

Christmas tree bedecks prize pony stall at Fair

By Vicki Ruhga

A Christmas tree, presents and Santa Claus at the horse barn on the Nebraska State Fairgrounds?

It was all part of the pony competition for Mary Streubing and her friend, Faye Friedli, both of York. The two women worked together to decorate the Streubing pony's stall in an "All I Want For Christmas is a Pony" theme. Their display won this year's trophy for pony-stall decorating.

Streubing said this theme was chosen because her 13-year-old daughter, Sheri, had outgrown her 6-year-old pony named Howdy Dudie, and the family was going to sell him.

Among the hay and horses, a Christmas tree with red and gold ornaments and a rotating colored light caught everyone's attention, Streubing said. There also was a

lighted Santa Claus on the stall door and garland strung across the aisle.

Among the presents under the tree was a large doll dressed in jeans, a cowboy hat and Western boots. She held a sign saying "All I want for Christmas is a pony!"

Streubing said the people who watched her put up the display had varying reactions.

"Some just looked at us like we were a couple a weirdos decorating a Christmas tree in September," she said. "Others came over to see what we were doing and thought it was a really clever idea."

Friedli, who thought of the Christmas theme, has participated in stall-decorating competitions for the past three years and won the trophy twice.

Her previous stall designs were Old McDonald's Farm and a merry-go-round design around the stall. Friedli

said she had a hard time finding a mannequin for the farm display.




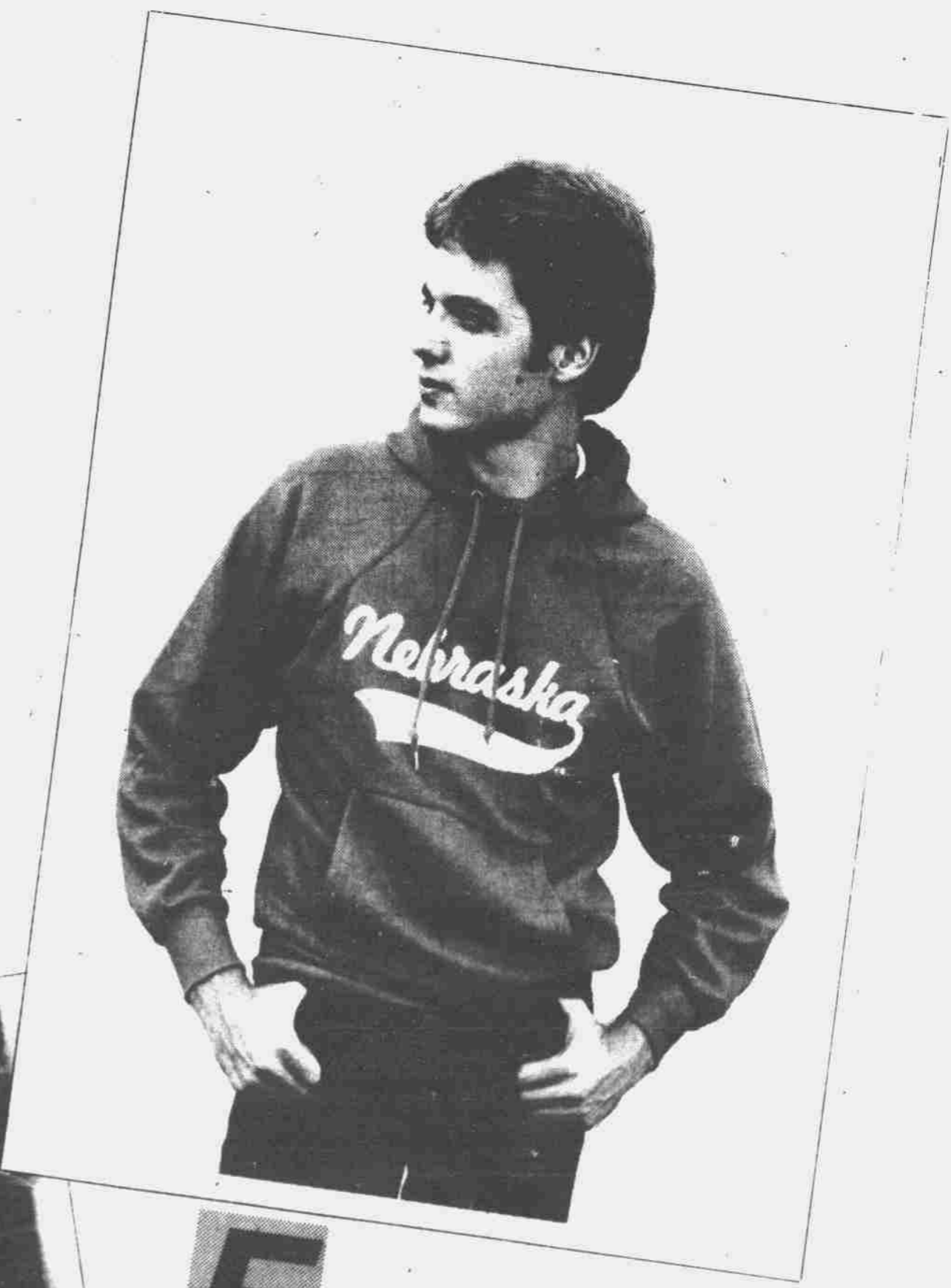
"We borrowed a mannequin from a department store, but the only one available was a female, and we needed a man," she said. "We had to make her into a man, so at night I went out and plucked hair out of the animals to make a moustache and beard."

For last year's display, Friedli had a friend paint a mountain scene on a king-sized sheet. She borrowed a windmill, and filled a small horse tank with goldfish and various coins to create a mountain scene. "We only lost 25 cents from the tank," she added.

Friedli said although she had a difficult time trying to locate a Santa Claus in September, she usually doesn't have many problems finding items for her displays.

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