

Rusty and Jerome Ornaments

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For generations of Canadian kids, the Friendly Giant (CBC, 1958-1985) was the highlight of weekday mornings.

“Friendly” was much beloved, as were his puppet companions, Rusty the Rooster and Jerome the Giraffe.



We were transfixed: by the castle, with its drawbridge, and inside, the miniature fireplace and tiny chairs; by Bob Homme’s velvet voice

as he read to us from storybooks drawn from Rusty’s bottomless bookbag; by Jerome’s quirky, gentle teasing; by the show’s haunting theme and the glimpse, at close, of a cow jumping over the moon as it rose over the castle.

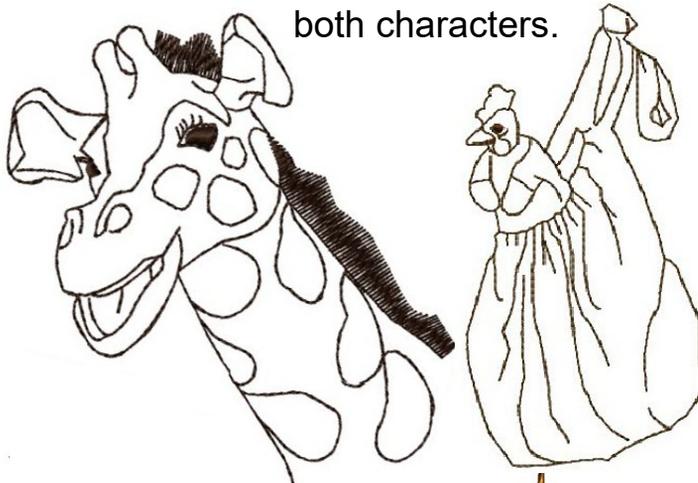


Jerome was a wonderful, expressive puppet, still immediately recognizable to any Canadian of a certain age, as is Rusty in his distinctive bookbag.



What better subjects for my newest memory ornaments than these most iconic of childhood characters?

I started with my redwork designs of both characters.



To make them into ornaments, I stitched the designs on a double layer of felt, with layers of tear-away stabilizer sandwiched between.

This process makes a two-sided ornament, so that back and front are identical, a nice touch should the ornament happen to rotate while on the tree. For hanging, I used a stylus to make a tiny hole at the pivot point of each figure.



A jump ring through the pinhole completes the ornament.



I ended up making multiples of both ornaments for friends and family members. My first Jerome was stitched on cream-coloured felt; after that I changed to orange -- his original colour -- and kept it for the remaining ornaments. He's stitched with purple thread, though it looks brown against the felt. For Rusty, I used navy thread and experimented with different felt colours; I like them all, though I may stick with the tan (the colour of his bookbag) for future stitch-outs.

I can't wait to add these to my Christmas tree come December, and I know the sibs are going to love them: they bring a touch of both childhood nostalgia and treasured vintage Canadiana. Score!



RIP Rod Coneybeare and Bob Homme, creators of so many warm childhood moments and lasting memories.