



Photos courtesy of Spruce Meadows Media Services
Randy Boni's latest chainsaw-sculpting project was to carve these four running horses from the center of a 900-year-old tree.

Chainsaw Artist Carves Team Of Horses

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

"It was like taking a knife to a gun fight," laughs Randy Boni about his latest chainsaw-sculpting venture. He's referring to the fact that his 3-ft. chainsaw bar looked a little small when he started work on a 5 1/2-ft. dia., 14,000-lb. western red cedar log. Still, within three weeks, the Parrottsville, Tenn., carver had helped four running horses emerge from the center of the 900-year-old tree.

Boni was hired in September to create the piece for the Spruce Meadows Equestrian Centre, south of Calgary, Alta., by Alfred Balm, who has contracted with Boni for other projects. Balm saw the video that went viral of Boni's horizontal chainsaw creations of turkeys, raccoons and other critters (FARM SHOW Vol. 34, No. 4) and was so impressed that he started to commission Boni's work. The horses were his latest project.

"I planned to just do a foal laying down," says Boni. "But when I saw the log, it was just too much of a log for my little idea."

He couldn't find a longer bar to make plunge cuts through the entire log, so he spent a lot of time drawing on the log so both cuts would meet in the middle.

The carving was so large that he literally crawled under the horses to carve. He cut out a lot of wood between the legs and from the center of the log, which was soft in places. The 13 1/2-ft. long log was the third section of a tree cut on Vancouver Island.

To preserve the natural beauty of the wood and reduce checking, Boni brushed natural colored Sikken's preservative over the finished piece.



The western red cedar log he worked with measured 5 1/2 ft. in diameter.

He was pleased with the results and credits Balm, who is also an artist, for "pushing me outside my comfort zone – pretty far!"

At 61, Boni says he's still amazed about the adventure carving and creativity has taken him on. Until he was in his late 30's, he and his twin brother were legally blind with congenital cataracts. After their surgeries, both became chainsaw carvers.

Boni is based in Tennessee, but has traveled extensively to do commissioned carvings.

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Teen Builds Stove From Wheels

Working in a cold farm shop during New York's cold winters didn't seem to bother his dad, but Levi Youngs, 17, thought a wood stove was needed. So, the resourceful teen started looking for a way to make a wood-burning stove cheap.

He started with a 24.5 by 10-in. truck wheel rim he found on the farm. A local tire dealer had two more of the same size in their dumpster. Youngs used an acetylene torch to cut out the wheel centers, then welded the three rims together. He cut a hole in a Schedule 40, 6-in. pipe for a chimney and welded it to the back rim, also closing in the back end with steel plate. The pipe goes all the way to the floor to support the stove. Youngs also drilled a small hole in the pipe for a damper and cut a hole in the pipe below the stove that can be opened or closed.

He used 1/2-in. steel plate for the door and made a handle out of a manure bucket tine. Two 30-in. pieces of tie stall pipe support the front of the stove.



17-year-old Levi Youngs made this wood burning stove by welding three old truck wheel rims together.

The 30 in. long stove keeps the 35 by 40-ft. shop comfortable on cold winter days. Youngs says his family has plenty of fabrication and maintenance projects to keep them busy so it'll get a lot of use.

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Portable LP Generator Comes With Built-In Tank

"Our new LP3250 propane-fueled portable generator comes with a 20-lb. liquid propane tank holder built right into the frame, eliminating the need to carry the tank separately. It eliminates the hassle of a stand-alone tank and the awkward fuel line that goes along with it," says Art Aiello, Generac Power Systems, Waukesha, Wis.

The generator comes with a Generac OHV 212cc engine that rides on a dolly-style frame, and an integrated fuel tank holder on back. The fuel line comes out the top of the unit where it's easy to connect to the tank.

The dolly-style handle on back provides leverage over the wheels, which makes it easy to tip the unit back on the wheels and wheel it around. The handle folds down for compact storage.

The 20-lb. tank provides up to 9 1/2 hours of running time, which is comparable to the running time of the same size portable gas generator, says the company.

"Until now the only options available in a portable propane generator required the propane tank to be carried separately, where it would then sit to the side of the generator while in use," says Aiello. "If you needed to move the generator and its fuel tank you had to pick up the tank in one hand and use your other hand to maneuver the generator. With the LP3250, you're maneuvering both the generator and tank as a single unit.

"Another advantage is that if the power gets knocked out it can be difficult to get gas to refuel a standard generator. But there are



Built-in 20-lb. LP tank holder on Generac generator eliminates the need to carry the tank separately.

liquid propane tank exchanges all over North America, so in an emergency it can often be easier to get your hands on liquid propane than gas.

"Unlike gas, liquid propane can be stored indefinitely without deterioration and safely transported without spillage. Propane also emits low carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons and fewer toxic pollutants than gas."

Manufacturer's suggested retail price for the LP3250 is \$619.

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PVC Punch-Plants Into Plastic Mulch

Planting strawberry plugs into plastic-covered beds goes fast for Emily Oakley and Mike Appel, thanks to a device they designed to put perfectly spaced holes in the plastic and mark where the next hole goes. The device lets them plant strawberries quickly and accurately.

"We plant 2,000 plugs per year on six 200-ft. beds," says Oakley. "We plant plugs or well-rooted tips instead of fresh dug crowns. Crowns need more babying than plugs and generally aren't available when we want to plant."

Oakley and Appel, who raise and market fruits and vegetables in Oklahoma, plant their strawberries in October. This gives the plants two months to get established before freezing temperatures arrive. Their planting regimen, which includes fall planting and tilling up beds at the end of the fruiting season, was featured recently in Growing for Market, a trade magazine for local food producers (www.growingformarket.com).

"We plant two rows of strawberries 16 in. apart with plants 16 in. apart within the rows," explains Oakley. "It's important to plant at the correct depth so the roots are well-ribbed, but the crown remains above the soil."

Their planting device is made from pieces of 1 1/4-in. dia. pvc pipe connected in a U shape. It's about 4 ft. tall with a cross pipe at the mid point. The open end of the U is attached to a 1-in. thick wooden slat with the pipe ends extending about 4 in. past the slat. The ends are beveled, creating a sharp edge to punch through the plastic.

The wooden crossbar maintains a common depth for holes. It also extends another 16 in. beyond one pipe end. As the U ends are pressed down into the bed, a long screw drilled through the end of the slat marks where the next hole in line for that row will go. At the same time, the leg centered on the slat is creating a new hole that was previously marked, and the other end is slipping into the



Strawberry plug-planting device is made from pieces of pvc pipe connected in a U-shape.

last hole made.

Once the first two holes have been made, the process ensures that holes down the row stay in line. While one of the pair is making holes, the other is following behind, slipping plugs into the holes in the plastic and firming up soil around them.

While other growers get two or more growing seasons from a matted bed, Oakley and Appel get only one. Higher annual plant purchases, the cost of the black plastic and annual transplant labor are offset by avoiding irrigation and weeding during the worst of the summer heat.

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