

The Journal of the American West

# Ranch & Reata



Volume 3.2 \$14.95

Western Artist John Moyers

Great Basin Ranch Families: A Portfolio

Arnold Rojas – Brave Old Men & Their Horses

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## FRONT GATE



photographed by Madeleine Blake, Shumway Ranch, Juntura, Oregon.

Because they can.  
The McKay kids – Joan, Anna Rose, Gabriel, Claire, Luke and Martin (standing on the horn)  
entertain themselves during a moment's break while gathering cattle.

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Cover image: Photograph of "Ashley" on our cover  
by Robb Kendrick.



# Ranch & Reata



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

# Rewards

By A.J. Mangum

John Weinkauff's bootmaking shop occupies a repurposed garage adjacent to his home in the hills outside Kerrville, Texas. His property is one of many gentlemen's ranches, to borrow a real estate term, that each cover several acres on a working cattle operation of several thousand. It's a modern pastoral setting, one blending an exurban lifestyle with vestiges of the Texas frontier. Grazing cattle meander through ancient oaks and drift past John's backyard as his saddle horses look on from their corral.

Inside John's shop, a dozen works in progress fill a rack. Tight rolls of pristine leather are stacked in a corner. Tools lie at rest atop workbenches, suggesting they've just been put down. And, along one wall, boot lasts, wooden forms around which boots are built, fill a floor-to-ceiling shelf. Each last bears the name of a customer, written in permanent black ink. Many of the contemporary West's most prominent figures – horsemen, ranchers, artists – are represented, creating a unique archive that exudes both raw functionality and



a particular brand of intimacy, as if each last bears the spirit of the customer it represents.

One of our group takes a seat and John brings from his bench an oversized notebook, which he places on the floor. Opening to a blank page, he draws an outline of his customer's foot, adding notes on measurements he takes with a tailor's tape. John stands and compares his measurements to his customer's existing last, noting ways in which he'll have to modify it for the new boots. He then spells out a long list of options: leather types,



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Image by Jim Arndt



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photos by A.J. Mangum

Kerrville, Texas, bootmaker John Weinkauf.

6

toe types, decorative elements and colors. And, so, a pair of boots is born.

I became aware of John around a decade ago. Mutual acquaintances spoke of his work with reverence, and he seemed an ideal editorial subject. Each time his name was mentioned, though, I detected an unspoken suggestion of reclusiveness on John's part. For years, I had the impression that the bootmaker would have little interest in a visit from a writer/photographer. His name went in a mental file: maybe someday.

This past spring, I traveled to John's adopted hometown of Kerrville for an event. A group of us sat in a hotel courtyard, enjoying a drink in the warm south Texas weather. As stories unfolded, a fellow quietly

joined the group and happened to sit next to me. Several jokes and much laughter later, I realized it was John. Arrangements for a shop visit took shape. It's a funny thing about long-held impressions and reality, and how the two sometimes have nothing to do with one another.

John's been building boots for decades, and is at a career stage in which he stays busy, likely as busy as he'd ever want to be, without advertising. He keeps a low profile, generally working only with existing customers, a possible explanation for my extrasensory (and incorrect) perception of his reclusiveness. John offers a life lesson on finding what you love to do, putting in the years to become great at it, and earning the reward of spending your days just as you wish.

Stop and think, and you realize the West is filled with such folks: craftsmen, artists, horsemen, ranchers. None of these are great career choices. Still, members of the cowboy culture have an oft-proven knack for holding firm to their aspirations and persevering. Enough succeed, at least by their own definitions, to keep the next generation hopeful and inspired.

Historically, the North American West has been an "all or bust" destination, a place to realize one's hopes or die trying. It still fosters lofty ambitions and, just often enough, those big dreams land their conjurers exactly where they want to be.



Weinkauf has added one last personal touch to this boot.





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# OF NOTE



## Some Summer Reading

This issue's Of Note is dedicated to that part of summer where one finds a nice tree to crawl under, enjoy its shade, and read or listen to something. We have lots to read in this issue – and some great books and music along with a few videos await you. Enjoy your summer – maybe do a little rain dance for us out here in the far west if you have a moment – it couldn't hurt.



photo by Kristin Reynolds

The Road to Summer





One of our contributors, Jameson Parker, always offers thoughtful material. Last issue we featured a photo by the renowned photographer – and coronet aficionado, Jay Dusard, in the Western Moment section along with his story of how he came to make that image. Here’s our friend Jameson’s take and we thank him for letting us print his thoughts on the matter here.

## LET US NOW PRAISE THE FORGOTTEN AND OVERLOOKED

By Jameson Parker

I only heard about Carl Jung’s theory of synchronicity a few years ago. In case you’re unfamiliar with it, I’ll explain that, as I understand it, it refers to the phenomenon of two or multiple events occurring that have nothing to do with each other, but which combine to have meaning to the person who experiences them. In other words, the linking significance of the events lies in the experiencing of them, as opposed to any causal significance. I recently had an experience of synchronicity.

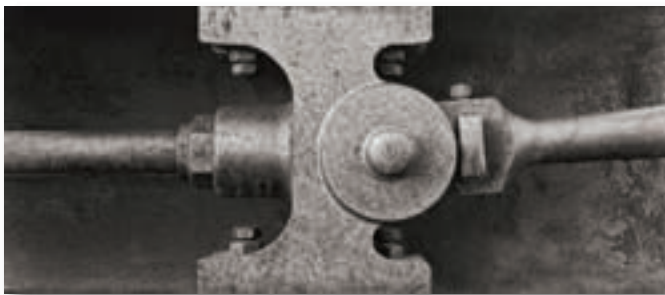


Image by Jay Dusard

I read a short story the other evening, “Resurrection of a Life,” by the late William Saroyan. It is, by any standards, an unusual short story, devoid of plot or characterization or even continuity in any traditional sense of those terms. The narrator is alternately the author or a young boy, very much like

the youthful author, who sells newspapers on the street to help his impoverished family earn a precarious living in a city much like Fresno, California, where the author grew up. It takes place during World War One, when the author was growing up and selling newspapers, and the story consists of jumps backward and forward in time from the author’s memories to the boy’s observations to the author’s observations of the boy’s memories. I read somewhere once that Saroyan rarely edited his work. I have no idea if that is true, but reading “Resurrection of a Life” I can well believe it. Like all of Saroyan’s work that I have read, the story is furiously fast, loose, impressionistic, and imbued with an extraordinary optimism and love of his fellow man:

“He used to go through the city like an alley cat, prowling all over the place, into saloons, upstairs into whore houses, into gambling joints, to see: their faces, the faces of those who were alive with him on the earth, and the expressions of their faces, and their forms, the faces of the old whores, and the way they talked, and the smell of all the ugly places, and the drabness of all the old and rotting buildings, all of it, of his time and his life, a part of him. He prowled through the city, seeing and smelling, talking, shouting about the big news, inhaling and exhaling, blood moving to the rhythm of the sea, coming and going, to the shore of self



Jameson Parker

and back again to selflessness, inhale and newness, exhale and new death, and the boy in the city, walking through it like an alley cat, shouting headlines.”

The author, the boy, is horrified when he has to shout the bloody headlines of the war, about Ypres, the Marne, another ship sunk, ten thousand Huns killed, but Saroyan’s irrepressible love of life shines through at the end:

“All that I have learned is that we breathe, from moment to moment, now, always now, and then we remember, and we see the boy moving through a city that has become lost, among people who have become dead, alive among dead moments, crossing a street, the scene thus, or standing by the bread bin in the bakery, a sack of chicken bread please so that we can live and shout about it, and it begins nowhere and it ends nowhere, and all I know is that we are somehow alive, all of us in the light, making shadow, the sun overhead, space all around us, inhaling, exhaling, the face and form of man everywhere, pleasure and pain, sanity and madness, over and over again, war and no war, and peace and no peace, the earth solid and unaware of us, unaware of our cities, our dreams, unaware of this love I have for life, the love that was the boy’s, unaware of all things, my going, my coming, the earth everlastingly itself, not of me, everlastingly precise, and the sea sullen with movement like my breathing, waves pounding the shore of myself, coming and going, all that I know is that I am alive and glad to be, glad to be of this ugliness and this glory, somehow glad that I can remember, somehow remember the boy climbing the fig tree, unpraying but religious with joy, somehow of the earth, of the time of the earth, somehow everlastingly of life, nothingness, blessed or unblessed, somehow deathless like myself, timeless, glad, insanely glad to be here, and so it is true, there is no death, somehow there is no death, and can never be.”

Saroyan always claimed he didn’t believe in God, but that long last paragraph is about as good an affirmation of the tenets of Christianity as you’re likely

to find anywhere.

The day after I read this, I opened a CD Jay Dusard sent me of some of his work over the years. In case you are unfamiliar with Jay Dusard, he is the renowned photographer who has spent a lifetime chronicling the American West, in every sense of that phrase: landscapes, ranchers, cowboys, horses, cattle, dogs, and the wild places where those people and animals come together. His portraits are spare, direct, and overwhelmingly beautiful in their stark and deceptive simplicity. He works almost exclusively in black and white, and achieves not only texture and intensity, but also an immense spatial precision, so that – as with a fine painting or with fine writing – the brain sees far more than is conveyed to the eye. Even if you’ve never lived anywhere but New York City and have come no closer to the reality of the cowboy life than old Roy Rogers movies, Jay Dusard’s images will take your breath away.

But the CD he sent me was entitled *Abstractions*, and with it he achieved very much the same thing Saroyan achieved with his writing: a love of and appreciation for life even in things we might normally overlook, even in things we might turn our faces from, things like death itself. An overturned railroad car, the rusting end of a dilapidated tractor-trailer rig, an abandoned and decaying camper, even the desiccated skeleton of a horse, all things most of us would turn away from, Jay turns into images of beauty, intriguing patterns and interplay of chiaroscuro and texture, the intricacy of blistered paint and rust, the elegance of a discarded piece of railroad engine, the stains of time on rock, all the beauty that exists unnoticed and unappreciated around us, those are the things Jay celebrates in this most recent collection. Like William Saroyan, Jay Dusard is “timeless, glad, insanely glad to be here...”

See more of Jameson Parker’s work – including his new eBook, *The Horseman at Midnight* at [www.readjamesonparker.com](http://www.readjamesonparker.com)

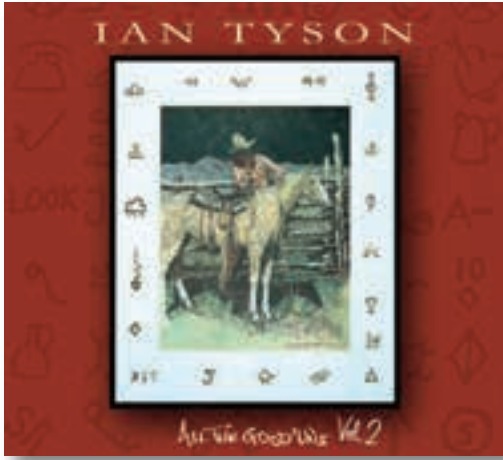




## A NEW ALBUM FROM A NEW IAN TYSON

Ian Tyson, Canada’s iconic singer and songwriter, turns 80 in September, but his energy remains undimmed – and he’s just released a second “best-of” compilation of songs from some of the dozen-odd albums he’s recorded for the Edmonton-based Stony Plain label.

His new collection – *All the Good 'Uns, Vol. 2* – the follow-up to *All the Good 'Uns*, his 1996 Gold album, is a collection of 19 recordings – including many of the “story” songs that Tyson has crafted about life in the west, the vanishing cowboy culture, and a few of the more personal songs that reflect the singer’s own experiences. The songs, chosen by Tyson and by record label head Holger Petersen, are taken from five of the dozen Ian Tyson albums Stony Plain has released over the years.



This is a magical moment in time as Tyson is also celebrating the near-complete recovery of his voice, badly damaged six years ago by the combination of a near-deaf rock and roll sound man at a massive outdoor county music festival, followed by a cold virus that wouldn’t quit.

“I fought the sound system, and lost,” he recalled. “I remember coming off stage and telling Ray Benson, of Asleep at the Wheel, ‘Ray,

I think I hurt my voice.’ I saw a doctor, and he said, basically, live with it.

“Late last year, I did three nights of my annual shows in Longview, near the ranch I have south of Calgary,” he says. “The last night was really hard, so I figured I’d have to do something drastic.”

Ian finally visited Tom Gillis, a Calgary ear, nose and throat specialist. “He checked me out very carefully, explored my throat, and found a whole mountain of polyps down there. The operation to remove them, and a continuing course of therapy seems to have done the trick.” That fact was proven without a doubt during his SRO concerts at the Ranch & Reata Roadhouse in Santa Ynez this past April. It was the Ian we remember along with a glorious voice, appropriate to where he is today. A true miracle was witnessed.



photo by Jenny Gimmersall

Ian Tyson at Ranch & Reata Roadhouse this past April.

Looking at the future with clear eyes and closing in on his 80th birthday, he looks back at five decades of a career that’s earned him countless awards, the Order of Canada, and a devoted following. He has concerts booked well into next year, including three shows in early July at Calgary’s Martha Cohen Theatre and fall dates across the country with Corb Lund.

At the same time, he continues to supervise his working ranch; this is a man for whom “the cowboy life” is an ever-present reality. Meanwhile, the songs keep coming and the stories he shares are as true as a well-worn saddle. [www.iantyson.com](http://www.iantyson.com)

## IT'S A GREAT AMERICAN SUMMER IN CUTTING

National Youth Cutting Horse Association World Finals Featured



photo courtesy NCHA

“Just Playin Smart” ridden by Amanda Morris

It's going to be a great American summer in Fort Worth, Texas, as cutting horse enthusiasts of all ages make their way to the Will Rogers Center for the Great American Insurance NCHA Cutting Summer Spectacular July 12 through August 3 and featuring the Grace Ranch NYCHA World Finals July 22 through July 25.

Slated to offer more than \$3 million in cash and prizes, the Great American Insurance NCHA Summer Cutting Spectacular brings not only top flight cutting horse competition to the arena floor but a host of family-friendly activities for members of the National Cutting Horse Association (NCHA) and fans of the cutting horse.

The National Cutting Horse Association, based in Fort Worth, Texas, is the world governing body for the sport of cutting. With more than 16,000 members worldwide, its mission is to promote and celebrate the cutting horse, whose origin on Western supports ranching and Western heritage. By establishing rules for the conduct of cutting horse shows, NCHA provides a level playing field and a progressive class structure, which accommodates everyone from the beginner to the advanced competitor. NCHA draws on the diverse talents and backgrounds of its members and encourages their participation in helping it achieve these goals. [www.nchacutting.org](http://www.nchacutting.org)





## SEASIDE GALLERY OFFERS UP SLO-POKE WESTERN RODEO

Seaside Gallery was established in 1996 as the first multiple artist fine art gallery in the central coast resort community of Pismo Beach, California. A family-oriented resort catering to the central valley and the central coast of California; Pismo Beach is ranked as California's 4th most popular resort after Anaheim (Disneyland), San Diego, and Palm Springs.

In 2011, gallery owners Tom and Sherie Burgher created the SLO-Poke Western Art Rodeo. Scheduled each July 4th weekend and throughout the month to take advantage of the naturally air-conditioned Central Coast and during a lull in the established national shows, they began attracting western artists and collectors to Pismo Beach. This year is the 3rd Annual SLO-Poke Western Art Rodeo and they will exhibit for sale the original art of well-known Western Artists including those who are accepted veterans of the Autry



Museum's Masters of Western Art Exhibition

and Sale, the Prix de West, the Coeur d'Alene, the C.M. Russell, and the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum Exhibitions. As the Burghers enthusiastically state: "We are very excited to be able to offer nearly 75 original paintings and sculptures as well as limited edition art of the giants of the genre:

Howard Terpning, Martin Grelle, Morgan Weistling, and Mian Situ amongst others." [www.theseasidegallery.com](http://www.theseasidegallery.com)

## WINE GHETTO EVENT SLATED FOR THE ALISAL, OCTOBER 25 – 27, 2013

The Alisal Guest Ranch & Resort will host the First Annual Wine Ghetto Weekend.

Our friends at the Alisal Guest Ranch are thrilled to serve as basecamp for the first Alisal Wine Ghetto Weekend – a fun packed weekend of wine country decadence featuring ranch cuisine, horseback riding and a full Saturday afternoon and evening of exclusive wine tasting and cavorting with the "legends" of the Lompoc Wine Ghetto – a handful of winemakers from the Santa Rita Hills who call a particular set of "glamorous" corrugated buildings in the south Central Coast of California – home. Featured wineries for the weekend long event include Palmina, Zotovich Cellars, Longoria, New Vineland and Samsara. For more information, [www.alisal.com](http://www.alisal.com)



## RAWHIDE REJUVENATOR

Can't tell you how many questions we get about "cleaning rawhide." Here's the answer from Dorothy Rogers at California Classics about their new Rawhide Rejuvenator.

"To keep rawhide naturally good looking, preserving its useful life and functionality, we have developed Rawhide Rejuvenator – ideal for removing abrasive sweat and grime as it cleans and preserves your fine investment. Rawhide Rejuvenator's consistency is much harder than many other rawhide products so that it won't be over-applied while it washes out easily – sometimes a problem with rawhide cleaners. In cleaning rawhide, more is NOT better. Excessive use of cleaners on reatas often finds them floppy and collecting excessive sand and dirt. Rawhide Rejuvenator doesn't do this as it is rinsed out completely. It is made in the USA with sustainable ingredients from California ranch-raised, grass-fed beef and gentle cleansing products. Each little tub comes with a sheepskin pad to get you started working up a lather. Remember, cleaning rawhide is about creating a good lather and then thoroughly rinsing it out. We hope you like it."



For more information contact Dorothy or Aaron at [info@calclassics.net](mailto:info@calclassics.net)



## FINALLY, THE TRUTH.

"Geronimo's Cadillac," the popular western song, describes the great Geronimo as driving a Cadillac – made famous by this photo taken at the Miller Brother's 101 Ranch in Ponca City, Oklahoma back in 1905. The car is actually a Locomobile. And there it is.

## MARILYN STIX

Photographer and designer, Mary Williams Hyde sends us this shot of a buckle by Marilyn Stix of Fallon, Nevada. She writes, "Marilyn specializes in intricately and perfectly cut filigree work with copper and silver. She has forty years experience engraving money clips, belt buckles, conchos, rings and also does jewelry repair. For a unique, one-of-a-kind concho or buckle, call Marilyn, 775-217-6177." Thanks Mary.







## BRIGHTON SADDLERY SALE, JULY 19 & 20

For 36 years, Brighton Feed and Saddlery in Brighton, Colorado, has hosted the largest saddle sale in the west. This



is not just a sale. Thousands of people travel from all over the world not only to buy and trade saddles, but to meet some of the biggest names in the industry and see some of the finest craftsmanship available. Saddles by Mecum, Lathrop, Chavez, Brogger, Keith Valley and Paul Van Dyke to name a few. With hundreds of new and used saddles in stock at unbelievable prices, you're almost guaranteed to find that perfect saddle. July 19th and 20th, just 20 minutes north of Denver. Don't miss

THE cowboy social event of the year! [BrightonSaddlery.com](http://BrightonSaddlery.com)

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## TEAM ROPER MATT SHERWOOD, NOW SPONSORED BY TWISTED X BOOTS.

Twisted X Boots has announced a sponsorship with professional rodeo team roper Matt Sherwood effective immediately. Sherwood, who lives in Pima, Arizona, is a two-time world champion team roper who won the event at the 2006 and 2008 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas. He also appeared in the 2011 WNFR and finished in third place.

Headquartered in Decatur, Texas, Twisted X Boots prides itself on manufacturing and marketing western boots that are based on the use of newer technology, stronger and lighter weight components, new tanning processes, as well as newer and more consistent manufacturing techniques. [www.twistedXboots.com](http://www.twistedXboots.com)



## HOMAGE TO THE MC WAGON

One of the truly historic western ranches, the MC Ranch, is having one of its most endearing symbols preserved in its own museum. D.L. “Jack” Nichol, co-author of the authoritative and fascinating book, *Bill Kitt, From Trail Driver to Cowboy Hall of Fame*, along with his niece and co-author Amy Thompson, are developing a small museum to house the MC chuck wagon in all its glory in the nearby town of Lakeview, Oregon. As Jack told us of the project, “We feel it is important to



photos courtesy D.L. “Jack” Nichol

D.L. “Jack” Nichol

not let this history slip away. Not only was there a uniqueness in the MC ranch’s size – covering over a million acres in two states and four counties, but also, you are not going to find other chuck wagon outfits that were home to the number of



MC wagon at work

cowboys who reached the pinnacle of success as the MC cowboys. This chuck wagon was the ‘summer home’ to two



Rendering of the MC chuckwagon’s new home

World Champion Cowboys – Ross Dollarhide, Junior and Buck Rutherford; four inductees into the Great Basin Buckaroo Hall of Fame – Ross Dollarhide Senior, Cleveon Dixon, Hugh Cahill, and Ernie Messner. And adding National Cowboy Hall of Fame inductee Bill Kitt, you have a very unique operation. There are not many people left who remember the chuck wagon outfits, and Amy and

I feel this is a way we can preserve the unique history of the MC and its Buckaroos.”

A website is being constructed at [www.mcranchchuckwagon.com](http://www.mcranchchuckwagon.com) and will be up before the whole operation opens up later this summer. We’ll have more about this in the next issue.

## MORE OF ANDY WESTFALL PHOTOGRAPHY

Last issue we featured Andy Westfall’s fine book, *Humbolt Heartland* in our Books to Find section. There’s no reason we’re showing this image other than the fact we love the shot and would like to be there with Clint Victorine as he and his dogs gather with the Pacific Ocean as a backdrop.







## MONTANA RANCH HORSE SALE CELEBRATES SOLID RANCH-MADE HORSES

After seven consecutive years of selling ranch-made mounts to folks looking for proven and experienced horses, the “REAL” Ranch Horse Invitational Sale organizers find that their product is still in very high demand. In fact, averages at this year’s “REAL” sale, held April 20th at the Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch outside Billings, Montana, were higher than ever.

The top five ranch horses at the sale averaged \$12,850; the top ten averaged \$10,800; and all ranch horses sold averaged \$6941. The top seller at this year’s sale, garnering \$15,000, was Lot 44, AMR Hickory Dry Fire, a 4-year-old gray gelding consigned by Aspen Meadows Ranch of Coalville, Utah. Winner of the Junior Horse Class in the Ranch Horse Competition, he could perform in the arena or in the hills. He sold to Fishtail Basin Ranch, Fishtail, Montana.

The Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch hosts the “REAL” Ranch Horse Invitational Sale at its equestrian center. The sale of a benefit colt each year raises funds for the YBGR, which provides residential treatment services for at-risk youth. Bar 7U Quarter Horses of Choteau, Montana donated the 2013 benefit colt, a 2-year-old sorrel gelding. Steve Mosser of Sheridan, Wyoming paid \$750 for the well bred horse and 100% of the purchase price was donated to the YBGR. Next year’s “REAL” Ranch Horse Invitational Sale is scheduled for April 18-19, 2014, and as usual, next year’s catalog is already full of quality ranch horses. For more information, visit the Montana Ranch Horse Association website at [www.realranchhorses.com](http://www.realranchhorses.com) or call (406) 446-2203.



Zeph Schulz of Aspen Meadow Ranch with Frannie Abbott of Fishtail Basin Ranch with high selling horse AMR Hickory Dry Fire.

## PICASSO AND THE COWBOY ARTIST

Channing Peake and Pablo Picasso  
 July 13 – September 22, 2013



artistic practices and lay bare their playful camaraderie. Their shared love of abstraction and an interest in the American West served as an important



lynchpin in their relationship. In Picasso, Peake found similarities with his own artistic vision, which privileged abstraction over realism and was based on investigating form and color. In Peake, Picasso found much – a fellow artist with whom to discuss art, and also an embodiment of the mythical American West as Peake not only owned a ranch but captured everyday scenes including images of the landscape, animals, riding and farm machinery.



all images courtesy Cheri Peake

Channing Peake

“Peake/Picasso” – a show opening July 13 at the Art, Design and Architecture Museum on the UCSB campus, looks at the unique friendship between the two artists:

Channing Peake (1910–1989) and Pablo Picasso (1881–1973). Through photographs, prints, sculptures, drawings, paintings and ephemera from the 1940s – 60s, the exhibition will examine similarities in their



artistic practices and lay bare their playful camaraderie. Their shared love of abstraction and an interest in the American West served as an important

lynchpin in their relationship. In Picasso, Peake found similarities with his own artistic vision, which privileged abstraction over realism and was based on investigating form and color. In Peake, Picasso found much – a fellow artist with whom to discuss art, and also an embodiment of the mythical American West as Peake not only owned a ranch but captured everyday scenes including images of the landscape, animals, riding and farm machinery.



An accompanying installation of personal objects and photographs related to Channing Peake and his life will also be on view giving more insight into the life and career of this important Southern California artist.

The exhibition will be documented by an exhibition catalog and will be complemented by a roster of related programs such as talks and musical performances.

For information [www.museum.ucsb.edu/exhibitions/upcoming](http://www.museum.ucsb.edu/exhibitions/upcoming)





## WRANGLER NATIONAL PATRIOT TOUR CELEBRATES MEMORIAL DAY



In honor of Memorial Day, Wrangler – the iconic American denim maker and manufacturer of western apparel – announced its fourth annual Wrangler® National Patriot™ Tour presented by the Department of Defense Armed Forces Entertainment division. As part of the brand's patriotic program, Wrangler is sending a team overseas to show appreciation and encouragement to American military servicemen and women on behalf of the entire western community.

The Wrangler National Patriot team, led by the brand's own Jeff Chadwick, is made up of western industry representatives including two-time World Champion PRCA bareback rider Kaycee Field, former Miss Rodeo America Maegan Ridley, country music artist Lucas Hoge and veteran Robi Powers. The group embarked on a multi-week tour through Djibouti, Africa and Turkey, along with other undisclosed areas of operation, to meet with troops and offer their support and praise.

"The Wrangler National Patriot program was founded in 2009 to pay tribute to those veterans who lost their lives or suffered injuries fighting for our country's safety and freedom," said Jeff Chadwick, director of special events, rodeo and equine for Wrangler. "I'm honored to be a part of the fourth tour, spending time with these brave men and women and offering gratitude in person."

With the help of local rodeos across the country, professional cowboys and cowgirls, and patriotic Americans everywhere, the Wrangler National Patriot program raised more than \$750,000 since 2009 – with additional funds being reported daily. Wrangler donates a portion of the proceeds from the sale of all Wrangler National Patriot logo apparel to support wounded or fallen American veterans and their families.

To find out more about how you can get involved in the Wrangler National Patriot program and its cause, and to receive tour updates including photos and videos of troops, visit [www.facebook.com/WranglerWestern](http://www.facebook.com/WranglerWestern). For more news from the Wrangler brand, visit [www.wrangler.com](http://www.wrangler.com).

## VAQUERO HERITAGE TIMES

Our friend, Jane Merrill, the brains behind the bi-annual “Vaquero Heritage Days” celebration of all things vaquero in the California mission town of San Juan Bautista, is launching *Vaquero Heritage Times* – a seasonal journal that celebrates the “lore and legacy of the California Vaquero.” Each issue will uncover old Mission histories, ranchos then and now, *viejo* vaquero reflections and more. Jane kindly sells *Ranch & Reata* at her fine gallery in San Juan Bautista, the South West Roundup Studio Gallery, so if you find yourself in beautiful SJB, stop by. [www.vaqueroheritagetimes](http://www.vaqueroheritagetimes)



## HAMLEY & CO. 125TH ANNIVERSARY SADDLE

Since 1883 Hamley & Co has been in the saddle and harness business. In today’s fast moving world, that is a bit



more than an accomplishment. Some may see it as a miracle, but for people who love what the Hamley maker’s mark stands for, see it as a testament to hard work and the constant, never ending search for the “next saddle being even better.” In the mid-2000s, when Parley Pierce and Blair Woodfield undertook the stewardship of the Pendleton, Oregon business – their mission was to continue the Hamley mission – a statement of purpose prominent in every past Hamley catalog: “Quality articles are made for men who are tired of the extravagance of buying cheap things.”



They have more than proven that statement in the saddle just completed to commemorate their anniversary. Crafted in the Hamley shop by the legendary maker Alan Dewey with saddle silver provided by Rob Schaezlein of Schaezlein & Son in San Francisco; the saddle is a celebration of the saddle making art. [www.hamleyco.com](http://www.hamleyco.com)

Alan Dewey

all photos courtesy Hamley & Co.





## SOME GRAND READS, DVDs AND MUSICAL DIVERSIONS

### *The Last Cowboy*

By Adam Jahiel



Photographer Adam Jahiel shot the wonderful image of the iconic Roy Rogers for the Publisher's Page at the back of this magazine and, like so much of his work, the subjects are treated as treasured friends – because they are. Jahiel – who hails from the teeming metropolis of Story, Wyoming, has created some timeless photographs of stockmen, cowboys, their work and their environment. His book of images, *The Last Cowboy* shows the real work in moments of grandeur. This 110-page tome to a way of life is a must for those who love great images of the West and their thoughtful presentation. [www.adamjahiel.com](http://www.adamjahiel.com)

### *We Pointed Them North*

E.C. "Teddy Blue" and Helena Huntington Smith  
If you haven't read this, you must. One of the greatest and most authentic books about real life on the range during the early years of the American West. Teddy Blue Abbott was a cowboy in the great days of the 1870s and 1880s. He came up the trail to Montana from Texas with the long-horned

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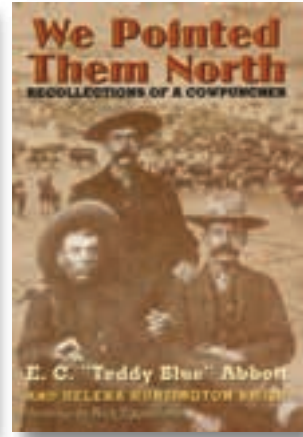
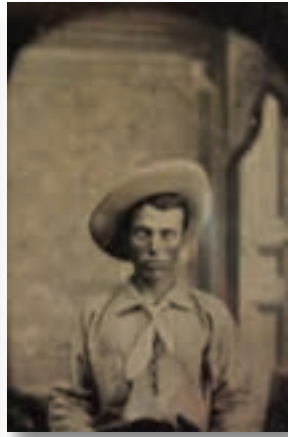
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herds that were intended to stock the northern ranges. This is a story of the American cowboy as told by one who lived the life when there wasn't a fence from Texas to Montana territory. A true classic.

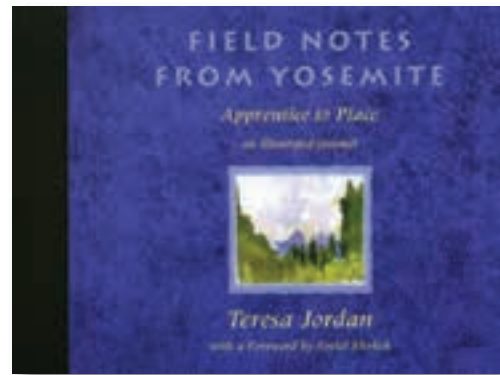


“Teddy “Blue” Abbott

*Field Notes From Yosemite*

By Teresa Jordan

Ms. Jordan is part of a fourth generation ranching family from the Iron Mountain country of southeast Wyoming and has written or edited seven books about Western rural life, culture and the environment. These include the memoir *Riding the White Horse Home* (subject of a future feature in this journal) and the classic study of women on ranches and in rodeo, *Cowgirls: Women of the American West*. As writer Gretel Erlich describes in the book's forward, “This book is her small homage to that singular place. (She reminds us) that apprenticeship, not expertise, is what allows us to see, and to revel in, the glories of the Range of Light. [www.teresajordan.com](http://www.teresajordan.com)



*Edward Borein, Cowboy Artist*

By Harold Davidson

The late author and legendary Borein authority, Harold Davidson was not only an authority on artist Ed Borein – he was his friend. And because of that, Davidson was fiercely protective of Borein's legacy after his death in 1945. This was the first biography and major compilation of the work of Edward Borein, published in 1974. Borein was the renowned Santa Barbara cowboy artist, who captured in oil, watercolor, and especially etching, the rich visual reality of the far West. A close friend of Charles M. Russell, Borein was gifted with a prodigious memory and artfully depicted cowboys and horses, Indians and buffalo with an uncanny accuracy of detail that served not only art, but historical truth. This book, out-of-print but worth the search, is a great, authoritative read, giving a look inside the life of one the West's greatest cowboy artists.



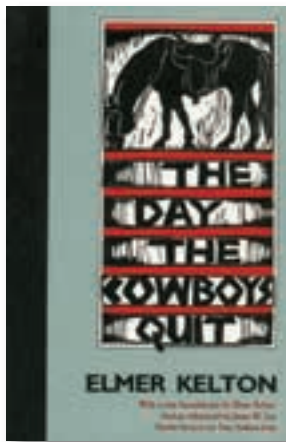




### *Tom Dorrance: More Than a Horseman*

By Margaret Dorrance and John Saint John

Much has been written about the reverence among horseman regarding the late Tom Dorrance. This book is a collection of memories and inspirations from friends and students of the late, self-described “horse’s lawyer.” Of Dorrance, author Saint John states, “In the human’s eyes, the horse has been viewed in many different ways, from the lowliest beast of burden to an almost godlike status in mythology. The horse has been a warrior, a farm worker, a circus act, a means of transportation...against his own nature he has carried humans to safety thru the extremes of nature’s elements. Operating in the main willingly, despite the ignorance of the human in understanding the horse’s incredible potential in what Tom Dorrance would call “true unity,” if only given the opportunity. Tom Dorrance ‘offered back’ to the horse all his life.” This book will give the reader much to consider.  
www.vivavaquero.com



### *The Day the Cowboys Quit*

By Elmer Kelton

From one of the greatest western writers of all time comes a story based on a historic event – a strike against large ranches on the Texas high plains. *The Day The Cowboys Quit* speaks of a west facing the encroachment of corporate mentality upon the freedom-loving universe of the Texas cowboy – no matter the cost. Sounds like something today, right? Set in 1883, the book tells the page-turner story of a changing west, exploited by wealthy, absentee cattle-owners who fence the range, replace traditions and trust with written rules of employment, refuse to pay a livable wage, and change things “that ought to be left alone.” So a bunch of cowboys working in the Canadian River country of the Texas Panhandle decide to fight back and do the unthinkable: they go on strike. This is one great book.

## COMING IN OCTOBER: “PORTRAITS OF THE AMERICAN CRAFTSMAN”

by Tadd Myers

Photographer Tadd Myers is on a mission – a mission to reaffirm the fact that we still hand-make things in the country. For several years Tadd has traveled America to record this fact and in the fall of this year, Lyons Press will publish Tadd’s book, *Portraits of the American Craftsman*.

Visit his site to get updates. We can’t wait.  
www.americancraftsmanproject.com



## GATHERED LIGHT

The writing of Joni Mitchell

Joni Mitchell is one of the greatest songwriters of the late 20th century. For over forty years her powerful lyrics have compelled listeners to dig deeper. This one-of-a-kind collection finally allows even her most passionate fans to do just that. Edited by Lisa and John Sornberger, *Gathered Light: The Poetry of Joni Mitchell's Songs* (Three O'Clock Press) includes more than fifty original contributions by acclaimed writers as well as many of Mitchell's long-time friends and creative collaborators. Joni Mitchell herself, has endorsed these explorations and has edited her lyrics especially for this edition, making *Gathered Light* the collection that fans of this legendary artist have been waiting for.



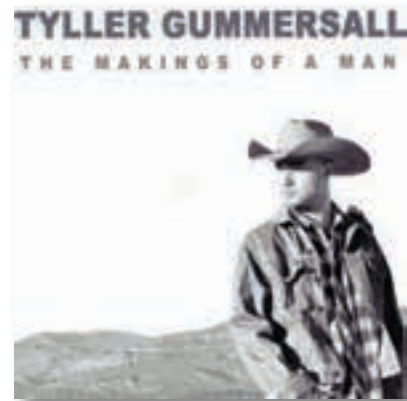
## MUSIC, PLEASE.

Here are three albums we are playing a lot and are worth your listening.

Juni Fisher always pleases and her new album, *Listen...to the Horse* (Red



Geetar Records) is dedicated to horses and horsemen (and women). The record features three co-writes with Waddie Mitchell and Diane Tribitt along with a Mick Beck original and Juni's version of the traditional standard, Stewball. You don't even have to ride to love this



one, but it helps. [www.junifisher.com](http://www.junifisher.com). Singer/songwriter, Tyller Gummingsall recently appeared live on RangeRadio.com and brought his new CD, *The Making of a Man* (Tyller Music). Some great guitar playing on his 1952 Martin guitar created the perfect acoustic environment for this young artist's record. Some great writing has made this a play-every-day album. [www.tylermusic.com](http://www.tylermusic.com)



Kacey Musgraves fourth album, *Same Trailer, Different Park* (Mercury Records) rode a tremendous wave of buzz earlier this year that included glowing reviews for single "Merry Go 'Round" and major love from non-country circles, including Katy Perry and Perez Hilton. It crested with three major nominations for the Academy of Country Music Awards, including female vocalist of the year. Edgier than many of her contemporaries, she will be a star. [www.kaceymusgraves.com](http://www.kaceymusgraves.com)





## AND SOME DVDS.

The team of Susan Jensen and Paul Singer has brought cowboy aficionados endless hours of viewing pleasure with their well-crafted video series on the various cowboys and stockmen that inhabit all the various corners of the West. Numbers 8 and 9 in the series explore the world of the *Texas Cowpuncher* and since Texas is so big, it's a two-volume experience. You can get any or all their video offerings at [www.vaqueroseries.com](http://www.vaqueroseries.com). The Battle of the Little Big Horn was a turning point in the history of the West and few realize that the horse of one of the officers survived. *Comanche* is the docu-drama of the beloved horse of Capt. Myles Keogh and how the Army cared for and celebrated his heroic life after he was found on the battlefield three days after that terrible day. [www.oldcowsdogs.com](http://www.oldcowsdogs.com). For years the go-to publication for riders interested in gentle horse handling has been the *Eclectic Horseman*. Publisher Emily Kitching also creates a supporting video "magazine," *The Horseman's Gazette*. The Spring 2013 Issue No. 14 DVD features, among others, the skills of Martin Black and Bryan Neubert. [www.eclectic-horseman.com](http://www.eclectic-horseman.com)



## ARTIST CURT MATSON – “SHORT END OF A LONG ROPE.”

For thirty years the love of horses and a desire to honor the traditions of buckaroo horsemanship have driven Curt Mattson's passion to create art. Authenticity, action, and narrative are all a part of what he creates. He gives his unique perspective to every piece he does in whatever medium he is creating in. There is a feel in his work that speaks to his knowledge of the lifestyle and artistic competence that provides the tactile elements that allow the viewer to do more than look, but to feel. Whether in oil, watercolor, charcoal and graphite, it is the classic

feel so unique to cowboy art – the things the camera cannot capture that he is fond of sharing.

[www.curtmattson.com](http://www.curtmattson.com) [www.Facebook.com/CurtMattson](http://www.Facebook.com/CurtMattson)



## CUSTOM COWBOY SHOP

Next time your travels take you through Cody, Wyoming – a must visit is the Custom Cowboy Shop. Established more than thirty years ago as a custom saddle and gear shop, Julie Butler, with a little help from her dad, saddle maker and silversmith Don Butler, has created a heaven-on-earth for the western aficionado. They still make custom saddles and offer a full range of traditional cowboy gear – with custom chinks and chaps a specialty. In addition to the gear, there

are hats, jewelry, apparel and home furnishings perfect for any rancho. And if you are looking for a special book or DVD, they have a huge selection of hard-to-find titles, training and general how-to-books perfect for every bunkhouse bookshelf. Here are photos of a tiny part of the shop that's worth a thousand words. [www.customcowboyshop.com](http://www.customcowboyshop.com)



## TOUGH BY NATURE EXHIBIT AT THE NATIONAL COWGIRL MUSEUM AND HALL OF FAME, NOW THROUGH SEPTEMBER 9

A new show at the “Cowgirl Hall” exhibits portraits that dispel many stereotypes of the women of the west and ranching women. “Tough by Nature, Portraits of Cowgirls and Ranch Women of the American West” opened May 9, and runs through Monday, September 9, 2013, at the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame, 1720 Gendy Street in Fort Worth.

The exhibition showcases 65 of Lynda Lanker’s drawings, paintings, works on paper, and prints, which document a vanishing way of life that affirmed the role of women in the economy and ecology of the American West. Her portraits reveal the ruggedness, beauty, and cultural tradition of ranch life and the resilience, character, and quiet strength of the





extraordinary women who gain their sustenance and livelihood from the land.

Influenced by Andrew Wyeth and Thomas Hart Benton, she used a variety of media – pencil and charcoal, oil pastel, egg tempura, plate and stone lithography, engraving, and dry point – to capture the spirit of the hard-working women.

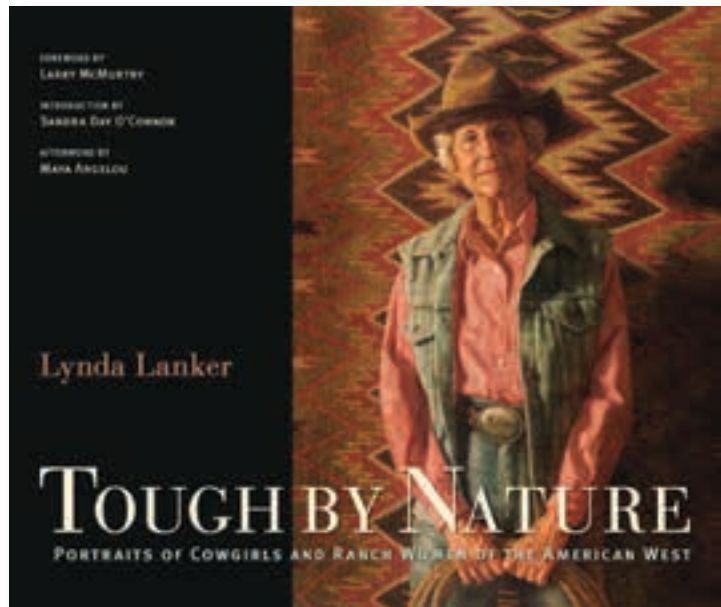
“I didn’t go out there to prove that their lives were so different from those of the women I knew or the cowboys we thought we knew; I started to discover that they were,” Lanker said. “There were at least as many of the female cowhands and ranchers who were doing the same work as the men but they had mainly been portrayed as rodeo queens in tight satin shirts with lots of sequins and fancy boots. I wanted to go deeper and show the true women instead of the stereotype. I hope people come away from the exhibition feeling the ruggedness, the beauty, and the cultural tradition of this life, for this ranch life, long romanticized, is harsh and makes one tough by nature. What these women and their families are doing is admirable. They have made an indelible imprint on the American landscape.”

“These inspiring portraits of these extraordinary women reveal their strong sense of self-reliance and confidence,” said Pat Riley, executive director of the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame. “They personify our mission to honor the women whose lives exemplify the courage, resilience, and independence that helped shape the American West.”

Eight of the women featured in the exhibition are Honorees in the National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame: Reba Perry Blakely, Linda Mitchell Davis, Ruby Gobble, Gretchen Sammis, Jonnie Jonckowski, Georgie Sicking, Mollie Taylor Stevenson, Jr. and Jan Youren.

Nine of the 49 women featured in the exhibition are from Texas (Alpine, Boyd, Burkburnett, Fort Worth, Munday, and Seymour), and the others are from Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Accompanying the exhibition is the 132-page coffee table book of the same name, which tells the stories of these remarkable women in their own words. American novelist, essayist, and screenwriter Larry McMurtry wrote the book’s foreword; Justice Sandra Day O’Connor, a 2002 Honoree in the Cowgirl Hall of Fame, wrote the introduction; and celebrated poet Maya Angelou wrote the afterword. Published in 2011 by the Oregon State University Press, the book will be available in the Cowgirl museum’s gift shop at the National Cowgirl Museum: 817.509.8662, [conciierge@cowgirl.net](mailto:conciierge@cowgirl.net), and <http://www.cowgirl.net/Store.html>.



## SHERIDAN, WYOMING HOSTS THE 20TH ANNUAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN LEATHER SHOW

The *Leather Crafters Journal* once again hosted the annual leather show held in Sheridan, Wyoming. If you make anything out of leather from saddles to bridles to belts – even wallets – the Sheridan Holiday Inn was the place to be May 17, 18, and 19. It’s old home week for saddle and harness makers who crawl out of their shops at least once a year to see what’s up at the leather show. Many friends of this publication showed there and, our own sales associate, Staci Grosskopf caught up with many. For information on next years show, [www.leathercraftersjournal.com](http://www.leathercraftersjournal.com)



Colleen Watt enjoying the new issue of *Ranch & Reata*



Don Butler



Everyone loves the leather show



Todd Hansen family and Scott Grosskopf (right)



Keith Seidel confers with Cal Zuege

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facilities, end-of-the-road seclusion, ponds, senior water rights, direct-private access to public land, abundant wildlife, excellent hunting, and is located within 15 minutes of a regional airport. This property is also unique in historic local lore, as at the turn-of-the-century, the ranch was owned by Teddy Roosevelt's hunting and fishing guides. A little bit of heaven on earth at \$37,500,000. [www.ranchland.com](http://www.ranchland.com)



## VINTAGE COWBOY WINERY

Here is a family owned and operated winery, with Joey Arnold taking the reins as Winemaker. For five generations the Arnold family has lived and worked on the original ranch land in Pozo – near San Luis Obispo, California – raising beef cattle, horses, and farming a variety of crops, including a 32 acre vineyard that was planted in 1995. They are rapidly coming up on the 100th year of farming and ranching and each generation has strived to preserve the land for the next generation so the family can shoot for another 100 years. [www.vintagecowboywinery.com](http://www.vintagecowboywinery.com).

## PENDLETON ROUND-UP, 103 YEARS OF OLD WEST LIVING (September 11-14, 2013)

It all began 103 years ago as a celebration of indomitable spirit of horses and the men and women who ride them. 1910 saw an arena built directly on the Oregon Trail as volunteers organized an authentic western exhibition for real cowboys and Indians. A challenge was issued to determine the “bronco busting championship of the Northwest” and a \$250 Hamley saddle offered as the prize. That late September afternoon and the cry “Let ‘er Buck” was heard around the world.

Today the Pendleton Round-Up is America’s largest four-day PRCA Rodeo, but remains true to its origins of authentic western lifestyle. Classic horsemanship is on full display on a pristine grass infield, where colorful wooden chute gates help create the most picturesque backdrop in rodeo. It’s where top cowboy competitors recline in the sun and cheer each other on, just as they might have 100 years ago, and the WPRA women race on the largest barrel pattern in the country.

Umatilla, Cayuse and Walla Walla Indians have been rounding-up horses in the area long before the rodeo began. Tribal participation at the Pendleton Round-Up provides historic cultural context with a living display of over 300 tipis, traditional foods, music and artisans, including daily dance competitions.

The real west rides on in Pendleton Oregon, September 11 – 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Let ‘er Buck!

Buy tickets at [pendletonround.com](http://pendletonround.com).



photos courtesy, Pendleton Round-up



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For over twenty-four years, the Claggett/Rey Gallery has represented some of the finest artists living in North America. Located in the Colorado mountain town of Vail, clients and visitors are treated to a visual wonder of art that celebrates the American West and beyond. Part of their mission is to publish and make sure you see the new book by the one and only Don Hedgpeth, titled *Cowboy Real* and found in this issue's Books To Find section. No better author could have been chosen to write about our favorite subject. [www.claggett/rey.com](http://www.claggett/rey.com)

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Rocketbuster Handmade Custom Boots produces about 400 pairs of unique one of a kind boots a year. For 24 years their eclectic shop in the historic part of downtown El Paso has been a must see for travelers from around the globe. On any given day this artful staff of ten takes on projects that expand the spectrum of possibilities. Building every step in the oldest



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For an inside look at their world check out their daily blog on Facebook "ROCKETBUSTER" and their website [www.rocketbuster.com](http://www.rocketbuster.com)





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## BY HAND AND HEART

# One Hand in the Riggin'

Rodeo gearmaker Shawn Schild, whose bareback bronc-riding glove has revolutionized the event, represents a new generation of western craftsmen.



By Rod Miller

No one has ever captured the spirit of the goin'-down-the-road rodeo bareback rider better than cowboy songwriter and singer Brenn Hill, in his song "One Hand in the Riggin'":

*Long as I'm still livin'  
I'll keep one hand on the wheel  
And one hand in the riggin'*

And no one has done more to help bareback riders keep that hand in the riggin' than Shawn Schild.

Schild designs, fabricates, and markets bareback riding gloves from the family business, B-Bar-B Leather of Blackfoot, Idaho. His innovative design and handcrafted manufacturing processes have made his gloves popular among bronc toppers from the college

ranks up through the top levels of the PRCA. In fact, his gloves have had a hand in so many world championships no one even keeps count anymore.

Take, for example, Will Lowe. Since joining PRCA in 2001, Lowe has qualified for the NFR in bareback riding 11 times, won three world championships, and shares the record for the highest scoring ride at 94 points. Over the years he's earned more than \$2 million with one



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BLOG





photos by Rod Miller

Shawn Schild is the designer and craftsman behind the patented, pre-curved bareback riding glove that's the favorite among the event's top PRCA competitors.

36

hand in the riggin'. And he won every penny with that hand in a Shawn Schild glove. "I've used Shawn's glove ever since I started riding," Lowe says. "The guys that taught me how to ride, they told me, 'This is the guy you need to call to get your gloves.' It's the only one I've ever used."

Schild's customer list reads like a who's-who of bareback riding: Kaycee Feild, Bobby Mote, Clint Corey, Marvin Garrett, Cody Demers, Kelly Wardell...the list goes on and on, according to Schild, and Lowe can confirm. "I don't know anybody who doesn't use Shawn's gloves," he says. "All the bareback riders use them."

But bareback riding gloves weren't even on Schild's mind when he went to work at B-Bar-B Leather, a business founded by his father, rodeo cowboy Bob

Schild. "The retail store opened in 1961, but Dad was building chaps out of the basement and out of the camper in his rodeo truck before that," Schild says. "My brothers and I spent weekends and summers learning how to do odd jobs as we were growing up. We buck-stitched belts, made odds-and-ends straps, and gradually graduated to chaps, chariot harnesses, bridles, breast collars, and saddles. Dad taught us to always do a nice clean job and make equipment that not only looked good but was workable equipment that would last."

Rather than cutting, skiving, tooling, stamping, and stitching leather for a living, Schild might have been an engineer. But, at the last minute, he realized it wasn't his life's calling and turned down a college scholarship





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Even without a hand in it, Schild's bareback glove looks ready to grasp the rosined handhold of a bareback rigger. "Because of the design," Schild says, "bareback riders are able to hold onto the horses easier and more securely, and with more comfort."

in favor of the family business. Bob retired in 1994 and Shawn and his brothers took over, with Shawn primarily responsible for rodeo equipment, Mike running the retail store, and Kelly operating the wholesale operation.

As years passed and customer demands changed, so has business at B-Bar-B. "We don't build nearly as many saddles, harnesses and such as we used to. We still custom-build nearly anything that our customers need, along with repairing their equipment for them," Schild says. But it's rodeo gear, "mainly gloves and chaps, and occasionally bronc saddles and some other accessories on a custom-order basis," that keeps him busy.

The bareback riding glove came about by request. As a bareback rider himself, Schild knew cowboys faced difficulty in finding top quality, readily available gloves.

"After months of harassment from fellow competitors [who knew of the family business and his skill with leather], I decided to try my hand at making a bareback riding glove," he says. "After extreme hours of discouragement, I finally came up with something workable, although not too pretty." Schild kept at it, redesigning, improving and experimenting until capturing a good share of the market.

But success wasn't enough. Schild wanted something better. "Eventually, I envisioned a new design that was later patented," he says. "It's proved to be what I believe to be the best pre-curved finger design on the market today."

That term, pre-curved, is an essential element of the Schild glove. Even empty, the glove looks ready to grasp the rosined handhold of a bareback rigger. "The patented pre-curved design creates less bulk and





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pinching in the closed fist,” Schild says. “This eliminates pinching of the palm and fingers, and greatly decreases forearm and hand fatigue. Because of the design, bareback riders are able to hold onto the horses easier and more securely, and with more comfort. With less chance of arm injury, cowboys are able to ride with more confidence and their careers last longer, as a general rule.”

Design, of course, is where it all starts. But materials and workmanship don’t take a back seat with Schild’s gloves. Cowhide is the leather of choice. “Tanning processes vary so much, quality is inconsistent,” he explains. “Now and then, I can find odd hides that will work but it’s getting harder every day. I’ve been using one tannery that custom tans my glove leather for me.”

Once a hide that meets Schild’s specifications is on the table, he lays out the patterns. “I usually use leather from the same hide for all of a glove,” Schild says, “but the palm side is always cut from the firmer part of the

hide and the back side from the more flexible part of the hide.” Stitching gets the same attention. “I use a fairly heavy nylon thread so it has durability. I also have to modify my sewing machines to pull a tighter stitch so the seams don’t separate under extreme stress.”

Schild’s experience with one hand in the riggin’ no doubt contributed to his understanding of the mechanics of bareback riding and the requirements of a perfect glove. He rode bareback and saddle bronc horses in semi-pro rodeos close to home for several years, winning three bareback championships. He followed that success with six years in the PRCA bareback arena, winning the Wilderness Circuit Finals average in 1991, the Wilderness Circuit bareback championship in 1993, and qualifying for the National Circuit Finals twice. “Traveling with and competing with the world’s top professionals on a daily basis, I was able to gain their insight on any changes that might make a difference in



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products made for competing cowboys,” Schild says.

Champion bareback rider Will Lowe thinks that insight is essential. “It’s tough for someone who’s never been a bareback rider to know how a glove is supposed to feel,” he says. “Shawn was a bareback rider, so he knows. His pattern just feels right, it fits on your hand.”

While riggin’ riders are the primary users of Schild’s gloves, they’re not alone. The same qualities inherent in the design – more comfort, less fatigue, elimination of pinching – make the gloves suitable for other uses. “Quite a few motorcycle riders use our gloves,” Schild says, “and they’ve even been tested by some military pilots.”

The versatility of his glove design has encouraged Schild to set his sights on arenas beyond rodeo. “I’m

developing a line of custom dress and driving gloves,” he says. “I’d like to become the number-one custom deerskin driving glove designer in the world.”

And there are other opportunities awaiting. “Since we’ve recently made an agreement with Ringers Gloves to develop glove lines,” Schild says, “the sky could be the limit.” Based in Houston, Texas, Ringers Gloves is a leading supplier of gloves to oilfield, law enforcement, firefighting, automotive, and other industrial users.

While the sky may well be the limit for Schild-designed gloves, it’s likely the business will always stay firmly grounded in rodeo arena dirt, helping the world’s best bareback riders keep one hand in the riggin’.



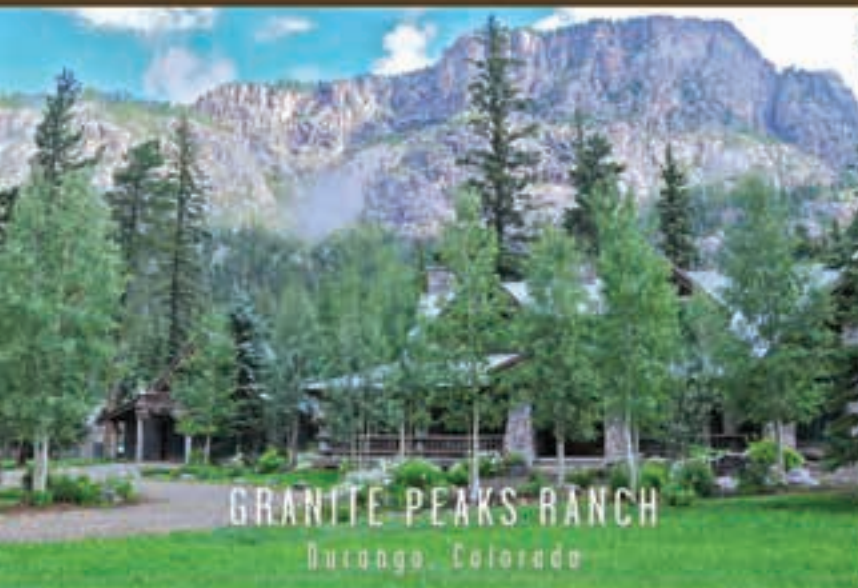
Rod Miller, a member of Western Writers of America, lives in Utah and writes novels, history, poetry and essays, as well as articles for *Ranch & Reata*. His latest books are *Go West: The Risk & The Reward* and *Cold as the Clay*. Visit online at [www.writerrodmilller.com](http://www.writerrodmilller.com).

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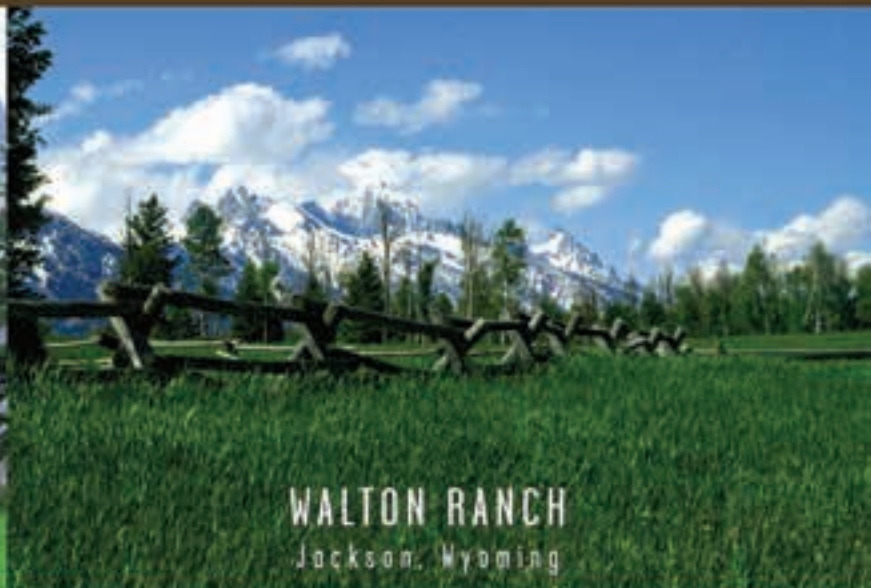


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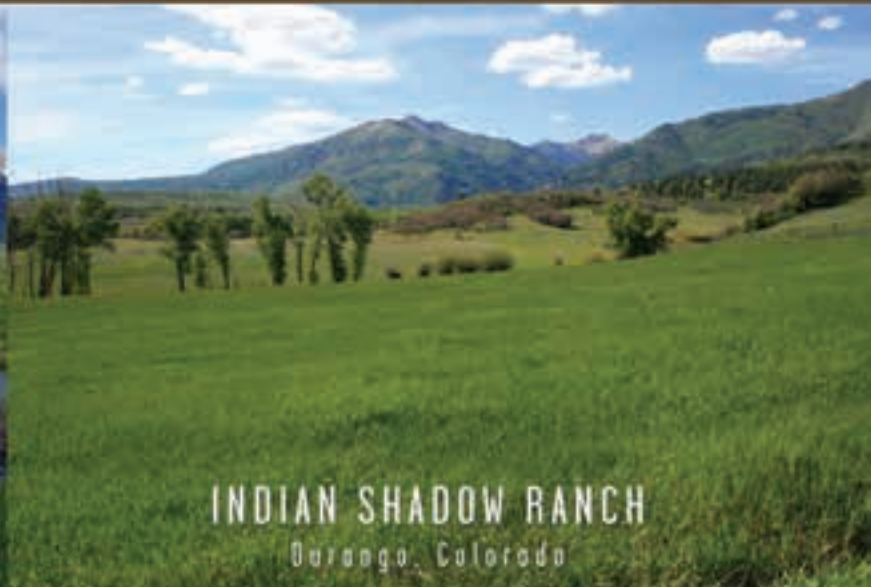
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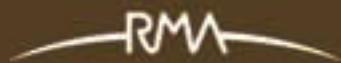
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### BIG CREEK RANCH

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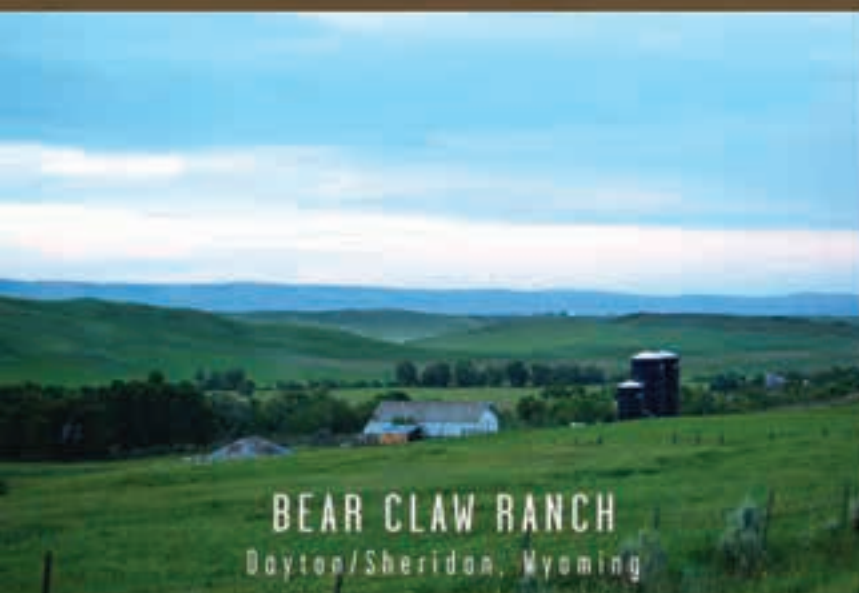
Private yet only 15 minutes from Steamboat Springs, 5,034-acres nestled in its own valley with 85% of the perimeter boundary on national forest. Five miles of Big Creek, 11,000 sq. ft. lodge, houses, utility buildings and historic barn. Development potential. \$59,900,000. Ron Morris 970.535.0881, Billy Long 970.927.3850 or Christy Belton 970.734.7885



### SAND POINT RANCH

Steamboat Springs, Colorado

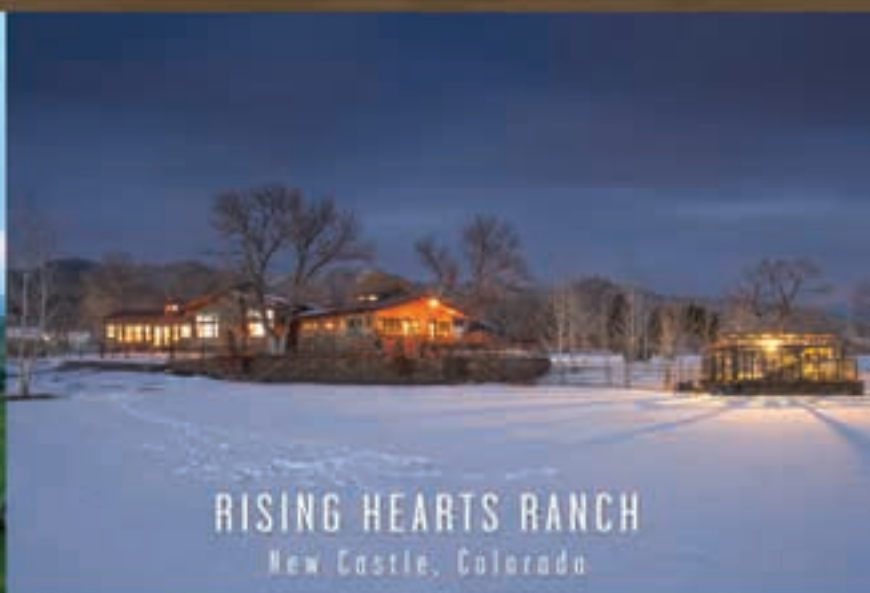
3000 acres of mixed forests with open parks and an alpine stream traditionally used for grazing, hay production and big game hunting. Access to national forests and wilderness, easily accessible with airport, world-class skiing, boutique shopping, and fine dining 30 minutes away in Steamboat Springs. \$12,950,000. Christy Belton, 970.734.7885



### BEAR CLAW RANCH

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## BOOKS TO FIND

# The Tintype Images of Robb Kendrick

**R**obb Kendrick has been around, and for more than 20 years the longtime photographer for *National Geographic* has traveled around the West of the United States, Canada and Mexico photographing the people who live and work horseback.

A sixth-generation Texan, Kendrick was raised in ranching country and has chosen a rather fitting approach to creating his art, slowly. He needs no batteries, digital cameras, memory cards or film. Rather his portraits are made by exposing and developing thin, metal plates that have been coated with a light-sensitive emulsion. The resulting “tintypes,” in their sepia tone glory, with non-Photoshopped, blurred peripheries create an environment that carries his cowboy

subjects back into the time of cabinet cards and posed studio novelty photography of the 1800s.

Mr. Kendrick has two books and both are worthy of important, coffee table positioning. *Still: Cowboys at the Start of the Twenty-First Century*, is a collection of 148 tintype portraits (University of Texas Press) that celebrate those who continue to make their living from horseback. His earlier book, *Revealing Character*, published in 2005, was the result of years of shooting and travel. Kendrick estimates he has probably covered more than 40,000 miles of all kinds of roads and shot on more than 60 ranches, towing a trailer that he uses as a darkroom. “Fortunately I love driving,”







he said, pausing before adding, “Thank God for satellite radio.”

Kendrick’s love of his cowboy subject is obvious, coming in large part from the enduring nature of the horse and cow culture they are part of. Viewing his work is an armchair journey through time even though the people in his crafted images are alive and well today, like our cover subject, Ashley.

His world is one of where show is fast – just as the cowboys he depicts. His 4 books – as well as prints – are available from his website at [www.robbkendrick.com](http://www.robbkendrick.com) in a variety of versions including some very elegant limited editions.



Another “I’m-a-Texan-and-proud-of-it” is the incredibly prolific Don Hedgpeth. His new book, *Cowboy Real*, from his ongoing collaboration with the folks at Diamond Tail Press is available through our friends at the Clagget/Rey Gallery in Vail, Colorado. Don has written over twenty books on important western artists and their art as well as too-many-to-count articles on western art in journals worldwide. There are few writing today about the art of the west who could match Hedgpeth’s insight to this celebratory world. In his new book, he has created an easy-to-read grouping of works on cowboy history, the land, horses and cattle, and songs along with his personal recollections of a giving life in the west. This is a must have for followers of Don Hedgpeth.

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*Legendary western artist, J N Swanson signing a print. Ranch & Reata Roadhouse in Santa Ynez, CA. 2012*



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## THE COOK HOUSE

# Veronica's Mole de Olla



By Kathy McCraine

It's been three years now since Elidio and Veronica Alcantara fled Arizona in the massive evacuation of illegal immigrants after the state's tough immigration law, SB 1070, passed. Elidio worked for us and was a good ranch hand, but it's Veronica's Mexican cooking that I miss most.

The couple showed up on our doorstep about eight years ago looking for work. They and their six kids were living in a rundown trailer while Elidio did yard work, but he had been a vaquero in Mexico, and he wanted

to work on a ranch. We never asked if they were legal. You didn't have to back then. Later, we spent thousands of dollars on lawyers trying to get him a green card so he could work legally, an impossibility then and now. By that time, though, in a weird twist of the legal system,



photos by Kathy McCraine

Veronica Alcantara

it was deemed "racial profiling" to check a current employee's legal status. In a way, he was "grandfathered in."

Veronica was raised in Mexico City, where her mother, Maria del Carmen Sanchez, cooked in restaurants for 20 years, mostly the famous Mansana de Roma. Maria del Carmen was a single mother who worked long hours, so it fell on Veronica, at the age of 11, to care for the family of four children. Early each morning, her mother would leave money under Veronica's pillow as she left for work. Veronica

would do the shopping, cleaning and cooking in the morning before heading for school in the afternoon. At 6:30 she returned home to feed her brothers and sisters.

"My mother always said, 'First you cook and clean. Then you can play,'" Veronica once told me. Obviously



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there was little time for play.

At 16, Veronica met and married Elidio, who was from the small pueblo of Tlaczala, near Mexico City. Elidio was breaking horses and selling firewood in the city. At first she was not impressed by this *vaquero*, who wore a *sombrero* and *botas*, not the shoes that city men wore. Nonetheless, she married him and moved to Tlaczala, where they set up house in a *jacal*, a crude adobe hut with dirt floor and no running water. Money was hard to come by. Sometimes bandits would rob Elidio of his firewood, compounding their problems.

And, the babies kept coming. Eventually, there were six, a boy and five girls, the last one born in the United States. Elidio was a hard worker who wanted desperately to provide for his family, so, like many poor Mexican men, he migrated to the United States, paying a “coyote,” or *pollero*, as they call human traffickers in Mexico, \$1,000 to lead him into Arizona.

Elidio was one of the lucky ones. He survived the desert and made it to Prescott, where he found work and eventually sent for his family. They spoke just enough English to get by, but the kids were smart and did well in school. The family embraced the American way of life. Except for acquiring a new blender, though, Veronica continued to cook in the traditional Mexican style. She loved using *ollas* and *cazuelas*, the earthenware pots that the Spaniards brought with them to the new world in the 16th century. That cooking method has all but died in the metropolitan areas, but lives on in the small pueblos and rural countryside of central Mexico.

When Veronica cooked for the whole family, there was always extra. Late in the afternoon, my doorbell would ring, and there would be one of the kids with a steaming pot of *tinga de pollo*, or *pozole verde*, or *albondigas en chipotle*. The following is her recipe for the hearty beef stew she called *mole de olla*, Mole in a Pot.



### Mole de Olla

- 2 pounds stew meat
- 1 medium onion
- 1 chayote squash, quartered
- 1 ear corn, cut crosswise into 3 pieces
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 10 green beans, trimmed and cut in half
- 3 medium zucchini squash, quartered
- 6 pasilla chiles
- 5 guajillo chiles
- 3 springs fresh epazote (optional)
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 cups water
- Salt to taste

In a large pot, cover the meat with water and simmer with ½ onion and salt for 45 minutes, or until tender. Remove onion. In another pot, cover the chayote, corn, potatoes, beans and zucchini with water and boil about 20 minutes until soft. Remove stems from the chiles. Cover with water in another pot, and boil for 10 minutes until soft. Blend the chiles, the other ½ onion, and garlic in a blender with about 2 cups water, then strain through a medium mesh sieve. Add chayote, potatoes, corn, beans, squash, epazote and the blended chile mixture to the meat and simmer 10 more minutes over low heat. Add salt to taste.



Kathy McCraine is the author of *Cow Country Cooking: Recipes and Tales from Northern Arizona's Historic Ranches*, available at [www.kathymccraine.com](http://www.kathymccraine.com).



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## YOUR HORSE'S FEET, A SERIES

# The Horse – Man Ship

By Pete Healey, APF

The other night I had to shoe a bunch of horses. I couldn't believe how good they were to work on. They all stood there tied up, not putting any tension in the lead rope, yielding easily when asked to move over. Not one of them pulled a foot away, tried to walk off with one foot up or tried to mouth or bite me. They made my life so easy I was able to do a really good job on them; it was a good deal for all of us. The reason I was shoeing these horses at night was because this was a dream.

It amazes me how many horses have a problem with me working on them; notice how I said that they have a problem with me. They have a problem because of something that got missed in how they are handled. More than once I have had an owner or trainer tell me that even though their horse is hard to shoe, he is great to ride. Baloney. I'll guarantee that if he is having trouble on the ground he is having trouble in the saddle. Ray Hunt had a saying "If they're good in the barn they'll be good in the field." This is true as I don't work on any horses that are really good at what they do that are hard to shoe.

A lot of owners and trainers don't realize how proper ground work can translate to the saddle. A horse that can position his feet to stand still can position his feet to move correctly. Not only do they move better, they stay sounder and pull less shoes. When led a horse should be following the handler on a loose lead rope. This is not the norm as most horses want to run up to the handlers shoulder because that is how they were taught. You know these horses; they're the ones with the fleece covered halters and have a chain over their nose. These horses that don't lead well usually don't tie good and what about tying? Cross ties are very popular but most horses are not broke enough to stand cross tied. These can be very dangerous for the shoer; I have had more wrecks in cross ties than anything else. I prefer to tie a horse to a wall or fence, up high. When tied high, if the horse moves, the pull is from above and lifts the horse at the poll making him break over behind. Having a horse held by the owner or trainer is the safest for the horse but not always for the farrier as these people are often the ones that created the handling problem. Most people when holding a horse either do too much or not enough.

When working with your horse's feet, take the time it takes to get him prepared to be trimmed or shod. The farrier's job is to shoe your horse the best he can but he shouldn't have to risk life or limb to do it. Shoeing should be a postcard experience where everything is peaceful – not an action film. If a horse is having a problem it is usually one of three things: he's trying to take charge, he's in pain or he's scared. Beating on them is not an option. Sedation is a great tool; use it when you need it.

We are all in the same boat called horsemanship. If your boat has some holes in it, get them patched up so it doesn't sink. [www.balancedbreakover.com](http://www.balancedbreakover.com)







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# Historical Journalism

## The western art of John Moyers

By A.J. Mangum

From an early age, John Moyers knew he wanted to be an artist. The son of renowned cowboy artist William Moyers, John grew up in Albuquerque, drawing and painting on a daily basis. Robert Lougheed, a friend of John's father, was an early influence, instilling in John an appreciation for a painting's design and the value of painting from life.

After high school, John spent a year at the Laguna College of Art and Design before enrolling at the California Institute of the Arts under a Disney scholarship that emphasized drawing. "At that time, it was difficult to find a school that taught traditional drawing," John says. "Disney was having a hard time finding animators, so they started a program at CalArts. I didn't want to be an animator, but the school had great teachers for life drawing, design and perspective."

When John returned to New Mexico, he began painting from life – working with models and painting on location, rather than relying on photographs for reference. He regularly showed work to Lougheed, eliciting feedback. "He had no patience for doing things the 'wrong way' –doing something out of your head or from a photo," John recalls. "You couldn't fool him. And, while nothing's easy about painting, it's actually easiest to paint from life, once you know the process."

Today, John is one of the most respected



*A Fish Out of Water*

I had more fun with this painting than with any other. The inspiration was my first visit to New York City. I've been there many times since, and I still get confused.





*Chinnin' the Moon*

I thought it might be neat to paint a bucking horse so that the only evidence of the ground is the dust he kicks up.



*Centinela*

Somebody always had to watch the horses, day or night.



*His Watch*

A Mexican revolutionary, always on guard.



*The Tools of the Trade*

It's Mexico in the late 1800s, and this man has the finest things: a Saltillo sarape, a '66 Winchester, silver spurs, a high-crown sombrero, and the finest charro outfit.



*The Finer Things in Life*

Who doesn't like to dress up and go out on the town?





*A Throne fit for a King*

I'm sure Pancho Villa owned many saddles, but this had to be his finest.



*Windswept*

For this painting, I tried to imagine what it would've been like when the Blackfeet traveled on horseback in the windswept Alberta foothills, east of the Rockies.



*The Pulse of the People*

The beat of the drums, on which all sacred dances are built.



*Spring Pilgrimage*

Among my favorite subjects are the beautiful grays that occur in the in autumn, after the leaves have fallen, and again in the spring, before the leaves return.



*Roof with a View*

In the 1920s and '30s, it was fashionable for the Taos people to wear war bonnets. There's a strong relationship linking the blanket, the war bonnet and the clouds.



*Sacred Water*

A Taos man and his horse, high on Taos Mountain.

painters working in the western and cowboy genres, and his depictions of the contemporary and historical West are among the most sought after on the art market. He lives in Santa Fe with his wife, fellow artist Terri Kelly Moyers. The two share a studio adjacent to their home on the edge of the city, and take full advantage of their New Mexico residence, making frequent excursions to paint on location, capturing scenes rooted in the state's cowboy, Native American and Hispanic cultures.

John's work typically begins with research into historical events, period attire and tools, and subtle trends that emerged and evolved during the frontier era. He and Terri travel widely to acquire period clothing (to later be worn by models), as well as antique tack. Such resources ensure accurate depictions of historical subjects, and help John meet the standards for historical journalism unique to western art.

"When I paint, I have to be as accurate as I can be," he says. "People can then see, for years to come, how Mexican cowboys dressed in the 1860s, or the gear southwestern cowboys used in the early 20th century. It's all about being authentic."



John Moyers is represented by Claggett/Rey Gallery in Vail, Colorado, and the Nedra Matteucci Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



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## THE WESTERN HORSE

# If Horses Are In You

As adulthood looms, young people in the West's horse culture face the daunting challenge of keeping horses in their lives. Teens like 17-year-old Sierra Pillmore are determined to build futures centered on the animals.



By Tim Keller

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Sierra Pillmore walks from the ranch house to tend the horses, her path lit by the red sun as it inches above Johnson Mesa to her left. From her vantage at the foot of Bartlett Mesa, just below the Colorado state line, she can see the sun's horizontal rays strike the distant T.O. Ranch, Green Mountain, Tinaja Mesa, Eagle Tail Mountain, and finally the Sangre de Cristo Mountains from Cimarron to Raton, New Mexico. At 17, it's the only home, and the only lifestyle, she's ever known.

"Without a horse in my life, there'd be a piece missing," she says. "They're therapeutic, and then they're peace." There's a picture of her at a horse show at age 5 on her first horse, Blue, a Quarter Horse that raised all three Pillmore sisters and now, at age 35, lives the good

life at pasture down by the pond.

As Sierra begins her senior year at Raton High School, she faces tough choices. Next year she'll go off to a college town, leaving the ranch for the first time. Like her sisters Mariah, 20, and Alina, 14, growing up in a close-knit family on a small, animal-filled ranch has spoiled her for anything else. "The feeling I get when I'm outside with my animals tells me that I'm not made to work indoors." It's the same feeling her mother had.

Georgia Pillmore grew up "a city girl" in Greeley, Colorado, where her dad was a golf pro. But just outside town she had friends with horses whose pull was irresistible. "If horses are in you," she says, "they're in you." She rode her bicycle twice daily to feed and care





photo by Tim Keller

New Mexico's Sierra Pillmore.

for the horses. By the time she met Roy Pillmore at Colorado State University, she was the Greeley Independence Stampede Rodeo Queen. When they graduated in 1984, Roy moved to Raton and Georgia took a job at Cherry Hills Country Club, near Denver.

Roy grew up in Denver but lived every summer on what is now Ted Turner's Vermejo Park Ranch, in the high mountains west of Raton. His dad spent those summers cataloging the landscape for the U.S. Geological Survey. Roy tagged along and helped. Each summer they had a string of ranch horses. As Roy reached his teens, the cowboy crews borrowed him to help move cattle. "To me, horses were for transportation and work," he says. He never owned a horse.

In the mid-1980s, Roy was working as a geologist himself, back in Raton, but he was still courting horse-crazy Georgia. With her mom, Roy bought Georgia, for her birthday, a Quarter Horse named Rocky. "I needed to attract her here and get her away from all those eligible bachelors up in Denver."

It worked. They married in 1988. Georgia joined Roy in Raton, and they bought their ranch, three miles east of town, where they've raised three girls and countless animals.

Rocky became everybody's horse. He started all three girls and "lots of cousins and itty bitty people," Georgia says. Partial to Quarter Horses, the Pillmores added Lady, then Blue, then Carlos, then Jazzy.



photo by Tim Keller

Sierra and her rodeo horse, Carlos, compete throughout New Mexico and Colorado.

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After turning Blue into a show horse, Sierra graduated to Carlos. The most competitive of the sisters, Sierra started barrel racing and pole bending in 4-H and proceeded to rodeos, beginning in the youth division of the Maverick Rodeo in Cimarron, where she's competed every 4th of July since she was five years old. She's regularly competed in Little Britches rodeos in Colorado Springs and others in Trinidad, Colorado, and Des Moines, New Mexico. In addition to racing, Sierra enjoys entering Carlos in western pleasure, showmanship, reining and trail competitions.

Like her sisters, Sierra is an honor student in school. She's on the varsity tennis team and recently represented

Raton High at Girl's State in Albuquerque, an annual leadership conference sponsored by American Legion Auxiliary. Growing up cowgirl has taught her responsibility.

"No matter how much homework I have," she says, "I have to go spend time with my horse because he's there waiting for me. It's a good feeling. When you and your horse have a routine, your horse looks for it. He waits for you."

Her mom adds, "We all work together a lot to keep the ranch going. We come together for the animals, but it's for us, too. We're close, bonded."

That's obvious during a recent visit. When Alina leaves for an evening with friends, there are heartfelt





goodbye hugs all around, even between sisters. Each time Mariah returns to CSU Pueblo after a weekend at home, Sierra and Alina shed some tears. The girls have joined in painting each other's bedrooms and each girl's room has pictures of her sisters.

Talking about their country lifestyle, Georgia and Sierra complete each other's sentences. The girls have grown up caring not only for their horses but also for their dogs, cats, chickens, rabbits, hamsters and fish. "It's a real-life hands-on world that gives them something living to care for and be responsible for," Georgia says. "Caring for animals is great therapy, especially for teenagers going through adolescent changes. They pour themselves into other living creatures they love. The animals are like best friends who are good listeners and the love they give the girls is unconditional."

Sierra smiles as she tells of the good times she and Carlos have. "After he's been worked real hard, I like to take him to our arena just on a halter and let him out and let him run and we kinda chase each other around. That's fun. When we get rain, our pond gets really full and we like to run through that. Carlos bolts up the side after racing through the water."

The pond, in fact, is rich with memories. "We've always gone down to the pond after a big rain. You can hear the frogs right away. We'd always go stomping around in that pond catching tadpoles in big buckets, wearing huge muck boots way too big for us."

Summer memories include spraying down the horses with a cold hose. "Giving the horses baths, it

always turns into a water fight. The spray bounces off the horses and we get soaked. It's hard to bathe a horse without coming up wet. And of course you finish and



Sierra earning her first blue ribbon in 2002.

the first thing the horses do is go roll in the dirt."

4-H has been an integral part of growing up in the country life. Sierra doesn't remember ever not being in 4-H; Georgia tells her that she started at age 4. "What I've learned is so broad," Sierra says. A member of the Johnson Mesa 4-H Club, she says the list of skills she's learned seems endless. She includes friendship, leadership and responsibility alongside animals, photography, community service, horse judging, shooting and cooking. She and her teammates compete in many categories every August at the Colfax County Fair in Springer.

Raton High once offered agriculture courses and an active FFA program, but discontinued the classes just as Sierra entered ninth grade. She's competed in



photo by Tim Keller

The Pillmore family gathers in Sierra's bedroom under a rodeo sign painted for her by younger sister, Alina. Left to right: Alina, Georgia, Mariah, Sierra and Roy.

Mariah is studying a pre-veterinary curriculum in Pueblo; she comes home on weekends to ride and compete, as her mother did before her.

Sierra will graduate from high school next year with a certified nursing assistant license and lots of college credits after two years in her school's Health Careers Pathway program. She's shopping for a college with a rodeo team and programs in natural holistic cures, such as physical therapy or massage therapy, with an

horse judging as a member of the now relatively inactive FFA club.

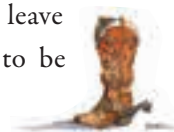
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That hasn't deterred her, though, and other opportunities have been rich. "I want to be a professional barrel racer and travel the PRCA circuit, travel the country with my horse and see big things. I know I'm not close to that now but I want to get there. This town has been a good springboard for me."

Her mom acknowledges that "these economic and drought-stricken times have made it difficult to hang onto this lifestyle. Sierra hopes to ride and compete throughout college but it will be difficult and expensive for her to have her horse with her." Her sister

ultimate goal of becoming an equine massage therapist.

Reaching the horses as the morning sun crests Johnson Mesa, Sierra says, "I don't know where I'll end up but it'll definitely be somewhere in the country with horses. I just have too many little memories, like hanging out at the barn, just chillin' with the horses, sitting in a wheelbarrow out in the corral, letting the horses come up to me, spending time with them. Those are the moments I'm going to miss when I'm away at college, but they're not something I can leave forever. Wherever I am, there's going to be horses. This is my life."



Tim Keller is a writer and photographer based in northern New Mexico. See more of his work at [www.timkellerarts.com](http://www.timkellerarts.com).



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Jihan Murad, Esq. riding Urbanus © Flying Horse Photography 2012

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# More Than a Name on a Stone

Actor John Corbett confirms his musical credentials with his second album, *Leaving Nothin' Behind*.

By Paul A. Cañada

Actor and musician John Corbett develops a noticeable swagger when he talks about his new album, *Leaving Nothin' Behind*. The record has drawn critical praise, as well as sell-out crowds to Corbett's concerts, settling any doubts as to his musical credibility. Best known to many for his work on the groundbreaking *Northern Exposure* and, more recently, for his work in *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, *Sex in the City* and *NCIS: Los Angeles*, Corbett's been playing music longer than he's been in front of the camera.

Corbett grew up in Wheeling, West Virginia, during its heyday as a coal and steel town. His stepfather, Bill Bowdnar, was a coal miner, while his mother, Sandy, worked in the city hospital's supply room. His mother bought him his first guitar when he was around eight, but music

was already a key theme in Corbett's childhood. Each week, the family gathered in front of the television to watch *Hee Haw*, which introduced Corbett to Roy Clark, Buck Owens, Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard and

Waylon Jennings, performers he still counts among his influences. Later discoveries would come from the 1970s classic-rock scene: Aerosmith, Kansas, Styx, Journey, Boston.

Corbett's father, John, lived in southern California, where he worked as a watchmaker and welder. After Corbett graduated from high school in 1979, he moved to Los Angeles, where his father helped him land a job at a steel mill. Six years into the job, Corbett suffered a disabling back injury. At 24, his days as a manual laborer were over, and he enrolled at Cerritos Junior College, where friends urged him to take an acting class.



photos by Bo Derek/courtesy Funbone

Musician John Corbett portrayed existentialist DJ Chris Stevens on the long-running *Northern Exposure* and now stars in *NCIS: Red*.





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*The Buffalo Signal*, bronze by Frederic Remington



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Corbett returns to his musical roots with his second album, *Leaving Nothin' Behind*, a blend of country, rock and folk.

"It turned out I was good at it," he says.

Between 1986 and 1990, Corbett performed in seven plays, worked steadily as an extra, acted in around 50 commercials, and landed his first speaking part in *The Wonder Years*. In 1990, he was cast on the CBS hit *Northern Exposure* as the existentialist disc jockey Chris Stevens, a role that earned Corbett an Emmy nomination.

To be nearer *Northern Exposure's* filming location of Roslyn, Washington, Corbett moved to Seattle, where he became part owner of Fenix Underground, a club that featured live music seven nights a week. He didn't know it at the time, but the business venture would trigger a full-fledged music career.

"I had that club for 10 years and saw lots of good performers and lots of not-so-good performers," Corbett says. "You get to a point where you say, 'I can

do better than that.' I knew I could be as good as some of the better performers I saw, and decided to make an album."

Corbett, who's musical style blends classic rock, folk and country-western, wrote eight songs for his debut album, but while looking for more songs to complete the record, he found 35 he liked better than his own. He dropped all of his compositions, replacing them with a dozen of the 35. Corbett's self-titled debut released in 2006 and reached no. 42 on *Billboard's* country album chart.

After five years of touring, Corbett decided it was time to work on a second album, and recruited songwriter Jon Randall Stewart to co-produce with Gary Paczosa, whose resume includes recordings with Dolly Parton and Alison Krauss. Stewart had written two songs

that appeared on Corbett's first record. He wrote or co-wrote seven for *Leaving Nothin' Behind*. Again, Corbett left his own songs off the album.

"I can't put a song on a record if I think it's subpar," Corbett says. "And the songs I write are subpar when compared to the great Nashville songwriters' work. I get greater pleasure singing an exceptional song [written by someone else] than I do singing a mediocre song that I wrote."

*Leaving Nothin' Behind* has earned high praise from critics. Michael Franklin, of *Outlaw Magazine*, wrote that the record was "...a stellar set of songs that rock, roll, weep and tremble. It's both gritty and smooth, sentimental and matter of fact. It breathes. There's not a dull thud to be found." When the time comes, Corbett jokes, his tombstone will bear Franklin's review.

The most poignant offering on *Leaving Nothin'*





*Behind* might be Stewart's heart-wrenching "Name on a Stone," a song that explores a universal yearning: "Be more than just a name on a stone/More than just a box of bones/I want someone to miss me when I'm gone/I want to be more than just a name on a stone." Corbett says the song reminds him of his father, who passed away in 2011. "I didn't even put an obituary in the paper," Corbett says. "I got him cremated and that was it. There wasn't anybody to let know that he was gone."

Since the release of his first album, Corbett and his band – lead guitarist Tara Novick, bassist Louie Vincent Ruiz, and drummer David "Hawk" Lopez – have performed nearly 600 shows, steadily selling out 400-seat venues.

"I have a great lead guitarist and rhythm section,"

Corbett says. "I've surrounded myself with three great musicians and great friends. They back me up in so many ways, on and off the stage. They shoulder me."

That brand of support, Corbett adds, has been vital to the success of his music career.

"I don't know if I ever saw myself making a living as a musician because it's a hard, hard way to make a living," Corbett says. "I got lucky because I've done some acting and that's helped sell out these venues. But, if I'd never been on a TV show, it would've been tough. It's hard to fill a venue on a Tuesday night when you're over 50. And I haven't seen 50 in almost two years. But I don't want people to walk out of there with anything other than smiles on their faces, saying to themselves, 'I'd come see this guy again.'"



Paul Cañada is a writer based in Texas.

Learn more about John Corbett's music at [www.johncorbettmusic.com](http://www.johncorbettmusic.com).

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# Thomas Cobb's West

The author of *Crazy Heart*, novelist Thomas Cobb creates modern westerns that transcend mythology.

By Jameson Parker

You have to admire any man who admits to once having had a band called, “Moist and the Towelettes.” Not only does Thomas Cobb admit to it, he even gleefully quotes a review of their music by *Texas Monthly*, which succinctly described the band as “...the worst band in Houston, if not the universe.”

That quote appears on the dustjacket bio for Cobb's most famous work, *Crazy Heart*, the basis for the 2009 film starring Jeff Bridges. The movie earned three Academy Award nominations, winning two, including Bridges' first Oscar for leading actor.

*Crazy Heart* was Cobb's first book, but to dispel any misconceptions about overnight stardom, the movie was made in 2009, while the book was published in 1987.

“It was my doctoral dissertation,” Cobb says. “I

had already gotten a BA, an MA, and an MFA at the University of Arizona. I had taught at Eastern Arizona College, and I had taught at the Arizona State Prison for seven years.”

Arizona State Prison?

“Actually, that was a lot of fun. I loved it,” Cobb says. “[The prisoners] were very engaged, and some of them were very smart. It was great, but I did get scared a couple of times. One night a storm knocked the power out, and I was locked in there with my students. I just kept teaching in the dark, but when the power came back on you could see the imprint of my body in the blackboard, I had backed up so far.

“I was running a bookstore at the same time, and I decided teaching was a hell of lot easier than trying to the balance the accounts at the store, so I went to the University of



photo courtesy Thomas Cobb

Thomas Cobb, author of the novels *Crazy Heart*, *Shavetail* and *With Blood in Their Eyes*.





Houston to get my PhD and I had a second childhood. I met my wife, I played in the band, I wrote *Crazy Heart*. I had a wonderful time. College is wasted on the young.”

*Crazy Heart* is a tragicomedy about an aging country singer whose life has spun wildly out of control, with too many highways, too many one-night stands, too many cigarettes, too many bottles of bourbon, too many ex-wives, and just too much living. The book rides the fringes of a modern anti-western, careening through the landscapes of the Southwest, but no matter how you define it, it’s a compelling page-turner, and its hero, Bad Blake, is a larger-than-life figure with the rare capacity to look squarely at himself and accept blame for his mistakes. Cobb has stated that most westerns are just medieval tales of knights errant with the costumes changed and, to a certain extent, *Crazy Heart* fits that description, although the dragons and villains Bad Blake must overcome are of his own making. But in that sense it’s a true western: there’s no more self-pity or whining with Bad Blake than one find with any John Wayne character.

“I was raised in Tucson, Arizona. It was a pretty standard lower middle class upbringing,” Cobb says. “My mom was a beautician, and Dad was a traveling salesman. Back in those days there weren’t as many televisions everywhere, especially in the motels where my dad would stay, so he used to read a lot, and he would bring books home. That prompted a strong desire in me to read. I was born in one of those awkward periods during the middle of the year, so I never went to kindergarten. When I went to school, all the other kids could already read simple words – cat, look, run – so I taught myself by memorizing.”

The first author he really loved was Henry Gregor Felson, who wrote children’s morality tales involving hot rods.

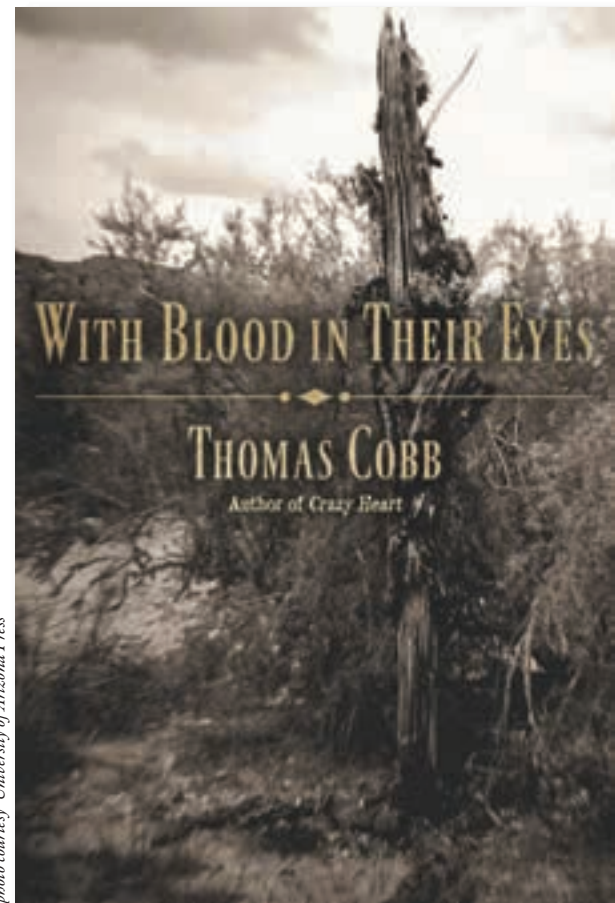


photo courtesy University of Arizona Press

Cobb’s *With Blood in Their Eyes*, set on the Arizona frontier, is a fictionalized account of the Power Brothers shootout.

“I really loved hot rods when I was a boy,” Cobb says. “I still love old cars. I’m always fighting the impulse to get an old car and restore it, but it’s too expensive and it takes too much time. Old cars are like young women: they’re great to look at, but you really don’t want to have to take care of them.”

Cobb recently retired as a professor of English at Rhode Island College, and while he still lives in western Rhode Island, his Arizona upbringing has influenced his work. All three of his novels are set in the southwest, primarily Arizona.

“I love the desert. Wet creosote was the first smell

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I found intoxicating,” he says. “Growing up in Tucson, I was very aware of all those myths and heroes of the Arizona frontier – Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday, Cochise – but I try to tell the reality of the West, not the mythology.”

And that reality was sometimes no more glamorous or honorable in the Old West than it is today.

In April 1917, President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany, in response to that country’s sinking of three unarmed American merchant ships a month earlier. Less well-known is that Wilson had already been planning to enter the war. Well before the sinking of the ships, he and members of his cabinet had secretly begun building the enormous machinery of war, including setting up the first successful draft in American history. To help make the concept of conscription more palatable to Americans, the government decided to remove itself from direct enforcement by having locally elected officials – sheriffs and governors – enforce the law. And while that tactic was used for its intended purpose by most people in most places, it was also sometimes abused for personal gain by people of wealth and influence who wanted more of both. In Arizona’s Galiuro Mountains, for instance, it set in motion events that led to the Power Brothers shootout, the bloodiest and deadliest shootout in Arizona history, an incident that left the entire Graham County sheriff’s department dead.

Cobb’s most recent novel, *With Blood in Their Eyes*, is a fictionalized, but meticulously researched, account of the Power family’s hardscrabble life – as cowboys-trying-to-become miners – the shootout, and the largest manhunt in Arizona history, involving more than 200 men from eight counties, military patrols, and a \$4,000 reward. (A contemporary newspaper account somewhat cynically stated: “It is generally conceded that the men will not be taken alive, but it would be illegal for the state to advertise a reward for the bodies of the men if dead.”)

One of men deputized to make the “arrest” was from a wealthy family in direct competition with the Power family for grazing, mining rights, and a lucrative illegal liquor business. Were there parallels between the Power Brothers incident and the modern West that Cobb wished to make?





“It wasn’t a conscious thing,” the author says. “I grew up in a time when the left didn’t trust the government. Now it’s the right that doesn’t trust the government. But we all see history in the context of our own time and our own experience, so I saw the Power brothers as heroes, as draft resisters. I saw them through the prism of a 65-year-old man. I saw them through the prism of the Vietnam era. I wanted to figure out why those sheriffs went up to the Power cabin, and of course it wasn’t just because of the draft.”

If you hear echoes of the range wars of the 19th century West, or of the conflicts with the government that continue today, it’s because any work of art reflects the world and experience of both creator and viewer.

Cobb started writing at the University of Arizona as an undergraduate.

“I started out in pre-med, but I felt compelled to write, so I switched to English,” he says. “You can imagine how my parents felt about that. I wanted to be a poet and I had a [small volume] published, but I found my poems, and the sentences in my poems, getting longer and longer. I had just started to move from poetry to fiction when I read *Lolita*. It stunned me. I still think it’s the best novel I ever read. For a while, I tried hard to imitate Nabokov. Then, at the University of Houston, I was very influenced by Donald Barthelme [a postmodernist writer and one of Cobb’s professors] and tried to write like him.”

Whoever influenced Cobb, and however much he may have tried to imitate them, he found his own unique lean and elegiac voice, shaped equally by the Arizona desert ...

*Under the feathery branches of a mesquite tree twenty feet in diameter, among the litter of the tree – small oval leaves, rotting beans, bits of cholla dragged by pack rats trying to build refuge – lay a diamondback rattlesnake, thick as a grown man’s forearm, coiled in folds, suspended in a state neither asleep nor awake.*

... and by the voices of his characters:

*“You see that mule there, the one with the short tail? That’s a shavetail, a young, green mule that hasn’t learned his tasks yet. He can’t go by himself. He’s always got to be paired with an older, smarter mule. He’s you, and I’m the older, smarter one. I’ll teach you what you got to know. You throw in with me, you’re going to do all right. You don’t, you*

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*Shavetail* may be the most original and singular coming-of-age story written since J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, though it has more in common with *The Red Badge of Courage*. Set in 1871, on the Arizona-Mexico border, it features heroes and villains, Apaches and cavalry, a kidnapped girl, shootouts, and all the other material of a traditional western. But in Cobb's hands, all these elements are rearranged so that, as in the movies *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* or *Unforgiven*, events unfold behind the façade of Western mythology. Honor, courage and self-reliance are all there, but seen, as Cobb himself might put it, through the prism of reality.

It's also an anti-war book, in the same way Hemingway's masterpiece of machismo, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, lays out the futility, chaos and absurdity of war.

"It was intended kind of as my Vietnam book," Cobb says. "I wasn't there, but [Vietnam] played an important role in my life."

And to the extent that wars share the same follies, *Shavetail* might have been written about conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan:

*"If the United States can't kill someone with a twelve-pound howitzer, they'll throw money at him until he's dead. It's the way the government does business, and all that the government does is business. Look around at what's here. What ain't spoiled is what the government hasn't had the time to spoil. And you know what we are? We're the spoilers..."*

Cobb has said: "Fiction is for two things: entertainment and figuring stuff out. There is this deep human need to tell and be told stories. But the reason we write fiction is to figure stuff out. You don't write because you know stuff; you write because you want to find something. That's what keeps writers going, and it sort of works for readers too. A lot of times you read fiction because you want to find stuff that you don't know."





Where The West Lives.



Photo: Jenny Gammersall

*The Legend. Lan Tyson  
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Stories by C.J. Lotz

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### **Investing in members turns freshmen into leaders**

*Model of Excellence Winner: Spencer County FFA, Kentucky*

This year’s Model of Excellence winner has figured out its chapter’s formula for success, and it’s all about involvement. Spencer County FFA of Kentucky focused on its members this year, and it paid off.

“Find activities that both the community and students are interested in,” FFA advisor Darryl Matherly said. “Everything should be helping the students in some way and interesting to the FFA members in general. If

you keep that in mind, you’re going to be successful.”

Never, ever forget the importance of freshmen, Matherly added.

### **The importance of the first year**

With Freshman Focus Activities, Spencer County FFA dedicated resources to new students making the transition from middle school to high school. Matherly said this time was critical in supporting new members and retaining them for the rest of their high school careers.

“If you don’t give them something to be involved



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in, they'll gravitate to something else," Matherly said. "If you get freshman excited, the next thing you know, their sophomore year they're coordinating events. And then junior and senior year they're officers coming up with new ideas and recruiting people."

The recreation committee organized a freshman-focused event each month. Events included a cornhole contest and a trip to the Kentucky State Fair. More than 95 percent of all freshmen took part in at least one activity. Freshmen were also paired with executive leaders who could guide them through the anxieties of the first year of high school.

The North American Livestock Exposition was one event that many freshmen took part in. They gave tours to young people who weren't exposed to agriculture. The freshmen wore their FFA jackets and were able to share their growing knowledge.

### Spread the leadership love

One of the chapter's most popular events, the Chili for Charity cook off, is organized and led by different members from year to year.

FFA members brought in 32 pots of chili and organized musical entertainment during the event. Guests paid to attend and could donate money or toys for local charities. More than 300 people attended. They

raised \$288 for the local Angel Tree charity and collected 167 gifts for the local Toys for Tots campaign.

To advertise, the PR committee ran an ad in the paper two weeks prior to the event, made announcements at the school and emailed all the teachers in the district.

"Who doesn't love to eat chili?" junior and chairman Caleb Fulkerson asked. "That's the greatest way to gather people in the community: through food and donating money to a cause that helps the community at the holidays."

### Get students moving

Everyone hears that young people love sitting at home on the computer or watching TV. Spencer County FFA wanted to break that stereotype and get their members out and moving while learning about agriculture. They organized Agriculture Olympics with 10 events – think feed sack races, fence post tossing and hay stacking.

To promote the event, some members dressed as "hillbillies" while signing up teams. A teacher team even got involved.

"I've gone the past three years, and every year I've competed with a different team, which helps me branch







out to different friend groups and connect with different people,” Tyler Goodlett, junior and student advisor, said. “Some kids don’t spend as much time outside, and they get to come out. It’s great for team building and meeting new friends.”

### **Where R U? R U OK?**

*Model of Innovation in Student Development Winner:  
Vinita FFA, Oklahoma*

Students hear it all the time – be careful with your phone, don’t text and drive, and keep your eyes on the road. But it’s not until they experience the risks firsthand that it becomes real.

“Texting is a huge part of our lives and our generation,” chapter president Hanna Minson said. “If you’re in a hurry, you send a quick text. But we care so much about our chapter, and we wanted to spread the message that texting while driving can wait.”

A healthy lifestyle is more than working out and eating right – it’s protecting your safety through the choices you make, Minson said.

Using a go-cart and cell phones, students at Vinita High School had to navigate an obstacle course while trying to text on their phones. Even a simple “Hi!” and “I’m on my way!” were difficult for students as they attempted to drive around cones and stay in the boundaries.

“The students used their own phones so they were comfortable,” FFA advisor Carolyn Piguet said. “They had to circulate through the cones rapidly. There was no room for distraction or else they would drive by a cone or drive over it. This made it apparent that they couldn’t take their eyes away from what they were doing.”

Thirty-five students participated in the half-day workshop, which was aimed at freshmen and sophomores who were just beginning to drive. None of

the students could navigate through the course without hitting a cone or going out of bounds while texting.

Eighty-two percent of teens ages 16-17 own cell phones, and at least 23 percent of auto collisions in 2011 involved cell phones. That’s 1.3 million crashes. These and other statistics about the perils of texting while driving really brought home the importance of the safety activity, senior and chapter vice president Tim Taylor said.



The ideal age to talk about driving safety, Taylor added, is as sophomores become old enough to get their permits and driver’s licenses.

“For some, it’s the first chance to have freedom and responsibility,” he said. “Even though they have that freedom, they have to take it seriously because one ‘behind the wheel’ could be life or death.”

Taylor took photos during the event and participated in the discussion afterward. Students signed a pledge that they wouldn’t text while driving. This year, to modify the event, the chapter will print smaller copies of the pledge and attach them to a lanyard so members can hang them in their car mirrors. The dangling signatures are a reminder of their friends and the promise to drive with their full attention on the road ahead.

## Bringing home the bacon

*Model of Innovation in Chapter Development Winner:  
Mineral County FFA, West Virginia*

The Mineral County FFA of West Virginia raised and processed 24 hogs to create a delicious, locally grown, smoked and cured treat the community can't find anywhere else.



“You can't just drive to Walmart to get this,” FFA advisor Charles Bennett said. “It's a specialty.”

In planning the activity, the group set a goal of raising \$20,000 for its supervised agricultural experience program. They exceeded their goal and raised more than \$23,000 by purchasing, raising, processing, storing and curing 24 hogs.

Nearly 200 buyers registered for the auction. They purchased two hogs to raise for chapter-related activities and processed 24 hogs for the event.

“The students learned the responsibility of the whole process – getting that product to the consumer from the time they own that pig till the time it's sold,” Bennett said.

Participating members raised a hog for 60 days, learning about meat processing from the very start. They kept logbooks of their progress and learned

specifics that would help them in any food-related agriculture job. For example, they learned about legal regulations and also about marketing a good product.

Will Woodworth, a junior and the Ham & Bacon Committee Chair, said hands-on learning was helpful for his agriculture knowledge.

“I learned how to properly cut up, process and country-cure hams and bacons,” he said. “I also learned about processing the loin into roast and chops, and the shoulder into sausage.”

Before selling their products, members attended a workshop by Koch Industries to learn about marketing pork products and the ways value-added products can increase revenue.

When the hogs were processed, it was time for a social event and auction. During the social event, members served bacon and ham for guests to sample.

Although the food science program has been around Mineral County since the 1970s, the workshop idea tied together food science, community outreach and fundraising motives.

This year, the activity came at a time when the school was updating its food processing equipment. Mineral County Technical Center was updating its food processing equipment, and upgrades included a large smoker. Bennett said this program was a chance to show administrators the value of the new tools.

For the members, there's the benefit of hands-on experience and the pride of seeing a product created from beginning to end.

Timmy Nester, a junior who serves as president, raised one of the hogs at home. He was enrolled in a meat and science class, and said he learned more about the legal requirements of food science.

“I had raised a hog before,” Nester said, “but this activity helped me be able to market a better product and talk to people about it and the process. You need to





be up on top of regulations from the department of agriculture and know what a safe product is.”

### **A Costa Rican coffee and service adventure**

*Model of Innovation in Community Development*

*Winner: Tri-Valley FFA, New York*

Lush forest, coffee plants trailing up mountainsides, remote villages tucked into hills and overlooking the indigo Caribbean Sea – the agricultural landscape of Costa Rica looks quite different than much of the United States.

On their trip to the Latin American country, members from Tri-Valley FFA in New York learned how Costa Rican agriculture works while taking part in a service project that changed both their chapter and the community they worked alongside.

Over spring break in 2011, 18 members and five chaperones traveled to Costa Rica for nine days. The students saw the country’s extremes: from the populated city of San Jose to a beach on the other end of the country to the lush rainforest viewed from an open-air Jeep ride. They visited an alligator farm and drank water from a coconut cracked open by a machete.

Through their travels, members realized the possibilities of sustainable ecotourism, rural tropical agriculture, and production for internationally traded commodities such as coffee.

“Costa Rica is moderately wealthy, and there is a tremendous amount of agriculture in a confined space,” FFA advisor Tara Berescik said. “We were able to see coconut production, a palm oil plantation, eco- and agro-tourism, and we volunteered at a coffee co-op.”

The students saw a farm in the tiny cloud forest town of San Bernardo where coffee was grown and prepared for international sale. The owners of the farm were interested in bringing in more visitors for agro-tourism.

“I didn’t realize how down-to-a-science it is to get

coffee from the plant to the coffee grinder,” senior Nat Tompkins said. “You have to have it at a certain humidity when you’re roasting before you can grind. There’s a certain time only that you can pick it. It’s more than pick, roast, grind and drink.”

The students and local family identified the need for a space for visitors, so everyone decided to build a



coffeehouse where visitors could rest, have a cup of fresh coffee, and learn about the farm.

The FFA members helped with the construction of the building – with 150 bags of cement, they laid sidewalks, installed a septic tank, hauled cinder blocks and constructed the facility over a combined 336 hours of work.

Working side by side with the local farmers, they were treated like part of an extended family.

Cheyenne Hennessey, senior and chapter secretary, remembers how ultimately rewarding the labor was.

“The heat was excruciating and we were all sweating buckets,” she said. “But it didn’t matter to us, because it was something that we would remember forever and the family would too. They had so little but shared so much with us. They shared their meals and their life and their culture.”

**Driven to succeed**

*Outstanding Middle School: Screven County Middle FFA, Georgia*

When the 125-member Screven County Middle FFA of Georgia wanted to express their appreciation for veterans, they took the time to write letters by hand and send them to their local heroes.

They then hosted a Veteran’s Day banquet and served 52 local veterans as well as the veterans’ families. They took their respect even further by making a wall of fame, decorating a float and riding with veterans in a local parade.



“It turned into a year-long project where we adopted a group of active military in Afghanistan,” FFA advisor Bridget Mixson said. “One of their members stationed out of Niagara Falls came to visit and presented a flag flown in the students’ honor.”

“We had a lot of people from our community attend our events, and help us during, and before and after,” member Gillian McGalliard said.

By listening to the needs and ideas of its students, the chapter created innovative activities that were well-attended and exciting for members and the school at large.

Member Erika Driggers competed in a public speaking contest and spoke about the need for

sustainable agricultural jobs – especially in a country that is facing food struggles in the future. The idea led to the creation of a “Hunger Banquet.”

“It was very interesting to watch the reaction of people when we told them that one farmer in the U.S. today has the daunting task of feeding 129 people and that there are currently more federal prison inmates than people who farm,” Driggers said. “I truly believe that a nation that isn’t hungry for agriculture will soon be hungry for food.”

When guests attended the banquet, they were given a status of high, low, or middle income and were served different amounts of food based on their income level. At the end of the program, everyone received a full meal, but the event illustrated the impact of food shortages around the world and the possibility of upcoming food shortages in the United States.

**Donations from the community and the parents of FFA members added up to make the program a success.**

“In these hard economic times, we try to select events that will fit into our budget and will allow all students to participate for free,” Driggers said.

To address health, members approached Mixson with the idea of telling personal stories that would relate to student health needs.

The chapter organized a health fair with 10 stations that 340 students from within the school visited. The topics ranged from drug and alcohol use to abstinence and mental health concerns. The students shared their experiences through drama and peer-to-peer sharing.

“They found real-life stories of teens struggling from these issues, dressed up and memorized their parts,” Mixson said. “All students rotated around and heard the stories and how it took their lives down the wrong path. In the end, they heard what they could do. With real-life scenarios, I do think it hit home.”







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THE FRONTIER PROJECT

# Undiscovered Country

A new ebook profiles the horsemen, craftsmen  
and artists defining today's West.

By A.J. Mangum

Since my youth, two passions – stock horses and writing – have defined my identity. I spent my childhood on horseback, on my family's Oregon ranch. Writing was a creative outlet; reading was a link to an outside world that seemed at times impossibly distant.

It wasn't until my freshman year of college that I began to contemplate the prospect of journalism as a career. The ambition was born in the hectic newsroom of *The Daily Northwestern*, the student-run paper at Northwestern University, and further nurtured in Oregon State University's journalism program, then headed by two-time Pulitzer winner Jon Franklin, an icon of the literary journalism movement.

Nearly 25 years ago, with my college diploma in hand and the ranch on which I was raised a memory just beginning to fade, I began a vocation that allowed me to merge my two defining interests, and set out to document the stock-horse culture – its horsemen, ranches, craftsmen and artists. It was an odyssey that sent me throughout the American and Canadian West (and far beyond) in search of intriguing people and compelling stories.

Awaiting me was a landscape and populace I had once thought familiar. With each foray into the North American outback, though, new layers revealed themselves. Much of the cowboy subculture, I realized, still remained undiscovered, hidden away in remote stretches of rangeland, in obscure saddle shops, and within the art inspired by a uniquely New World mythology. Endless story opportunities seemed to exist, a realization that, for a writer, is at once daunting and inspiring. The stories collected in *Undiscovered Country*, a new ebook published by The Frontier Project Inc., represent a small piece of the ensuing journalistic adventure.

The following excerpt – “The Journey,” about Montana bit and spur maker Todd Hansen – is one of 17 stories in the collection.

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Todd Hansen sits hunched over a workbench in his shop in the ranch country east of Billings, Montana. The industrial scream of an air-powered graver fills the room.

He's a tall man when he stands upright, but at the moment Todd has curled himself into a comma shape to get close to his work, a delicate engraving job on a piece of silver. Wearing eyeglasses, he guides the graver



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(the proper name for an engraver's tool) over the small disc of precious metal, creating a scroll pattern, a freehand work of modern frontier art.

The shop, a large addition to the home Todd shares with his wife, Tina, has the semi-organized clutter often



generated by a busy craftsman. Tools are neatly arranged on a wall. Finished works – ornate but unquestionably functional bits and spurs – occupy a glass showcase. A seemingly random assortment of raw materials and works in progress fills the room's various benches and shelves.

A self-taught craftsman, Todd has developed a reputation as one of today's best bit and spur makers. His work, known for its sound architecture and aesthetic appeal, with its ornate, California-inspired

design, has cultivated a loyal following among working cowboys and earned the praise of fellow craftsmen. Todd's work has also earned more formal praise; in 2009, the Academy of Western Artists named him its bit and spur maker of the year, and one of his bridle bits earned a best-in-show award at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering's prestigious gear exhibition.

Born in 1965 and raised in Billings, Todd's introduction to horses came courtesy of a high-school girlfriend. He took a spill from one of her horses and, rather than resenting the animal, became intrigued, wanting to learn more about horsemanship. He took a job as a stall cleaner and exercise rider for a local ranch that raised halter and rope horses. As his exposure to horses increased, Todd developed a fascination with the buckaroo culture and its trappings, including spade bits and California-style spurs.

After he and Tina married in 1986, Todd went to work as a mechanic and welder for a Billings sugar-beet processor. He remained obsessed with bits and spurs, though, and spent his free time "tinkering," as he puts it, attempting to replicate the intricate gear that had so intrigued him.

"I'd go to stores or shows and eyeball other work, wondering how it had been made," he says. "I started making simple stuff – bits and spurs I made for myself or gave away to friends, who were thrilled to have anything. Your friends can be your best help or your worst kind of encouragement, making you think you're doing great work. Now I wish I had all that stuff back."

As Todd attended more shows and began speaking with other craftsmen, he realized his early efforts were far from marketable. In 1989, he met bit and spur maker Ed Buchler at a show. A protege of Elmer Miller, whose bit- and spur-making school helped many craftsmen get their starts, Ed talked Todd through the process of inlaying silver, providing the younger artisan enough





information to begin experimenting with the technique. Subsequent accidental discoveries – an engraving video by Jeremiah Watt, an air-powered graver made by GRS – helped him advance his techniques.

“The engraving was a struggle for me, but the flood gates opened,” Todd says. “I learned about bright cuts from Jeremiah’s tape. And with the air-graver, I was able to manipulate a lot faster and easier.”

By the early 1990s, Todd was confident enough in his work to display it at Cody, Wyoming’s Old West

Show. There, he met Bob Hall, the author of *How to Make Bits & Spurs*, one of the most influential volumes on the craft.

“He was the nicest guy,” Todd recalls. “He came over and invited me to his truck, where he had boxes of his work. He said, ‘Try this. Try that. Just keep with it.’ With just a few words, he gave me such confidence.”

Still making bits and spurs in the evenings and on weekends, Todd began building a loyal base of customers willing to take their places on a growing



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waiting list for his work.

“The dream was to do this full time,” Todd says. “It was easy to put names on a list, but I lacked the confidence to make that jump.”



Tina, he admits, gave him the push he needed, pointing out that the longer he worked at the sugar-beet plant, and the closer he got to retirement age, the more difficult it would be to leave for a venture of his own. Finally, in 2004, Todd quit his day job, and has since made his living as bit and spur maker.

“It’s getting easier, in terms of my confidence,” he says. “I’m relaxing into the idea of making a living at this. It’s much different working for yourself. It’s a different feel.”

Todd works in the shop Monday through Friday, putting in the hours to which he became accustomed during his mechanic days, closing shop around five or six in the evening. He typically works on no more than two projects concurrently – enough, he says, to stay busy, but not get overwhelmed or disorganized.

“It’s not really work,” he explains. “You look at the clock and wonder where the day went. But even on weekends, I’m always thinking about it.”

Many of Todd’s bits and spurs have a finish he calls “smoke,” his own interpretation of French grey. He’s also fond of blued steel with inlaid silver, and adornments ranging from silver tear drops to more unique design elements, such as an engraved cherub or hula girl, a motif Todd calls “too cool not to use.” He fills notebooks with such ideas, noting everything from wallpaper designs to eye-catching architectural details. He’s currently experimenting with gun-engraving, and ways in which to incorporate that style’s intricate, refined scrollwork into his bits, spurs and saddle silver.

Todd’s clients, for the most part, are working cowboys. Respected Great Basin horsemen Richard Caldwell and Dwight Hill are among the many fans of his work; Todd credits them for providing him crucial feedback on the mechanics of his bits. Todd draws his share of attention from collectors, as well. Regardless of a piece’s final destination – be it a tack room or display case – Todd says functionality always comes first in his work. He admits he gets a thrill from seeing his most ornate work being put to use by a rider. A dedicated roper – he and Tina keep four Quarter





Horses – Todd’s held back one of his best bridle bits for his own use.

“The time and effort goes into function,” he says. “The ‘pretty’ is just an added bonus. If it doesn’t work on a horse, what’s the point of making it? Enjoy the nice things in life, including nice bits and spurs. Use them. Abuse them.”

Todd connects the interest in his work to the resurgence in the bridle-horse culture, men and women devoting themselves to the long-term development of refined horses and the use of equally refined gear.

“More people are interested in getting with their horses and doing things right,” Todd says. “They ask me the kinds of questions that come only from people

who’ve been riding for years. They know their stuff and they want the best.”

A similar ethic influences Todd’s approach to his work. Alone in his shop, fashioning raw steel into functional tools and developing original takes on design and decoration, Todd says he’s never guided by the clock or calendar. Such was the mindset of the vaquero horseman, for whom slow and meaningful progression always trumped a hurried approach.

“Folks ask me how long something will take to make,” he says. “I don’t keep track. For the vaqueros, there was always *mañana*. Making a bit or set of spurs is as much a journey as making a bridle horse.”



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## A VISIT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN

# The Past is Just That.

There are things that happened when I was a kid that are kind of embarrassing for me to share, but here's one. Every now and then as I'm getting ready to go to a clinic and work with people and their horses, I'll be cleaning up in the morning, getting ready for the day, and I'll glance in the bathroom mirror and get a look at the roll of toilet paper hanging innocently next to the toilet. To most folks, toilet paper doesn't have any big, significant meaning in their lives but it does for me. Some things just get etched in your mind, etched in your brain, and they can take you back in the blink of an eye.

One evening my brother and I had tried our best to go to bed early as that was the best way to avoid many of my dad's drunken outrages. If we could get to bed early, it might not even occur to him that we two boys were in the house, and he might just sit and get drunk in the dark by himself. Unhappily, his pickled brain often did send him thoughts of us, and he'd get us up and holler and scream at us all night long for anything and everything. I remember sitting, night after night, at an oak table that he had made himself (for such a tough guy he was pretty handy; not a terribly kind person, but a pretty handy guy). To this day, I could probably hand-draw every grain of that oak table for you, because we

learned to keep our eyes down, to never look up. If you looked up when he was already on a drunken tirade, he interpreted looking at him as a provocation, guaranteed to get you knocked across the room. So we always looked down at that table.

On this one night, we'd gone to bed early, but he came into our bedroom and yanked us out of our bunk beds and made us go into the kitchen. Now, dad was kind of a tightwad. He'd always turn the heat way down at night and didn't care much if us kids were warm or not. So we sat there in our underwear and it felt like we were in Antarctica.

He had somehow decided that my brother and I must have been using too much toilet paper because he believed the roll was getting smaller way faster than it had been in the past. And that was the topic for our intellectual exchange for that evening. We spent the next four or five hours listening, crying, getting beat on, knocked across the room, picked up and thrown back into our chairs. And all through this endless horror, the thing that kept filling my head about the whole deal was that this issue of toilet paper consumption was going to boil up to the surface again probably a dozen times over the next four or five days, before he finally let it go. He had a hard time changing



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gears and just letting go and moving on.

So when I'm on the road and I have a chance to talk to folks, I work with them to let go of something that has already happened, something that embarrasses them. I try to help them recognize and remove some personal issue they may have with their horse, husband, or child. I make a point to talk to them about moving on, being able to change gears and not feel like everything has to be resolved or that everything has to have closure. Like I said, you're not always going to get closure and you don't necessarily need closure; you do need to move on.

At least, that's something I've found to be true in my life. I'm not a tortured soul for what I went through

as a kid, but I'm definitely wiser for it, and I hope I'm able to share the wisdom I gained from those early days with others I meet on the trail. I may not be an intellectual compared to some folks, but I survived some pretty tough life experiences growing up, and I share that so they know they're not alone. Not anymore.

And that's really what it's all about for me; how we deal with whatever comes along and how we can help others get through and beyond their own problems. Living in the past can become a habit, and humans aren't the only ones who do this. It can be a habit with a horse, as well. What works with horses also often works with people.




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# AQHA

# Fritz and Georgia: Indian Not Indian

By Tom Russell

*I believe a good painting...you can sense it a mile away.  
The minute you walk across the room, it either grabs you  
and knocks you down and kills you, or forget it....*

Fritz Scholder

94

In the late 1940s an eleven-year-old South Dakota kid named Fritz painted images and stamps on blank letter envelopes. His own concoctions. A boy-dreamer from the Badlands. The kid sent these art envelopes off to famous folks like Albert Einstein and Prince Feisal of Iraq, among other luminaries. He asked Einstein and the boys if they'd put their signature on his hand-made envelopes and return them in the mail. I'd imagine that the famous ones were amused at the kid's presumption and gravitas. Most of them signed the envelopes and sent them back to South Dakota, postmarked from different countries. Instant collectibles. Even King Feisal complied. Two days before he was assassinated.

Welcome to the keen mind and artistic career of young Fritz Scholder – quarter blood Luiseno Indian, three quarters German, and son of an Indian school administrator. Fritz would become a world-famed painter: major collectors of his art being Robert Redford and Ralph Lauren. *Among others*. And myself. Though I don't own any originals. Just posters and prints. For many years I've been intrigued by Scholder's

stormy career, his technique, and his colors. He was a man who painted Indians in the abstract and pushed the outsider boundaries of what we know as Western art.

Fritz Scholder (1937-2005) was part Luiseno Indian, but later in later life he looked *full-blooded* Indian, with his long black hair and a bemused scowl on that mug worthy of Red Cloud or Sitting Bull. He possessed Indian bearing. He attacked the canvas in that manner. Like a warrior – paintbrush in one hand and a rag in the other – painting a line or a figure then wiping out and smearing his lines and images. Pushing the limits of color and under-coating. He called it *covering up his tracks*. Bob Dylan records might be blasting on the stereo as the paint flew. Dylan and Scholder seemed to be in touch with parallel, untamed muses. American visionaries.

I don't need to detail Scholder's early years, the schooling, and the awards. Fritz fought his way up through the ranks of American art. *Quickly*. He studied under various Native American artists, including Oscar Howe, but as he moved on, his major influence was his teacher Wayne Thiebaud – the Sacramento master





*American Indian #4*, 1972 Lithograph

known for his colorful pop realism of objects like cakes and pies and donuts, and depictions of the farming delta around Sacramento California.

Scholder was also influenced by Richard Diebenkorn's *under painting* technique. The secret here being to paint over one color with a different shade or tint, and keep layering the paint so that remnants of the older coats show through in spots. This creates a multi-dimensional, color-textured background.

Finally, and most importantly, Scholder was caught in the rum-drenched sway of Francis Bacon, the Irish painter who depicted wildly distorted images of human subjects: ghoulish popes and poets. Bacon had also used a rag to smear and distort faces.

Francis Bacon's studio was so outrageously cluttered with rags and cans and paint tubes and brushes that, when he died, the studio was moved into a museum. *Intact*. It was a monument to fanaticism in art technique. Our man Bacon liked to drink and gamble in Monaco. And throw paint. Fritz picked up on all that passion and process and brought it to his Indian images. Fritz abstracted the West, but the message beneath was deeply realistic.

## II Into the Mystic: The Fetish Maker

*The power of art in anyone's life is a must.  
Every society has some form of religion and some  
form of art.  
It seems to me to a basic activity of putting down  
one's marks  
that you were here.*

Fritz Scholder

My interest in Scholder's paintings is centered in his depictions of Indians – as well as the few cowboy images. I won't analyze or discuss at length his vampires, devils, martyrs, and pyramids. Leave that to the critics. I like the Indians. We're centered in the West here. It's the Indians that drew the world's attention to Fritz, and it's the Indian paintings that created controversy.

Scholder's work has drawn me to it. Yanked me by the neck. He called himself a: "*Painter, print-maker, and fetish maker.*" He said: "I revel in being able to produce statements in various forms, because in today's world art and magic are greatly needed." This word *fetish* is at the heart of understanding Fritz Scholder and his art. A fetish may be a *fixation*, or a *thing evoking irrational devotion or respect. A charm, amulet, talisman, totem.*" (Quote: *The Oxford Pocket Dictionary.*) Scholder was a medicine man. A conjurer in paint, print, and clay. He

even carved his own fetish dolls. It's an Indian thing.

Scholder denied feeling "Indian" or being a purely "Indian painter." But it was in the blood history. His heritage is outlined in an interview in 1995 with Paul Karlstrom of the Smithsonian Institute. To quote Fritz:

"The Scholders were an old pioneer family of San Diego County. My great-great grandfather had come over with two brothers from Wurtemberg, Germany. He decided to walk across this country. He ended up in Fort Apache (*in the Eastern part of Arizona*) and was mustered into the army there, because they were trying to catch Geronimo. After he got

out, with some kind of injury, he continued to walk toward California.

"He was just about dead out there and laid down under a big Oak tree to die. But he woke up and found he was in an Indian village...and he married an Indian woman. The tribe I'm affiliated with is called *Luiseno*, after King Luis of Spain. They were one of the Indian tribes that were forced to build the missions. They were chained to pillars at night so they wouldn't run away – another chapter in that particular history of the West. And my dad saw Pancho Villa once, riding around. And he shared a stage with Will Rogers."







Later, when Fritz went to seek out his Indian heritage in California, he found only ill-kept graves behind Missions, littered with “*old salt shakers and broken soda bottles.*” The Indians built the missions and then were buried behind them – in unmarked graves with trash littered on top.

There’s a more personal angle to my interest in Scholder – I began painting about ten years ago. I walked into an abandon studio here in El Paso and painted a cow. The cow looked more like a dog or a pig, but what the hell. I was on my way. Some call it *naïve art*. Others might call it regressing to a childish state. I call it *starting from scratch*. Somebody eventually bought that first painting. They thought it was a horse.

Welcome to the world of art. I never gave up my day job as a songwriter.

I now have my art in many galleries and a book of my paintings is on the market. Not to brag. I’m a beginner. I have a long road ahead of me – and my biggest influence is Fritz Scholder. I would consider him, along with Georgia O’Keeffe, two essential artists who brought a modernist view to Western painting – a magical way of looking at our landscape and Western character. We can toss around these artsy and spiritual notions like *magic* and *mystical*, but you have see the paintings yourself and gauge your own reaction, in your mind, gut, and heart. It’s about the same as listening to a song. You can look or listen again and again and always

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*Indian at Gallop Bus Depot* (1969) 40x30 Oil on canvas

take something different away.

Black river rocks. Cow and horse skulls. Drunken Indians. Fritz and Georgia O'Keefe. *Western fetish makers*. I got to thinking about them one day and wondered if they'd ever met. Then I stumbled upon that manuscript from the Smithsonian Institute interview. In sixty-eight pages of deep dialogue, Scholder lays it all out: his life, his teachers, his passion for painting, his friendship with Ralph Lauren, his meeting with Picasso's wife, the controversy surrounding his Indian paintings, and on and on... and a weird and wonderful dinner with Georgia O'Keefe.

Let me begin, though, with a short tale of my journey to one of Scholder's studios. Halloween afternoon in Galisteo, New Mexico – and the goblins and trolls were lurking in the shadows of his art.

### III Halloween in Galisteo

*You read about this lion - he killed a man with his  
paw*

*Sampson he got his hands around the lion's jaw  
And he ripped that beast till the lion was dead  
And the bees made honey in the lion's head.*

*Samson and Delilah*, Reverend Gary Davis

It was a Halloween afternoon and the road out of Santa Fe twisted down south, aiming for Mexico, which was three hundred miles away. The journey led through a Southwestern landscape broken by adobe villages, abandoned trailers, tumbleweeds, and vacant mom and pop grocery stores. We drove onward through crippled cottonwoods and across dry creek beds – through dust-devil cyclones of autumn leaves. Deep into the forgotten West.



courtesy private collection





Galisteo was down here somewhere, where Fritz Scholder and his wife Romona owned a house and painting studio, before Fritz moved on to Scottsdale and onto his third and last marriage. Romona was still here. I was driving and thinking of that film: *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. It was a carnival movie based on a Ray Bradbury story. A carnival was setting up on the edge of town. The leaves were turning the color of a Halloween pumpkin. Autumn was the time of witches and ghouls and primitive harvest rituals. And carnivals. Fritz Scholder territory. The day had that feel to it.

Romona had kindly invited us down to see the house and studio. She met us at the church and led us down the road to the two hundred year old adobe fortress. Outside, in the back courtyard, we could see the tip of Scholder's large sculpture of a man fighting a lion beneath a Mesquite or Cottonwood tree. I thought of the Reverend Gary Davis song about Samson fighting the lion, ripping it apart, and then the bees making honey in the lion's head. Fritz must have known the song.

There was another statue of a martyr. Or was it a vampire? These figures danced beneath the falling, harvest leaves. *A ballet for The Day of the Dead*. We entered the kitchen and front room of the old adobe. The spirits were here: Native American pots, skulls, baskets, votive crosses, shrunken heads, voodoo dolls, Scholder paintings, and a small Maynard Dixon painting. Art everywhere. Tastefully arranged. A dozen more objects I couldn't focus on.

Five years earlier I'd travelled to all three major Scholder retrospectives: Santa Fe, Washington D.C., and New York City. I was on a pilgrimage. I'd stood and faced a hundred paintings, but that experience couldn't match standing in his studio, or in the front room of this adobe, feeling Fritz's ghost in all the images and objects and art. We were now inside Fritz's head. *The fetish maker*.

Romona patiently described all of it. Romona is a successful practicing psychologist and knew of my interest in Fritz's work – and here we were. Trying to absorb. In my mind you cannot glean truth from the essays and exhibition folders writ' up by art historians and critics. These folks are always telling us *what we're seeing* and *what the artist was feeling* and *what we should be feeling* and the *rudiments of the era when it all*

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*happened.* The context, you see. It doesn't work that way. Art escapes time and explanation. Here we were, in the midst of the man's mind – something here we could not describe. Like seeing a movie that altered you, but later you couldn't explain the plot.

Here was a part the collection of the kid who'd sent those envelopes to Albert Einstein and the Royalty of the Middle East. I asked Romona about Fritz meeting Georgia O'Keefe and the legendary dinner. "Yes," she said, "He came home reeking of garlic." That was it. She smiled. Remained silent.

We walked out thought the back courtyard to his studio. I recall pictures of Fritz in this very studio – squatting down on a Navajo rug as he contemplated works in progress. I've seen a film of Fritz, in this room

or another studio, pulling unfinished paintings out of a stack and destroying them. Slashing the canvas with a bowie knife. The art was either good, in Fritz's eyes, or it was gone. He was passionate and dramatic even in the process of destruction.

We looked through a large stack of Scholder's lithographs, chatted awhile, and it was time to head back to Santa Fe. We walked out of the compound. Across the road a bent mesquite fence toppled over itself, snaking up the lane – running away into the early sundown light of oranges, reds, and yellows.

Ramona Scholder said goodbye, then she took a step closer and looked me in the eye – like she was about to reveal the secret to all of this. She spoke softly.

"Did anyone ever mention to you where Fritz is buried?"

I hesitated a second. "No," I said. "Where *is he* buried?" "I wouldn't know," she said. "*I have no idea.*"

She looked me in the eye. I looked her in the eye. On the other side of the adobe wall, behind us, a sculpted man man was fighting off a bronze lion and martyrs were weeping. Weird magic afoot. Little witches were dawning their costumes in houses across the haunted West.

I had no idea where Fritz was buried. Nor did Ramona. Curious end to a Halloween afternoon. Fritz was laughing about all this, somewhere out beyond the dust-red sunset.

"*I have no idea,*" kept running around my head as we drove north, back to Santa Fe. He was buried *everywhere*, is my guess. In every painting and curious collected object. In all those dolls and crosses above the adobe fireplace. The master fetish maker had *become his art*.

As I glanced back at the adobe compound two chubby Indian kids, a boy and girl, were walking down the road with trick or treat bags. I thought of Fritz and Georgia O'Keefe. One of the little boys even *looked*





like Fritz, and I suppose it was. The old trickster and shape shifter.

The Indian kids were yelling *trick or treat*, and I hit the gas before the little Fritz monster could grab me and inform me where he'd been buried, before he'd crawled out of the grave with his trick or treat bag. I reached into the glove box and brought out an old Paul Siebel CD and jammed it into the player. I turned it up loud, as we flew through that Halloween afternoon – back towards Santa Fe.

But the Fritz necromancy wouldn't give up. The old Luiseno fetish maker had hold of my soul. Paul Seibel sang these lines from the song: "Then Came the Children":

*Well come gather around me friends of mine,  
While I sing to you about a minstrel band  
Of children in their witches hats,  
Painting pictures with the pipes of pan...*

#### IV Fritz and Georgia

"...to live on paper and canvas  
what we're living our hearts  
and heads."

Georgia O'Keefe

For traditional Western painters I favor Edward Borein and Charlie Russell for their depictions of cowboys, vaqueros, bony steers and horses. True West. Their drawings and paintings exuded raw character and knowledge of the cowboy soul. A horse felt like a horse. If the horse had wintered poorly, that's how the boys painted it. Remington, for my taste, was too polished and removed. He was a fine illustrator, but I couldn't read where his heart lay.

I like Maynard Dixon for his skies, and I have seen those same rolling cloudbanks on many an afternoon in



courtesy private collection

Fritz Scholder

West Texas. They certainly exist as wonderment of the Great Spirit's work. Maynard had them down. I loved Tom Lea, because he *knew* the country and *knew* *toros bravos* and I was honored to have lunch with him once, when he was 90 years old and blind, and we talked about the bullfighter, *Manoleta*, and about how to distinguish between dozens of varieties of cactus and other varied Western matters. Tom Lea's lunch that day consisted of three bowls of Peppermint ice cream. I loved all these western painters.

Then there was Will James. I have odd Will James memorabilia – a cancelled check from 1931 and a letter sent to a friend from the Hotel Algonquin in New York, asking the friend to send Will's drawings back. Will (or *Bill* as he called himself) was fond of drawing broncs on cocktail napkins in back street Hollywood bars. I wish I had one of those.

But Scholder knocked me over. His Indians anyway. And I'd been an admirer of Georgia O'Keefe since I was a kid. She was a desert rat. So was I. Obviously when you speak of this thing called *art magic* or Southwestern *fetishism* or plain-old *Southwestern art*, you arrive at the bottom line. Georgia O'Keefe.

No need to dissect her life here. She has been well writ-up, and her landscapes, florals, and bone paintings are featured in a thousand sets of calendars and greeting cards. *An American icon*. Georgia's shadow snakes across the modern Southwest, and it's a long one. No other female artist, with the exception of Frida Kahlo, has empowered more women to strike out into their own isolate, artistic territories. Her spirit circles around Taos and Santa Fe and Silver City and anywhere someone is bent over an easel or a potter's wheel. She was a hard act to follow.

Georgia had seen the bright lights of Times Square, painted depictions of the Empire State Building (as did Fritz) and then turned her back on those Eastern lights, trading them for the magic blush and glow of the Southwestern deserts. She retreated to New Mexico. "*She went away inside her own country*," a critic remarked. She re-invented herself and flourished for over ninety years. She had immense mettle. Plenty to spare.

Georgia *became* the Southwest she loved. Arid, cere, silent, portentous – at times poisonous. A wizened

human-agave with long thorns. She was a minimalist in work and personality. There was no bullshitting her, and she preferred her own company. She liked smooth black river rocks and ocotillo fences and ancient Indian baskets. She loved to cook, and her hands seem to have been transplanted from an olden Spanish statue – long veins running down fingers that were elegant and knowledgeable in the dough. Always *in the dough*, or the clay or the paint. Or *thinking up* the paint.

Fritz Scholder knocked on Georgia's door one day, out of the blue, half-expecting to be thrown off the premises. Georgia was in a gentle mood that afternoon and invited him in. He sat at her feet and listened to her talking about "Frankie" (Frank Lloyd Wright) and how she missed not stretching her own canvases, and the sorry fact that you couldn't find a good wine in Santa Fe.

"It's always dangerous to meet one's heroes," Scholder said in the Smithsonian interview. "...because you can, of course be very disappointed. O'Keefe especially had developed a persona, and when she opened the gate I first was struck by just realizing she looked like her pictures. It was shocking. She'd developed a persona that I'd never seen in anyone else, and as we crossed the patio with the famous black door, she said something to me I'll never forget. She said, 'There are times when you must

spend an afternoon with one whom one will never see again.'" (*Scholder laughs*) "And I knew what she meant.



Light Coming on the Plains III, watercolour, 1917.



courtesy private collection

Georgia O'Keefe. Roadside post cards





I'd caught her at the right time. She was lonely."

"She spoke in poetry," Scholder continued, "And she floated as she walked. She talked around her art, but never *about* it.

As the late afternoon shadows moved across O'Keefe's face, Scholder witnessed her shape-shifting between a male and female spirit. She seemed androgynous, basked in the red-yellow glow. She rocked in her chair and occasionally reached down and ran her hands across the smooth river rocks, which were arranged in a flat Indian basket on the floor.

"At one point," said Fritz, "she was talking, her eyes were closed, and she stopped in mid-sentence. And I looked up and it was quiet and I waited. *Nothing*. And I thought, 'God, Georgia O'Keefe has died on me.' She was sitting there and it seemed like an eternity. But all of a sudden she started right where she left off. She had been waiting for the precise word, and if it meant that I had to wait and she had to wait, that was fine. She had self-integrity that wouldn't stop."

One night, when Georgia had become more comfortable around Scholder, she invited him to a dinner party at the adobe. There were at least eight courses of gourmet food served. The courses changed when O'Keefe rang a little bell for her Spanish maid. When everyone was full, out came a giant bowl of salad, and Georgia served up large portions for all. The guests choked it down politely. Nobody crossed Georgia.

"I took the first taste of that salad," said Fritz, "and I almost fell off my chair, because she'd put every garlic in the world in this salad. This salad would have walked off by itself. It was incredible! And I knew I had to eat it."

"At that point, Georgia looked up at all of us with a little smile on the corner of her mouth, and she said: 'Well how do you like the salad?' And like school kids, we said in unison, 'Great Georgia.' (*Fritz laughs*) And she said, 'Well that's nice because we have enough for

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seconds.’ And she rings the bell and the maid comes (*Fritz laughs again*)...and I don’t know to this day if this was some little joke of hers or what, because when I got back to Santa Fe that evening I was *green*, I was told. And I *felt* green too. And I couldn’t look a garlic in the face for five years.”

And on it went into the night. Georgia was the spirit and sainted presence hovering over the energy of the room. And who wouldn’t have loved to have been a lizard or a fly on the wall above a basket of black river rocks – that night when the garlic salad was served?

The desert West is the territory you aim for when you’ve had enough of faculty meetings, grant applications, faux social scenes, and art openings where the cheap Chardonnay is served in plastic cups, and no one really *looks* at the art, or feels it. You *go away inside*

*your own country*, out yonder to the desert, and reinvent your ability to talk to God through your art. You spice the salad any damn way you wish.

Fritz had met his match.

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In the year 2008 the Smithsonian Institution, in league with the National Museum of the American Indian, staged a double Fritz Scholder exhibit in New York and Washington D.C. The exhibition (and the book which followed) were titled: *Indian Not Indian*. I would recommend the book for anyone interested in Western art. I favor the Indian and cowboy images. I've established that above. But in order to understand this man's life and work you'd have to cast an eye on the dark stuff – the vampires, martyrs, monsters and fallen angels.

As I leafed through that Smithsonian interview I discovered that Fritz was a friend of the late songwriter John Stewart. Stewart had been a member of the Kingston Trio and later enjoyed a successful solo career. I'd worked with John several times and some folks have compared my singing voice with his – dark and low. I'm honored. He was a damn good songwriter with a huge following in the Southwest.

I called up John Stewart's wife, the singer Buffy Ford, and learned a few more details and amusing anecdotes about Fritz and his penchant for collecting odd objects, and painting unsettling subject matter. I was given another insider view.

"Fritz was light as a person," said Buffy, "but dark as an artist. He was scared of death. But in his house he had this death room with mummies and coffins! One time he came home with this real voodoo doll from New Orleans. He brought it in a plastic sack, and when he got out of the car his dog attacked the bag and ripped it apart. Fritz had to put the doll in a glass case."

"One day my husband John and I went over to Fritz's house and Fritz showed John the voodoo doll. In the glass case. John felt instantly sick when he got close to the case. We had to leave. That's the kind of stuff Fritz had around."

"Another time Fritz brought out this little sliver of

wood. He said it was an authentic piece of *the true cross*. The cross Jesus was crucified on. A little sliver. He handed it to John, and John drops the cross! They're both down on the floor looking all around for a long time. They never found it. Fritz was such a nice man. He never used profanity or anything. But he had all this dark, weird stuff. And he always wore these red shoes. Like magic slippers or something. He was a magician. So was John."

Here was the doubled-sided nature of the artist who painted the martyrs and vampires. And those Indians. *Monster Indian, Portrait of a Massacred Indian, Drunk Indian in Car, Indian With Beer Can* – Scholder seemed to be scratching and smearing the paint, in order to reach the voodoo beneath it all. And the message. The pain embedded within Native American history.

"I knew," said Fritz, "that when I started the Indian series that it was a loaded subject. It was a no-win subject and it was national guilt. So it was a subject that had tremendous baggage with it. And for me to abstract the subject...well..." It was a dangerous move.

Fritz continues: "But I was surprised at the outrage, immediate outrage, especially in Santa Fe, when I started the Indian series. The gallery literally had to have armed guards at the door because of the reaction of the militant Indian groups. And for a number of years in Santa Fe there were armed guards at my openings. Art is very powerful.

"With the Indian thing I was intent on going past the clichés and pushing people's ideas about the subject. I once did an Indian standing in front of the Eiffel Tower, and people might have thought that I was using my imagination. I wasn't. There were old photographs of Indian chiefs being photographed when Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show arrived in Paris."

The current world of Western art, at times, slides into a *greeting card* view of the West. Cowboys on hills





*Pancho Villa's Horse* by Tom Russell



gazing at the stars. Stage coaches in rainy frontier towns. Images of male and female Indians dressed up in buckskin finery. They usually look like well-tanned, white, Hollywood actors. Movie extras. Scholder saw the other side of the coin. Fritz had been to Gallup, New Mexico on a Saturday night after the bars closed down. He'd witnessed *the parade of the walking wounded*. That outsider territory of our West where a Navajo might hawk his best silver or *Two Grey Hills* rug – and go on a bender. Staggering towards the next bar.

“Non Indian painters,” said Fritz, “had been painting the Indian for decades as a noble savage in a very romantic way, coming up with paintings that looked like Italians squatting by the bonfire sharpening their arrows. And then there were a lot of Indian artists from the Indian school who had been caught in a tourist pleasing cliché – painting colorful paintings for tourists. Being in an art colony can be an albatross around the neck of any town.”

So be it, Fritz.

There are deep mysteries embedded in the history of our Western art. We're reminded of that by peering at old Kachina carvings, antique Navajo rugs, Mimbres pottery, and such. And the images of certain fetish makers and painters like Fritz Scholder and Georgia

O'Keefe. It's strong stuff. Like a salad spiced with an overabundance of garlic. You may not like it – but you'll never forget the experience. And the mind of the person who served it up.

That Halloween afternoon in Galisteo swirls around in my memory, and the Paul Seibel Halloween song. In that same song Seibel wrote:

*Somewhere in the distance  
you and I have fought  
the monster to a draw...*

Fritz Scholder looked the monster in the eye and fought it to a draw. He painted what he saw. And felt. The quarter blood Luiseno gave us an abstract-expressionistic eye for viewing the Indian West. Fritz and Georgia expanded our Western vision, even if they tossed the odd dark image, or a chunk of raw garlic into the mix. They both *went away inside their own country* and left their mark by putting on canvas what they lived inside their hearts and heads.

Thanks to: Romona Scholder, Gary Brown, Eric Temple, and Buffy Ford.



Tom Russell's new record: *Aztec Jazz*, and his art book: *Blue Horse/Red Desert* – as well as his cowboy records and songbook are all available from: [www.tomrussell.com](http://www.tomrussell.com) or [www.villagerecords.com](http://www.villagerecords.com)

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## LIGHTING OUT

# Travels with Harry

A cross-country excursion with clinician Harry Whitney offers a whirlwind tour of the West, and a glimpse of a traveling horseman's life on the road.



By Tom Moates

110

The windshield on Harry Whitney's RV is enormous. Like a big fisheye lens, it provides a portal through the otherwise enclosed interior of the coach, revealing a panoramic view of the world as we begin our journey west. From the galley, back at about mid-ship, looking forward at the brilliant morning spilling through the windshield is like standing inside a big box camera with the shutter open. I felt like the film.

We were barreling along I-90, west of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, having begun the day at a truck stop parking lot in Eagle Lake, Minnesota. It was a good launching point for day, which needed to end in Wyoming in order for us to arrive on time at Harry's next clinic.

There's no hood on the front of Harry's motor home. Where the windshield ends, the road begins. I could see straight down to the pavement as it rolled under the bumper to become part of the distance behind us. I stood in the stairwell by the passenger seat, my elbows on the dash, feeling like I was leaning forward from the bow of a ship, out over the water, as we cruised. Harry sat in the driver's seat, gripping the large wheel and looking out at traffic and our surroundings. He'd come this way many times and made comparisons to previous years. This was a dry one, he said.

Two gray ribbons of highway led to a point where the horizon met the blue sky. It was not my familiar Virginia horizon, but a South Dakota horizon, one so far





photo by Tom Moates

Horsemanship clinician Harry Whitney pilots his RV on his annual circuit.

off that countless square miles of sunflower fields blooming golden seemed small in the bigness. Still, the landscape didn't feel flat. Instead it seemed to amplify the curvature of the earth, making it more perceptible in the openness. It was a strange sensation for this traveler.

I stood with my camera in hand, head up by the glass, soaking in the size of the scene unfurling before me, snapping photos nonstop. The landscape was all so new, and everything seemed photo worthy: grain elevators, wind generators, horses in the distance, oddities like the world's biggest metal bull's head.

The trip had taken shape earlier in the year, when I talked Harry into letting me tag along to a couple of his summer horsemanship clinics. I strive to get to any of Harry's clinics, but this time, I'd spend two weeks with him in the RV, traveling across 1,500 miles of America I'd never seen. At home, horses would be on pasture, and my absence wouldn't slow the summer garden harvest, managed by my wife, Carol. If there was a time to get away, this was it.

I rendezvoused with Harry in Minnesota for a clinic at Suzy Fitzsimmons' FitzFarm, and at the end of

the clinic's final day, Harry and I packed up and hit the road. Harry has made this circuit going on two decades, and he knows the ropes. Travel rules (such as "don't stop

explains his choice of a big, quality diesel machine to cover distances and stay on schedule.

Nevertheless, I'd already done my part to complicate Harry's itinerary, arranging a detour south of I-90, near Custer, to a ranch near a little place called Pringle, to meet Amy Kirk. Amy is a rancher and writes a newspaper column and blog called *A Ranchwife's Slant: Cowboys, Kids, and Ranch Life*. I'd negotiated to publish Amy's first book, a compilation of her columns, for my Spinning Sevens Press, and was eager to meet her and see the setting for her essays.

Harry kept the RV in the wind and we flew across South Dakota. I was mesmerized at the changing scenes



photo by Harry Whitney

A moment of pure tourism at the Montana state line.

at night ahead of a city, only to be stuck in the next morning's rush hour") are well entrenched in his operational manual. We made a couple hundred miles that evening, reaching the far side of Sioux Falls after dark. We were en route to Harry's next clinic, in Stevensville, Montana.

Eagle Lake to Stevensville is 1,200 miles, across the width of South Dakota, through a corner of Wyoming, and across most of Montana. We had three days for the journey. Such timing justifies Harry's Herculean effort at maintaining his RV. If a clinician is late for a clinic, it's disastrous. Preparations are made months in advance. Students must arrange vacation days and travel with horses, and Harry takes that seriously. The commitment

through the windshield and continued taking pictures through the bug squish. By around 11, Harry pointed out a peculiar landscape ahead – the Badlands – and offered to detour through Badlands National Park.

White formations of I'm-not-sure-what (not really soil, not really clay, not really sand, but a weird combination of them all) surrounded us. It was a landscape tortured by eons of wind and torrential downpours. Stripes of red and rust ran horizontally in the hills, spires and pinnacles. Sloughing buttes and hillsides towered like castle walls. In other places, flat ground dropped off into a crazy maze of eroded arroyos. I could see why *banditos* and rustlers holed up in the Badlands: good luck finding





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photo by Harry Whitney

The author interviews columnist Amy Kirk at her family's ranch in South Dakota.

anybody who wanted to stay hidden.

It took a couple of hours to wind through the park. Once on the other side, we continued west, headed for the Black Hills. The Sturgis motorcycle rally was underway, and Harleys were everywhere. Little towns nestled in peaceful valleys had streets lined with sparkling chrome machines.

It was a year of severe drought, and wildfires raged in many states. We occasionally saw the evidence up close. Smoke would come in like a fog, and visibility on the highway would drop to less than a mile.

Charred remains of forest could be seen as we drove deeper into the hills.

In addition to damage left behind by fires, there were a huge number of dead, standing trees – brown pines scattered among the living. The work of the destructive pine beetle, it left me wondering what would stop these majestic mountains from becoming naked hills.

We made it to the Kirk Ranch, where a wildfire had recently scorched the forest within sight of the house. We knew we were in the right place: the roof of a red barn bore the ranch's brand, K over CC, in big white





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letters. Harry drove over the cattle guard and parked, and we met Amy's husband, Art, and teenage son, Myles. They were heading out for a fencing project.

They drove Harry and I up the road to meet Amy at an old wooden barn where the couple had been married. The barn had been built by Art's ancestors. Amy and I visited in the shade of the barn, then we rode to the home place to meet her daughter, Renee, and the family's dog, Pepper, and to check out Art's shop. Then, Harry and I climbed back aboard the RV.

Crossing the cattle guard, we couldn't help but stop again. The Kirks have an antique threshing machine sitting on a hill by the side of the road. I'd seen many of these that day, but this one was uncommon, set up as if it were running. The augers were extended and two wagons were set in place like the thresher was in action. Harry loves photographing old cars, trucks and machines and he went to town on this rig.

It was after 7 when we hit the Wyoming state line. Highway 16 takes a diagonal, northwesterly track, meeting up again with I-90 at Moorcroft. We hopped on the interstate and made it to Gillette before calling it a night. My first day on the road with Harry had been amazing, like four days crammed into one.

Dawn broke. Sunlight streamed across hilly pastureland, and soon we were rolling up I-90, through Sheridan, Wyoming, and heading to the Montana line. This wasn't a day for stops. We bucketed down the interstate, making time to our destination. The diesel purred and the pavement alternated between a smooth surface and repetitious dips. Miles swooshed by a hundred at a time, and I was still at the windshield snapping photos as we sped along. Montana amplified the openness I'd first seen in South Dakota.

We passed through the Crow Reservation, which still showed signs of green. The further we traveled west, however, the more brown and burnt the landscape

became. The deep green of irrigated fields offered a stark contrast to baked soil and bleached fields.

We passed through Billings, Livingston and Butte. I drove for a while as Harry caught a power nap in the passenger seat. The stretch of highway had a long section that wound through a sharp pass with wicked crosswinds. Warning signs and wind socks lined the edge of the road. I managed to hold the big machine between the lines, a task akin to piloting a bread box on a kid's Matchbox track...in a hurricane.

A fire had started on a stretch of highway, and emergency crews were just arriving as flames shot skyward from the edge of the other lane. We passed a truck with blown tires and figured sparks from the rims had started the blaze. Throughout the day, smoke from other wildfires, most hundreds of miles distant, darkened the sky and wafted in and out of our path.

We reached Missoula in the late afternoon and set a southerly course on Highway 93. Soon we were traveling along the lush Bitterroot Valley, a green oasis compared to the land through which we'd just driven. The sharp rock faces of the Bitterroot Range towered to the west. A smaller range, the Sapphire Mountains, defined the valley more humbly to the east.

Well before dark, Harry backed the motor home into its regular yearly spot at a friend's place. Central to everything was a log home, complete with dogs in a fenced yard and a canopy of trees shading the house, driveway, yard and outbuildings. After 700 miles, it felt good to stand again on *terra firma* in such a peaceful setting.

The next afternoon, Harry fired up the RV and we traveled the short distance to the clinic venue, Malika Coston's Kootenai Creek Equestrian Center. As is the case at each of Harry's clinics, students are always excited to see him and eager to help out. This extended family has to make life on the road much more bearable for a clinician.





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photo by Harry Whitney

The Kootenai Equestrian Center offers a view of Idaho's Bitterroot Mountains.

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During the clinic, Malika surprised me and asked if I'd give a book reading one evening. It was the first (and as yet, the only) time I've given a reading. Luckily, the audience wasn't overly prone to heckling, and the material I chose got some laughs.

The end of a clinic is always both sad and exciting. I'm eager to head home and put lessons to the test, but I'm always sorry to part from Harry and other friends. Clinics are little worlds unto themselves, and can be settings in which some wonderful changes take place in people and horses. When a clinic ends, reality rushes back.

The Montana clinic wrapped up and Harry had a

couple of days to travel 400 miles to Wenatchee, Washington. At the halfway point, Harry's route would pass through Spokane, from which I'd arranged my flight home. The morning after the clinic, we pulled the RV's shore power, stowed gear, and headed north toward Missoula.

We weren't crunched for time, and would easily make Spokane by nightfall. We managed a side trip so Harry could take photographs at the National Bison Range, near Dixon, Montana, and pay a visit to a chiropractor in downtown Spokane. Harry has severe neck troubles and his annual circuit includes



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adjustments by various chiropractors.

We looped back down to the interstate and headed for Idaho. The mountains at the state line were phenomenal. Our vantage point looked out over an immense valley, with rolling peaks carpeted with thousands of acres of healthy evergreens. After another stop at a Cabela's, in Post Falls, Idaho, it wasn't far to Spokane and the airport.

I could have easily continued going on down the road with Harry. For every horsemanship question I seem to get answered, two more came to mind. More than ever, I'm seeing more of Harry's teachings at work in myself and others, but those realizations expose how

much I still don't know about horses. Even with Harry's brutal schedule, I'd happily make the whole circuit with him to learn all I could.

It is remarkable, though, how whole days can disappear traveling with Harry. Time warps in mysterious ways. Weeks melt away. Those two weeks were a whirlwind, and I came to realize that existence in such a blur – making miles, snapping photos, catching up with a friend when the timing works out – defines life on the road for Harry. Then he arrives at a clinic and the buzz of that life begins, bringing on its own amazing momentum. Then, without fail, the cycle begins again.



Tom Moates is the author of several books on horsemanship. The most recent is *Going Somewhere: A Continuing Journey into Honest Horsemanship*. Learn more at [www.tommoates.com](http://www.tommoates.com).

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## THE HEN HOUSE

# Wonder Woman in 501s

School's out and the gate's open for our four columnists as they light out for parts known – and unknown.



By Reata Brannaman, Nevada Watt, Ceily Rae Highberger  
and Hannah Ballantyne

**T**he last time you heard from the Hen House, we were gearing up for our last days in Bozeman before summer break, making preparations to hit the road toward many misadventures. Our first excursion found us driving to Oregon for the annual Jordan Valley Big Loop Rodeo, leaving behind all evidence of student life, as well as most modern conveniences.

Living out of a wall tent for a weekend at Jordan



Hannah Ballantyne, Reata Brannaman and Nevada Watt

Valley meant spending hours gathered around a campfire, surrounded by new and old friends. It also meant no showers, no primping, and little time spent worrying about hair and makeup. A quick swipe of mascara and a dab of powder was considered good enough. Brushing hair? That's what hats are for. Being able to rough it for the

weekend, and still manage to come out the other side looking (maybe not smelling) like a rose is what makes





photos courtesy The Hen House Archives

Hannah Ballantyne

the western woman a rare breed.

Our inspiration for this article came to us when we saw a particularly classy-looking gal walking behind the bucking chutes, sporting a snap-brim hat, white-collared shirt and a warm smile. Hanging from one shoulder were some gently used rawhide reins and horsehair ropes. Wrapped in the other arm was a beaming baby. This, our friends, was Wonder Woman in 501s.

The women we admire – and are surrounded by in our everyday lives – don't often fit the stereotypes of the mainstream culture. When we were growing up, our mothers modeled for us a certain pride in being women, seeing it as a blessing, and never a hindrance.

In certain circles in the western world, some women think that they need to compete with men, or act manly,

in order to be accepted or even given a chance. In reality, it's about your skills, and what you bring to the table, not only as a person, but as a hand.

Being as comfortable in the kitchen as you are on the back of a horse doesn't make you less of a hand. It makes you well-rounded. We know a lot of ranch wives and daughters who are up at the crack of dawn, saddling horses. They spend all day in the saddle, getting back to the barn at dark, and still manage to put three square meals on the table for their families. Some feminists might consider this combination of tasks demeaning. In reality, such responsibilities give these women – those who are capable of doing it – a higher sense of accomplishment and self worth, as well as the respect of their families and coworkers.



Ceily Rae Highberger

Marilyn Monroe said, "I don't mind living in a man's world, so long as I can be a woman in it." When we heard this quote, branding season came to mind. Cooking breakfast for the crew, saddling up early, making a big circle, trotting toward the branding fire, sweeping up two on a big soggy calf, stacking the dallies on a mulehide horn – just another day in paradise for us.

It's not unusual to see several girls out there working

on a crew. They might have long braids down their backs, lipstick and mascara and painted nails. But they're doing a job, just like everyone else. What sets them apart: the ability to be feminine while also being tough as nails. Looking beautiful while covered in dust is more than a physical trait; it's accompanied by an aura of confidence.

At a branding, someone once asked Reata why she painted her nails and wore lipstick when she knew she was going to get dirty. She replied, "If my nails are

painted, you can't see the dirt under them. As for the lipstick, I think it makes me rope better."

We aren't feminists, and we don't like chauvinists. In fact, we aren't fond of labels at all. We strive to be women proud of our capabilities, who don't belittle the capabilities of others to make ourselves seem more competent.



Some new silver work by Nevada Watt



In R&R's 3.1 Hen House story, we incorrectly attributed some silver to Nevada Watt. We apologize for any confusion.



# Lessons in Living

A photographic portfolio, years in the making, celebrates Great Basin ranch families at work and at play.

Text and Photography by Madeleine Blake

The photographs on the following pages are from a four-year photographic survey documenting the lives of six Great Basin ranching families. I spent several days on each shoot, essentially moving in with the families to give them time to get comfortable with me and my camera. Unposed, these images reflect ordinary days in extraordinary lives. The way children are raised provides a deep understanding of many aspects of family, community and culture. Unlike



*Clare, Joe, Martin, Gabriel, Luke and Pearl (the dog). Joe and Joyce McKay adopted six children from Haiti. The kids are superb horsepersons, not only helping with ranch chores, but bringing home buckles and checks from junior rodeo competitions.*



*Winter Feeding, Little Humboldt Ranch, Paradise Valley, Nevada.* The cattle don't hesitate once hay hits the ground, so Joe and Sam Harper work hard to roll it out quickly. They complete this chore, and chop ice along the ranch's creek and feed the rest of the livestock – horses, pigs and dogs – before they start their day as home-schooled students.

adults, children can spend the time that it takes to establish more than a superficial rapport. They both engage and disengage. It's usually quite easy for them to accept a camera being pointed toward them. After a while, they just go about their way.

I am, by far, more interested in what works than in what doesn't. It's important to share such discoveries, especially in times when we're inundated with negativity. I found ranch-raised children, even the youngsters, to be resourceful in solving problems – especially mechanical ones. They also seem to think of work as part of life, rather than a job one goes to for a specified number of hours. For them, play blends into work and vice versa. Their respect for authority, easily seen, can be attributed in part to living around livestock and ranch equipment, where stakes are high and outcomes can be serious. The kids I met were all fiercely independent and responsible, yet committed and interdependent as a family.

Delving into the traditional American West is, for me, a humbling lesson in living close to the land, experiencing weather and the whims of nature, and figuring one's way through hard times and good. Our western heritage is deeply ingrained in our society, yet most of us, especially urbanites, stumble through life, unaware of its contribution. I am deeply grateful to each of the families that I photographed for enriching my life.





*Luke McKay.* Astride his horse, Luke looks forward to a day of competition. Rodeo is a social event as well as a competitive one, and he'll get to see friends from around the region.



*Airborne.* Isabel Stoddart has no need of a jungle gym. Horses and haystacks, creeks and open spaces provide great exercise of both body and mind. The haystack morphed to a ship, then to a castle in very little time.



*Haying, TJ Quarter Circle Ranch, Burns, Oregon.* At 12, Visalia Hammond has been driving a truck for nearly a decade. She's indispensable when it comes to haying.



*All is Calm, Crooked Creek Ranch, Nevada. Will Stoddart throws a perfect loop. Notice that none of the cattle are flustered. The girls in the background stand rodear, as there are no fences on this half-million acre ranch.*



*Partners. Before their team roping event in Vale, Oregon, Joe and Gabriel McKay discuss strategies.*







*An Unlikely Trio, Little Humoldt Ranch, Paradise Valley, Nevada. Sam Harper introduces his Limousin steer to his cat.*



*The Littlest Buckeroo. Reuban Stoddart assesses the morning as he prepares to work cattle in the big open. He'll be with his mom as she stands rodear, learning a task that he'll perform on his own in a few years.*



*Like Father, Like Daughter.* Visalia Hammond's dad is the artist Carl Hammond. He and Visalia's grandmother, Dorothy Hammond, have encouraged Visalia in all of her artistic and ranching pursuits.

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*Stampede String, Walking Box Ranch, Juntura, Oregon.*  
Clare McKay, regal after a day of junior rodeo.

Madeleine Graham Blake is the co-author, with Tupper Ansel Blake and William Kittredge, of *Balancing Water: Restoring the Klamath Basin* and *Mandeville Island: A Fine Balance*, and co-author, with Linda Husa, of *The Family Ranch: Land, Children and Tradition in the American West*. In 2003, with Tupper Ansel Blake, she photographed for the David and Lucile Packard Foundation's Conserving California Landscape Initiative. From 2005-2010, she produced four short documentaries for the Western Folklife Center's Deep West Video Project. She received an Irvine Foundation Arts Grant in 2012 to photograph people in California's Butte Valley. And, her work has been published in numerous magazines. She lives in Lower Klamath Lake, California, with her husband, Tupper, and their Jack Russell, Mick.





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# Brave Old Men and Their Horses

“I prayed very hard to be able some day to ride  
and handle a horse as that old man could.”

Story and Photography by Arnold Rojas



Joaquin and Juan Feliz astride alert horses, at Paso Ranch.





A rusty bridle bit, a broken spur, a few scraps of fading tradition are all that remain of a classic horsemanship that thrived for 150 years in California.

Gone are the *rancheros*, the grave, bearded men of Arab dignity whose stately gestures were as eloquent as their clipped, archaic Castilian; gone are the youths who rode out into the wilds to capture the truculent grizzly bear with rawhide ropes; gone are the girls with the soft, brown Moorish eyes who danced whole days and nights with a tireless vitality; gone are the musicians who strummed guitars through days and nights of *fiesta*; gone are the gentle Indian retainers who were to meet injustice with dignity.

Gone are the great ranchos with their broad acres and sprawling, flat-roof adobe houses, where the stranger was welcome to stay for a day or for a lifetime; gone are the cactus hedges which enclosed the apricots, figs, olives, grapes and pomegranates which Semites had brought to Spain from some far Eastern land.

Gone are the rodeos with their thousands of milling, bawling, wild-eyed cattle, held in check by eager, gallant little mustangs; gone are the *vaqueros* with their silver-inlaid bits and spurs, their buttoned, braided reins and *ramals*, their beautiful, tooled-leather saddles on which were always strapped the ever ready *reatas* that held death in their sinuous loops.

I met him on one of those mornings which could come only to the Southern California of 50 years ago. It was late February after a rain. The sun was warm and all the world was green, with a carpet of grass spreading knee-deep over the Rosa De Castilla Hills that rim the San Gabriel Valley. The orange trees were in bloom, and the fragrance of *azahar*, so loved by the Moors of Spain, hung in the heavy, drowsy air. The green of the trees melting into the darker shades of the Sierra Madres, capped with snow on the higher peaks in the

background, unrolled a panorama of Southern California I knew in my boyhood and shall always love and remember.

He came riding through the *alfileria*, sitting erect in his high-horned saddle, reins nipped delicately in the fingers of his left hand, and I knew him to be a *hijo del pais* (son of the country). He was an old man. His bearded face was seamed and weatherbeaten, yet it had a touch of race common to the old *Californianos*.

He rode one of the finest horses I had ever seen – a bright blood bay with black points, and not a single white hair on his body; even his hoofs were black. Young as I was and as little as I knew about horses, I could recognize this blood bay's quality as the old man rode up and stopped beside me.

He greeted me in that half-mocking tone all old men of that period used when they spoke to kids.

"*Ah, vagamundo, para donde vas?*" (Ah, vagabond, where are you going?).

"*Tio, vine a verlo trabajar su caballo.*" (Uncle, I came to see you work your horse.) I had sense enough to acknowledge kinship in respect for his gray hairs.

The old man smiled.

The horse was standing perfectly still; only his ears moved back and forth. The old man moved his feet. The spur chain rattled against the metal bottom of the stirrup. The horse was instantly alert. His ear turned back, the better to catch any signal from his rider. The old man raised his reins and twisted his wrist ever so slightly. The horse spun to the left. The old man twisted his wrist in the opposite direction. The horse spun to the right. The old man raised his reins and shook them. The horse trotted backwards. Suddenly the old man leaned forward, and instantly the horse sprang forward and stopped when the man dropped the reins on his neck. The old man walked the horse two hundred paces away from me and turned him around toward me. He



Frank Arviso shown with Don Toribio Cordova, head vaqueros on Tejon Ranch for many years. Many of the old-timers, such as Don Toribio, never lost their nerve or spirit of adventure. Though after a trying day they groaned all night in their sleep, pride of profession made them the first to undertake a chore most young men hesitated to try.

stood for a moment, then he tightened his reins and leaned forward. The horse leaped into a fast run. When he was abreast of me, the old man squeezed his legs, and raised the hand which held the reins; but he did not pull. The horse came to a sliding stop. If the old man

had been carrying a glass of water, he would not have spilled a drop.

I was reminded of the stories my grandmother had told of riders racing to bring her a glass of wine, and stopping their horses with a tray of glasses in their hands without spilling a drop, at the *fiestas* in Los Angeles a century ago when she and California had been young together, and she had danced the *varsoviana* with Don Andres and Don Pio Pico.

Here was a perfect affinity, a horse in accord with his master. It is said that when a person wishes hard, he prays. If that is true, then I prayed; for I wished very hard to be able some day to ride and handle a horse as that old man could. With the reins hanging loose, he had used his body and legs to move that horse smoothly, rhythmically and beautifully.

On that day I became the shadow of Andres Palomino. Palomino is an old Castilian surname, and, in this case, had nothing to do with the color of a yellow horse, but instead was derived from the noun *paloma* (dove).

Andres Palomino would mount me on one of his horses, and as I rode beside him he would give me terse counsel on handling horses; and these are some of the spare, pointed rules which he set forth in the short time I sat at his feet, so to speak, and learned about horses. Our Moorish-Andalusian





ancestors left us a heritage which all *hijos del pais* foster and hold dear. Our way of riding is still the art of those ancient *jinetes*, the shifting of the weight, the pressure of the knees, the placing of the spur against the horse's side to establish communication between horse and rider, which we call *ayudas* (aids). If you signal your horse by using the aids, you will not have to pull continuously on your horse's mouth and your horse will not become hard from the constant pulling. His mouth as a result will remain responsive.

"Teach your horse to stop early in the morning rather than late in the afternoon. A horse worked in the afternoon will not dry out. Most cases of strangles result from a horse passing the night with a wet coat. Besides, in the early morning the sun's rays are horizontal, and if a man is not sensitive enough in the seat of his pants to feel by the horse's movements when his horse's feet are in the right position for the pull, then the rider can watch his shadow so he can see the position of the horse's legs, and pull him to a sliding stop."

One morning I arrived as he was saddling a young horse. I watched him pull the cinch up tight.

"It is better to cure whatever sores a horse may get than to mend broken bones when the saddle turns because of a loose cinch. Besides, a broken neck can never be mended."

He led the horse around in a small circle for a few turns. This practice is called "*Tres pasos de la Muerte*" (Three paces of death). Vaqueros do this to avoid being hurt in case the horse is a cinch-binder (falls over backwards when cinched tightly).

"It is better for the horse to fall with the empty saddle. That way he will only break the cantele, and that is better than for him to break the rider's neck.

"It is hard to put a rein on a horse without cattle. With cattle the horse does not always have his mind on his rider, and has a purpose in turning and stopping.

After he has learned to turn after a cow, he will associate the laying of the rein on his neck with turning, and besides, the work takes the edge off a colt.

"See that the knot on the *jaquima* is tied so that it won't loosen. A knot that works loose when the colt is pulled causes him to pull or lug on the *jaquima*.

"Do not ride a colt in the *jaquima* too long without putting a bit in his mouth or he will become habituated to the *jaquima*, and as a result will be hard to accustom to the bit. Most luggers are made that way.

"Do not tie the rein of the *jaquima* to the saddle to give the colt a headset. Doing that will only teach him to lay against it, and he will lose all feeling around his nose.

"Do not pull a colt with both reins of the *jaquima* to stop him. Pull by doubling him with one rein. And do not pull a colt more than once a day.

"There is no such thing as a stupid horse; there are only stupid riders; and if a man says his horse is no good, it is because the man is no good.

"In riding horses one must remember that the art of reining horses is centuries old, that only the purpose, not the method, has changed; that the use of bits was established by exact laws and principles of mechanics that have proved accurate since the Moors brought the art of riding *a la Jineta* into Spain; that good reinsmen are always old men, that there is no substitute for patience in teaching a horse; that if a horse doesn't do as his rider wishes it is because the horse doesn't understand his rider.

"Never put a bit without a port in your horse's mouth. A horse cannot keep his tongue in place with a bit that has no port, because the tongue is always slipping over the mouthpiece and letting it rest on the bars and bruising them."

The vaquero of California inherited the science of *la jineta* and adopted it to the working of cattle and the

lassoing of grizzly bears, buffalo, elk and any other animal that he met in the course of his riding. The sliding stop, the spin to the right or to the left, and the trot backwards and the *testerazo* (the blow with the horse) were retained, while the techniques of warfare – such as the *capriole*, in the execution of which the horse leaps into the air and kicks to rid himself of clinging enemies – while very useful to the Spanish when Aztec warriors swarmed around them, were discarded when the soldiers settled on the ranches to raise cattle; but at heart the old soldiers remained cavalrymen.

Brave old men. Almost every ranch carried one or two old men on the payroll. They could hold their own or even better the best young men in the daily work of the range. They were old-timers who never lost their nerve, the spirit of youth or the instinct for adventure though their hair was white and their weather-beaten faces bore the stamp of years.

Though they groaned all night in their sleep after a trying day and were the objects of muttered abuse from the boys they kept awake, when morning came they were always ready to accept the challenge of a struggle with man or beast, or to enter into any adventure to prove that age could not conquer them. Perhaps it was the pride of their profession that made them the first to undertake a chore that some young men would hesitate to try.

Victor Ortega would put a dollar on each stirrup and ride a bucking horse without losing either coin. Juan Perez, nearly 90, could rope a 100 calves before he missed a throw. Tiny, shriveled old Avelino Martinez tucked a six shooter into his shirt to command respect he got from all men. Jesus Lopez sat aching on his horse until all his men had eaten before dismounting to eat himself. Bruno Contreras picked his old body off the ground when bucked off by the white horse and climbed on again for a repeat performance.

Old Cholo Valenzuela would take a green colt, ridden two or three times, teach him to stand, then take two boxes and make a platform to mount the colt from. Jesus Garcia could ride a little roan mare for a week working with buckaroos that changed horses every day, and do more work than any of them without hurting the little mare.

David Sesenia would mount a horse with a loose saddle, and reaching down, give the latigo a pull until the cinch was tightened as the horse bucked.

Joe Alvarado was a fellow whose shirt was always pressed and clean and whose boots never lost their shine no matter how dusty the day. A man who could bulldog steers from a motorcycle, he was a good roper, rider, and knife-thrower who turned out to be a cattle association detective.

Juan Bravo, a noted early day horsebreaker, once threw a loop across the Calloway canal to rope an animal on the opposite bank.

The little scrub horse. I came upon the threadbare rider and his scrawny little horse at a rodeo in the Temblor Hills. The pair was holding one side of the herd. I call him the threadbare rider because his clothes looked as if he were making a desperate effort to get one more day's wear out of them before they fell apart. They were so worn and patched. His hat brim would long since have drooped down over his eyes if he had not interwoven a buckskin string around the edges to keep it from flopping. His shirt was patched at the elbows with pieces of the same buckskin that held up his hat brim. His pants were worn white along the legs where the constant friction of the reins and ramal had rubbed them. They were patched across the seat and along the inside of the legs. Even his boots had been reinforced at the toes and heels, but even there spurs had worn a hole at the heels.

Obviously, the needs of this old man's family were





of first importance and precluded his spending on himself and obliged him to wear his clothes until they could be worn no longer. It could be seen that this old man had a thrifty wife who had to spread a meager wage thin over many urgent needs. In a word he was poor, but his clothes were clean. His efforts to prolong the life of the leather in his saddle, bridle and reins was apparent in their well-soaped appearance. In any other occupation this old man would have long since been pensioned off, and left to end his days in peace.

Undersized, hairy-legged, ewe-necked, hammer-headed, roman-nosed, walleyed and unlovely, the little horse's appearance was in keeping with that of his rider. He was one of those mustangs that nature shapes by vigorous, unrelenting selection to survive hunger, thirst, cold, heat, unremitting toil and man's brutality. I never tired of watching the little horse work. He would lay his ears back, leap out after an escaping cow, and drive her back into the herd without the least guidance of his rider. With his teeth bared and his eyes rolling, he was the very image of rage incarnate as he followed the cow.

The old man had become aware of the delight I

took in watching the little horse work; consequently, when I rode up to him and offered a smoke, he accepted it. Thus having put him in a good mood, I said, "*Ese caballito no tiene par.*" (That little horse has no peer.)

"*Es corrientito,*" (He's a little scrub.) he answered. "*Pero de mucho corrazon. Muchas veces estos caballitos tienen mas capacidad para aprender que los grandes bonitos.*" (But of great heart. It is often that these little scrub horses have more capacity to learn than larger, prettier ones), I defended. The old man smiles.

"*Si, porque es en un principio sincronizan el pensamiento con el del hombre que los monta.*" (Yes, because from the very beginning they synchronize their thoughts with those of their rider.)

For many years, in many lands, from many horsemen, I have sought knowledge of horses; but none have ever explained the art of managing a horse so succinctly as the threadbare old rider on his scrawny little roan in the Temblor Hills.

In those few terse words lies the answer to a world of problems in managing a horse, "Synchronize the thoughts of the rider to



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*Publisher's Note:* The late Arnold Rojas, last of the vaqueros, was an intelligent, energetic, self-taught man who knew and loved the world of the California horse and vaquero, saw it vanishing, and described as much of it as he could in books such as *These Were the Vaqueros* and *Vaqueros and Buckaroos* as well as uncollected articles written especially for *The Californians* magazine. This superb magazine on California history was published by Jean and Michael Sherrell from 1983 - 1995 and we are pleased to offer some of the stories Mr. Rojas wrote for *The Californians* through the gracious permission of its publisher, Michael Sherrell. His late wife, Jean, edited the magazine and following each of Mr. Rojas' stories, they gave readers the following insight into his writings: "The atmosphere, detail, knowledge and expression he captured paved the way for us to reenter another era and ride with the vaqueros. Before he died, Arnold – always a generous man who gave gifts as if your acceptance was a favor – asked us to see that his world was represented correctly, as he recorded it in his writings, for as many people as possible, beginning with our readers. Arnold's stories are illustrated with photos from his own collection and other repositories of cowboys, vaquero and horse lore, as well as with original drawings by cowboy-artist-sculptor Jack Swanson, our friend and Arnold's." We thank Mr. Sherrell for allowing us to help keep Mr. Rojas' words alive.



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## RANGE RADIO

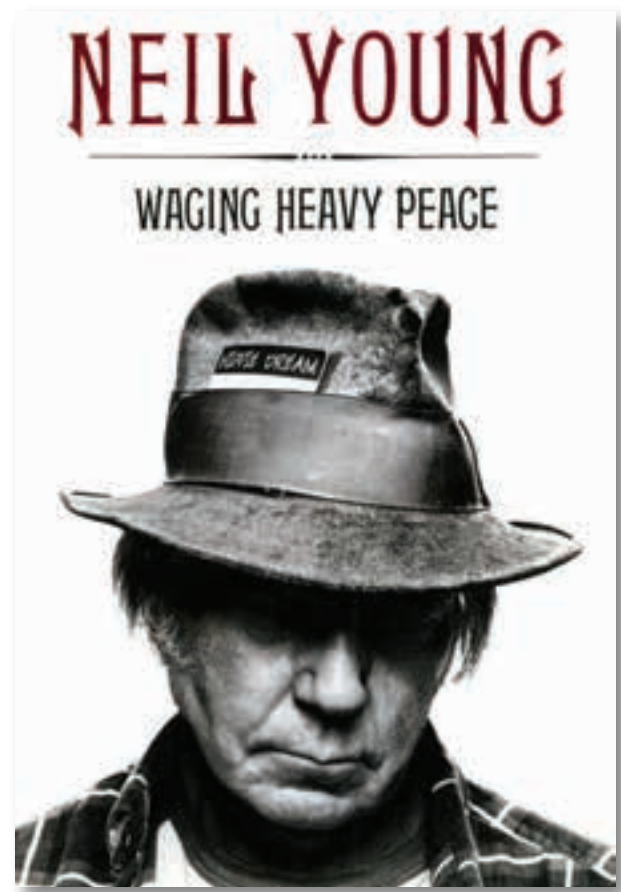
# Neil Young: Not All Who Wander Are Lost



138

Last year, the legendary musical over-achiever, Neil Young released his memoir, really an extended chat with fans, *Waging Heavy Peace*. In its five hundred some pages we are treated with a wandering look at the life of this incredible musician/force of nature. Among the things we hear in his unique written voice is a perspective on music – his music – and how he gets from here to there and why it is so important to him.

“When music is your life, there is a key that gets to your core. I am so grateful to still have Crazy Horse (his band), knock on wood. You see, they are my window to the cosmic world where music lives and breathes. I can find myself there and go to a special area of my soul where those songs graze like buffalo. The herd is still there, and the plains are endless. Just getting there is the key thing, and Crazy Horse is my way of getting there. That is the place where music lives in my soul. It is not my youth, time or age. I dream of playing those long jams and floating over the herd like a condor. I dream of the changing wind playing on my feathers, my







brothers and sisters around me, silently telling their stories and sharing their spirits with the sky. They are my life. How often can a guy make a living doing that? Not that often is my guess, so I accept the extreme nature of my blessing and burdens, my gifts and messages, my children with their uniqueness, my wife with her endless beauty and renewal. Am I too cosmic about this? I think not, my friend. Do not doubt me in my sincerity, for it is which has brought us to each other now.”

If you are someone who doesn't own eight or ten Neil Young albums, this book may not be for you. On the other hand, if you do; it's a must read as it confirms what we all suspected. He is still the coolest guy in the room. BR



Here is a link to a very early and unique performance of Neil Young's early hit, "Sugar Mountain," by fellow Canadian artist, Joni Mitchell. <http://youtu.be/22uNQUkiWMk>

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# The Road Trip List

More classic must-have tunes from those early morning sojourns to the rodeo, a roping or just a drive to the office.

## #22 Gillian Welch, *The Harrow and the Harvest*

This little section of *Ranch & Reata* is dedicated to providing folks on the move with music to enjoy and ponder. Since there are many of you out there who spend hours, days, weeks in vehicles and whether you're heading for a neighbor's gather, a rodeo in another state or just driving to the office; our selection this month, Number 22 in an ongoing list, we feel will be especially satisfying on those long slow crawls – because it features the incredible singer/songwriter Gillian Welch.

A couple of years ago Ms. Welch and her partner Dave Rawlings opened for the short-lived reuniting of the Buffalo Springfield. The anticipation of seeing the Springfield again – I saw them last about a billion years ago in 1968 – would have trampled the attention span of most audiences but Welch and Rawlings had 'em in the palm of their hand. Between the incredible writing and solid playing of Welch and the heaven-inspired solo playing of Dave Rawlings – not to mention their stage setting rendition of Jefferson Airplane's stoner anthem, "White Rabbit," the two graciously and expertly set the mood for a dip back into the 60s with Neil Young, Stephen Stills, Richie Furay et al. So at the end of their opening set, Welch and Rawlings picked up their stage stuff, high-fived Young as they passed and simply walked into the night.

It would have been an unnerving moment for many musicians – being the lead in for legends – but Welch and Rawlings handled their opportunity with the skill and



grace of artists who new precisely why they were there – simply to be who they are and play what they play.

Gillian Welch and her “sprawling, soulful tunes” as they have been called will lull you into a way better place than the inside of your pick-up cab. Her partnership with the incredible Dave Rawlings is a creative collaboration that is steeped in southern influence, harkening back to the Stanley Brothers and their ilk along with the likes of Robert Earl Keene, John Hartford and vintage John Prine. Listening to these artists helped Welch define the sound she wanted. So it comes as no surprise that the story songs of Welch’s 2011 effort with Rawlings, *The Harrow & the Harvest* is entrancing from start to “The Way the Whole Thing





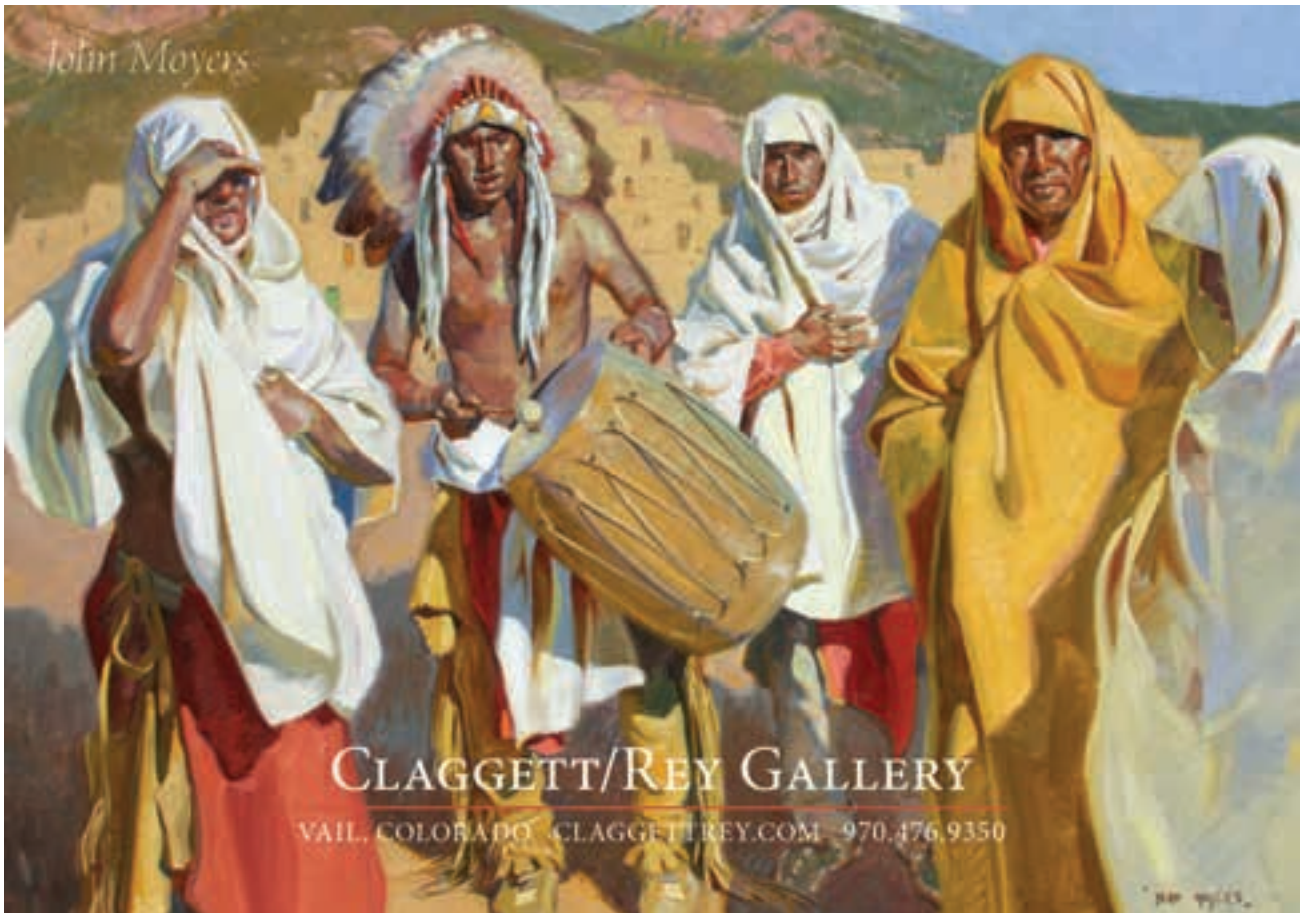
Ends.” It is an album that allows the two artists the space to stretch and play. Not bad for a artist who essentially taught herself to play guitar in her bedroom – influencing only herself by playing the chords from song

books spread out in front of her. Gillian Welch is a sensitive treasure and *The Harrow & The Harvest* – if you are not familiar with her music and the playing of Dave Rawlings – is a grand gift and a superb introduction to the grace and wonder of their wooden music. [www.gillianwelch.com](http://www.gillianwelch.com)



The making of the letterpress album cover for *The Harrow & The Harvest*.

One of the unique things about this album is the fact that Welch and Rawlings turned a blind eye to the notion that printing is a dead end road and utilized fine letterpress as the method of creating their album cover – within the jewel case. Here is the story of the making of their album cover as told by the folks at Aardvark Letterpress in Los Angeles. [http://youtu.be/k\\_Mz\\_imdISk](http://youtu.be/k_Mz_imdISk)



# A Western Moment

*“This will introduce Channing Peake.”*

June, 28, 33  
Friend Mr. Dixon,  
This will introduce  
Channing Peake, a good friend of  
mine, and one with plenty of  
ability in an art way. His  
big interest is the Nevada  
Country & People — and Ed  
Borain says he does them well,  
which is praise indeed!  
Sorry I can't be with  
him when he drops in on you  
but he's heard me talk "Dixon"  
so much he's anxious to  
know you.  
My best to you all  
Sincerely  
Joe De Yong.

Earlier in this issue's "Of Note" section, we told you about a truly wonderful retrospective exhibition being held this summer at University of California, Santa Barbara, of works by Picasso and one, Channing Peake. For many, it will be an introduction to Peake's art. Channing Peake's artistic life unusually fascinating. He was an accomplished artist, rancher and horseman who moved within a close-knit community of talented, sometimes mysteriously interesting people — all over the world. Doesn't sound that unusual now but during the first part of the last century, things happened slower — no jets, no world wide "inter-web" to slice distance and time to nothing. So it is a gracious moment in Peake's life that we share here, when three interesting people interact via a handwritten introduction bringing Channing Peake together with artist Maynard Dixon for the first time via the charming words of Joe De Yong, in the year of our Lord, nineteen-hundred and thirty-three.

Joe De Yong,  
Santa Barbara  
California

Maynard Dixon,  
728 Montgomery St  
San Francisco.

Introducing Channing Peake

Letter and envelope courtesy of Cheri Peake





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## TWO WRAPS AND A HOOEY

# Lest We Forget

Recently I was watching the John Wayne/John Ford classic, *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*. This film is an education not only in film making but of the era in which it was made. The movie won an Oscar for cinematography, an achievement that can be partially credited to the fact that John Ford and his cinematographer, Winton Hoch, based much of the film's lighting and imagery on the paintings and sculpture of one Frederick Remington. Think about that for a minute – considering fine art as visual inspiration is a pretty elegant approach to making a cowboy movie. Of course the location didn't hurt either as Monument Valley is way better than Warner's backlot and green screen.

There is a touching scene in the film when Wayne's aging war-horse character, Capt. Nathan Brittles is being retired and has one last review of his troops. His men

present him with a silver pocket watch engraved with the sentiment, "Lest We Forget." It is a telling moment – both in the film and the environment of the country.

An era was changing, the film was released in 1949 as the country was moving headlong into the 1950s. Big post-war social changes were in the works. Communism became a word every school kid would learn. And just at the last minute, Wayne's Nathan Brittles was pulled back from riding into the sunset at the end of the film to be "reassigned" as a scout

for the Army. California had been his goal and the far west was still his future. So, for the rest of us, was the growing cultural game changer – television. In 1949, there were 30,000 television sets operating in the United States and it would, among other things, bring the "new west" into people's homes with popular western television shows, often featuring fading silver-screen



photo by Adam Jabiel



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cowboys given renewed opportunity to reach new audiences. It was an era that would last until the late 1960s when cowboys and horses were replaced with spaceships and talking cars. An elegant era of simple, value based story telling was ending.

This was really brought home to me a couple of years ago while attending an auction of items from the closed Roy Rogers & Dale Evans Museum. After Roy retired from films and television in the 1960s, he and Dale created a little museum in the high-desert town of Victorville, California. It was their celebration of all things Roy and Dale and featured things from their careers including movie posters, stills, costumes, souvenir lunch boxes – even Nellie Belle the Jeep and Roy’s trusty horse, Trigger – lovingly “stuffed” into his signature rearing position. I can remember meeting Roy Rogers for an interview there in the early 1990s (a large moment for me). As we chatted, he took me on a tour of the museum, dressed exactly as you would picture him, and greeted every guest he saw. He would welcome them and stand for a photo but whenever the conversations got too gushy he would skillfully extricate himself by saying, “Hold on, did you hear that? It’s Trigger, he’s calling me, better see if he’s in trouble!” He smiled with a wink and we walked away. Incredible. He was Roy Rogers – all the time.

So it was a bit disheartening as I entered that auction to see all those memories one last time before they were disbursed to the four winds, to hear a young 30-ish family – obviously walking through for just something to do, ask me, “So who’s Roy Rogers?”

Yikes. Were they kidding? Later I realized I guess I shouldn’t have been surprised. Each generation has its own heroes and its own celebrity moments. Film – and the internet – help us remember but just as Capt. Nathan Brittles was saved from riding into the sunset by a grateful US Army, it was because, in the film’s story, he was needed. Roy and Dale’s era may be over, their friendly and fun museum gone, but their values, their approach to family and life, live on. Because they are needed. Their elegant and courteous approach to life is worthy of respect and emulation. Lest We Forget. BR





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