

Photos courtesy Valley City Times Record

A "retired" motorcycle doing "wheelies" serves as Cruff's mail box.

BILL CRUFF TURNS "JUNK" INTO ART

This Inventor's Also An Artist

By Brenda Halvorson

"I look at a piece of someone else's junk and right away I can see something different in it," says Bill Cruff, operator of Cruff's Cycle, Auto and General Repair Shop of rural Rogers, N. Dak.

But Cruff does more than repair. He is an inventor, an artist whose medium is metal.

Cruff's inventions run from the practical to the whimsical. His most recent "creation" is a fountain for his yard. The base is made from a small water tank. From it rises the pipe of a grain auger. The two upper tiers of the fountain are made of Plexiglas.

"I wanted to put tropical fish in my fountain, but there wasn't any point if you couldn't see them," explained Cruff. "So I used the Plexiglas."

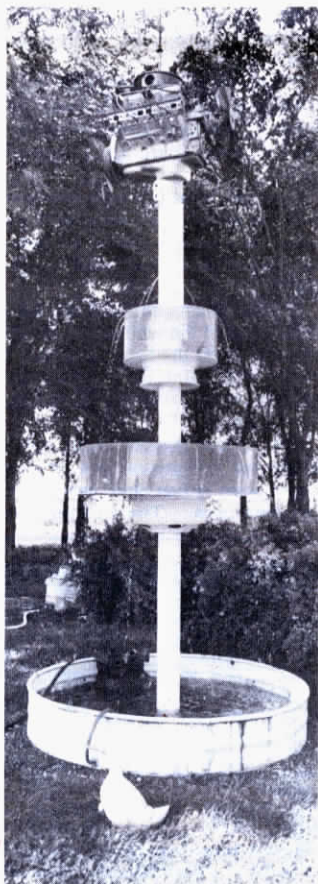
"That was the most expensive part of the whole project," he continued. "The rest is just made of stuff we found around the place."

Holes were drilled in the auger and in the Plexiglass to provide for the streams of water. And, because he works with metal and engines, Cruff topped the structure with a 440 Dodge V-8 engine.

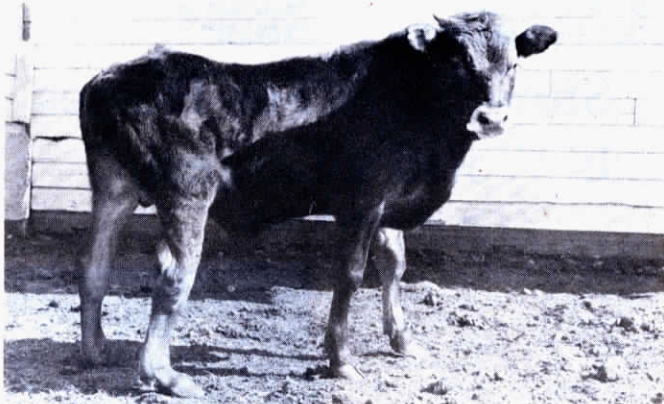
"We call it our 'Condo V-8' because the wrens have built their nests in each cylinder," laughed Cruff. "I had trouble with twigs plugging the holes while they were building, but they must all be settled now."

A sump pump provides the pressure to run the fountain.

"My granddaughter Michelle goes swimming in the bottom tank now that we've convinced her there aren't any fish in it," remarked Cruff.



Birds nest in cylinders of the old engine on top. Below it are two "see through" aquariums. Bottom tank is swimming pool for kids.



Calf was born tailless and has what appears to be a moose-like hump.

RESEARCHERS SAY NO

Is This A Cow-Moose?

Do you see the markings of a moose in the accompanying photo, or do you see a Jersey calf? If you see both, you agree with a group of Canadians in Northern Alberta who've been puzzling over the strange-looking calf for the past year.

Born to a Jersey cow on the Herb and Jean Gilbert farm near Drayton Valley, Alberta, an area where there are lots of moose, the bull calf doesn't look like any calf that ever came out of a Jersey mother and a bovine sire. The calf was born tailless, like a moose, has the beginning of a significant hump, again similar to a moose, and its hair is the same color and texture as a moose.

The Gilberts have three bulls on their farm and they bred the Jersey mother unsuccessfully to all three. They finally gave up and turned her out to pasture. Soon after, Herb saw a bull moose breeding the cow.

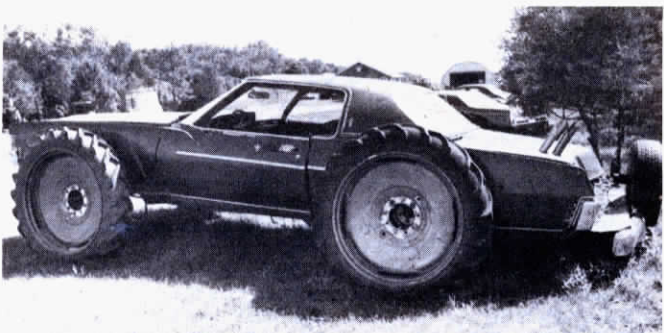
"I forgot about the moose until the calf was born. Once I saw it, it was impossible not to see it looked like a moose," Herb told FARM SHOW.

Local veterinarians were called in to investigate and they agreed the calf looked like a cow-moose cross, even though tests showed that the animal's hair came from the cow family.

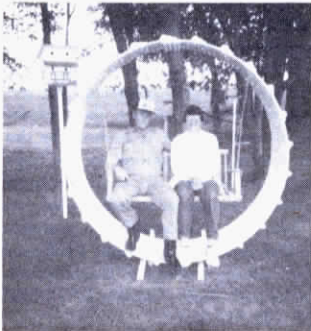
However, an animal scientist soon caught wind of the situation and informed the Gilberts that a cow-moose cross is impossible because the animals belong to two different zoological families and have totally different chromosomal make-ups. A moose and a cow cannot crossbreed just as a horse and a cow cannot, the expert said.

Speculation continues, though, among farmers around the small town, fueled by stories of a Jersey cow in another part of Alberta that supposedly mated recently with a whitetail buck deer and came up with a calf that looked just as strange as the Gilbert calf.

The Gilberts have had lots of offers for the calf but they're hanging on to it. "There will probably never be another one like it," says Herb.



Cruff's "mud-racing special" has 60 in. tractor tires and two engines (the original and another built into trunk).



"Love seat" made from the 6 ft. dia. wheel (24 in. wide) salvaged from an antique steam engine.