

CREATIVITY

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Using a welder borrowed from the neighbour, the team worked into the dark until they could no longer bare working without a light, then returned to finish the job at 5 a.m. Monday morning. At noon they physically, without the assistance of mechanical equipment, loaded their project on the back of a flat bed truck for the drive back to Fort St. John.

Though their entry wasn't the winning work, it was a crowd favourite. The weather vane also took the top bid (\$1,425) when the creations were auctioned off.

"Our raven perched atop a working weather vane is quite characteristically a lover of all things shiny and beautiful. Coveting the red-stained glass top of the weather vane, this steadfast bird will perpetually brave the cold winter winds and weather, giving tribute to the north and all its residents," stated the artists.

The two winning entries were done by teams from Arch Welding of Fort St. John.

Farmers' creativity put to the test

Rolla family's entry in welding competition showcases ingenuity required on the farm

BY BRENDA BIRLEY
PEACE COUNTRY SUN WRITER

Nobody is really self taught, you learn from your environment, said Emilie

Mattson.

"If you allow yourself to delve into your environment, that is where the real education is. That is where it all comes from."

If that is the case, the Mattson cattle ranch, just west of Rolla in northeastern B.C., has been an excellent teacher.

The family soared to new heights during a recent test of that education, the Great Canadian Welding Challenge held Aug. 1-2 in Fort St. John.

The first annual welding art competition demanded competitors be creative on a time limit. At 1 p.m. on Sunday, Fort St. John Mayor Steve Thurlakson announced a theme - wildlife - and the 17 participating teams ran for their



Karl Mattson, Dean Mattson, Inge Jean Hansen and Emilie Mattson take a much deserved break while they wait for the Fort St John Arts Council to judge their creation.

-Brenda Birley, Sun Media



After 24 hours, the Mattson family unveiled their masterpiece - a gorgeous weather vane that ended up selling for \$1,425 in the auction.

-Brenda Birley, Sun Media

welders. A mere 24 hours later, participants would unveil their masterpieces.

True to the spirit of farmers everywhere, the Mattson family was up to the challenge. It takes a special person to successfully etch a living out of the land. Intuitive, persistent, spontaneous and inventive could all be used to describe today's farmers.

On the farm every hour counts, during the small window Mother Nature allows for harvest. If the combine breaks down you have to be inventive and you have to be quick. And creativity is deeply ingrained

Even after deducting the travel time to and from Rolla, the Mattsons had plenty of time to let their creativity shine.

"It was hard to come to a consensus, we all do different kinds of work so there was a lot of arguing," laughed Emilie Mattson. In the end, the family settled on Karl's vision.