hole and clip.

“When we first put it up we took the mailbox down every weekend because we were afraid someone would vandalize it, but lately

we’ve been leaving it up,” says Carolyn.

Scott built a Deere tractor mailbox for his father, which took longer because there were more pieces. His dad likes it so much he has been too afraid to put it up at all, though.

“We’ve had a lot of compliments and interest in our horse mailbox and many people have asked Scott to build one for them. He now takes orders on a custom basis.”

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