

Limestone Fencepost Carved On Kansas Prairie

Limestone fenceposts are a common sight in Kansas. But there's only one like the post carved recently by a California sculptor on a pasture owned by Larry Hickman off Hwy. 232 near Lucas, Kan.

The carved post is a likeness of Hickman's daughter with long flowing hair.

It wasn't the first time sculptor Fred Whitman has worked on a Kansas fencepost. For years, people have been shipping Kansas limestone posts to him at his Ventura, Calif., studio. He carves 8 or 9 limestone sculptures a year. Clients pay from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per post.

This year he decided to go to Kansas to see where the limestone is actually quarried. He introduced himself to folks at the Grassroots Art Center in Lucas, which celebrates the artwork of self-taught individuals who want to express themselves through art. Rosslyn Schultz, director of the center, spent an entire afternoon with Whitman driving around looking for a post he could work on.

Once Whitman found a location he liked, he used a hammer, chisel, raspy file, and sandpaper to do the work. He spent 4 days in Lucas carving the fencepost.

"People around here are really enthusiastic about what he's done. There's been a lot of interest," says Schultz. "One man told us he wants Whitman to carve Abraham Lincoln on a post."

Dentistry prepared him for the art, because the closest thing Fred had to formal training was his previous career. When a lower back injury made it intolerable to continue in that profession, he took up sculpture. Sculpture allows him to stand upright and move around as he works.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rosslyn Schultz, Grassroots Arts Council, 213 S. Main St., Lucas, Kan. 67648 (ph 785 525-6118; www.grassrootsart.net) or Fred Whitman (ph 805 804 7000; www.fredsrockart.com).



Photo courtesy Steven Schultz, Grassroots Arts Center

Sculptor Fred Whitman recently carved this limestone fencepost on a pasture owned by Larry Hickman. The carved post is a likeness of Hickman's daughter.

Wheeled Carts Keep Disabled Pets Active

Eddie's Wheels give dog owners an option when their pets have spinal injuries or diseases that cause weakened hips and legs.

That was the case when Ed and Leslie Grinnell's Doberman was diagnosed with spondylosis and disc disease at age 10. Ed, a mechanical engineer, analyzed the dog's skeleton and designed a cart that would support her pelvis with a yoke over her shoulders. It gave her spine the support it needed to heal.

Twenty years later, Ed is still designing carts to support dogs and other animals, including alpacas, goats, deer, cats, rabbits and even a pot-bellied pig. He's also come out with the first cart for dogs with missing, amputated or disabled front legs.

"We'll work on carts for any animal that is meant to walk on four legs," Leslie says. "Every cart is individually made. We talk to each customer and talk about lifestyle and terrain."

The padded saddle that holds the dog's pelvis allows complete motion and doesn't

chafe the skin like some carts can. The couple knows that from experience. That's important, Leslie says, because anything that causes the skin to breakdown can result in a lethal infection.

The staff at Eddie's Wheels helps customers get the correct measurements for their pet and determine the best size wheel for the terrain and activity level of the dog. Cobblestone streets in Brooklyn are actually harder on carts than meadows and fields, Leslie says.

Made out of aluminum and stainless steel, the carts are designed to last the animal's lifetime.

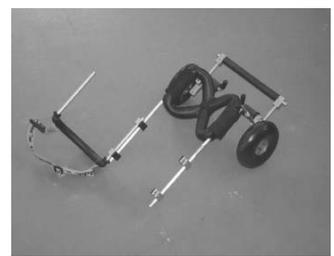
Carts start at \$300. Eddie's Wheels also offers other equipment for animals with disabilities. Photos and videos on the website show the remarkable feats animals can accomplish with Eddie's Wheels. The company has made carts for customers in the U.S., Canada and overseas.

"I want people to know that this is a happy option," Leslie says. "The dogs like the attention. They become local celebrities."



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Ed Grinnell designs carts to support animals with spinal injuries or diseases that cause weakened hips and legs. One cart (above) is designed for dogs with missing, amputated or disabled front legs. Other carts have been designed for alpacas, goats, deer, cats and even a pot-bellied pig.



Teenager Collects Rare Antique Garden Tractors

With nearly 3 acres of lawn to mow you wouldn't think that Tyler Cunningham, 15, would have a fondness for garden tractors. But he has more than a fondness; he's a collector. He often mows the grass with a 30-in. cut 1980 Snapper he and his dad, Bave, rebuilt together when Tyler was 12. When he was a toddler, Tyler immediately figured out how to open the safety-latched cupboard doors that took his father two hours to install. As Tyler got older he enjoyed taking off doorknobs with a screwdriver. Restoring a 1946 John Deere B tractor with his dad cinched Tyler's interest in old tractors of all sizes.

"We just learn as we go," Tyler says about the restoration process.

When he fixed a cast iron antique Briggs and Stratton motor for someone, Tyler was given a choice of a Volkswagen Beetle car or a Gravely walk-behind garden tractor as payment. He chose the Gravely.

Other garden tractors in his collection include a 1969 Sears model SS12 with a 3-point hitch and disk, which he uses to plow the garden; a 1960's Locke reel mower; and a 1962 Allis Chalmers model B1 tractor manufactured by Simplicity.

"The owner had the AC tractor completely taken apart," Tyler says. "It has a snow blade on it. I've only seen snow twice in 15 years."

The model that made his heart beat wildly was a rare Snapping Turtle mower he found in a scrap iron pile at an estate auction.

"We'd seen them on the Internet and at tractor shows. They are extremely rare," Tyler says. "I knew what it was. The auctioneer didn't have a clue why we were so interested in it."

The lawn mower wasn't part of the auction, so Tyler asked the estate manager what he wanted for it. The manager suggested \$5 and said he'd even throw in a Sears rototiller.

When the young Jackson, S.C., collector was featured in a "Lawn and Garden Collector Magazine" article recently, he was amazed by the number of readers who sent him copies of Snapping Turtle manuals, parts and information.

Tyler's mother is not surprised. "People are amazed at the knowledge he carries around. They want to go out of their way for him," she says, adding that Tyler mows lawns and does other chores for people to thank them for giving him old mowers.

In order to continue to support Tyler's



Tyler Cunningham is only 15 years old, but the Jackson, S. Carolina youngster already has an impressive collection of garden tractors.

Photos courtesy Amy Phibbs

passion, the family may have to add sheds for his collection.

"I'm always looking for them - older models up to the early 80's," Tyler says.

To support his hobby in the future - and so he can make his own parts - he's planning to go to school to be a machinist.

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Tyler found this rare Snapping Turtle mower, in a scrap iron pile at an estate auction.

