

Giant Horseshoe Pile Represents 55 Years Of Work

Every week Tim and Joe Kriz add to a collection that started nearly 55 years ago. They dump a couple of buckets of horseshoes on a 16-ft. pile of horseshoes outside their shop. Buried in the pile are horseshoes once worn by Budweiser Clydesdales as well as horses owned by famous Hollywood celebrities.

All the horseshoes in the pile come from horses shod by members of the Kriz family. In fact, Tim and Joe are eighth generation farriers.

However, the majority of the horseshoes in the pile came from their fathers, Johnny and Joe Sr. The brothers served as farrier instructors in WWII and shod horses and mules for Armed Forces in Osaka, Japan. Joe even shod Emperor Hirohito's white Arabian stallion during the occupation of Japan.

The brothers returned home to carry on the family tradition. As draft horses became less popular after WWII, the brothers bought horses by the semi-load in the Midwest.

In an article by Stacie Lynch in "The Draft Horse Journal," Joe says he was one of the first "flying farriers" in the 1970's. He flew to Florida every six weeks to work on his clients' horses. The Krizes shod the horses of many celebrities including Roy Rogers, Gene Autry and Marilyn Monroe. They also

shod the Dunromin' Arabians, Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus horses, Disneyland's Percheron Hitch, and three of the world's largest horses.

"Big John was 19.2 hands tall and weighed in at 2,640 lbs," Joe Kriz recalls. "It took 32 in. of steel to make one shoe to fit him."

Tim remembers coming home from high school and bending steel (usually 22 in.) for horseshoes for his dad, Johnny, who died at 71. Joe is still alive at age 92 and still lives, sleeps, and breathes horses," Tim says. The family continues to keep anywhere from 25 to 40 draft and draft-cross horses at a time.

The horseshoe pile on the Kriz property is part of the family's history - but not all of it. A flood in August 1955 washed away the horseshoes at the brothers' old blacksmith shop in Seymour, Conn. They moved about ½-mile north of the site and started another shop. In 1978, the pile was moved to the Kriz farm by using a crane with a clam shell bucket to fill a tri-axle dump truck three times.

The pile has grown substantially since then. "There are rasps in the pile too," Tim says. "They don't last long when you shoe a lot of horses."

Like his father, Tim shoes the Budweiser Clydesdales - two of the four teams, or 50



All the horseshoes in this 16-ft. high pile come from horses shod by members of the Kriz family.

to 60 horses every six weeks. Today there are some new techniques, better tools and ready-made horseshoes, Tim says. With Connecticut's high horse population there is plenty of work - enough for a ninth generation to join the forces. Tim's son, Cody, 17, helps shoe and Jesse, 13, may start helping

in the future.

"We've always been farriers. It's a family tradition," Tim says.

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"Corn Crib" Gazebo

Looking for a way to use an old corn crib? John Zaborny and his wife turned a small crib into a head-turning gazebo for their back yard.

The gazebo has a cobblestone floor with 6-ft. high fence panel sides. There's a free-standing fireplace in the middle of the floor. A 6-in. dia. flue pipe runs up through the center of the roof.

"It's a really nice place to relax during the summer and, with the fireplace, we can use it in cool weather, too," says Zaborny. "We planted grapes all the way around so in a couple years it will be a nice looking arbor. Also, swallows like to nest in the roof which is a good thing because they eat twice their weight in insects every day."

They started with a 16-ft. dia. corn crib

they got from a neighbor. They hauled it home on a trailer, then used a boom loader and chain to set it upright. The crib had 4 ft. of sheet metal below the roof and wire below that, which they cut off. They set six thin wall galvanized steel posts in the ground in a hexagon shape and then placed a 6-in. dia. pvc pipe over each post. Then they lowered the crib down on the posts and welded the sides onto the posts.

They attached panel wire fence all the way around the posts to form a grape arbor, leaving an opening to walk through.

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"Corn crib" gazebo has a free-standing fireplace in middle of floor, with a 6-in. dia. flue pipe running up through center of roof. Photo shows gazebo before it was enclosed with a wire fence grape arbor.

"Pop Can" Target Thrower

"It gives kids something to shoot at safely without the cost of clay pigeons," says Doug Hilton, Seward, Ill., about his homemade "pop can" trap thrower. It's designed to use everything from aluminum pop cans to plastic bottles, walnuts, and golf balls.

"Everyone has a bag of aluminum cans to recycle. That provides all the targets you need, and when you're done shooting you can still recycle the cans," says Hilton.

The trap thrower consists of a 1-ft. high, 3-in. dia. plastic tube attached to a base that's staked to the ground. A rope attaches to a spring-loaded trigger assembly on the thrower. The operator places the target inside the tube and cocks the trigger assembly, then pulls on the rope to discharge the target. It goes straight up into the air at a height of 20 to 40 ft., depending on the object used.

"The target is easier for kids to shoot at than a clay pigeon because it doesn't fly as fast, and it goes straight up in the air instead of at an unpredictable angle. As a result kids aren't as likely to get discouraged, yet it's still a challenge for adults," says Hilton. "Different targets with different shapes, sizes, and weights will all fly differently which adds some variety. The targets are also affected differently by wind conditions

as well.

"It'll throw just about any object as long as it's not too heavy. An aluminum pop can will go at least 20 ft. high. A golf ball really flies and will go half again higher than a pop can. A tennis ball is about the heaviest object you can use."

Hilton says he came up with the idea because he wanted a new way to get kids involved in shooting sports. "A clay pigeon can be a little intimidating to kids, which takes the fun out of shooting. Also, because the target doesn't go as fast or far kids can use a .410 or 20-ga. instead of a larger gun."

Hilton plans to manufacture the target thrower and expects it to sell for about \$60.

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Homemade "pop can" thrower is activated by pulling on a rope attached to a spring-loaded trigger assembly.



Photo at right shows target thrower cocked and in the fire position.