



A cowpuncher and his cow is yet another example of the action which Grievess puts into his work.



Sculptor Grievess' massive piece, which took a year to complete, includes the elements of nature and man that he likes to keep in his art.

## How sculptor makes wild west come alive

By SHIRLEE IDEN

Sculptor Bob Grievess believes that anyone can learn anything if they want to badly enough.

Grievess, who is a sign painter by profession, has a business in Southfield and lives in Farmington Hills.

Art in several media has interested him for many years but he is completely primitive in his approach having had almost no instruction.

Grievess was born in Ohio and came to Michigan as a youngster. He grew up in Ferndale, then lived in western Nebraska where he was a ranch hand.

"That's where I got acquainted with my subject matter," he said. "My stuff is almost completely western."

Following his western interlude, Grievess served as a gunner on a B-17 bomber during World War II.

"After the war, I went to Chicago and did some art studies at the Chicago Art Institute," he said. "I tried for years to be a painter but it never worked for me."

About three or four years ago, he said, he started sculpting in soapstone.

"I WOULD make a figure out of modeling clay first," he said. "Then one of my kids who had studied ceramics asked why I didn't make the figure out of ceramic clay."

This led the artist into the field of ceramics and into the production of some rather large pieces.

"I tried to plate them with copper and I thought I really had something at first, but it turned out to be a disaster," he said. "They deteriorated."

The acid in the clay ate the clay body.

Grievess then delved into welding. He bought a welding outfit from his son and started doing metal casting.

"Now all my sculpting is in metal," he said. "But I'm still learning, all by myself."

Grievess learns by asking. He said he goes out to foundries and "bugs the people" until they talk to him and help him learn more about the craft.

He's been in metal casting a year now and turned out several smaller pieces and one very large one.

"I can't estimate the time it takes me," he said, "because I'm still learning the craft."

Grievess works in a studio that has been converted from a garage. It is crammed with machinery and other evidence of his experimentation into various mediums.

His wife, Sonya, and four children, Nancy, 25, Lisa, 23, Bruce, 21, Jennifer, 9, have always been supportive of his curiosity and the intensity with which he approaches his art.

HE WALKED AROUND the workshop, pointing out machinery he had picked up, showing pieces of his past work and even using a torch on the metal figure of a horse and rider.

"I'm completely free of influence of any formal art school," he said. "And I've made a lifetime study of animal anatomy. There's no school in the country that teaches it."

Grievess said his children all have artistic talent and Nancy once won a gold key in the Scholastic Awards.

Sonya is his special cheering section but she sometimes complains it's like living next door to a factory.

"I'm always out here," he said, indicating the workshop. "I put at least 40 hours a week into my sculpture. I work until at least 1 p.m. every single night."

Grievess said he had been working all in copper but is now going into bronze.

"Bronze is much stronger," he said. "You can work without a mask with copper but it's very hard to cast. Actually, I'm very green at metallurgy,

but I know bronze is cleaner and safer."

Grievess said he picks up many of his tools and machines in area junkyards. "I got this drill press in a junkyard and brought it back to life," he said.

"I love to go to junkyards. You can walk around for half a day and there are so many things you can put to use."

NATURE IS a vital element in the sculptor's art. "I like to put nature in my work," he said.

"Too many sculptors have taken the action of its natural surroundings. I try to put in the trees and the rocks. I find beauty in a rugged rock."

Mostly a loner, Grievess is a member of the Scarab Club. He said he's sold some of his pieces but "sometimes I'm sorry."

The large piece of metal casting that he just completed took him a year to fashion. "That's because I went from welding to casting and had to spend so much time getting an education," he said.

"I feel really happy. I've cracked the door and have entered the world of bronze and it's exciting to me."

Grievess finds metal casting more satisfying than carving because for him carving took too long. His sculpture is his only hobby. "It's an obsession," he said.

"It's like anything you get deeply involved in. It has its highs and lows and is a forever thing. You never reach the top of the hill. There's always somewhere higher to go."

If he has a goal, simply stated what Grievess would like to do is to be able to earn a living at sculpture and live where the winters aren't so bad.

Photos by Jack Margolis

### Sprangue returns from deployment

Navy Interior Communications Electrician Firefighter Mark Sprangue, whose wife Karen is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Cerny, 2227 Eleven Mile, Farmington Hills, has returned from a deployment in the southwestern Pacific.

He is serving as a crewmember aboard the guided missile destroyer, USS Hoel, homeported in San Diego, Calif.

While deployed, he participated in exercise "Kangaroo II," the largest peacetime training operation ever held in Australia. It was conducted in the Tasman and Coral seas, and along the eastern Australia coast. It centered on a major amphibious landing by U.S. forces, and a subsequent link-up of the assault units with Australian and New Zealand ground forces.

Sprangue joined the Navy in 1974.

### Mary Cole takes honors

Mary Cole, a freshman at Dakota Wesleyan University, has been named to the dean's list for the first semester of the 1976-77 academic year.

She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Cole of Farmington and is one of 25 students in the university who received all A's for the semester.

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Carefully, with glasses to protect his eyes, Bob Grievess uses his torch to weld the figure of a horse and rider.