

The Journal of the American West

# Ranch & Reata

Volume 3.4 \$14.95



Our Western Holiday Issue

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## FRONT GATE



*photo by Julie Chase Baldocchi*

An 8 year-old Kate Neubert, stepping off her horses and embracing a new challenge.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>FRONT GATE</b>	1	By Julie Chase Baldocchi	<b>FEATURE</b>	120	Generation Next By Rod Miller
<b>EDITOR'S NOTE</b>	6	A Little More Hope, a Little Less Fear By A. J. Mangum	<b>A VISIT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN</b>	124	Being Successful with Horses and Other Humans, Part 2
<b>OF NOTE HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE</b>	10	New Things from Out West	<b>LIGHTIN' OUT</b>	130	Unbuilding By Melissa Mylchreest
<b>BY HAND AND HEART</b>	58	One Human Hand By Emily Esterson	<b>THE HEN HOUSE</b>	142	Unlikely Candidates By Reata Brannaman, Nevada Watt, Ceily Rae Highberger and Hannah Ballantyne
<b>BOOKS TO FIND</b>	66	Three Little Books	<b>PHOTOGRAPHY</b>	146	Simple and Soulful Photography by Julie Chase Baldocchi
<b>THE COOK HOUSE</b>	70	Pam Ewing's California Red Enchiladas By Kathy McCraine	<b>FEATURE</b>	158	Nostalgia By Arnold Rojas
<b>FEATURE</b>	74	What Painting Is By A. J. Mangum	<b>MUSIC</b>	170	The Road Trip List #24 & 25
<b>YOUR HORSE'S FEET</b>	84	Cowboy Shoeing By Pete Healey, APF	<b>A WESTERN MOMENT</b>	174	Braided Art of Ernie Morris Jay Harney
<b>FEATURE</b>	86	Cover Girl, Ashley Riggs By Thea Marx	<b>PUBLISHER'S NOTE</b>	175	Two Wraps and a Hooey By Bill Reynolds
<b>FEATURE</b>	92	The Songster, Redefined By Hal Cannon			
<b>THE WESTERN HORSE</b>	98	Send in the Clones By Paul A Cañada			
<b>HORSEMANSHIP</b>	102	Upcoming Horsemanship Clinics			
<b>FEATURE</b>	104	Through the Looking Glass with Ramblin' Jack Elliott By Tom Russell			

**Cover image:** The art of the western buckle is about more than just holding up one's Wranglers. TCAA silversmith Mark Drain makes western dreams come true in sterling silver and gold. Photograph courtesy the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum and the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association.

# Ranch & Reata



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

# A Little More Hope, a Little Less Fear

By A.J. Mangum

Some version of the scene played out countless times every spring. Long after dark, on a cold night, I'd bundle up in a heavy coat and wool cap, and pull on a pair of muck boots, standard farm footwear for Oregon's wetter season. My dad and I would walk the hundred or so yards between the house and the horse barn, a flashlight beam dancing across the ground in front of us.

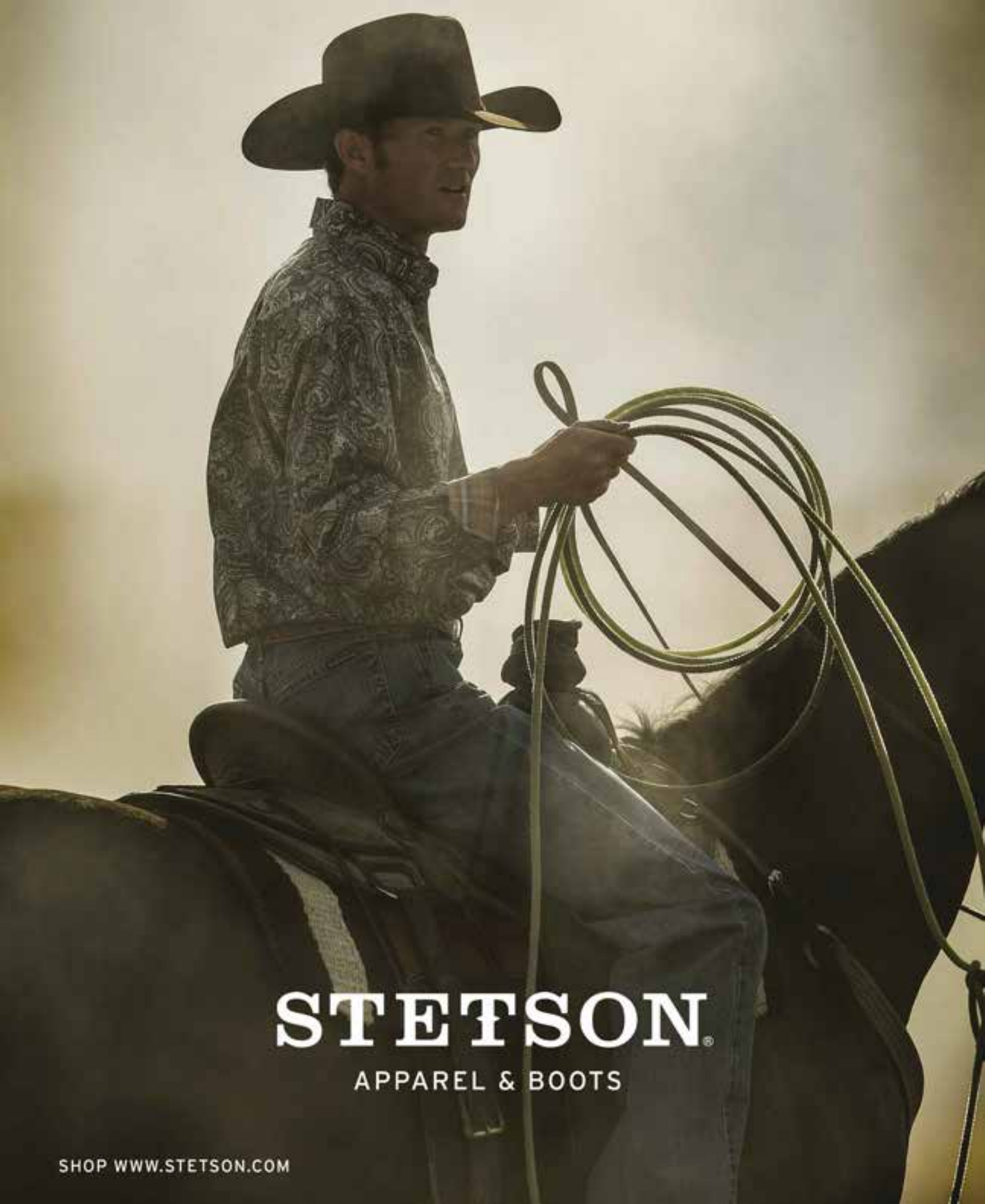
The barn was a cavernous wooden structure, its shell built in the early 20th century, with an architecture unique to the Northwest and northern Rockies – a high-peaked tin roof and an exterior of weathered lumber. A haystack, several hundred bales we wouldn't touch until late spring, occupied the center of the barn, separating two rows of stalls. The stalls along the barn's south side were each a standard 12-by-12. Those along the north side were oversized 16-by-20 foaling stalls. We



had close to three dozen broodmares, but just four foaling stalls, reserved for those mares closest to their anticipated due dates. We'd slip into the barn through a back entrance, out of view of the mares, and quietly take seats in a darkened tack room.

The mare we suspected was closest to foaling always occupied the stall opposite the tack room. The





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haystack partially obscured our view, but also served to conceal our presence. Through a gap in the tack room door, we'd catch glimpses of the mare as she slowly paced in her stall, the scene dimly lit by a low-watt bulb. As I sat in the dark, listening over the sounds of the night for the mare's footfalls on a thick bed of straw, the sense of anticipation had a way of warping time; minutes could seem like hours, and hours could seem like moments.

On rare occasion, a mare would go into labor in front of us and require help, but most of these nights were relatively uneventful. Satisfied the mare was safe and that foaling was not imminent, we'd return to the house, perhaps with the intention of another wee-hours excursion. Often enough, we'd begin making morning rounds and find a healthy foal had arrived quietly overnight, and was standing beside its dam, already comfortable with its place in the world. Regardless of their all-too-frequent futility, though, those hours spent in our cold, dark tack room, awaiting the arrival of a new foal, remain among my most precious memories of childhood, a time when the endless possibilities a new foal represented could quicken my pulse, and thoughts of a horse's unknown destiny brought with them more hope than fear.

I'm not sure the boyhood version of myself would recognize today's horse industry, in which the collective fear of failure is so strong that once-ironclad registry rules are now routinely rewritten to assure breeders of advantages that nature might see fit to delay, or outright prohibit. Over the last 30 years, political pressure and lawsuits have forced registries to rewrite the very definitions of their breeds so that

vocal minorities of breeders can realize short-term reductions in risk, even if it means long-term damage to a breed's integrity.

These campaigns have created a stock-horse culture in which a full-fledged Paint Horse might also be a full-fledged Quarter Horse; a registered Quarter Horse and a registered Appaloosa might be indistinguishable; and a breeder can improve his odds of success by harvesting multiple embryos from a mare within a given year, with the idea of eventually casting off the inevitable oversupply of horses that fail to make the cut.

In this issue, contributor Paul Cañada writes about the cloning controversy now plaguing the Quarter Horse industry. A recent federal court ruling ordered the American Quarter Horse Association to begin registering clones, giving what was once nothing more than a sci-fi concept the potential to become a mainstream practice in the stock-horse world. (It's worth noting that the Jockey Club not only prohibits the registration of cloned Thoroughbreds, but also prohibits embryo transfers and even artificial insemination.) Instead of striving to produce foals that could be superior to their sires and dams, breeders – if that term would still apply – could simply extend the marketability of existing superstar horses by creating genetic copies. Thus, a fundamental tenet of breeding, that each generation should represent an improvement over the last, is lost.

No, that kid who spent so many spring nights shivering in a darkened tack room, excitedly pondering a foal's unwritten future, wouldn't recognize today's horse-breeding landscape. At times, I'm not sure I do, either.

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## Interesting Things and Stories from Out West

### OUR 2013 GIFT GUIDE

A little later in OfNote you will find our annual Holiday Wish List. It is filled with all kinds of things to help your gifting needs. Speaking of gifts, we would certainly be remiss if we didn't suggest the kindest gift of all – a gift subscription to *Ranch & Reata*. Visit [ranchandreata.com](http://ranchandreata.com) for the fastest and easiest way to handle your entire list. We guarantee the gift of *Ranch & Reata* won't show up as a re-gifted item at your New Year's Eve party!





## THE LEGENDARY MC RANCH CHUCK WAGON FINDS A HOME IN LAKEVIEW, OREGON.

This past August saw the opening of the MC Ranch Chuck Wagon Exhibit celebrating and displaying the old MC Ranch chuck wagon along saddles and gear from the historic MC Ranch. Hundreds converged upon the freshly completed MC Chuck Wagon Exhibit on the afternoon of Saturday, August 10, near the junction of highways 140 and 395, for a grand scale celebration – and the last meal to be served from the venerable, 120-year-old wagon that’s been out of service since the early 1950s. Not only did the

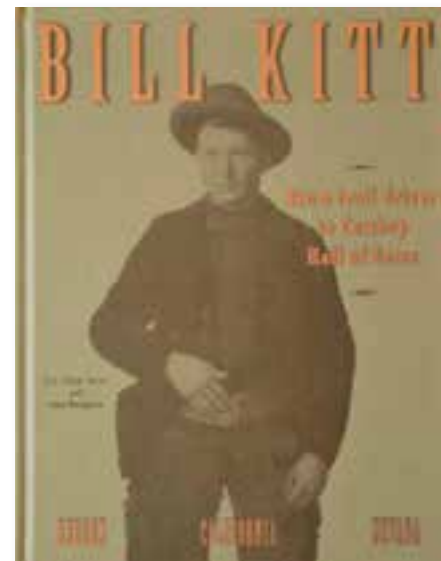


MC Chuck Wagon Exhibit building in Lakeview, OR

the project in coordination with the town of Lakeview. Nicol’s niece, Amy Thompson, with whom he co-authored the book *Bill Kitt: From Trail Driver to Cowboy Hall of Fame*, also coordinated the celebration and was markedly pleased with the turnout.

“It’s amazing,” she said. “We’re honored so many people wanted to take part in the celebration and be served the wagon’s ‘last meal’ before its installation.”

Nicol then spoke and gave a brief history of the MC Ranch as well as the chuck wagon, noting that authenticity was key in the exhibit’s construction. Old barn wood from the MC Ranch buck shack was utilized, inside the



occasion draw locals in droves, but many well-wishers and celebrants from multiple states also arrived for the occasion.

The celebration, of course, centered on the new, scenic addition to the town of Lakeview, a western-stylized exhibit building that houses the historic MC Ranch chuck wagon.

Among the guests attending was the project’s progenitor, Jack Nicol, who developed



Amy Thompson and Jack Nicol welcome the crowd.



The MC Chuck wagon and gear

building, along with genuine Warner Valley dirt.

“There isn’t going to be anything in there that didn’t come from where the wagon came from,” he said. “I kept the wagon, because I didn’t know where it would end up... I knew it belonged in Lake County, and judging by this



crowd, I’m glad you all agree with me.”

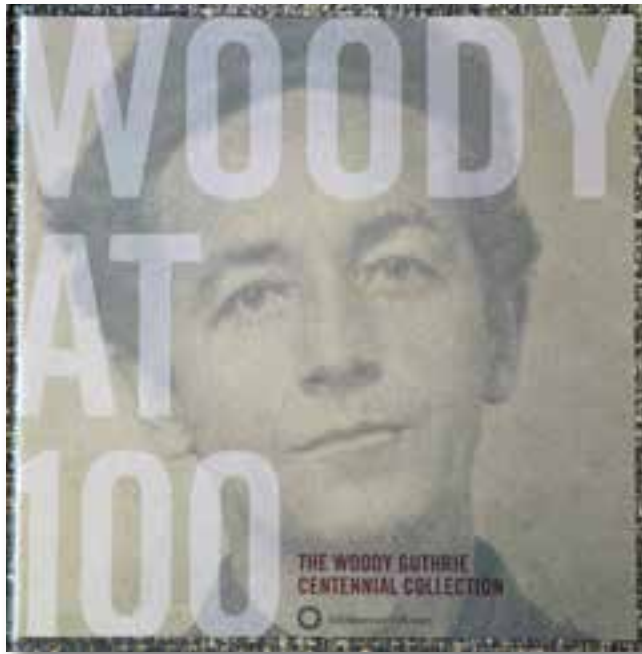
The project is the second of Jack Nicol’s to remember his family’s involvement with the MC Ranch. For more information on the exhibit and Nicol and Thompson’s superb labor of love biography of Bill Kitt – visit [www.mcchuckwagonexhibit.com](http://www.mcchuckwagonexhibit.com)

## SWEETBIRD STUDIO



Our pal Nancy Andersen at Sweetbird Studio creates one-of-kind buckles and jewelry and so much more that you MUST visit her website at [www.sweetbirdstudio.com](http://www.sweetbirdstudio.com). Of her work she says, “I call my buckles ‘wearable shrines of intention.’ In this age of big box, small connectedness, over simulation and undervaluing of precious life, I offer you my designs. Using jewelry as a vehicle for change is my way of connecting souls, inspiring others to live by their wits again and reawaken the wild nature in all of us.” Nancy is also on another mission – in her refurbished Airstream to celebrate creativity in America on a journey she calls, “Made In

America. By Grown Ups.” Follow her exploits on her website as well.



## WOODY AT 100

This glorious album-sized book/CD collection by Smithsonian Folkways Recordings celebrates the 10th anniversary of the birth of folk singer and activist Woody Guthrie. Illustrated extensively with Guthrie art, album covers and personal ephemera; the book is topped off with three CDs of Guthrie's true body of work. It is beyond special. [www.folkways.si.edu](http://www.folkways.si.edu)

## BEING MCQUEEN

This totally gratuitous shot of Steve McQueen from the classic rodeo film, "Junior Bonner" is simply here as a shameless promotional moment for an upcoming story by contributor, Dan Gagliasso on the making of the classic Peckinpah film. Stay tuned.



## CAA+TCAA+NC&WHM = COWBOY ARTISTRY

Each fall the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum features a show that combines the art and craft of the West in Cowboy Crossings filled with work from the Cowboy Artists of America and the cowboy craftsmanship of the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association. The members of each of these groups blow the doors off the Museum with their work – an example of which is the incredible buckle by

TCAA member Mark Drain which graces our cover this issue. For more information on the show, which opens October 11, visit [www.nationalcowboymuseum.org](http://www.nationalcowboymuseum.org)

## JOHN MORAN AUCTIONEERS: THE ESTATE OF ERNEST A. BRYANT III

Hosted by John Moran Auctioneers at the Pasadena Convention Center on November 12, this two-session auction boasts a full catalog of 450 lots of artwork, British and Continental antiques, British, American, and Continental silver, porcelain, high-end horse tack, saddles, spurs, bronzes, a superlative 1931 Ford Model 'A' Woody wagon and a 1965 Mercedes-Benz 230SL hardtop/convertible, period and contemporary California fine art and a large collection of works by Edward Borein, along with much more. Full-color catalogs will be available online and for purchase directly through John Moran Auctioneers.

Ernest Albert "Ernie" Bryant III (1931 – 2013) was born in Pasadena, California to Ernest Albert Bryant, Jr. and Judith Tilt Bryant. As a fourth-generation rancher and a third-generation art collector, Ernie inherited a rich legacy of stewardship of the land and an appreciation of culture and beauty from each of his parents. While the Bryant side of the family had deep ties to California ranching, the Tilt side of the family had a strong affinity for craftsmanship and the arts. This combined family history would positively influence Ernie's interests, adventures and acquisitions throughout his lifetime.

Ernie Bryant was truly a Renaissance man with an early California sensibility. Whether a beautiful painting, a handcrafted shotgun or a bucket of tools, Ernie would be happy to know that new collections will be started, and others expanded, with the works of art and objects that he loved and cared for throughout his rich life.

(Publisher's Note: My late father and I had the great pleasure of knowing "Ernie" – he was gracious and generous and had a passion for the West that was unsurpassed. He also collected "militaria" such as jeeps and cannons; as he said, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine." Ernie was one-of-kind – accent on kind – he will be missed.)

For more information on this important sale e-mail at [info@johnmoran.com](mailto:info@johnmoran.com) or visit [www.johnmoran.com](http://www.johnmoran.com)

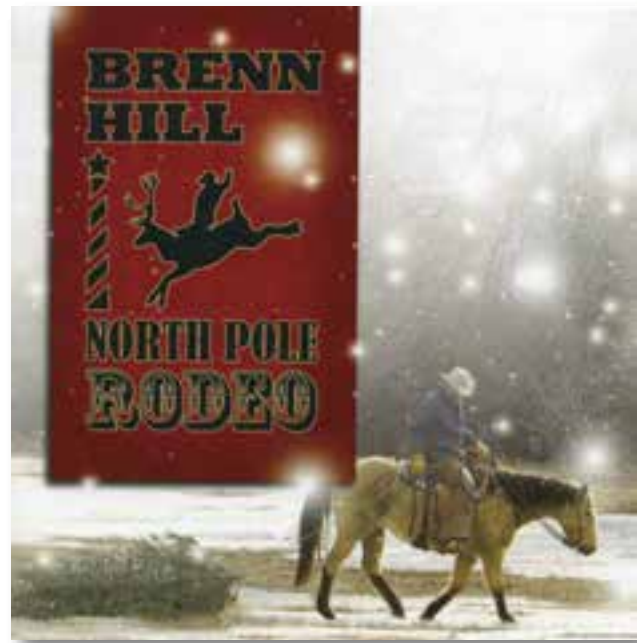






## A BRENN HILL CHRISTMAS – *NORTH POLE RODEO*

Red Cliffs Press has released the long-awaited Christmas recording by Hooper, Utah-based Singer/Songwriter Brenn Hill. Recorded in Salt Lake City, Utah, and produced by Brenn and multi-instrumentalist extraordinaire Ryan Tilby, this collection features Christmas favorites like “Oh Come All Ye Faithful,” “Silent Night,” and a honky-tonk version of “Rudolph the Red-Nose Reindeer,” as well as a few originals from Brenn like “Quinney’s Rigg’in,” and “North Pole Rodeo.” North Pole Rodeo is the ninth recording from artist Brenn Hill. For more information, go to [www.brennhill.com](http://www.brennhill.com) and click on “Music.”



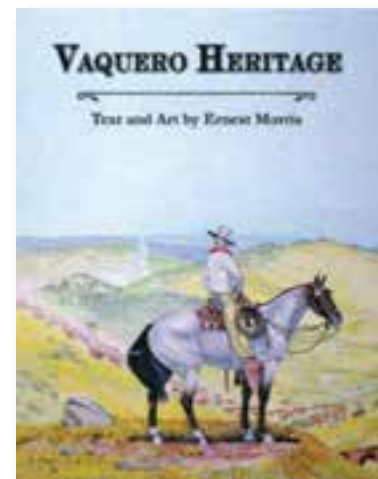
## *VAQUERO HERITAGE* – BOOK NO. 5 FOR ARTIST ERNIE MORRIS



Vaquero artist and classic creative human, Ernie Morris is about to release his fifth – and according to Ernie – his last book. Don’t believe it. Ernie’s previous books are the living links to classic vaquero ways and history. This one features many

new and personal stories and photos and art never before published. It is guaranteed to be a classic. Coming soon to [www.elvaquero.com](http://www.elvaquero.com)

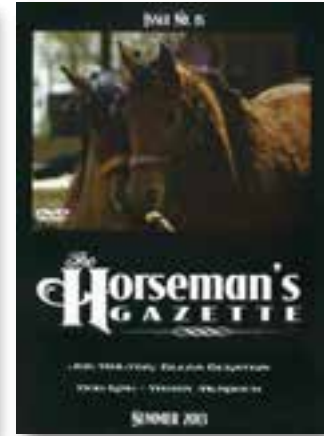
Don’t miss this one or any other of Ernie’s books.



## ECLECTIC HORSEMAN DVDS

Emily Kitching and her Eclectic Horseman site offer some of the best instructional materials for those looking to make a classic bridle horse. Every once-in-a-while she produces a video-magazine, *The Horseman's Gazette*. The new one is out along with all sorts of others including the story of Comanche, the horse that survived the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

Visit [www.eclectic-horseman.com](http://www.eclectic-horseman.com)



## CRISMAN SCULPTURE

Randee Crisman's art is often reflective of the dynamic honesty of the horse. The bonds between humans, their dogs and horses are powerful and intuitive feelings are challenging to portray. Sometimes her work leans towards the representational; other times more spare work having an almost abstract presence. Growing up in Montana taught her resourcefulness and independence early and often. She says she still has much to learn from horses as we all do.

Visit [www.randeecrisman.com](http://www.randeecrisman.com)

## BOOK, BOOK & BOOK

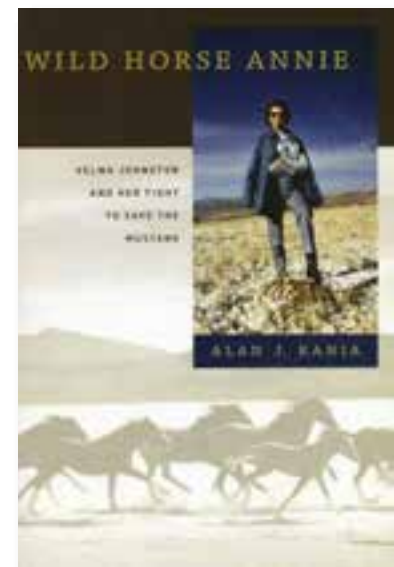
Three more books worthy of your nightstand available at your local indie book seller – shop there and support them!

*Wild Horse Annie Rides to the Rescue.*

By Alan J. Kania

In 1950, Velma Johnston, a shy Nevada ranch wife, came upon a horse trailer leaking blood. When she discovered the destination of the trailer and its occupants – a trio of terrified and badly injured wild horses – she launched a crusade that eventually reached the halls of Congress and changed the way westerners regard and treat the bands of mustangs and burros that roam their region.

Ms. Johnston, who became known as “Wild Horse Annie,” undertook to stop the removal of wild horses and burros from US public lands and protect





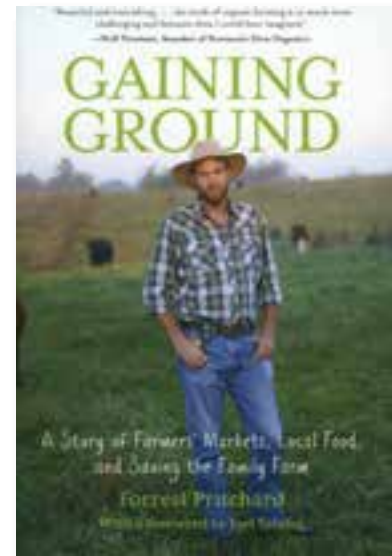
them from the worst aspects of mustanging. Her campaign attracted nationwide attention, as it led her from her rural Nevada County to state offices and finally to Washington, DC. Author Alan J. Kania worked closely with Johnston for seven years, and his biography provides unique insight into Wild Horse Annie's life and her efforts to save the West's wild horse herds through the passage of protective legislation. No matter where you stand on the issue, this is a fascinating read.

***Gaining Ground:***

***A Story of Farmers' Markets, Local Food, and Saving the Family Farm***

By Forrest Pritchard

One fateful day in 1996, after discovering that five freight cars' worth of glittering corn have reaped a tiny profit of \$18.16, young Forrest Pritchard vows to save his family's farm. What ensues – through hilarious encounters with all manner of livestock and colorful local characters – is a crash course in sustainable agriculture. Pritchard's biggest ally is his renegade father, who initially questions his son's career choice and rejects organic foods for sugary mainstream fare. But just when the farm starts to turn heads at local farmers' markets, his father's health takes a turn for the worse. With poetry and humor, this inspiring memoir tugs on the heartstrings and feeds the soul. The universal saga of the struggles of family farming is brought home with this important view of a way of life, which is important to all of us.

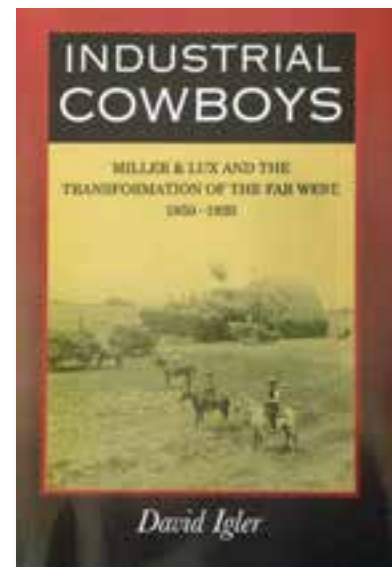


***Industrial Cowboys:***

***Miller & Lux and the Transformation of the Far West, 1850-1920***

By David Igler

Few industrial enterprises left a more enduring imprint on the American West than Miller & Lux, a vast meatpacking conglomerate started by two San Francisco butchers in 1858. *Industrial Cowboys* examines how Henry Miller and Charles Lux, two German immigrants, consolidated the West's most extensive land and water rights, swayed legislatures and courts, monopolized western beef markets, and imposed their corporate will on California's natural environment. Told with clarity and originality, David Igler's story uses a fascinating case study to illuminate the industrial development and environmental transformation of the American West during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Miller & Lux happened once – with timing, guts and luck. Doubtful, ever again. An important story in ranching's history.



## MONTEREY COWBOY FESTIVAL – BACK AGAIN, DECEMBER 13, 14, AND 15

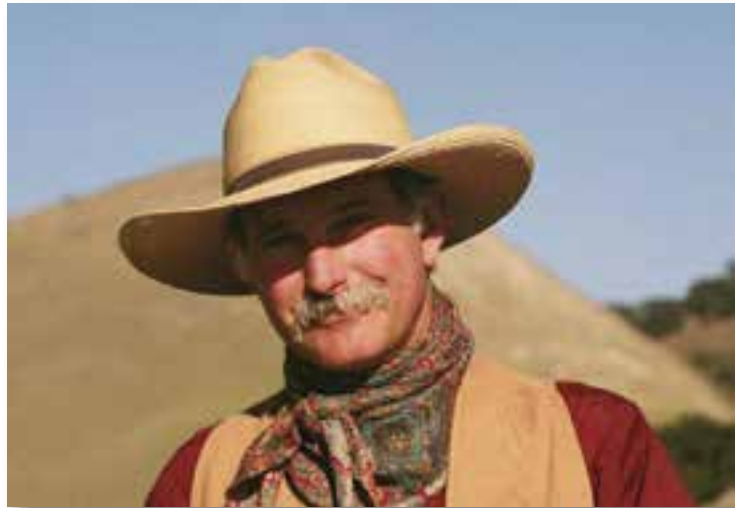
Cowboy poetry is a “folk art” that dates back to the early cattle drives. It’s classic story telling in rhyme and meter created by those first cowboys on those drives. Their music were ballads from their native countries with the lyrics changed to reflect their new vocation. The interest in cowboy poetry and music for the past ten years has been growing in the Monterey region due mainly to the annual Monterey

Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival.



Monterey and the surrounding communities have

a unique and rich cowboy heritage, from the original California Vaqueros to the local ranching cowboys today. Complete information on The Monterey Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival is available at [www.montereycowboy.org](http://www.montereycowboy.org).



Dave Stamey

## SPEAKING OF WESTERN MUSIC...

The Western Music Association (WMA) is an organization that encourages and supports the preservation, performance and composition of historic traditional and contemporary music and poetry of The West. In August of 1988, a group of Western Music performers and fans met in Las Vegas to organize an association and present a festival. In November, WMA will begin a yearlong celebration of its 25th Anniversary and many of the founding members will be in attendance. The celebrations will kick-off at the WMA Annual Convention November 20-24 at the Marriott Albuquerque. A highlight will be the celebration of Herb Jeffries 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. He is the last of the singing cowboys, “The Bronze Buckaroo,” and the last surviving member of the Duke Ellington Orchestra. WMA is joining with the Albuquerque Jazz Community to honor this legend. There will also be workshops, showcases, yodeling and harmony contests, special guests and the annual WMA Awards Show at the Historic KiMo Theatre to recognize those WMA members who have excelled at their craft. For further information on WMA or the 2013 Convention, [marsha@westernmusic.org](mailto:marsha@westernmusic.org) or 505-563-0673.



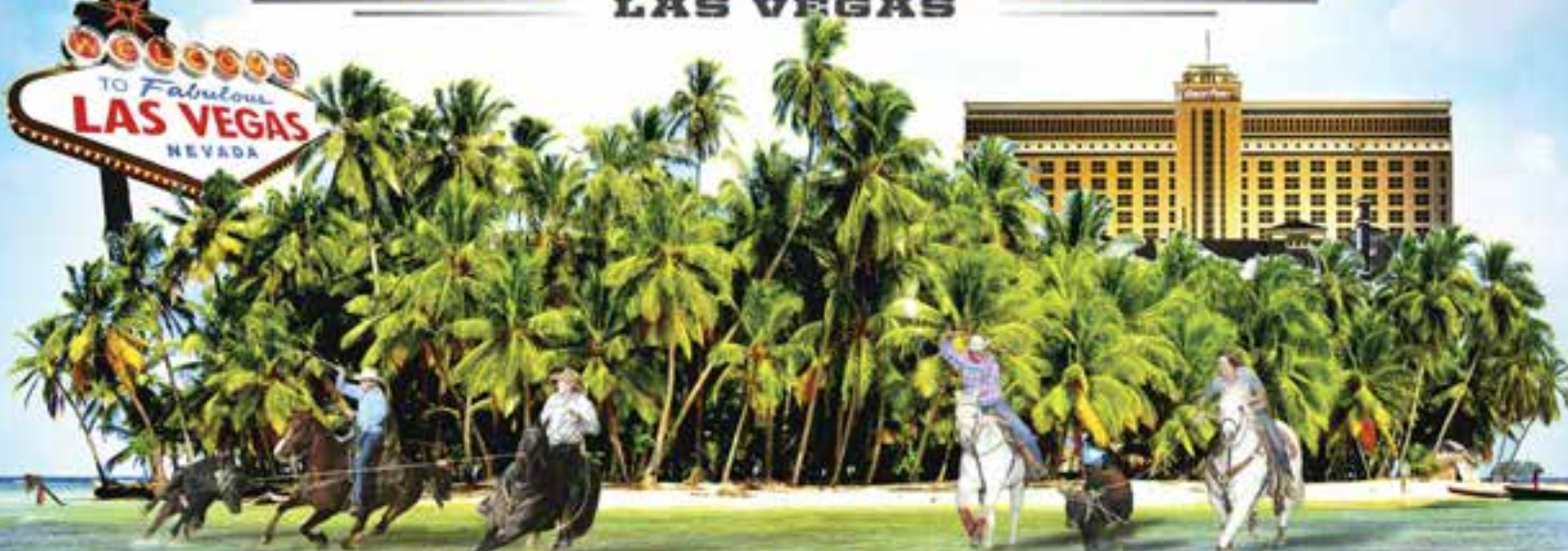
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## THE SAGE BRUSH SEA BLOG – 25 THINGS

Rachel Larsen is a rancher’s wife and lives with her family on the “sagebrush sea” in southeastern Idaho. She describes herself as “Wife, mother, sister, artist, cowgirl, knitter, rancher, student, dilettante yogi, and gardener, not necessarily in that order.” Recently in one of her posts she gave her readers – and anyone who wishes to visit her blog at [www.thesagebrushsea.com](http://www.thesagebrushsea.com) – a wonderful piece of writing consisting of a list of things she wanted ranch kids to know. It is wonderful and deserving of being stuck on the fridge in every home around – whether you’re a rancher or not. Everything on the list is something every kid should read.

Thank you Rachel.



### 25 Things I Want My (Ranch) Kids to Know

You may not live on a ranch or be a ranch kid, but every one of these 25 things work no matter where you live. Take their essence and thrive.

1. **You have chores, because we love you.** They seem tedious, but they are the building blocks for your future. Responsibility, accountability, and basic life skills begin with sweeping the floor, scrubbing the toilet, and feeding pets and livestock. We love you, we want you to find success in life. Success comes from preparation, so we give you chores.
2. **Boredom is a choice.** Don’t let me hear you say you are bored. Boredom is a choice, when your backyard is the whole outdoors, there are chores to be done, and books to be read. If you can’t entertain yourself with a stick and a bucket full of calf nuts, we’re doing something wrong.
3. **There is magic in watching the sunrise.** Early mornings are hard, we don’t rise as early and as easily as Dad. Do it anyway. The beauty you will witness with the awakening of the world is worth sleepy eyes and cold fingers.
4. **A pet is more than a companion.** Your cats, dogs, calves, and ponies are more than friends and playmates. They are lessons in empathy, responsibility, love, and letting go.
5. **Grow your own food.** Our world is increasingly rife with poor food choices; the easiest response to unhealthy options is to grow your own food. I don’t care it’s a single tomato plant or a garden large enough to feed 10 families, cultivate an appreciation for fresh, whole food.
6. **Be open to learning.** In horsemanship and life, you will never know it all, never assume that you do. A humble open, attitude towards learning will lead to new skills and experiences.
7. **Dress appropriately for the occasion.** A cowboy’s uniform, hat, long-sleeved shirt, jeans, and boots, evolved out of necessity. Protect yourself from the sun, wind and weather with the proper clothing. I nag and question your clothing choices, because you are precious to me.
8. **There is a time and a place for bad language.** Sometimes you just need to cuss; spew anger and frustration in one grand verbal barrage. Smash your thumb with your shoeing hammer/fencing pliers, massive runback at the gate,



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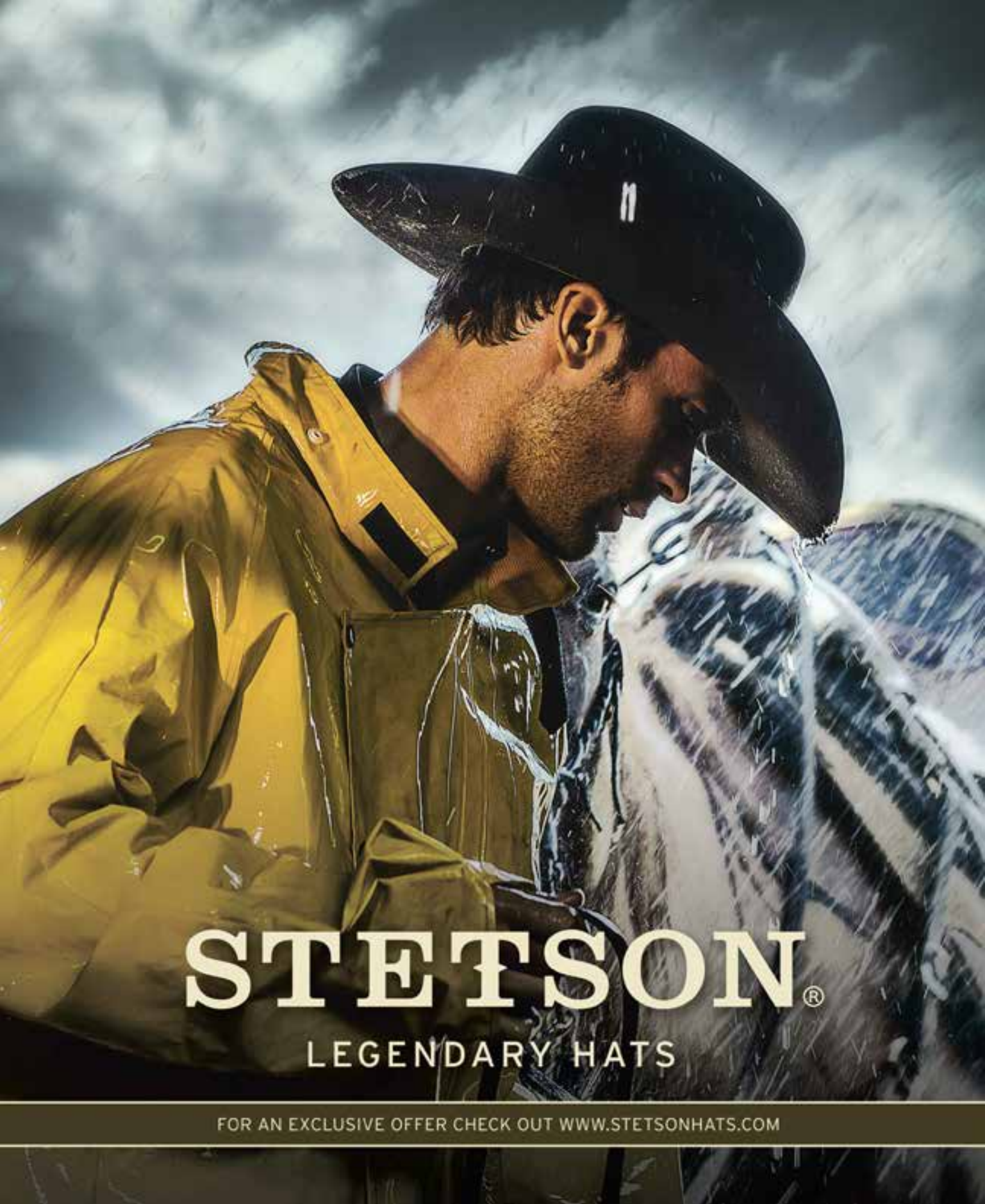
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ringy heifer won't take her calf? Yes. At the dinner table, the classroom, in front of your grandmother? No.

9. **Feed your help.** Neighbors, friends, or hired men? It doesn't matter, sometimes the best way to show your gratitude for a long day of hard work is a lovingly prepared hot meal and cold drink.
10. **Don't judge, but if you do, judge them by their abilities, attitudes, actions not appearances.** Buckaroo or cowboy, flat or taco, slick or rubber? In some circles these comparisons can lead to heated debates, more often than not based strongly in personal opinion, rather than rooted in truth. This is true outside of the ranching world, as well. Words have power to create divisiveness, do not use them to speak against yourself or gossip about others.
11. **Stewardship.** Dad and I choose to be responsible for landscapes and livestock, this lifestyle defines who we are. Sometimes that means ballgames are trumped by pasture rotations and dinnertime is delayed by cesarean sections, it does not mean we love you any less. I hope you approach the world with a sense of respect and connectedness.
12. **Fake it till you make it.** You don't have to be confident in everything you do, but taking a deep breath and acting like you are helps you get through it. This can be applied in the arena, the sorting alley, to horses or people, and life as a whole. Stand up straight and look the challenge in the eye, as you gain experience confidence will catch up with you.
13. **That said, don't mistake arrogance for confidence.** No one likes a swaggering braggart, even if he is a competent swaggering braggart. There is honor in being unheralded, if you enjoy your work.
14. **Low-stress is best. . .for you and for livestock.** Don't let it defeat your spirit and energy. Don't let it impact your livestock health.
15. **The only dumb question is the unasked question.** Where is the gate? Which calf? Can you help me? Ask questions, no one will think less of you. Clear communication helps prevent misunderstandings.
16. **Always do your best.** There are days when your best is better than others, recognize that. Avoid self-judgment, abuse, and regret and enjoy the process.
17. **"There comes a time when you're gonna get bucked and you're gonna need to know what to do so you don't get stepped on."** -Betsy Swain, 1875. Do not let fear of pain or disappointment stand in the way of new experiences. What I regret most in my life are opportunities missed out of fear. Pain and disappointment are a part of living, learn to take them in stride and keep moving forward.
18. **Be polite and kind.** Enough said.
19. **But, don't be a pushover.** Stand up for yourself.
20. **Develop a sense of place.** Wherever you may live, learn the names of plants, rocks, and animals, visit old homesteads (or neighborhoods) and educate yourself about Indigenous cultures. In doing so, you gain roots, a sense of belonging that will lend you stability in all that you do.
21. **Break a sweat everyday.** Pound a steel post or take a jog, whatever you do, break a sweat daily. Your mind and body will thank you for it.
22. **Be present.** If you are mindful of the moment, it is easier to catch a mistake before it happens, redirect a broncy horse before wreck, and have better relationships. It might surprise you, what you observe and what you achieve when you are fully in the moment.
23. **Unplug.** Go to cow camp. Leave the computer screen, TV, and cell phones behind. Watch the chipmunks and rock dogs, read a book, or share a conversation with your family.
24. **Sometimes the hard decisions are the right ones.** We cannot rationalize suffering and pain to animals. Sometimes the best decision is the hardest one to make, know when to let them go.
25. **You do not have to maintain this lifestyle, but please appreciate it.** I don't expect you to grow up and follow in our footsteps; the long hours and low pay aren't for everyone. Carry these early horseback mornings in your heart.





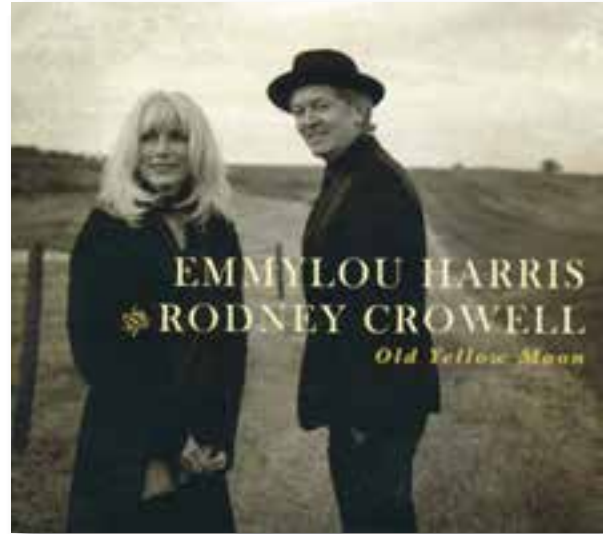
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## EMMYLOU HARRIS AND RODNEY CROWELL'S *OLD YELLOW MOON*

This is a muy importante record and 2013's most important collaboration between two of Country Music's most respected artists. *Old Yellow Moon* features four songs written by Crowell as well as interpretations of songs such as Hank DeVito's "Hanging Up My Heart," Roger Miller's "Invitation to the Blues," and Allen Reynolds' "Dreaming My Dreams," among others. Produced by Brian Ahern (Johnny Cash, George Jones, Roy Orbison), this is the first official collaboration from the duo since Crowell joined Harris' Hot Band as guitarist and harmony singer back in 1975. In addition to Harris and Crowell, the album features world-renowned musicians including Stuart Duncan, Vince Gill, and Bill Payne, as well as members of the original Hot Band. [www.nonesuch.com](http://www.nonesuch.com)



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## RIATAS & ROUNDUPS

Author Katherine Hardin cuts to the chase when she describes herself and this charming book, "I am a cowboy, who just happens to be a girl! My writing reflects the events and circumstance that surround this lifestyle." Filled with poems and prose, Ms. Hardin obviously loves the cowboy ways. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)





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## HIGH NOON'S 24TH ANNUAL WESTERN AMERICANA AUCTION

On January 25,-26, 2014, folks from around the country will gather in their boots and jeans to shop at both the antique show and auction all weekend, with the High Noon bunch in Mesa, Arizona

On both Saturday and Sunday (January 25-26) over



photos courtesy High Noon Western Americana



150 individual dealers in their booths will offer their best cowboy, Indian and Fine art

pieces for sale during the day. Saturday night dealers, friends and spectators all gather for High Noon's signature auction. This year they are offering "the best array of historic and silver saddles we've had in over 20 years," says the one and only Linda Kohn Sherwood, co-owner and founder of High Noon.

A highlighted saddle will be an historic Visalia California riding outfit complete with saddle, martingale, headstall, bridle, bit, spurs, and saddlebags.

Originally created for and owned by General John Koster of the California State Militia, the entire outfit is laden with sterling conchos. This set was featured on the 2005 Antiques Roadshow in Reno and it was noted that this is "probably one of the finest California riding outfits I've ever seen," by Roadshow appraiser Bruce Shackleford.

For art lovers, the auction brings to market very special John Hampton bronzes, WHD Koerner and Borein artwork. In the Native American Indian arena will be a great assortment of Northern Plains bead and quillwork, plus collectible and usable rugs.

And as always, the High Noon Auction will feature its signature collection of historic and highly collectible cowboy, Hollywood memorabilia, spurs, bridles and fine Western Art.

The High Noon Western Americana Weekend will be held January 25-26, 2014 at the Mesa Convention Center and adjacent Marriott Hotel in Mesa, Arizona. For more information, visit High Noon at [www.highnoon.com](http://www.highnoon.com)





## LIGHTLY, BY ACCIDENT

California's Sheila Varian shares the story behind one of her greatest horses.

By Jameson Parker

The achievements of California horsewoman Sheila Varian are well known, from her groundbreaking win of the 1961 open reined cow horse championship at the Cow Palace (she was the first amateur, the first woman, and the first rider aboard an Arabian to achieve the honor) to her 2003 induction into the Cowgirl Hall of Fame. What's not so well known: the colossal blunder that resulted in perhaps her most beloved horse, a gelding named Lightly Bey V.

Sheila grew up in vaquero country, among the big ranches, open ranges and small towns that once defined California's central coast, from Ventura to Salinas. Her early mentors included Morgan Horse breeders Sid Spencer and her husband, former U.S. Cavalry veterinarian Doc Forsythe. Other influences would come to include such figures as Chief Arnold Rojas, Ed Connell, Luis Ortega, Ernie Morris and Tom Dorrance, whose guidance became especially meaningful once Sheila began training and showing horses.

"I didn't have an arena so, after work – I was teaching school – I'd run home and train down the side of the road," she says. "Tom would stop by and spend a couple of hours. Boy, did I learn a lot."

After Sheila's '61 win at the Cow Palace, she quit her teaching job to focus on breeding and training horses. With no cattle on her own property, Sheila spent weekends working horses on cattle on a ranch west of Paso Robles. During one of those weekends, she got a call from one of the girls taking care of her horses at home.

"She said this little dark bay, a four-year-old gelding with four low socks and a star, was giving them fits," Sheila recalls. "I wanted to use him as a ranch horse, but the girls couldn't get anything done with him. I told them to throw him in a trailer and bring him up to me."

The next morning, Sheila thought the horse looked as if he'd lost weight, but figured the girls had been working him hard. She saddled and longed him, then rode out.

"I remember thinking the girls weren't doing anything right because the horse wasn't broke at all," she says. "But he went everywhere I asked, up and down hills, over ditches, through water."

The next day, Sheila moved cattle on the horse and, the following day, drove home, leaving him at the ranch. That evening, the ranch's owner, Don Severa, called.

"He said, 'I thought you told me this little bay was a gelding. This horse has testicles.' Those girls had put the wrong horse in the trailer," Sheila says. "There were two young horses, dark bays with four low white socks, each with a white star. The four-year-old gelding had been started. The two-year-old stud hadn't. I'd hobbled a horse that



photo by Jay Dusard

Sheila Varian and Lightly Bey V, 2003



photo by Vickie Fletcher

Cowgirl Hall of Fame girls: From left: Sandy Collier, Sheila Varian, and Audrey Griffin

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had never been hobbled, saddled a horse that had never been saddled, and put a snaffle on a horse that had never been bitted up, then rode that horse up and down mountains for two days, and he never once balked.”

Lightly filled out and grew to 15.2 hands. Sheila took him through the hackamore and two-rein, then into the spade bit, and the horse became her preferred mount for working cattle and conducting horsemanship seminars.

“He wasn’t a bold horse – he was always shy – but he never refused anything,” she says. “He took everything in stride and would’ve walked through fire for me.”

As highly as she values temperament in a horse, Sheila didn’t leave Lightly a stallion; just one mare, an Arab-Quarter cross, was bred to him before he was gelded.

“I rode Lightly for 28 years,” she says, “and can’t remember ever having an argument with him. He was always honest, and always did his best.”

Including skipping some steps in the training process that might have been critical for a horse with a less equitable temper.

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### The Cow Palace, 1961: The Day The World Changed

In the world of reined cow horses, the Cow Palace in San Francisco is a magic place. Showing horses at the Cow Palace is the equivalent of a musician playing Carnegie Hall. The idea of a “palace for cows,” as one newspaper headline of the era read, was conceived at San Francisco’s 1915 Pan-Pacific International Exposition due to the huge popularity of the livestock show. Local business leaders decided to build a permanent structure to house future expositions – out of the inclement San Francisco weather. Twenty-five years later, in 1941, the first Grand National Rodeo was held there in honor of Will Rogers.

Some 20 years later, another significant event would take place at the Cow Palace. It was the fall of 1961, and at that year’s Grand National, a quiet, dedicated young school teacher would ride her 5-year-old Arabian mare, Ronteza, and show against the best, with an outcome that would take the place apart. Sheila Varian grew up in the rural Central California town of Halcyon and seemed drawn to the ways of the Vaquero and the Pacific Slope bridle horse. She knew early on that if she were to do it right



she would have to train her horses by herself. She sought out the best and learned the ways of the hackamore and the bridle bit. She would take her first horse, an Arabian, on to now only be a solid working cow horse but also an undefeated Western Pleasure horse in the Arabian show world.

“I had worked toward October 1961 for five years. My Ronteza had gone from a young hackamore horse as a 3- and 4- year-old to carrying the spade bit with a bosal through her fifth year,” Sheila remembers. “I had learned what Ronteza needed most for competition was not training but conditioning.”

Sounds like a girl just going to a horse show, doesn't it? Consider this, men had always dominated the Stock Horse/Reined Cow Horse world. Its history in California traces back to the 1700s and 1800s when the Vaquero grew to great prominence on the haciendas – with plenty of good weather and time for roping, gathering, and driving cattle. The vaquero's horse skills became the stuff of legend. He was good with his hands and was stylish and proud. Well-bred horses were his pride and joy. The Vaquero trained his horses to work the cattle and then showed them off at Sunday competitions at neighboring ranchos. In October 1961, the Reined Cow Horse competitions were continuing that tradition – with mostly men in the saddle. But that year a young woman was entered to ride in front of 10,000 San Franciscans who paid to gather in the Cow Palace Live Stock Pavilion and watch the Reined Cow Horse Championship.

The story of what happened that weekend at the Grand National Rodeo is best told in Sheila's own words. “I had never verbalized my goal of winning the Cow Palace, not even to myself – why else would one work for five years single-mindedly? It was always a pleasure with Ronteza. Riding a good bridle horse has always been like a song to me: The movements my horse and I make together are the melody that floats through the air.

Eliminations were held for the lightweight and heavyweight horses on Thursday morning. Ronteza was obviously a lightweight, although she had developed

photos courtesy Sheila Varian



Sheila and Ronteza at work.



Sheila and Ronteza after the mare slipped. Seconds later the pair were up and caught the cow.  
Cow Palace, San Francisco, 1961.



My number was called, and we had won the World.

into a stout Arabian. Siting on Ronteza waiting to compete was the epitome of two paralyzed individuals. We stayed in the back behind the other riders, perfectly still. Ronteza wouldn't move. If she were ready to be "on," I would feel her heart pounding through the fenders of the saddle. Between our two hearts ka-thumping away we were both motionless, waiting. My number was called, and I rode into the brightness of the fabled Cow Palace arena.

As we loped into our figure 8's everything about her felt soft and right, and I began to relax and concentrate on smooth round figure 8's. I could feel we were on the money.

We finished our dry work, rode to the end of the arena to receive our cow. With the work we had done to this point I could feel Ronteza was invincible in her mind. She thundered down the arena wall. When the last horse rode, we were all summoned back into the arena for the announcer to call the five horses forward that would be showing in the lightweight class on Friday evening. My number was called first and then four more. There stood Ronteza and I in a line-up with the legendary stock horse trainers of the time.

Our lightweight class was scheduled for Friday night, and when our class was called I rode first. Half-frozen and breathless, Ronteza and I rode into the Cow Palace and loped into our pattern. She didn't notice the 10,000 people in the stands, the cattle driving up the chute in the alley along side the arena, and neither did I. We were in our own land. Ronteza, head low, was ready to simply put the steer back through the neighbor's gate. Just like at home. Just like all those days and years before. Little Ronteza was brilliant, she knew what to do and I was fortunate enough to be along for the ride. The chute gate opened and a brockle-faced black steer came whistling out. Ronteza worked that steer the way all the great cow horses had before her. In what seemed like seconds, our ride was almost complete, all that was left was to circle the steer – showing how a game horse would fearlessly push a cow into a small circle to the left and then to the right.

"As Ronteza drove her steer for the final time, I asked her to drive hard, pushing between the fence and the cow. She

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was galloping all out with her head down, charging for the shoulder of the cow to finish the circle. Suddenly her feet hit hard packed dirt and in one motion she was falling, skidding on her side, not able to catch any dirt to stop herself. I was standing over her, my feet on either side, the reins still in my hands. The rules raced through my mind in slow motion. Go off your horse and you are eliminated. Ronteza lay flat on her side. I stood over her but still technically “on.” Ronteza saw the steer galloping but now 10 feet ahead of her. She lunged to her feet, pulling me right along with her and drove for the steer’s head and shoulder, pushing in with all her strength to force the circle small and tight. She didn’t notice me leaning over her outside shoulder trying to untangle the rein from the shank of her spade bit. No matter, she finished up her circling – single-minded on that cow. She was simply finishing her job as she had at the neighbors, pushing cows through the gate.

On that night Ronteza bested the best as she was called out number one. We had made the finals. When the arena gate swung open for the third and final time, Ronteza and I trotted into the brilliance of the Cow Palace lights. The screaming crowd had taken Ronteza into their hearts. She was not a quarter horse, like the rest, a girl rode her, she had fallen working her cow, and even with the fall the judge had placed her first.

The third run was *déjà vu* of the two before. The feeling of perfection was so intense I remember thinking I could have urged Ronteza to drive her cow to the top of the auditorium seats and she would have done it easily. Her mouth felt as soft as a knife cutting through warm butter.

After all the horses were shown, my memory is only of exhaustion. My number was called, and we had “Won the World” – my little Arabian mare and me. The little horse that had ignored the bumping and pushing of the crowded back gate, the blinding lights of the arena, and the roaring crowd stood quietly as the flashes from the cameras recorded a moment in time at the Cow Palace.” BR



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## E.W. GOLLINGS - A RECORD OF HAPPENINGS

Gary Temple of The Meadowlark Gallery in Billings, Montana has published a new book on artist Bill Gollings. This book “EW Gollings: A Record of Happenings” is Mr. Temple’s own attempt to “clarify the correct history of the artist” through the writings of Gollings from his own diaries, day journals and personal ephemera. This is an in depth look and included in its 254 pages are extensive personal diary entries covering 16 years, plus personal in-depth analysis by the artist himself as to painting timelines, his thoughts on his life and career. Temple has included new discoveries from the archives of the artist’s family that have never before been seen along with newspaper articles about the artist going back to 1904. All this and the first ever, thorough analysis of Gollings’ printmaking career from 1926 until his death in 1932. The personal moments in the diary entries – massively illustrated with the artists’ drawings and artwork – give a look deep into the artist’s life. Example – on a page in his 1928 diary, “Friday, March 30, 1928 – divorce granted today.” This is obviously a true labor of love for Mr. Temple and the limited edition of the book (pictured) is astounding. For information on the limited editions as well as the trade edition of 1500 copies, visit [www.meadowlarkgallery.com](http://www.meadowlarkgallery.com)



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presentation of emotional content in nature. “I strive to find the mood and present it as elegantly as I can, I especially like humidity, weather and miles of air over pristine landscape.”

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## GAVIN BROOKS ART

Gavin Brooks is a landscape painter best known for western and atmospheric landscape compositions of coastal themes and pastoral vistas. Layering years of drawing and classical atelier training with a contemporary approach she emerged with a unique style where luminosity and modern brushwork are united in sophisticated compositions.

Her emphasis is on strong design, tonal unity and the decisive use of neutrals to support color relationships. Gavin is driven by a pursuit for an elegant and modern



*Valley Fields 30x40*



## WESTERN SILVERSMITHS, A SERIES

### R. SCHAEZLEIN & SON

By Jason Maida,  
Buckle Aficionado and Historian

It was around 1995 when I first went to visit Rob Schaezlein, III in his workshop in San Francisco, California. Hammering away, his father, Bob, sat working with hundred year-old tools and I was immediately captivated by the rich and colorful history of this one-hundred-twenty-five-year old Silversmith shop. I realized that Western Silversmith's were just not influenced by the times around them, but by the generations before them.

The first Robert Schaezlein, the son of a baker, was born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1849. A trained silversmith, Robert traveled to the United States through Providence, Rhode Island at the age of 19 working for silversmith F. Kroger. Robert married and moved to San Francisco, California in 1878. In 1888, Robert partnered with Benjamin Burrige to form Schaezlein and Burrige. They



Rob and his late father, Robert Schaezlein

produced society and masonic badges as well as souvenir spoons and flatware. The 1906 earthquake destroyed their place of business as well as the partnership between Schaezlein and Burrige. But because one embossing screw press did survive the massive damage caused by the earthquake, Robert Schaezlein was able to pick up and reopen his business in 1909. Joining him was his son Robert F. Schaezlein Sr. and with a horse drawn wagon they moved their shop to the basement of their home.

When Robert F. joined his father, he brought with him his knowledge as a trained jeweler. Robert F. began crafting fine jewelry for some of San Francisco's elite adorning his pieces with precious stones. Robert F. also began doing silver work for Visalia Stock Saddle Company in the early teens and 1920's. It was here their business started to evolve into a Western Silversmith and Robert Schaezlein, the first, became less involved. Robert F. made the hand forged monel Visalia Humane Bit that later became famous. In the late 1920s he started making several Levi Strauss award buckles including the annually awarded World Champion All Around Cowboy buckles and the Six Time Winner Trophy Buckle. He also made buckles for the Grand National Rodeo, Horse and Livestock Show at the San Francisco Cow Palace. In the 1930s he started working for Al Nolte where he began manufacturing custom Sterling Silver Belt Buckles and a variety of saddle and harness trimmings for western saddle makers including C.C. star, Bona

produced society and masonic badges as well as souvenir spoons and flatware. The 1906 earthquake destroyed their place of business as well as the partnership between Schaezlein and Burrige. But because one embossing screw press did survive the massive damage caused by the earthquake, Robert Schaezlein was able to pick up and reopen his business in 1909. Joining him was his son Robert F. Schaezlein Sr. and with a horse drawn wagon they moved their shop to the basement of their home.



Allen, Hamley & Co, Keystone Brothers and Ray Holes Saddle Shop. In the 1950s they started making the classic Saddleman Buckle for Levi Strauss, depicting their



trademark figure of a cowboy walking away with a saddle slung over his shoulder.

Robert F. Schaezlein, Jr. (Bob) joined his father in the business after World War II in 1946. Having been trained as an engraver by German master engraver Fred Newmeyer, he began doing fine hand – cut lettering and ornamental engraving. In 1963, about three years after the death of Robert F. Sr., Bob moved the store to its present location. In 1986, Robert F. Schaezlein, III joined his father in the business where they worked side by side for over 20 years until his death in 2008. Now Robert F. Schaezlein, III, continues the tradition of his family business and of fine German craftsmanship his father, grandfather and great-grandfather maintained over 100 years ago. Rob prides his business in the tradition and quality of his work. Rob says “In many ways, we make the same things we’ve been making for those now-famous saddle shops, using many of the same dies we used back then.



We focus on high quality, traditional style saddle/bridal trimmings and belt buckles. We also make many custom pieces based on our customers’ ideas and specifications. All our products are hand made here in America, as they have been for 130 years. In a time of disposable, cheaply made products, our belief is in creating work you can be proud to own for a lifetime, and pass down to the next generation.” See the current work of Rob Shaezlein at [www.rschaezlein.com](http://www.rschaezlein.com)

## PENDLETON® WHISKY RELEASES NEW 2013 BELT BUCKLES

Our fave, Pendleton® Whisky, imported by Hood River Distillers, Inc., the largest and oldest importer, producer, and bottler of distilled spirits in the Northwest, announced today the release of the new 2013 Pendleton Whisky belt buckles, available now. Packaged on a select number of 1.75 liter bottles of its signature Canadian whisky,





this distribution marks the next buckle presented in the Pendleton Whisky belt buckle series.

The first Pendleton Whisky belt buckle was released in September 2010 in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Pendleton Round-Up, from which Pendleton Whisky gained its name. Now known as a novelty collector's item, the brand has continued to produce the buckle annually for loyal fans due to popular demand.

"We are honored to continue the tradition of creating these beautiful, exclusive belt buckles for our fans," said Tia Bledsoe, senior brand manager, Pendleton Whisky. "This year marks the 10th anniversary of the launch of Pendleton Whisky, so the commemorative buckle and featured '2013' year is particularly exciting to see."

Crafted by Montana Silversmiths, a world renowned western jewelry maker and fellow ProRodeo sponsor, the new 2013 buckles feature an oval shape with the Pendleton Round-Up Let'er Buck slogan and bucking horse symbol and year stamp in gold detailing. Nearly 35,000 belt buckles will be available nationwide on a limited basis and while supplies last. [www.pendletonwhisky.com](http://www.pendletonwhisky.com)



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## ANOTHER ROSENTHAL HEADS FOR RESISTOL

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"I'm thrilled to welcome another generation of Rosenthal hatters into our Stetson family", said Stan Redding, Hatco President. "He will be learning every aspect of the business. We are a vertically integrated company where we make the complete hat from start to finish. There is a lot to learn, but Ben is up to the challenge."

Ben Rosenthal said, "I'm grateful to everyone at Hatco for giving me this opportunity to learn the hat business from the ground up just like my father, grandfather and those before them."

The history of the Rosenthal family and the manufacture of hats stretches back to 1917 with Hyman Rosenthal in St. Joseph, Missouri, where they manufactured caps and hats. Ben L. Rosenthal entered the company out of high school and eventually operated the hat production and sales as President and CEO. Ben negotiated the licensing of the Stetson brand in 1970. Gary Rosenthal joined the family business in 1956 after graduating college and serving in the US Navy. He is currently in Product Development and Sales. John Rosenthal, the 4th generation Rosenthal to work in the hat industry, learned the business growing up and coming to work for the company after graduating college. John is currently the Director of Plant Operations for the Garland and Longview, Texas manufacturing plants. [www.resistol.com](http://www.resistol.com)



Gary, Ben and John Rosenthal



## GIFT GUIDE 2013

Here is our Christmas Wish List with some great gift ideas for the upcoming holiday season – something for every cowboy and cowgirl on your list, whether they’ve been naughty or nice!

– Thea Marx



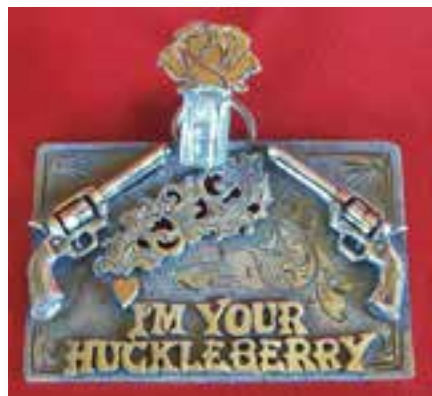
### JEWELRY

#### FLAG BRACELET

If she loves beadwork, she must own this Authentic Native American beaded bracelet on brain tanned deer hide. A wonderful collector’s piece! Nathalie 505-982-1021. [www.nathaliesantafe.com](http://www.nathaliesantafe.com)

#### ZPT SILVERSMITHS

Nothing says forever like, “I’m Your Huckleberry.” Stake your claim in silver and gold with this stunning proclamation limited edition pendant from ZPT Silversmiths. [www.zptsilversmiths.com](http://www.zptsilversmiths.com)



#### MAIDA’S

Buckle up and go out on the town with this gorgeous contemporary Jason Christopher Engraved Sterling Silver Trophy Buckle with Custom Monogrammed Raised Script Initials and Ostrich Leg Belt. [www.maidasbelts.com](http://www.maidasbelts.com)



#### NR HUNT SILVERSMITH

Superior Craftsmanship and Artistry is evident in the details. Call 1-888-501-7807 to visit NR Hunt by appointment at his Sedona, AZ studio or visit [nrhunt.com](http://nrhunt.com).







**LONG LIVE** keeping the West wild.

**LONG LIVE** high spirits and high heels.

**LONG LIVE** strained necks and weak knees.

**LONG LIVE** after-hour campfires.

**LONG LIVE COWGIRLS.™**

09 MWZ  
Premium Patch®

*Wrangler*  
LONG LIVE COWGIRLS.™

wrangler.com



**GIST**

**Longhorn Star Money Clip**

If a money could talk, it would request a Gist Longhorn Star Money Clip. Classic western style in sterling silver with gold. Now that's what makes dough happy! [www.gistsilversmiths.com](http://www.gistsilversmiths.com). 1-800-456-4478



**Gist 3D Stars linked Bracelet**

Wish I may, wish I might, catch a falling star tonight. No problem. Just put Gist's sterling and gold bracelet on your Christmas list and your wish will come true. [www.gistsilversmiths.com](http://www.gistsilversmiths.com). 1-800-456-4478



**MONTANA SILVERSMITHS WATCH**

Never miss a moment of your fantastic life. You'll be on time, everytime with a Montana Silversmiths Dress West Sunset Roping watch. [www.montanasilversmiths.com](http://www.montanasilversmiths.com). 855-358-5002

**MONTANA SILVERSMITHS ROSE GOLD BITTERROOT SUN JEWELRY SET**

Montana's state flower makes a beautiful entrance in this three piece rose gold set from Montana Silversmiths. A perfect stocking stuffer! [www.montanasilversmiths.com](http://www.montanasilversmiths.com). 855-358-5002



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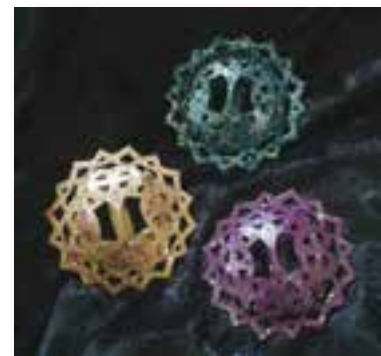


**SCOTT HARDY BUCKLE**

This quiet Canadian cowboy has made buckles for celebrities, royalty and ranch families worldwide. Hang the custom buckle you choose on the tree for a right smart decoration and let the lucky recipient go on a treasure hunt. [www.scotthardy.com](http://www.scotthardy.com). 403-558-2337

**BURNT SPUR CONCHOS**

One of a kind custom concho steel copper or sterling silver and gold If your pockets are deep enough. We offer many kinds of patinas to match your saddle and gear. Call 775-217-6177





### A CUT ABOVE BUCKLE

Be-jeweled, trophy or simply elegant – you pick the sparkle, or not – and Andy’s crew will design a buckle that makes your heart sing. [www.acutabovebuckles.com](http://www.acutabovebuckles.com). 951-600-0444

### CATENA WATCH

Dazzle her with diamonds and each time she checks the hour, she’ll think of you. Low profile horseshoe watch with mother-of-pearl dial and crocodile band. Catena [www.catenausa.com](http://www.catenausa.com). 888-991-2277



### JANET VITALE LARIAT PENDANT

Lasso her heart in gold or sterling with this charming lariat pendant from Janet Vitale. Earrings to match. [www.janetvitale.com](http://www.janetvitale.com) 406-223-2311



### MEREDITH LOCKHART BRACELET

Award winning fashion designer gone loco making fabulous jewelry. Hand hammered copper with turquoise by Meredith Lockhart. [www.meredithlockhart.com](http://www.meredithlockhart.com). 913-886-2247



### HOME

#### SKULL

Intricate, one of a kind hand-carved cow skull, exquisite in detail and guaranteed to produce exclamations of admiration. Nathalie Home. 505-982-1021 [www.nathaliesantafe.com](http://www.nathaliesantafe.com)

### THE LIFE OF RYLEY

Does Ruffy get to rip the paper off his rawhide bone each Christmas? Good. Then add to his joy this year and

give him a set of these stylin’ faux bois bowls and fill them with kibble. You’ll have one happy hound! [www.thelifeofryley.com](http://www.thelifeofryley.com)





### WRANGLER STOCKING

Let's face it. If you are 97 or 3, checking out what is in your stocking is fun. Make sure you have one tough enough to hold his new cordless drill and cool enough for your teenage daughter who loves horses. Wrangler's fits the bill everytime. [www.wrangler.com](http://www.wrangler.com). 888-784-8571

### FAUXPAW

The Best Gift Ever is one that never stops giving. Original hand crafted cherishable custom ceramic bowls, treat jars, trophies, platters and urns by artist Debby Carman. Celebrating all those loving licks and understanding looks, one dog at time.

[www.fauxpawproductions.com](http://www.fauxpawproductions.com). 949-233-2082



### THE REAL WARM STUFF FROM PENDLETON MILLS

Here are some warm things to warp up in during those chilly winter season nights from our favorite woolen mill



#### Pendleton Towels to roll up in

One of Pendleton Mills' oldest blanket patterns brings history and Native American style to baths from ranch house to urban loft. The time-honored design was created in the 1920s to celebrate the heroism of the Northwest's great Nez Perce leader, Chief Joseph. The Arrowheads symbolize his bravery & point in all directions of Mother Earth. Perfect for any

bathroom, these solid-colored towels coordinate perfectly with our two-toned Jacquard towels.



#### The N7 Blanket

Redefining re-gifting - this blanket is a collaboration with Nike N7. Pendleton will contribute a portion of sales for each blanket to the American Indian College Fund.

Nike N7 is a program committed to inspiring and enabling participation in sport for Native American and Aboriginal populations in North America. With the belief that sport has the power to unleash human potential. Both from [www.pendleton-usa.com](http://www.pendleton-usa.com)

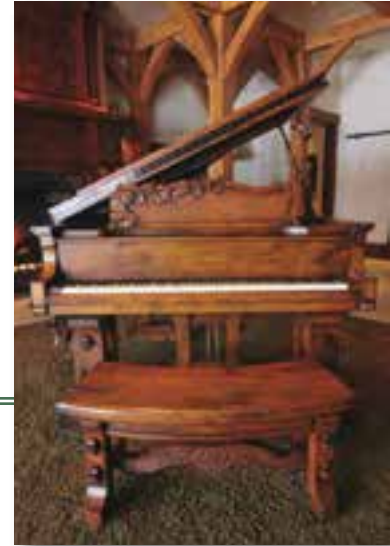


## ROCKING HORSE

Make a little one's dreams come true with Fancy, a hand-carved rocking horse with real saddle and bridle, by artist Randee Crisman. [www.randeecrisman.com](http://www.randeecrisman.com). 206-329-8503

## RUSTIC GRAND PIANO

Make beautiful music on this 1925 Lester baby grand completely restored into a rustic knotty alder



masterpiece by Utah artist Paul George 801 360 3361.

## WHISKY AND WINE



### PENDLETON WHISKY

From congratulatory shots behind the chutes to cheers for sealing the deal, Pendleton Whisky has a reputation as a spirit aficionado's favorite choice. Fine whisky is always a welcome gift. [www.Pendletonwhisky.com](http://www.Pendletonwhisky.com)

### WINE APOTHECARY

Wine Connoisseur on your list? This is a Must! One-of-a-kind custom blending kit from Wine Apothecary allows you to create and design your personalized wine, draft your own unique label, and even order your blend online to precise specifications. [www.wineapothecary.com](http://www.wineapothecary.com)



## ACCESSORIES



### VOGT SHAVING KIT

The ultimate in masculine, this hand carved leather shaving kit is just what every man who has a connection to the west would enjoy for their next foray on the road. [www.VogtSilversmiths.com](http://www.VogtSilversmiths.com) 888-675-2957



### COWBOY WILD RAGS

Color yourself happy whether you are giving one of these Cowboy Wild Rags as a present or tucking it into your own stocking, it is guaranteed to be unique. [www.cowboywildrags.com](http://www.cowboywildrags.com)

### BIG BEND SADDLERY:

#### Big Bend Bag

Perfect for the no nonsense guy who leans toward simplicity of style, but never compromises quality, this leather travel bag is the ticket. From Big Bend Saddlery. [www.bigbendsaddlery.com](http://www.bigbendsaddlery.com)



#### Crossing the "Digital Divide."

Big Bend Saddlery's extremely cool iPad notebook is made for the full-size iPad. It features a strap and snap that also fastens the notebook in the tabletop mode. It is made with camera holes front and back and a Velcro closure - available in Basket stamped, Carlos border or plain with a brand, initials or logo. [www.bigbendsaddlery.com](http://www.bigbendsaddlery.com)

### AMON CARTER MUSEUM

Chic with a safari edge, this handmade leather and canvas satchel will only get better with age. By Daniel Wright for the Amon Carter Museum Store. [www.cartermuseum.org/shop](http://www.cartermuseum.org/shop). 800-573-1933



### PINTO RANCH

For the handbag collector, this Kulu bag from Pinto Ranch is a sure bet. She will drag you under the mistletoe after she opens this one... [www.pintoranch.com](http://www.pintoranch.com) 800-393-8001



### CLAIR KEHRBERG

#### Carved Leather Handbag

Winner of the *In Style Magazine* handmade handbag contest, Clair Kehrberg, made the western industry proud. Call one of her creations your own now, like this show stopper, or make sure hints are dropped for Christmas and beyond for a custom design. [www.kehrbergleatherart.com](http://www.kehrbergleatherart.com). 541-620-1634





### HAT COZY

No more icicles for ears after feeding because you can wear the HatCozy with almost any hat and it keeps your ears, warm, warm, warm. [www.hatcozy.com](http://www.hatcozy.com). 541-771-7788



### PWOLF CATINA BELT

Wrap yourself pretty with the Catena belt from award-winning designer Patricia Wolf. [www.PatriciaWolf.com](http://www.PatriciaWolf.com). 800-PAT-WOLF

### CARHARTT BAG

When your tough guy needs a tough bag, make sure it is one with the Carhartt label. There are so many pockets in this one, he might be gone for awhile. Best send snacks. [www.carhartt.com](http://www.carhartt.com)



### FOXXMD EVOLUTIONARY SKIN CARE

Give yourself a gift of lasting impressions. The love of the outdoor life doesn't mean you have to compromise beautiful skin, it just needs the right stuff, like flowers need sunshine to blossom. [www.drfoxxmd.com](http://www.drfoxxmd.com). 760-972-6116

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[Small logo]

### BOOTS

#### STETSON LADIES BOOT

Stetson has created the perfect mix of serape and boot for a fab fashion statement. Know this one is going to be on a lot of Christmas lists, so get it now! [www.karmaninc.com](http://www.karmaninc.com)



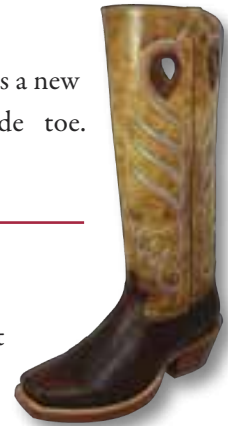
#### STETSON MEN'S BOOTS

Snazzy boots for a night out in the city or a drink at the saloon in old cowtown, these boots by Stetson transcend locale in favor of good taste. [www.karmaninc.com](http://www.karmaninc.com)



### TWISTED X MEN'S BOOTS

Between the brush and that darn ol' cow that went to the sale barn, Dad needs a new pair of boots. He'd love these! Twisted X Buckaroo with punchy wide toe. [www.twistedxboots.com](http://www.twistedxboots.com)



### TWISTED X YOUTH

Punchy is as punchy does....Twisted X youth boot for the kids that want to be just like Dad (or Mom). [www.twistedxboots.com](http://www.twistedxboots.com)



### PHOTO ARIAT LADIES

Pretty as a peacock and loaded with style, Mirabelle from Ariat makes a cowgirl's heart flutter with happiness. [www.ariat.com](http://www.ariat.com)



### PHOTO ARIAT MENS

Technically sound with all the WOW color factor you ever wanted in a boot you can show off and look good in all at the same time. The Crossroads boot from Ariat delivers the full package. [www.ariat.com](http://www.ariat.com)



### LUCCHESI BOOTS FROM HAMLEYS

#### Men's

Classy, but with an edge, sort of like the handsome guy in the business suit with a tattoo. If he's a little dangerous, these boots are his. [www.hamley.com](http://www.hamley.com)



#### Women's

How do you make a woman leap into your arms? You give her Lucchese boots from Hamley's. these beauties are pretty as a bouquet of posies. You won't go wrong. [www.hamley.com](http://www.hamley.com)



#### Tony Lama

The first year Tony Lama opened his doors as a boot maker, he and a helper made 20 pairs of boots and did many repairs, today his name is synonymous with classic style and quality. Tan Rista Roper. [www.tonylama.com](http://www.tonylama.com)

Once a cobbler for the US Cavalry, Tony Lama made his name making custom boots in El Paso that were asked for by western stores the country over. Black Rista Square Toe. [www.tonylama.com](http://www.tonylama.com)





## APPAREL

### VAQUEROS DE LAS OLAS

Surf on the edge of life with a cowboy hat for shade and the ocean spray sweet on your face. Be a Vaqueros De Las Olas (cowboy of the waves) for just a day in this catchy T. For information call 805-899-3537



### HATCO RU Little boy

For that serious little cowboy is a serious little shirt with all the details including pearl snaps from RU. He'll be asking for a truck and trailer soon, best be prepared. [www.ru-apparel.com](http://www.ru-apparel.com)

### RU Little Girl

Classic western favorite in Tesla plaid with a feminine edge for your little cowgirl, she can wear it to the city or outrun the boys at school, whichever it is, she will be stylin' cool. [www.ru-apparel.com](http://www.ru-apparel.com)

### RU Men's

He is the quiet, but strong type who dresses to please. An ombre plaid with western point yokes speaks timeless cowboy anywhere. Give him the gift of gab. [www.ru-apparel.com](http://www.ru-apparel.com)

### RU Faux Fur

In the Darby Faux Fur Vest from RU she'll grab attention with its body slimming cut and warm collar. A perfect little gift for fashion conscious girl in your life. [www.ru-apparel.com](http://www.ru-apparel.com)



### BARRANADA

Tailored to flatter in a stunning cobalt, this shirt is at home in the boardroom or in the arena. Either way it commands attention. [www.barranada.com](http://www.barranada.com). 308-382-2920

### STETSON

Serious jeans for the seriously handsome Stetson wearing man in your life!  
[www.karmaninc.com](http://www.karmaninc.com)



### RYAN MICHAEL Women's Owl Shirt

Channel your inner Athena in Ryan Michael's crisp cotton owl shirt and have the wisdom of the white goddess at your side. [www.PintoRanch.com](http://www.PintoRanch.com)



### Men's Denim Ryan Michael Shirt

Urban nights or hot hard working days won't deter this artfully cut and embellished shirt from Ryan Michael. Looks especially good in a beautiful package!  
[www.PintoRanch.com](http://www.PintoRanch.com)



### MILLER RANCH

Get him the perfect goin' to town coat this year. From Miller Ranch this charcoal wool coat will keep him warm and make the ladies swoon.  
[www.millerranch1918.com](http://www.millerranch1918.com)



### WRANGLER WOMEN'S JEANS

Buy one pair for you and each of the beautiful women in your life – they will LOVE these Rock 47 jeans from Wrangler. They will sparkle all holiday season!  
[www.wrangler.com](http://www.wrangler.com). 1-888-784-8571



### TASHA POLLIZZI

Modern with a vintage twist, the Cowgirl Trench from Tasha Pollizzi will be a smashing success with the fashionista in your life. Make sure she has one under the tree!  
[www.wyoming-outfitters.com](http://www.wyoming-outfitters.com). 307-733-2035





## OLD FRONTIER

Old West elegance meets new world charm with Old Frontier Clothing. No need to strap on a side arm, your handsome looks will stop 'em dead in their tracks. [www.oldfrontier.com](http://www.oldfrontier.com). 323-643-0000



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### DOUBLE D Indian Iris

Casual takes on a new hue in Indian Iris velvet by Double D Ranchwear's Turquoise World Velvet top and Frontier Trapper boot.

[www.ddranchwearwomen's.com](http://www.ddranchwearwomen's.com)



### Sunrise Prayer

Hours of research and design time mean timeless pieces for Double D's enduring legacy of fashion. The Sunrise Prayer T, Warriors Dream Jacket and Night Horizons short skirt. [www.ddranchwearwomen's.com](http://www.ddranchwearwomen's.com)



### Rainbird

Heirloom fashion makes wonderful gifts, especially those with the Double D tag. Trust me your daughter will be glad you put this on your Christmas wish list. Rainbird Coat. [www.ddranchwearwomen's.com](http://www.ddranchwearwomen's.com)



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## FILSON

Filson "re-releases" its classic Forrestry Cloth Cruiser. The 2012 revival reintroduces the classic design in forest green and features similar design elements to the 1934 model, including: a double-pocket across the back, four large front utility pockets, additional pencil and compass pockets and an interior pocket that allow sufficient space to stash essentials. A must for every truck! [www.filson.com](http://www.filson.com)





### ALL AMERICAN JEANS

On a hope on a dream Lawson Nickol founded his All American Clothing company. See the successful line at [www.allamericanclothing.com](http://www.allamericanclothing.com) and support Made in the USA.

### JULIE EWING

She'll dress you in head to toe leather elegance and put the perfect handbag in your fingers. All you have to do is strut your stuff and smile at all the admirers. Gown and handbag by Julie Ewing. [www.j-ewingdesigns.com](http://www.j-ewingdesigns.com). 512-321-2176



### CARHARTT WOMEN'S COAT

She's got style even when she is feeding the horses in the howling wind and blowing snow, that is why she needs Carhartt's Weathered Quinwood Chore Coat. Lots of pockets make it extra special. [www.carhartt.com](http://www.carhartt.com)

## HATS

### AMERICAN

Like caviar and champagne, a fine hat is for relishing. A gentleman's choice will surely be American Hat Company's phenomenal 1000X Pecan 100% Belly Beaver and Mink complete with a 14K buckle set with a small diamond. Only at fine Western Retailers



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Photo: [unreadable]

### STETSON

When the day calls for your favorite hat, reach for your Stetson Heritage 6X in silver belly, you know it never fails you. [www.stetson.com](http://www.stetson.com)



### RESISTOL HAT

Invitations should read, coat, tie and 20x required. Just because it looks so good. Resistol Black with Vogt buckle set. [www.resistol.com](http://www.resistol.com)





### CHARLIE 1 HORSE HAT

Rowwwww! You won't go unnoticed in this faux leopard spotted felt from Charlie One Horse aptly named, On The Prowl. [www.charlie1horsehats.com](http://www.charlie1horsehats.com)



### WRANGLER HAT

Meant for bull ridin', swing dancin', and wild horse chasin', the Ring Neck in Red from Wrangler. [www.wrangler-hat.com](http://www.wrangler-hat.com)



### TACK

#### BUCKAROO BUSINESSES

Like lights on the Christmas tree, these stirrups add the sizzle to a saddle. They are made of oak, bound in aluminum, and hand engraved. [BuckarooBusinesses.net](http://BuckarooBusinesses.net). 406-252-5000

### BRIGHTON FEED

#### Powder River Wade Saddle

Fuel your passion with a new saddle from Brighton Feed. This Powder River Wade saddle is just itching to be broke in. Not your style? They've got hundreds in stock. [www.brightonfeed.com](http://www.brightonfeed.com). 800-237-0721



### HAMLEY'S

There is still time, have Hamley's make a custom saddle for under the tree. But you better get to it, good things take time. [www.hamley.com](http://www.hamley.com) 541-278-1100



### NATE WALD HOBBLES

Twenty-five years of experience braiding rawhide can teach a man a great deal, one is patience. Nate Wald's patience and talent shines through his work whether it is for a collector or a piece that needs to

be put to work in the round pen. [www.natewald.com](http://www.natewald.com)

## REAL ESTATE

### ELK HORN RANCH

Privacy. Wilderness. Mountains and Open spaces. The Elk Horn Ranch in the Yellowstone Club at Big Sky, Montana is the ultimate Christmas gift. Santa is waiting to deliver your dream ranch...complete with recreation abound and a beautiful residence. [theresa@hallandhall.com](mailto:theresa@hallandhall.com). 406-656-7500



### WALTON RANCH

Own an icon of the American West. The Walton Ranch in Jackson Hole, Wyoming has a lasting legacy in the state and beyond. Breathtaking beauty and sophisticated small town America all in one. [www.rmabrokers.com](http://www.rmabrokers.com). Ron Morris 970-535-0881 or Billy Long 970-927-3850.

## TRAVEL

### PAWS UP

Aaaah. Now you know what relaxing in the most exquisite atmosphere on the planet feels like. The Montana sky overhead, endless forests, beautiful streams and a glamping experience like none other. Surprise her. She is worth it! [www.pawsup.com](http://www.pawsup.com). 800-473-0601





## ART BOOKS MUSIC

### BARBARA VAN CLEVE

Achingly beautiful images by National Cowgirl Hall of Fame honoree, Barbara Van Cleve are wrapped in leather for this signed special limited edition of *Hard Twist: Western Ranch Women*. Includes signed original photograph of author along with 8 lettered artist's proofs. [www.cowgirl.net](http://www.cowgirl.net). 817-509-8662

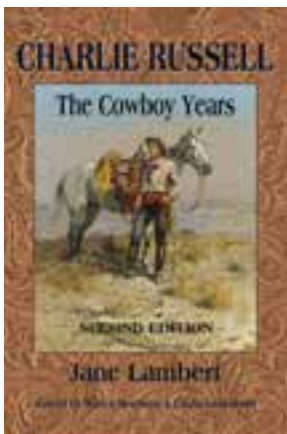


### MIKE BECK CD

Do your heart good. Help a soldier and a horse at the same time. All proceeds from Mike Beck's Tribute album go to The Joyful Horse Project to support their unique horsemanship program that teaches combat veterans how to rehabilitate neglected or abused horses for adoption into new homes. [http://shop.joyfulhorseproject.org/Mike-Beck-Tribute-CD\\_c4.htm](http://shop.joyfulhorseproject.org/Mike-Beck-Tribute-CD_c4.htm)

### TIM COX

The holiday season conjures up many deep feelings, none less than the devotion between cowboy and horse captured in *A Lot Like Heaven*, by Tim Cox. The perfect gift for the western art lover. [www.timcox.com](http://www.timcox.com)



### JANE LAMBERT RUSSELL BOOK

Are you a Charlie Russell fan? Then you must have Jane Lambert Russell's *Charlie Russell, The Cowboy Years* second edition. The lights will burn long into the night as you discover more about this western legend, his cronies, Judith Landing and swimming horses across rivers. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

### ANDY SANCHEZ

Art of the land touches the soul. Original Andy Sanchez juniper wall hanging inlaid with semi-precious stones created to your taste and style. [www.andysanchez.com](http://www.andysanchez.com)



### CURT MATTSON

“What’cha Up To?” is the perfect way to dress up an entry with a great art piece and help you out as a coat hanger. Bronze by Curt Mattson. [www.curtmattson.com](http://www.curtmattson.com) 623-322-4826



### GUMMERSALL

Artistic team, Jenny Gummersall and her husband, C. Gregory Gummersall, push the boundaries of western art into the contemporary realm with an intense mixture of art photography and explosive collage work. Hang it and love it. [www.gummersall.com](http://www.gummersall.com)

### AMERICAN CRAFTSMAN

Celebrate one of America’s greatest assets, those who create by hand. Tadd Myers captures our country’s own in their workshops, embracing enduring traditions of craft in his stunning coffee table book, *Portraits of the American Craftsman*. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



### OUR OWN A.J.’S *UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY*

This e-book by our intrepid editor A.J. Mangum includes essays on 17 westerners who define the modern cowboy culture. Stories include profiles of artist Harley Brown, modern-day stock detective Pete Olsen, saddlemaker Pedro Pedrini, and the late Paul Bond. \$4.99. Available for the Kindle and Nook, and via iTunes.





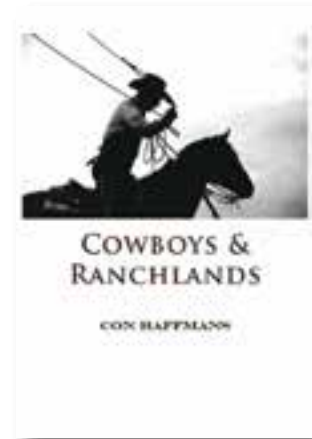


## A.J.'S LIST

We couldn't leave our Editor out of the gift list search so here are some items A.J. Mangum figured would be pretty nice to give (or get!)

### COWBOYS & RANGLANDS

Since 1990, Haffmans has traveled the American West, photographing cowboys at work and the environments that define their identities. This 136-page book is an honest, unparalleled tribute to working cowboys, complete with insightful commentary by Haffmans, who offers poignant observations on western landscapes, horses and friendship. \$50. Available from Amazon.com and BarnesAndNoble.com.

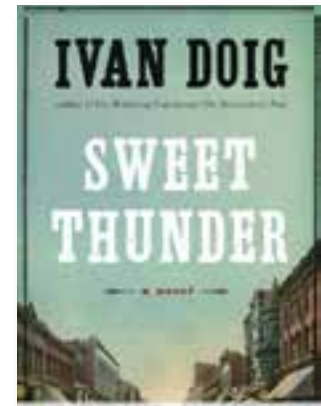


### JONAH HEX COMIC BOOKS

Since his DC Comics debut in 1971, Jonah Hex has provided comic-book fans an Eastwood-style western anti-hero. Get in on the beginning of his legend with *Jonah Hex: Tall Tales*. Prices vary by retailer. Available from Amazon.com and other booksellers.

### SWEET THUNDER, BY IVAN DOIG

One of Big Sky Country's greatest voices, Ivan Doig offers in this 2013 novel his third tale centered on freewheeling con artist Morrie Morgan, and a plot built upon journalism and organized labor on the early 20th century frontier. Prices vary by retailer. Available from Amazon.com and other booksellers.



### STEWART WILLIAMSON SPURS

Slide on a pair of custom spurs that'll hold up to a day's work while expressing your individuality in a way no factory-made set can. Prices vary. [www.custombitsandspurs.com](http://www.custombitsandspurs.com).

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BY HAND AND HEART

# One Human Hand

A young woman stitches together a life making handcrafted saddles.



By Emily Esterson

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58

A good saddle lasts generations. And a saddlemaker who produces a comfortable, functional and beautiful piece of craftsmanship can be revered by riders. Like a talented horseman, a gifted saddlemaker is patient and precise and willing to put in the time to perfect his or her craft.

Crystal Smith, 34, founder of Saddlesmith Saddlery in Idaho Falls, Idaho, knows all about long hours and patience. A horsewoman who's been riding since she was a small child, Crystal tagged along as part of the family outfitting business, Hincks Palisades Creek Ranch, where her parents took out dudes in the summer and hunters in the fall and winter. When she wasn't helping the family, she worked as a secretary at Outfitters Pack Station in Idaho Falls. During her idle time, she'd

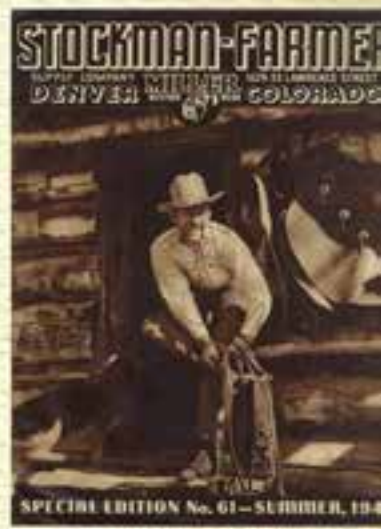
wander into the workshop.

"I started playing around in the shop," she says, "making little stuff for myself and my parents."

When master saddler Kent Frecker took a hunting trip with Crystal's parents, her father showed Frecker a particularly nice headstall Crystal had made. Frecker has been making custom saddles since 1981, and has made saddles for Ray Hunt, Curt and Tammy Pate, and Tom Selleck, among hundreds of other clients from all over the world. Frecker invited Crystal to work for him and, when she couldn't find a babysitter, allowed her to bring her infant daughter to work, a major bonus. She started there in 2006 and, over the course of five years, made 58 saddles working closely with Frecker and with David Rigby, a Frecker saddler since 1991.



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photos courtesy Crystal Smith

Crystal stamps a pattern. Stamping provides a creative outlet for a saddlemaker, and often represents a great challenge in meeting a customer's aesthetic expectations.

60

The process of ordering a custom saddle is an education for the customer and a challenge for the maker. Getting the initial details right determines the quality of the final product. The challenge, says Crystal, is that many customers don't know what they want, and don't understand the vocabulary – the definitions and roles played by rigging, jockeys, fenders.

Saddlemakers, of course, understand how a saddle's construction will affect how it fits and feels to a horse and rider. But customers see a saddle only when it's complete, rather than as the sum of its parts. Each decision – and there are dozens – will have an impact on the look, feel and fit of the finished product, so Crystal sends the customer a diagram to make the process easier.

Still, she doubles as a kind of saddle-design consultant, and a saddle order can take a couple of hours to complete. She takes down details from basics, such as seat size, to umpteen little choices about style, form and fittings. The artistic part, stamping, is where she gets to inject heart and soul into a project. Each saddle is a piece of functional art, useful yet beautiful, in a way that only a handcrafted item can be.

After five years learning the craft from Frecker, Rigby and Frecker's son Tyler, Crystal started building saddles at home. "[Kent] had me doing small work, and I wanted to build saddles and needed a little extra money, so I started building my own," she says. Crystal builds each saddle in her home workshop, a converted two-car garage about 10 steps from the back door of the

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house she shares with her husband, Jared, and their three daughters. You can find her in the workshop nearly every day, often with her girls, ages 9, 6 and 3, ready to help with stamping, sweeping or other jobs. So while she's one of only a handful of young women saddlemakers, she's also building a love for and knowledge of the craft among her own next generation of women.

It's not an easy path. It takes years for a saddlemaker to build a reputation, and even more years to develop a style, that creative zing that will entice customers to buy from you. In addition to learning from Frecker and Rigby, Crystal has worked with Dale Harwood (she purchases her New Zealand-made trees through Harwood's wife, Karen) and has taken classes from Cary Schwarz, who's been making saddles since the early 1980s. Schwarz says developing a saddlemaking style is much like becoming a master musician.

"You start out copying what other people have done," he says. "That's often a bit of a life sentence, because artisans will always carry some of that influence throughout their careers. You don't wake up one day and say, 'I have my own style.' Even for me, my style is still under construction, after 30-some years. Crystal's on her

way to developing her style. She's on the same journey all of us go through."

Five days spent studying her craft with Schwarz was the longest Crystal had ever been away from her family, but nonetheless, she used the time to experiment, to inch closer to perfecting her craft.

Start-up costs, the price of materials and tools, and developing her artistic chops have all been serious challenges. Re-creating a specific picture in leather stamping and tooling is another struggle. "Sometimes people give me a certain design, a brand or picture they want tooled," she says. "That's a challenge."

A slip of the knife created another setback last year. Crystal cut her wrist, severing a couple of tendons and a branch artery. The injury took her out of the shop for six weeks, time she could not really afford.

Saddlemaking takes a certain kind of personality:

detail-oriented, nearly surgical in precision and patience, artistic, possessing an understanding of the mechanics of horse and rider, a love of a traditional craft that's rapidly being supplanted by production lines in far-off countries. Saddlemakers spend hours on the precise placement of a fitting, sanding and shaping the horn and the cantle, and stitching the whole thing together. It's a



A work in progress in Crystal's shop. The young saddlemaker learned much of her craft from mentors that have included Kent Frecker, Dale Harwood and Cary Schwarz.





slow and painstaking craft that doesn't always mesh well with today's instant-gratification, instant-messaging culture. Despite Crystal's love of tradition (she listens to old country music in her workshop), she focuses on innovations, thanks to input from cowboy friends and her parents.

"I have my own style," she says. "Maybe I change the angle of the skirts, or the jockeys, maybe the carriers are a little different. When it comes to tooling, I have a few different types of flowers. I draw different scrollwork around them. I get feedback from customers, and that might help me narrow the seat up, or make it rounder or flatter in certain spots."

Crystal's four horses serve as guinea pigs for her designs. "I don't like to be perched up on top of the horse," she says, "so I take a little out in the leg area, so you don't feel like you're riding spread-eagle." In all, it takes Crystal about 40 hours to complete a plain saddle. A stamped saddle can take up to a month to complete.

Her craft may be traditional, but Crystal's marketing is 21st century. She has a Web site, but most of her interactions with potential customers come through her Facebook page and from word of mouth. She's had customers from across the United States, as well as from Germany, Canada and other countries. She's slowly making a name for herself.

As unusual as it might seem for a young woman to

take up the craft, Schwarz says custom saddlemaking is experiencing a bit of a renaissance.

"There's a lot more information and learning opportunities available to people than there once was," he says. "Not a week goes by when I don't I hear about someone doing this."

The difference, though, Schwarz says, is that he doesn't hear about many people – particularly women – trying to make saddles full time, for an income. There are plenty of hobbyists, but "there are not so many of us who are actually paying bills, and that's an important distinction."

Schwarz estimates that the ratio of female to male saddlemakers is overwhelmingly lopsided – maybe one in 10, or even one in 20. Even though her journey hasn't been easy, Crystal has a certain faith in her approach. After all, she's doing what she loves, creating a piece of work where each stitch is tight, each element handcrafted.

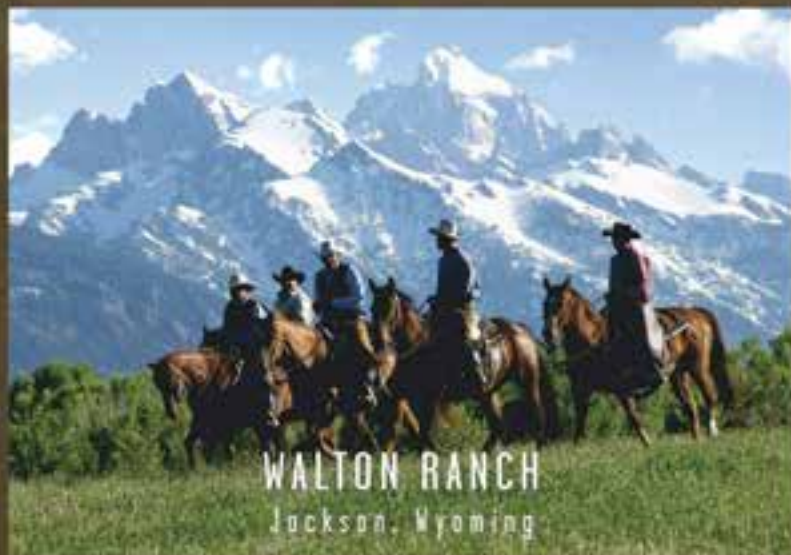
"When you order a custom saddle, you're looking at a piece of work from one person," she says. "That's what it means – not something from an assembly line of 20 people. There are no gaps, no loose pieces, and it sits on the horse correctly. The work is touched by one human hand and that hand carries that person's heart."



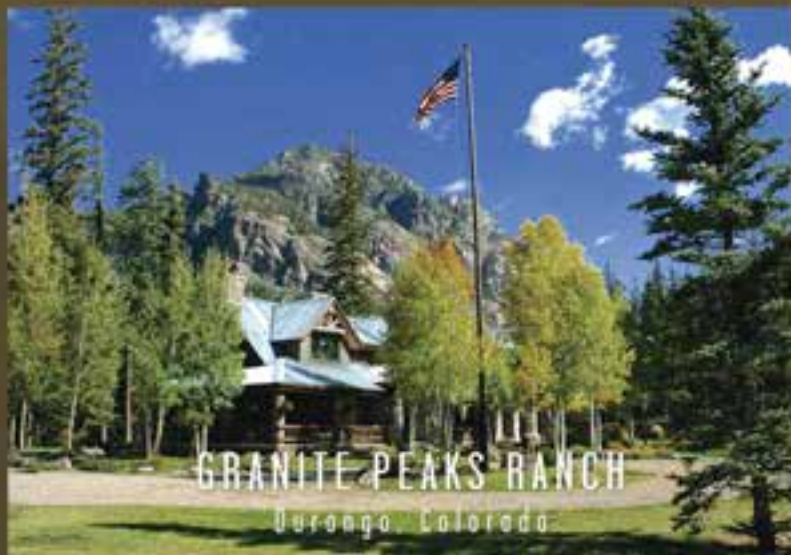
Idaho saddlemaker Crystal Smith



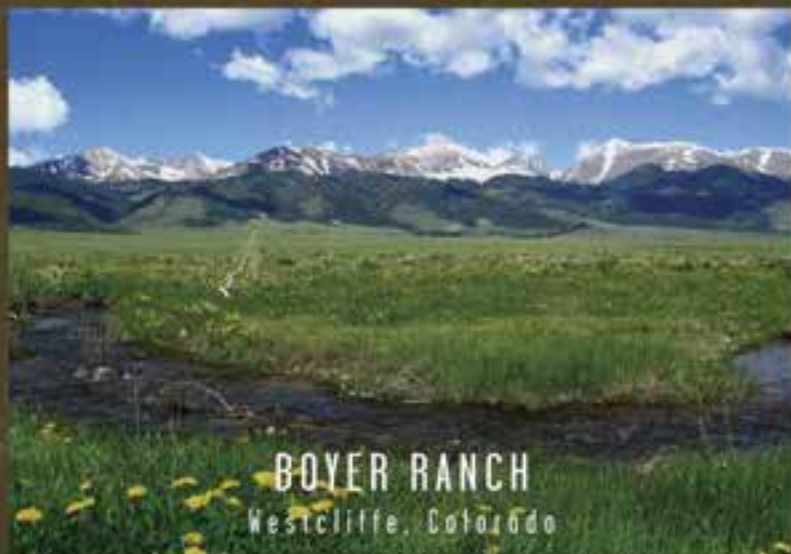
Emily Esterson, based in Albuquerque, writes for and edits business and horse magazines. She is the author of *The Ultimate Book of Horse Bits*.

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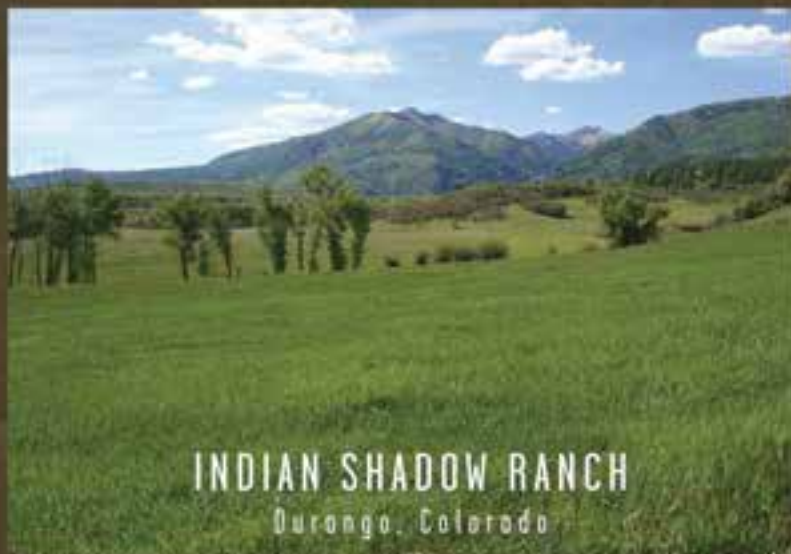
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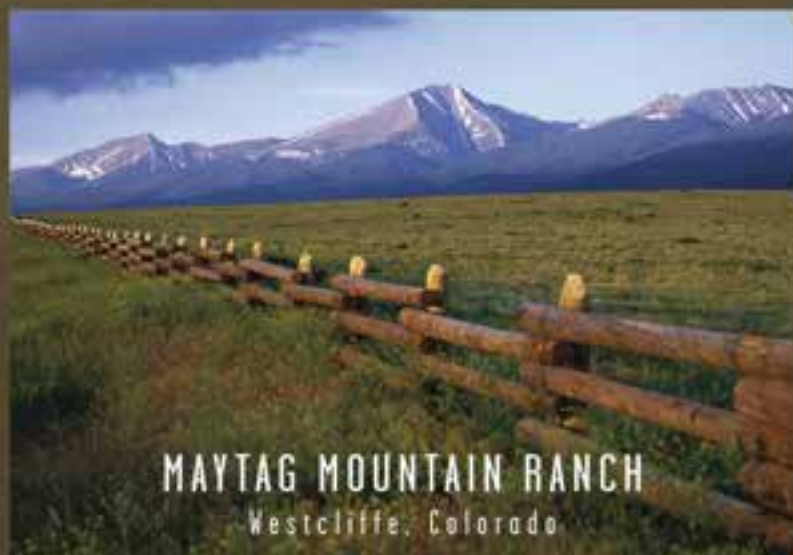


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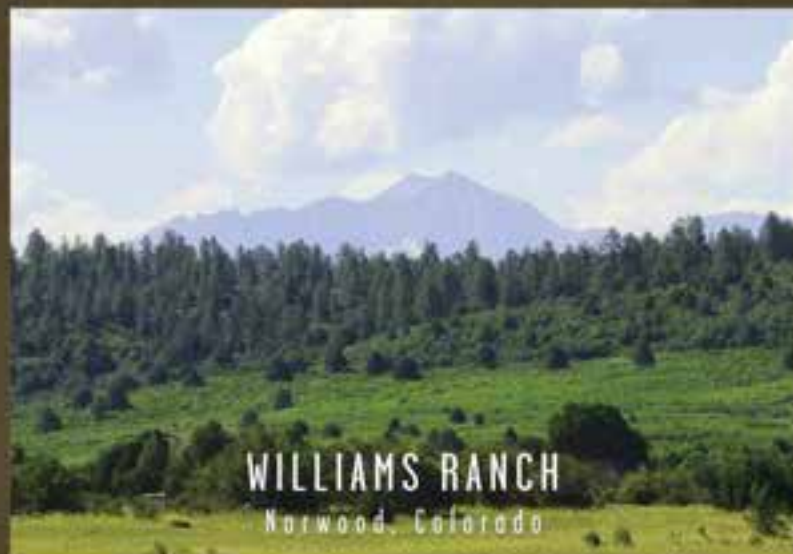
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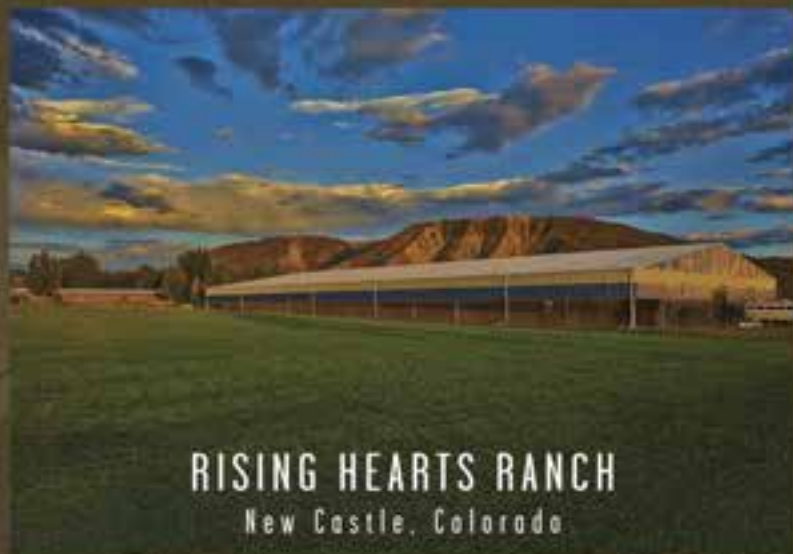
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## BOOKS TO FIND

# Three Little Books

In Creating Relationships, with Horses or with People, These Books have Helped Change the Lives of Both for the Better

**W**riter/horseman Tom McGuane speaks of the horse as few can. His eloquent writing enables the reader to see his vision of the horse as a greater, more significant entity. A longtime cutting-horse rider, he has succumbed to the dance between horse and cow, a condition for which there is apparently no cure. His writing reflects his continuing amazement at the effect horses can have on people. “It is not the duty of the horse to be a biofeedback mechanism for yearning humans; yet it is remarkable how consistently people with horses claim to have learned much about themselves through them.”

Horse training is a function of subtle behavioral changes. Yet for generations, the “bigger hammer” approach – that the human was superior – ruled. So it is interesting that wherever it came from – and it is the source of many a discussion – the more nonintrusive approaches to horses and their training have gained incredible popularity over the last 30 or so years. This approach, a function of building an honest relationship between the human and the horse, has no greater “father” figure than the late Tom Dorrance, a man who

has done more for the horse, quietly and without fanfare, than most realize.

Great horsemen follow a lineage, and it was no different with Dorrance. He worked as a teacher for years with a young Ray Hunt, who in turn took the information and traveled extensively putting on clinics, working with people and their horses – literally all over the horse world. Hunt’s travels sparked an entire new generation of horsemen, including a young trainer from Montana, Buck Brannaman. As part of this lineage, Brannaman continues the traveling clinician tradition, putting on 40 clinics a year around the United States and Australia.

This line of horsemen dedicated to the horse, Tom, Ray, and Buck are sort of the Yoda, Obiwan, and Luke Skywalker of the horse game. Their ways carry on the tradition of their teachers, in turn helping more and more carry on a kinder – and more successful approach – to training. Interestingly, at the insistence of their students, each of these three has written books that have become classics in the world of horse-human relationships. Tom Dorrance published *True Unity* in

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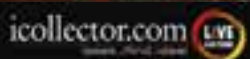
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1987, Ray Hunt published *Think Harmony with Horses* in 1978, and Buck Brannaman published *Groundwork: The First Impression* in 1997. Fortunately for us and for horses everywhere, all three are still in print.

While all of these books are about working with horses, they are about something more. In describing effective horse-training methods,

the authors also teach a lot about having more effective relationships in general – with your horse, your spouse, your kids, your co-workers. All three volumes ask the



reader to slow down and listen. Be courteous and respectful. They teach that life is a dance and to succeed, relationships must have give and take.

There is a great wisdom in these books beyond the horse arena. As Tom Dorrance puts it, “I try to feel what the horse is feeling and then I can operate from where the horse is. I have watched horses when they are loose by themselves or loose in a group; gentle raised or wild range raised, their naturalness will show. And by studying their actions and reactions I have been helped to understand how to present myself in such a way that the horses will respond to what I may ask of them.” Sounds like an effective day at the office. Tom Dorrance gives credit where credit is due: “What I know about the horse I learned from the horse.”

Like his mentor and teacher, the late Ray Hunt furthered the cause. Hunt’s visiting-clinic approach to working with horses enabled tens of thousands to learn more about this quiet revolution. “Working with the horse is a way of life for me,” he says. “He’s my livelihood, my hobby, my passion. If given a little thought, a little understanding, and a little common sense, the horse

gives back in full measure. If the human can give 5 percent, the horse will come from the other side with 95 percent. The horse never ceases to amaze me with what he can get done with very little help from the human.”

As a young man, Buck Brannaman had the opportunity to see Ray Hunt and Tom Dorrance at a clinic near a ranch he was working on near Bozeman, Montana. Brannaman has never forgotten that first impression. “The

things that Ray Hunt and Tom Dorrance have taught me about myself, have changed my life. The approach that they showed me was like nothing I’d ever seen, nor probably will ever see again.”

“Life and horses – “as Buck Brannaman says, “it’s all the same to me.” It’s a truth that may be not as subtle as it seems. As humans, we all want to communicate better and hopefully be better attuned to the feelings of those we care about – horse or human. The books these three have written help people do just that. Even though the volumes have been around for a while, their effect continues to be significant, both in and out of the world of horses and saddles.


Brannaman’s friend and mentor Ray Hunt summed it up pretty well: “As time goes on, all the little things will fall into line. A lot of times, it is darkest before the dawn. Sometimes the horse might get a little worse before it gets better. We should be adjusting to fit the horse. Fix it up and let it work. You can’t make it happen and you can’t put a time limit on it. Sometimes the slower you go, the faster you learn.” Amen.





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## THE COOK HOUSE

# Pam Ewing's California Red Enchiladas



By Kathy McCraine

70

**P**am Ewing describes herself as a displaced Californio – or, more specifically, a displaced Barbareño. Californios are the *descendientes* of the earliest Spanish settlers of California, when it was still under Spanish rule, but those who trace their ancestry to Santa Barbara County are also *Barbareños*.

Pam is a seventh generation Californio, tracing her ancestry back to Capt. Jose Francisco Ortega, who came to California with the Portola expedition to establish missions in 1769. Her ancestors



photos by Kathy McCraine

Displaced Californio Pam Ewing.

were among the first to receive land grants from the Spanish government, with Ortega himself establishing the once huge Rancho Nuestra Señora del Refugio.

“He had a lot of kids,” Pam says, “so there are a lot of us today who trace our ancestry back to him. We call each other ‘cousins,’ and we consider ourselves *paisanos*, people of the land.”

Most of the old ranch families are dispersed now, their ranches split up and the old adobe haciendas torn down or remodeled by the



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influx of newcomers over the past 50 years. Pam, 62, feels strong ties to her past, and such changes make her sad. She and her husband, Nick, now live on a small place on the New Mexico border just east of Springerville, Arizona, but she still has fond memories of growing up in her ranching family on the central California coast.

Los Alamos, where Pam was raised, was a small community then, where everybody knew everybody else. Her grandfather, William “Bud” Howerton, spent 89 years cowboying in Santa Barbara County, 25 of those years running the Hollister Ranch. A highly respected cowboy and horseman, he was named Honorary Vaquero at the Santa Barbara Old Spanish Days Fiesta in 1974, and he won seven saddles at that event over the years.

Pam’s earliest memories are of attending horse shows, rodeos, and big brandings where neighbors all helped each other. Always there was food: huge barbecues at the brandings and fabulous lunches her grandmother Marguerita brought to horse shows.

Marguerita Howerton’s great grandfather, Fernando Tico, was the original grantee of Rancho Ojai at Ojai, California, and she came from a family of horsemen, vaqueros and rawhide braiders. She rode and lived her life on great ranches like Las Cruces, Santa Margarita, Rancho Alamo and Tar Springs. Above all, she was a great cook.

“Grandma was always feeding everybody,” Pam says, “and food for her was love. She loved to cook in her little kitchen, and she was bubbly and warm and loving. I don’t know how old I was when I started helping clean beans and then helping her make tortillas, but I can still remember the smells of her kitchen where she taught me to cook – red chile sauce, roasting chiles, homemade tortillas, palillis, sweet bean empanadas – and always there was a pot of beans simmering on the stove.



Grandpa grew a huge garden, so we had lots and lots of produce, and she would serve huge meals.”

Pam has covered a lot of miles since those days in her grandmother’s kitchen. She and Nick have run cattle, managed ranches, and operated a hunting guide business in California. About 10 years ago, they moved to Eagle Creek, Arizona, where they leased a ranch, day-worked, hunted lions and bear, packed, outfitted, and operated a fencing company. Through it all, she has continued the tradition of her grandmother, cooking in the style that is unique to the old Californios, a blend of Spanish and Mexican cuisine. One of her favorite recipes, which goes all the way back to the Ortega family, is California Red Enchiladas.

“All of grandma’s cousins, her aunt, her great aunt, her mother – everybody cooked that enchilada,” she says. “I don’t know why, but in Santa Barbara County you put egg in it, maybe because we Catholics have Lent



and don't eat meat on Fridays. You could feast on grandma's enchiladas when you were supposed to be fasting. It's just a very old recipe."

When she has time, Pam goes through the laborious process of making the red chile sauce from dried chiles and freezing large batches for future use. This simplified version calls for canned red chile sauce.

### California Red Enchiladas

- 3 medium onions, minced
- ¼ cup California olive oil
- 2 28-ounce cans Las Palmas Medium Hot Red Chile Sauce
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- ½ teaspoon powdered oregano
- 2 pounds medium sharp cheddar cheese, coarsely grated
- 6 hard boiled eggs, chopped very fine
- 1 15-ounce can Early California Extra Large Black Olives
- 12 medium flour tortillas (about 8 inches in diameter)

Place the onions in a medium frying pan and pour the olive oil over. Stir and sauté, until translucent, several minutes. Heat the red chile sauce in a large pot. In a small bowl, mix together the flour, brown sugar, red wine vinegar, and oregano. Stir in enough of the chile sauce to make a thick paste, then whisk back into the pot. Simmer the sauce until thickened and hot. One by one, dip a tortilla in the sauce until coated on both sides. Place in a large baking dish and spread down the middle a handful of cheese, a handful of onion, a handful of chopped egg, two tablespoons of sauce, and two olives. Fold and roll the tortilla around the filling, leaving a little of the edge of the tortilla protruding beneath. Repeat with the remaining tortillas. (Use two baking dishes if necessary.) Pour additional sauce over the enchiladas, spread the remaining cheese down the middle, and decorate with more olives. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees until hot and bubbly, about 30 minutes.



Kathy McCraine is the author of the award-winning book,  
*Cow Country Cooking: Recipes and Tales from  
Northern Arizona's Historic Ranches.*

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# What Painting Is

For painter Quang Ho, art is the pursuit of that which is true.

By A.J. Mangum



*Gathering*

When Quang Ho thinks back to his days as a student at the Colorado Institute of Art, one moment stands out: It's 1982, and Quang stands behind an easel, putting the finishing touches on a painting depicting a model who poses in the center of the classroom. With just five minutes remaining in the class, its instructor, Rene Bruhin, begins circulating. When he reaches Quang, he stops and briefly studies his painting. Rene then takes the brush from Quang's hand and proceeds, as Quang now describes it, to "destroy" the work.

"I thought I could draw anything, that I could paint anything," Quang says. "But there's a big difference between



*Winter Creek*

being able to render and being able to understand what painting is. I saw the parts. Rene saw the whole.”

Quang’s passion for art had begun in his early childhood in Vietnam, and had thrived during his adolescence in the United States. By the time Quang was 16, his work had already been the subject of a successful one-man show at Denver’s Tomorrow’s Masters Gallery. It wasn’t until he studied under Rene, though, that he began to understand the *language* of art.

“Painting is understanding the visual vocabulary – lines, shape, color, value, texture, edges, the raw material you use



*Coral*

to create an illusion on canvas – and bringing those elements together,” Quang says. “Whether it’s a landscape, a still life or something abstract, explore the harmony and connectedness that exists. Every piece of paint correlates to every other piece of paint, just as every note in a piece of music moves perfectly into another note. It’s nothing to do with rendering realistically.”

Today, Quang’s work resides in collections throughout the world, and is regularly featured in major shows. Working primarily in oils, his subjects range from still lifes and landscapes to the worlds of ballet and the culinary arts.

In the fall of 2012, Quang was one of a select group of artists invited by



Artist, Quang Ho



*Coraled*

Wyoming's T Cross Ranch – a guest ranch outside the small town of Dubois, in the state's northwestern corner – to participate in a weeklong retreat. Artists would have the ranch to themselves, with unlimited access to its wranglers, horses and landscapes.

"I'd been on ranches before, but I'd never paid much attention to horses," Quang says. "At the T Cross, I looked at the horses closely, did one painting, and couldn't leave them. The whole week, I just wanted to study the horses."

As Quang contends, though, subject matter is only a starting point. Art, he explains, emerges from the interaction of a painting's elements, the way in which a work offers an opportunity to give voice to that visual vocabulary: lines, shape, color, value, texture, edges.

"It might be a painting of horses, but it's not really about horses," Quang says. "That's not the point. The inspiration has to become a visual vocabulary that makes sense."

More than a year after the T Cross retreat, horses remain for Quang an obsession to which he expects to devote 15



*Kitchen Atmosphere*



*Mizuna Kitchen*

to 20 paintings in a pursuit of nothing short of a pure truth.

“Going forward, I’ll forget they’re horses,” he says. “I’ll paint with thicker paint, white on white, black on black, with ideas revolving around the horse’s shape. You’ll see a conglomeration of shapes, and then realize they’re horses. I’m trying to find out what is true, and how it all connects. If a horse inspires a painting, that horse is also the barn behind it, and the sky above it. It’s all connected. Grab a corner, and it all peels off.”





*Horse 5*



*Mingling*



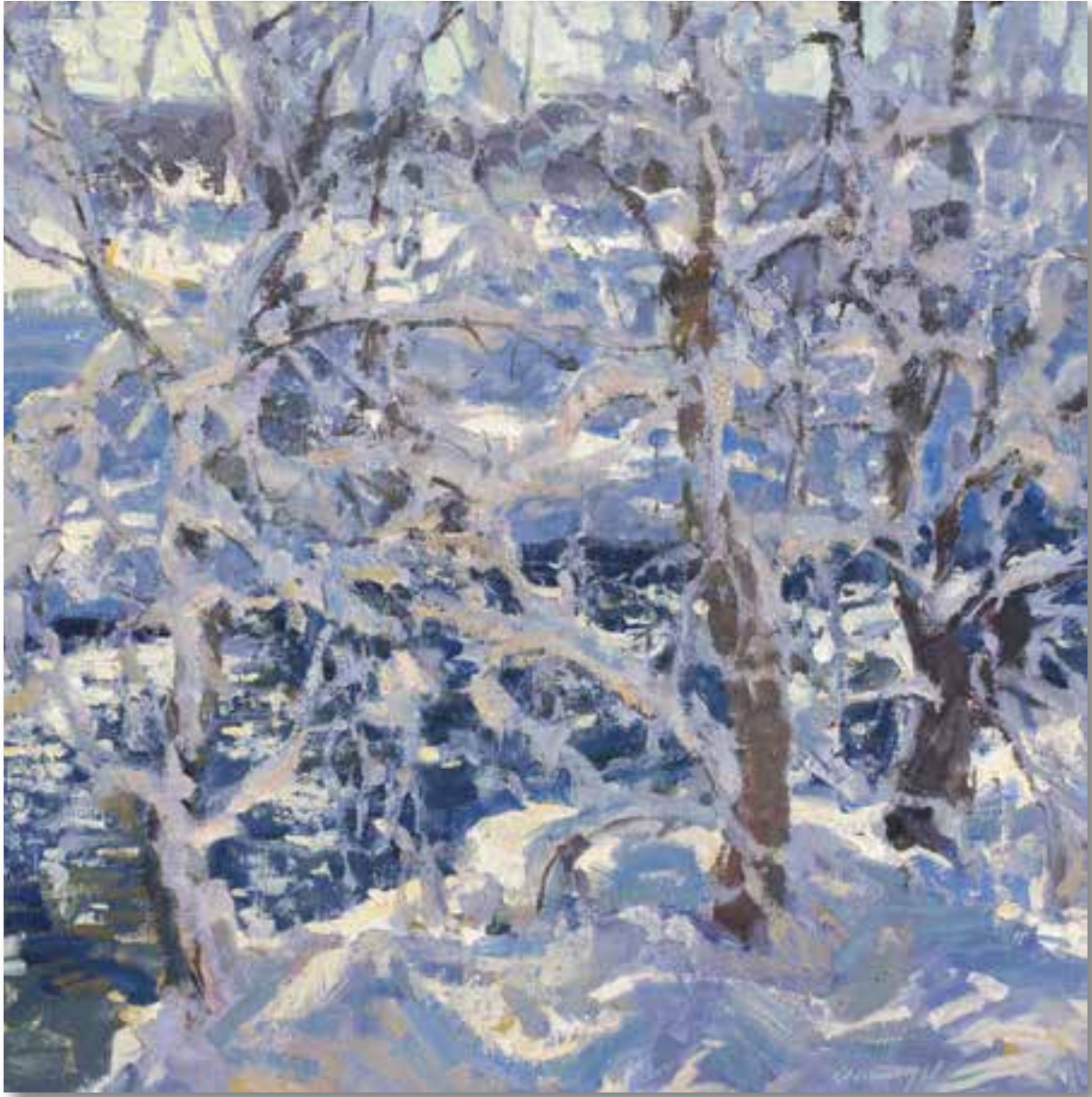
*Grand Canyon Storm*



*Grand Canyon*



*Daily Sustaining*



*Winter's Web*



*Meyer Lemons*



*Summer Arrangement*



Quang Ho has been selected as the featured artist for the 2014 Coors Western Art Exhibit, held in conjunction with Denver's National Western Stock Show. His work *Mingling* will be featured on the exhibit's poster and publications. He is represented by multiple galleries, including Vail, Colorado's Claggett/Rey Gallery.

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# Cowboy Shoeing

By Pete Healey, APF

Remember the movie *The Cowboys*? John Wayne played a rancher named Will Anderson who hired a bunch of school kids for a cattle drive. There is a part in the movie where the villain says to John Wayne, "Mister you're going to need a baby carriage to get these kids across the prairie," and John Wayne replies, "Well whatever I need, I'll get." Ray Hunt used to say, "Do what it takes, no more no less." When a horse comes onto my shoeing floor, this is how his feet are going to get handled; whatever they need they'll get, no more no less. This may mean two swipes with a rasp or two tubes of acrylic repair, after all I was taught to shoe from a cowboy.

Although I am not much of a hand, I have been exposed to some really good ones. One thing I have noticed about good cowboys, male or female, is that they are good at whatever they do. My uncle who taught me how to shoe is not only a great horseman and cattleman but can do anything well and correct. I know a lot of good cowboys that are talented in other skill sets including shoeing a horse. There are still a lot of places where a living is made horseback; cowboys ride long miles and shoe their own string of horses. One advantage cowboys have is that most ranch horses have good feet. This model foot was a big asset in my shoeing career as I was imprinted with what a good foot looked and felt like. This evolved into a measuring system that maintains a good foot and restores a bad foot. The biggest problem with our modern farrier and veterinarian industries is that they don't know what a proper foot looks like or how it should biomechanically act.

Years ago manufacturers of horseshoes made hot and cold shoes. The hot shoes had long heels, which could be forged into bars or calks or cut off. The cold shoe had a short-heeled pattern for use where a forge was not practical. At first they were used by the military and then ranchers, packers and outfitters. These were referred to by the manufacturer as "Cowboy Shoes." These shoes had poor design characteristics and made it difficult for even an experienced person to do a good job. Thus, when cowboy shoes were put into the hands of a poor workman, "Cowboy Shoeing" was the result. This inappropriate term is still used today and means poor quality or cheap work.

A couple of years ago a lady called me and made an appointment to get her horse shod at the clinic. She brought over a nice horse with a fancy halter. The lady had on fancy western clothes with plenty of bling and jewelry and she was wearing her spurs. She told me she had a ranch in one of the northern states and was spending the winter down here. She told me to slap some "cowboy shoes" on her horse and that she would be back in an hour. This gal looked pretty busy and being she said "cowboy shoes" and had her spurs on kind of told me she might have to get horseback anytime to rope a wild bull or something. I made sure I doubled checked the balance on this horse; the breakover radius, the hoof-pastern axis, medial-lateral balance and depth of foot. Now, we never did discuss how much I charge to shoe and I don't charge extra for a good job because they're suppose to be good. We must have had a miscommunication about "cowboy shoes" because I thought she meant "Cowboy Shoeing" and she was quite disappointed with the bill I gave her. I guess her idea of what this horse *needed* should have been *less* and I never saw her any *more*.



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*american character*

# Cover Girl

Working for Ralph Lauren's Double R L line, Ashley Riggs still draws upon her roots on a Nevada ranch.

By Thea Marx

*Editor's Note: After the publication of our June/July 2013 issue, cover photographer Robb Kendrick sent us a note with an interesting bit of trivia: the cover subject, Ashley Riggs, who Robb originally photographed for National Geographic, had since gone on to a career in fashion, working for Ralph Lauren in New York. We asked contributor Thea Marx, to follow up with Ashley, who was kind enough to share her story.*

**T**he daughter and only child of the cow boss on a Nevada ranch boasting several thousand cow-calf pairs, Ashley Riggs grew up riding horses and working cattle. She was homeschooled when she wasn't helping her parents, and spent her down time creating fashion plates like those that had appeared in the leading fashion journals of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. She longed for such period clothing, and trailing cattle on one of the country's largest ranches was a perfect setting for her to daydream about her own designs.

When Ashley's mother, Mary, made her a period costume, Ashley's ideas for changes were so numerous that Mary decided it was time for her daughter to learn to sew and make her own costumes. With instructions from her mother and further tutoring from her grandmother, Ashley quickly advanced to the finer points of sewing, creating pieces on an antique treadle machine. Within a couple of years, her work had its



photo courtesy Ashley Riggs

Ashley and her Van Norman gelding, Bert, after a 2006 horse show. "I'm wearing my grandpa's 1950s western shirt," she says. "I still wear it to work sometimes."



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Trintype by Robb Kendrick

Terry, Ashley and Mary Riggs.

first public test at the Cheyenne Frontier Days parade, in which she partnered with Wyoming cousins to enter in the costume contest her elaborate, fit-for-Hollywood creations.

“I won first and third that day,” she says, “just because I wanted to dress up and ride in a carriage.”

After graduating early from high school and earning an undergraduate business degree, Ashley’s interest in fashion remained strong. She traveled to Chicago for a two-week fashion program, returning with her course in life seemingly set.

“[Chicago] sealed the deal,” she says. “There was no

question in my mind as to what I wanted to do with my life. It had to be fashion.”

Since her teens, Ashley had read about New York City’s Parson School, now formally known as Parsons The New School for Design. Founded in 1896, Parsons’ fashion program ranks among the world’s best, having launched many illustrious careers from its campus on the Lower West Side. Following her father’s advice to learn only from the best, Ashley applied, earned a spot at Parsons, and moved east.

“School was so exciting,” Ashley says. “It was everything I dreamed of – draping fabrics, making



patterns, all of it. I knew I was in the right place. I have to admit, though, on my first day on the A train, I wondered what I was doing. The city is such a different experience.”

Today, Ashley is a design assistant for Ralph Lauren’s Double R L line, working with men’s woven shirts. She works amidst fabric samples, rigging “inspiration sets” built from vintage finds that convey the look and feel of the line designers are creating.

“Think saddles, vintage plaids, bits, rawhide, sweat-stained hats, and worn work boots, and you can visualize my workspace,” she says. “I still dress western, with my favorite RRL jeans, long-sleeved Oxford shirts and my Justin boots. I still go to work with my hair in a braid, just like in the cover photograph.”

Attentive readers will recognize Ashley from *Ranch & Reata’s* June/July 2013 cover, which featured a photo shot by Texas photographer Robb Kendrick as part of a *National Geographic* project documenting Nevada’s ranching culture. The image, a sepia tintype shot with a Civil War-era camera, then appeared on the cover of the coffee-table book *In Focus: National Geographic Greatest Portraits*.

Ashley recalls gathering with ranch hands around the pickup tailgate Robb used as his darkroom, watching as he created unforgettable images that offered glimpses into their lives.

“Robb was this mystery guy who’d been around the world,” Ashley recalls. “We were hanging on his every word. My mom was canning peaches that day, and hadn’t wanted me to go to headquarters because she



Ashley Riggs appeared on *Ranch & Reata’s* June/July 2013 cover, in a photograph by Robb Kendrick. Ashley went on to study fashion at New York’s Parsons school, and now works for Ralph Lauren.



needed help. I went anyway, and look what happened.”

Robb’s image of Ashley has been a recurring theme for both photographer and subject. “I was able to help complete the circle with Robb when we had a book signing for him at our flagship store in Manhattan,” she says. “It was perfect to



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photo by Shannon Laidler

Ashley and fellow designer Cody Hammond during a book signing for photographer Robb Kendrick at RRL's flagship store in New York City.

have his images among the designs inspired by the lives he shoots."

Ashley says she misses ranch life, and credits it for giving her a work ethic she can draw upon in an industry in which 10- to 12-hour work days are common. Her background also gives her a skill set uniquely suited to working for Ralph Lauren.

"I think about the way I grew up and the people I know," she says. "Ralph Lauren is trying to re-create that aesthetic."



Thea Marx is a Wyoming-based writer and design specialist. Learn more about her work at [www.contemporarywesterndesign.com](http://www.contemporarywesterndesign.com).

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# The Songster, Redefined

Texas musician Andy Hedges offers a contemporary take on old cowboy songs.

By Hal Cannon

Andy Hedges gives me hope for the future of old-time cowboy music and the art of poetry recitation. Along with a handful of other fine young artists, Hedges stands apart as the foremost young interpreter of cowboy folk songs. There are other great young artists writing their own songs or interpreting popular cowboy harmonies and swing music, but not many of them specialize in old cowboy songs that came before radio and recording. I recently spoke with Hedges about his new album and the state of cowboy music and poetry with younger generations.

Hedges' new CD, *Andy Hedges, Cowboy Songster*, contains 14 songs. Many are rare old gems, such as "Down South on the Rio Grande," to which Hedges added a melody, using lyrics from a 1938 Lomax cowboy songbook. He also takes a fresh approach with classics such as "Old Chisholm Trail," drawing inspiration from an African-American version of the cowboy standard recorded by Moses "Clear Rock" Platt. Hedges finds equal inspiration in the music of older cowboy singers – Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Don Edwards and Buck Ramsey – who are among the leading proponents of these traditions.

Hedges is fascinated by the idea of "the songster," an old-fashioned concept he's working to redefine. In an age in which most singers are classified as either

singer-songwriters or cover singers, Hedges cringes at the tired act of learning music just to imitate others. He also thinks too many singers with little talent as songwriters are pressured into that approach because it's expected.

"I don't think of myself as a re-enactor," he says. "I'm interpreting this music in order to bring myself to it: someone living in the current time who finds these songs moving and inspiring. I'm trying to play these songs in way that makes sense in our world today."

Born in 1980, Hedges grew up in the tiny town of Tokio, Texas, about an hour's drive from Lubbock. His father, a former bull rider, became a pastor in the Primitive Baptist Church when Hedges was a young boy. To make ends meet, the family cared for a small ranch (though Hedges is reluctant to call it a ranch) in lieu of paying rent, and looked after the outfit's few head of cattle, pasture and old barns. The place was surrounded by cotton fields and sand hills, and made an ideal setting for Hedges to explore as he was homeschooled from first grade through high school.

Hedges' boyhood curiosity extended to his father's cassette collection. When he heard the Sons of the Pioneers, Marty Robbins, Johnny Horton, Tex Ritter and others for the first time, it was love at first listen.

When he was 14, Hedges found recordings by Don

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Edwards and Waddie Mitchell, and was entranced. He began listening to Red Steagall's weekly radio show and slowly realized there was a revival afoot in the cowboy world. He started learning cowboy poems, picked up a guitar and aimed toward meeting the people who made the music and wrote the poems that so intrigued him.

"I grew up very conservative," Hedges says. "By most people's standards, sheltered. There are good and bad things about this. One of the really good things is it's a primary reason I became interested in traditional music. I was out there without many outside influences, as far as hearing popular music of the day."

In 1999, the Texas Cowboy Poetry Gathering invited Hedges to recite poetry. Soon after, in 2000, he was invited to Elko for the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering. As he became more proficient at singing and playing guitar, Hedges decided it was time to record a CD.

He had become acquainted with Lubbock musician Andy Wilkinson, and had heard that Wilkinson produced albums. By then, Hedges had gathered a few songs, including one or two he'd penned himself. When he approached Wilkinson about producing his album, the older musician ushered Hedges into his home office and asked him to perform one of his songs. Hedges obliged and Wilkinson asked for another song, then

another. He recalls that Wilkinson listened to around five songs, then asked what Hedges wanted his first album to be.

"I want it to be cowboy," Hedges replied. "I want it to have a folk sound, and I want it to be good."

Wilkinson told Hedges that, in that case, he should not record any of the songs he'd just sung. He sent Hedges home with assignments: recommendations for traditional songs, and albums to listen to. For Hedges, it was a watershed moment.

"It sounds harsh," he says, "but it's one of the most helpful things anyone has ever done for me."

Over the years, the two Andys have become close friends, traveling together and sharing the stage. On the road, they've conceived of recording projects and, for several years, recorded an album

together annually. It's an odd pairing, in some ways. Wilkinson is almost twice Hedges' age. Wilkinson is a songwriter and poet; Hedges is an interpreter. Wilkinson's voice is sweet, while Hedges' has some grit. Hedges doesn't sing harmony, and both are generally solo guitar players. And, they share a first name, which can be confusing.

What binds the two, though, is a shared love of western tradition, and an abundance of ideas on how to interpret it. Their collaboration has led to a series of albums strong in concept and beautifully executed.

This past April, I traveled to Turkmenistan with



Andy Hedges performs in Lubbock, Texas.

photo by Jason Hedges/courtesy Andy Hedges





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photo courtesy Andy Hedges

Andy, with his wife, Alissa, and daughter, Maggie Rose.

Hedges and a small group of cowboy musicians, including Gail Steiger of Prescott, Arizona, and Linda Svendsen of Bozeman, Montana. We lent our talents and knowledge to a cultural tour sponsored by the U.S. Embassy and the Turkman Horse Association.

As Hedges and I traveled together, I asked him about his views on life and our shared commitment to the West. Hedges grew up in a religious household. Today, he works with his father in the crop-insurance business and remains active in his church. I was curious about his view of the political and social gulf that can exist within the western culture.

“Because of playing music and because of my background, I have friends on the extreme right and on

the extreme left,” he says. “In general, I don’t think both sides try to understand each other. It seems like there’s lots of bickering. It’s a problem when you’re so convinced of your views you can’t, for a moment, try to understand an opposing view.” One thing Hedges loves about cowboy gatherings is that, while artists and audiences don’t hide their views, they still come together, in spite of political and religious differences, for a shared love of cowboy tradition.

A challenge facing cowboy music and poetry, though, is an aging audience. Radio producer Taki Telonidis and I just completed an Idaho Public Radio documentary on the National Old-Time Fiddlers Contest in Weiser, Idaho. We observed how vibrant the



scene is for a multigenerational audience. Older musicians regularly play fiddle music with younger folks, and the tradition seems to have no age barriers.

By contrast, at many of the cowboy events we attend, the audiences are older. When we started the Cowboy Poetry Gathering, in 1985, the average age of our first audience was about my age at the time, 35. That average age has followed me since; I'm now 65. Hedges was not yet five years old when the Cowboy Poetry Gathering launched, so I was curious about his observations on this demographic shift.

Hedges says that when he first heard Waddie Mitchell perform, he simply thought it was the funniest thing he'd ever heard. He didn't realize it was poetry, and had no opinion on Mitchell's age in comparison to his own.

"The last thing I ever considered was if Waddie was [part of] my generation," he says. "Young people don't care how old the performer is. They want to be inspired. They want to hear stories and music that moves them. I fell in love with this art form as a kid because the stories are great. The music is great. As performers and organizers, if we keep the focus on presenting art that is good and authentic, people are naturally drawn to it."

Hedges contends that the generation behind his own is drawn to folk music, as well as to a "more grounded" life, but that the cowboy experience has somehow been excluded from that trend. I predict it will be Andy Hedges and likeminded artists who will open up the world of cowboy arts to new generations, both urban and rural.



Musician, folklorist and journalist Hal Cannon is the founding director of the Western Folklife Center.

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## THE WESTERN HORSE

# Send in the Clones

A recent court decision regarding clone registration could fundamentally change the stock-horse industry.



By Paul A. Cañada

98

This past summer, a jury in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas, Amarillo Division, ruled in favor of plaintiffs Jason Abraham of Canadian, Texas, and Gregg Veneklasen, DVM, of Amarillo, in a lawsuit against the American Quarter Horse Association. The plaintiffs sought the right to register cloned horses with AQHA.

The jury found that AQHA violated Sections 1 and 2 of the Sherman Antitrust Act and Sections 15.05(a) and (b) of the Texas Free Enterprise and Antitrust Act. Judge Mary Lou Robinson ordered AQHA to pay nearly \$900,000 in legal fees to the plaintiffs, and issued a judgment restraining the association from enforcing Rule 227(a), which prohibited registration of horses produced by any cloning process. Robinson ordered AQHA to

immediately amend its registration rules to “allow for the registration of Quarter Horses produced through somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) and their offspring.” The order required numerous specific amendments be added to AQHA registration rules.

AQHA argued that its membership has the right to make decisions regarding the registry. *The Amarillo Globe-News* quoted AQHA Executive Vice President Don Treadway as saying, “When individuals with shared interests, goals and values come together to form a voluntary association to serve a common purpose, the members have a right to determine the rules for their association.”

Wade Arnold, one of AQHA’s attorneys, echoed that point when he told jurors the organization has a right to set its own lawful and reasonable rules. The



photo by Paul Caniada

This cloned mare is part of the breeding program of NCHA hall of fame riders Phil and Mary Ann Rapp of Weatherford, Texas.

plaintiffs succeeded, however, in arguing that AQHA maintains monopoly control over the Quarter Horse business and that its registration rules exclude cloned horses from the multimillion-dollar industry.

Aiding the plaintiffs was the fact that AQHA has changed live cover rules in the past to allow foals produced through artificial insemination and other advanced technologies. Attorneys for Abraham and

Veneklasen argued that, like other breeding technologies now commonly accepted, SCNT technology is safe and legal, and should be allowed.

“SCNT is nothing more than an assisted reproduction technique, similar to the in vitro fertilization and artificial insemination used widely in animal reproduction,” Veneklasen says. “There’s no genetic manipulation of the animal, no genes added,

removed or manipulated. A clone is a genetic twin of the original.”

The judgment directly affects AQHA, but has other breed associations quaking in their boots. If AQHA’s appeals fail and the ruling stands, will other associations be forced to include clones in their registries? What impact would a widespread use of clones have on gene pools, breeding businesses and equine performance sports?

The buzz on social media sites supports AQHA’s claim that the vast majority of its membership is against registering clones and their offspring. Cloning opponents argue that the practice is “unnatural” and “isn’t what God intended,” often equating clones to Frankenstein’s monster. However, cloning proponents argue that such technology should be no more controversial than commonly used breeding practices like artificial insemination.

When National Cutting Horse Association hall of fame riders Phil and Mary Ann Rapp, of Weatherford, Texas, were first approached about cloning, the couple questioned the ethics behind the practice. They ultimately decided cloning had a role in their program.

“I had my doubts until, one day, an electric storm hit our area,” Mary Ann says. “After the storm passed, we checked our horses and found two were hit by a lightning strike. In the pasture next to the two we lost were our clones. I decided if God didn’t approve of cloning, our clones would have been killed too. I no longer doubt our decision to clone.”

Many of cloning’s opponents have more earthbound objections. Logan Silha runs the Lazy JS Ranch in Bowman, North Dakota, where his family has raised cattle and Quarter Horses, and held an annual Quarter Horse production sale, for more than 50 years.

“I think it’s a case of people with too much money and too much time on their hands,” Silha says. “The

plaintiffs knew when they went through the trouble of cloning that their horses would not be eligible for registration. They knew that going into it and still cloned. Now, they have the clones on the ground and want to register them, and to hell with the association and the rules.”

Cloning proponents argue that the practice gives horse owners the opportunity to repeat the successes experienced with top performers. Lindy Burch – also of Weatherford, Texas, and like the Rapps, an NCHA hall of fame rider – cloned her prized mare Bet Yer Blue Boons.

“When the cloning opportunity came up, I wanted to take advantage of it just to see if it would be possible to have another Bet,” Burch says. “It was never my intention to clone and breed her, and get her registered. I couldn’t care less about registering her. That’s not the issue. The issue is whether she’ll cut, whether she’ll be competitive.”

Opponents of equine cloning contend that the practice will reduce genetic variation and therefore stall advancements within a breed. Stan Weaver raises Quarter Horses on his ranch outside Big Sandy, Montana. A national director for AQHA, Weaver is chairman of the association’s Ranchers Heritage Council and a member of AQHA’s hall of fame committee. Cloning, he says, threatens the Quarter Horse’s genetic diversity.

“A true breeder is always thinking he’s going to breed a stud that’s going to be better than the one he has,” Weaver says. “When that happens, the breeder moves the Quarter Horse forward. In my opinion, cloning is a step backwards. The horses they’re cloning are 20 to 25 years old. Our industry has gone so far and has improved horses so much from what they were 25 years ago.”

Silha agrees, adding, “I think our goal should be to advance the breed, introducing new genetics and



crosses. Nobody knows where the next High Brow Cat or Mr Jess Perry is going to come from, but somebody will certainly breed and raise one. I think we can always improve the Quarter Horse through smart breeding, but I don't think cloning does much to advance it."

As for cloning's potential impact on the marketplace, most agree the "jury's still out," particularly regarding heightened expectations for clones' potential success in the arena, and for their ability to produce winners themselves.

"The performance industry is waiting to see if clones can produce a product similar to what the original did in their day," Phil Rapp says. "If the current crop of clones

are competitive, people will start to take notice. If the High Brow Cat clone, Copy Cat, can produce something that's very close to what the original High Brow Cat produced, you have a whole new ball game."

Regardless of the strength of conviction on either side of the cloning argument, if cloning becomes a mainstream practice, it has the potential to fundamentally change breeding for equine performance sports. As for the net effect of those changes – clones that can match the achievements of their originals or, as opponents predict, the degradation of fundamental breeding principles – only time will tell.



Paul A. Cañada is a Texas-based writer and photographer, and a recipient of the Western Heritage Award.

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November 11-13, Whitefish, Montana;

(406) 220-2534

November 16-18, High River, Alberta;

(403) 395-3395

November 22-24, Cologne, Germany;

[seminar@heinrichsof.net](mailto:seminar@heinrichsof.net)

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[www.petercampbellhorsemanship.com](http://www.petercampbellhorsemanship.com)

November 2-5, Cochrane, Alberta; (403) 246-6205

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# Through the Looking Glass with Ramblin' Jack Elliott

By Tom Russell

*Did you ever stand and shiver,  
just because you were lookin' at a river?*

Ramblin' Jack Elliott  
912 Greens



Jack Elliott, early 1960s

## I Four Scenes from a Rough Script... *The Makings of Ramblin' Jack*

### Scene One:

Picture a four-story Victorian Brownstone apartment in Brooklyn. Around 1939. Up in a high window there's an eight-year-old boy peering down onto Ocean Parkway, the wide promenade running from Prospect Park to Brighton Beach. The kid in the window hears the roar rising up from nearby Ebbets Field. One of the Brooklyn Dodgers just hit a home run. It's a Flatbush summer's day. It's an American moment. The kid is all ears.

Later the boy will mimic and re-create that roar with a hurricane, windy-sound rolling out of his throat and over his lips. He will tell you it's the sound of the crowd at Ebbets field on a July day. You will believe him. He will tell you this long after Ebbets field has been torn down and the Dodgers have moved to Los Angeles.

The kid will be an American *raconteur*. A spinner of long remembered dreams. The boy will be able to summon everything that ever happened to him. Every



moment in his event-filled life. How the weather was, and what the girls were wearing. In elaborate and charmed detail.

Now the magic moment is at hand. The turning point in the kid's life. The boy looks down and sees a cowboy riding a horse up the Parkway below. *Imagine that.* Out of the blue. It's one-horse parade advertising the rodeo at Madison Square Garden. A cowboy riding through the streets of Brooklyn. The boy in the window is hooked. *Forever.*

The kid runs down four flights of stairs and follows the cowboy to the edge of the Belt Parkway – miles away – to Coney Island. Out to an old rent-horse stable near the beach. The kid wants to talk to the cowboy. The following week he will command his parents to take him to the old Madison Square Garden in New York City. *To the rodeo.* He will hear Gene Autry sing. Next year they will return to the rodeo and hear Roy Rogers. The kid will buy a cowboy songbook and learn *Red River Valley*. He will read all of Will James' novels. The boy is now a cowboy. *In his imagination.* He will saddle-up his dream and spur wild his buckaroo fantasy. *Forever.*

The boy's name is Elliott Charles Adnopo. His father is a doctor.

**Scene Two:**

A few years later. Around 1945. The teenaged boy has run off with the rodeo. He's got a job cleaning stalls and grooming trick horses for Colonel Jim Eskew's outfit. The kid has a guitar. He's learning chords and songs from a rodeo clown named *Brahma Rogers*. The cowboys and wranglers call the kid *Poncho*. And later



photo courtesy WC Reynolds Collection

Jack, PR photo, 1987

*Buck Elliott.* His parents, back in Brooklyn, are dead-worried. There's a *missing child* flyer nailed on telephone poles all over Brooklyn and New York City. I've seen this flyer reproduced:

*"Wanted: Elliott Charles Adnopo...age sixteen... gold rim glasses...carrying a small brown canvas bag... probable destination a ranch...Parents not opposed to him staying on a ranch."*

Exactly like that.

**Scene Three:**

1957. Paris. The kid has grown up. In his 20s now. He calls himself *Ramblin' Jack Elliott*. He is Ramblin'



photo courtesy www.ramblinjack.com

Jack and Bob Dylan, Greenwich Village, early 1960s

Jack Elliott. This thing he has become. The myth fully formed – spurred and broke to ride. He's learned guitar from Woody Guthrie out in Coney Island. He's memorized Woody's repertoire – including all the cowboy songs. He's now busking (singing on the streets for donations) with his friend Derroll Adams. *Rake and a Ramblin Boy, Buffalo Skinners, Muleskinner Blues, Old Blue, Billy the Kid*. They're bringing cowboy music to Paris, Rome, Brussels and London. They ride Vespa motor scooters with wives and girl friends and guitars and wine bottles strapped on the back. Bohemian cowboys. *Boulevardiers*.

Ramblin' Jack Elliott will busk on the London subway platform and Mick Jagger, later of *The Rolling Stones*, will see the cowboy with his guitar and he (Mick) will decide then and there to become a singer and quit art school. *Imagine* the musical history involved here. The conjunction of artistic spirits.

But wait.

Somewhere, high up on the Mesabi Iron Ore Range of Minnesota, a young kid named Robert Zimmerman will borrow a Ramblin' Jack Elliott LP from a friend. He will study Ramblin Jack's guitar styling, his drawl, and his manner of presenting a song. This kid, up in Minnesota, will later change his name to Bob Dylan. He will, in turn, concoct his own personal myths and histories which will include tales of carnivals, circuses, reform schools, playing piano in rock and roll bands, entertaining at Colorado strip joints...and the like. Some of it true. Some of it fiction. The Minnesota kid will pioneer folk songwriting.

**Scene Four:**

2008. Elko Nevada. The National Cowboy Poetry Gathering. I'm getting married to a lovely Swiss gal, in a backstreet wedding chapel – a light snow is falling. *Wylie Gustafson. Paul Zarzyski. Dick Gibford*. The room is filled with cowboy singers and poets. The *crème de la crème*. Ian Tyson is our best man, and he sings a song with lines such as: *What does she see in this old cowboy?* Ramblin' Jack Elliott is also honorary best man, and he's now hopping around and singing endless verses of *Rake and a Ramblin Boy*. It's like Jack's theme song...and mine, in a way.

It's a wedding song on this occasion.

*Well I'm a rake and a ramblin' boy  
There's many a city I did enjoy  
But now I married me a pretty little wife  
And I love her dearer than I love my life...*



Ian keeps elbowing me: *“Is he through yet? Is he through yet?”*

But Jack ain’t never through. He’s dancing and singing. His mind was carried off by that rodeo cowboy riding up that Brooklyn Boulevard. Almost seventy years back. Jack’s life is enveloped in a never-ending biographical rap which issues forth from his musical tongue – a long bending story or song – footnoted in the ever changing moments of Jack’s mind. *Living folk history*. American Poetry.

Roll the credits. For *now*. Our experimental cowboy script has no end...the stories go on and on. Let’s take a closer gander at Jack’s early music years.

## II Buskers, Boulevardiers, and Basket Houses

*Jack treats his guitar like a human being...  
his (first wife) June told how when they first got  
married  
Jack wanted to keep the guitar in bed with  
them...  
June would make sure that Jack had his finger  
picks  
and that he knew what songs he was going to sing  
and that his hair was  
combed and that his fly was zipped up...  
and after he got through she would pass the hat  
around  
and then they’d go somewhere to eat, and she  
would portion out  
the money...(To Jack and Derroll)...  
Shel Silverstein, 1957*

What does this *Ramblin’ Jack Elliott* have to do with the vision of our West? *Plenty*. The West is a land of ongoing reinvention, fashioned by artists, writers,



photo courtesy WC Reynolds Collection

Image from self-titled album cover “Jack Elliott,” 1964, released on Fontana Records

showmen, flim-flammers, snake oil salesmen, range bums, saddle tramps, and outlaws who altered their personal histories and re-christened themselves with a more colorful handle: *Billy the Kid*, *Mark Twain*, *Will James*, *Buffalo Bill Cody* and such....Jack’s contribution? *Ramblin’ Jack Elliott* created his identity in those early Wild West shows out East, grabbed a guitar, learned traditional cowboy songs, and then took this music back to the old country, in much the same way that Buffalo Bill took buffalos, broncs and Indians across the Atlantic. Europe never got over it. Then Jack returned to America and made cowboy music legit among the new-folk crowd.

I’m damn fascinated by Jack’s “early period” when he sang on the street with that Portland banjo player

named Derroll Adams. On the avenues of the old world they call it “*busking*,” from the Spanish verb *buscar*: to seek. (Ramblin’ Jack told me that.) It’s an honest trade that goes back to Homer and *The Odyssey* on down to Zossimus in Ireland. The *sung-news* accompanied by drum, lute, mandolin, or guitar. For a begging basket the boys had a cowboy hat turned upside down on the sidewalk. Derroll and Jack played for food and wine, and maybe a pallet on the floor. Wandering bards. Folk blood brothers.

*“We’d put out our hat on the streets of Paris,” said Jack, “and play ‘til we made enough for a hotel room and a meal. Other people might play all day, but Derroll and I were not all that greedy. Maybe we shoulda’ been. Ha!”*

They eventually recorded an album called: *Ramblin Boys*. Another called: *The Cowboys*. They yodeled and drank up their busking money and crisscrossed the continent. In a short time they were European legends. When Jack had his fill of busking through Europe he caught a freighter back to America. He was welcomed as a hero in Greenwich Village. Folks began to steal his style and guitar licks.

Derroll Adams never came back.

He established himself as a folk presence in Europe and married a pretty Belgian woman, Danny. (“*The most decent human being I’ve ever met.*”). He settled in Antwerp and created a banjo style he called *Up-Picking* and *Back Picking*. In the next three decades he’d read a thousand of books, paint a thousand pictures, and occasionally appear in the smoky Belgium folk clubs and festivals all over Europe. Not so much a *renaissance man* as Zen-Cowboy throwback.

Derroll was part of the Beat scene in Topanga Canyon, California, in 1954. He met the actor-botanist Will Geer and also had his first encounter with

Ramblin’ Jack Elliott. Jack does a fine imitation of Derroll at that historic meeting:

*“I hear you play the banjo.” says Jack.*

*“Yup,” says Derroll.*

*“You wannna play a song?” says Jack.*

*“Guess so,” says Derroll.*

*“You got a banjo? Says Jack.*

*“Nope,” says Derroll.*

*“Maybe we could borrow one from Bess Hawes,” says Jack.*

*“Yup,” says Derroll.*

The first song the boys learned together was *Muleskinner Blues*. Says Jack:

*Derroll Adams was the closest thing to a Muleskinner I had ever met at that time...he had been a lumberjack choker-setter and a windfall buckner. But Derroll had something extra. He had a Chinese kinda’ beard, and he had sorta’ Japanese calligraphy written on his banjo. It was some kind of hip statement that Jack Kerouac wished he’d have wrote.*

In 1958 Derroll and Ramblin’ Jack performed at the Brussels World Fair billed as *The Cowboys*. Then Jack split and there was Derroll, happy to scratch out a living as the only banjo-playing cowboy on the European continent. Derroll Adams died in Antwerp Belgium February 6, 2000.

One magic afternoon in Antwerp, after Derroll had passed on, I was allowed to step back into his life. I was invited for coffee at his old apartment. I was sleuthing Jack and Derroll’s busking years. I sat in the kitchen with Danny Adams, Derroll’s wife. I don’t like the word *widow*. It connotes spiders and death and loss, and Derroll was still hovering around us. Frailing the banjo.

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Those old Antwerp rooms were crowded with *the things Derroll left us*, as Danny whispers. *The things Derroll left us*. A grand bohemian disarray of an underground life lived well. Tea kettles, coffee cups, and jelly glasses with Burgundy stains. Stack of his original paintings. The aroma of red wine, candle smoke, old books, oil paint and kerosene. Two of his banjos sat propped-up on the couch.

Nothing was moved since Derroll passed-on. I strummed a G chord on one of his banjos and got the chills. I pictured him riding his old bicycle down to the river in Antwerp – sitting there with a sandwich and a bottle of wine. Playing banjo or painting all day. Matisse in a cowboy hat. Now he’s moved to higher ground. I thought of that Ramblin’ Jack line: *Did you ever stand and shiver...just because you were lookin’ at a river?*

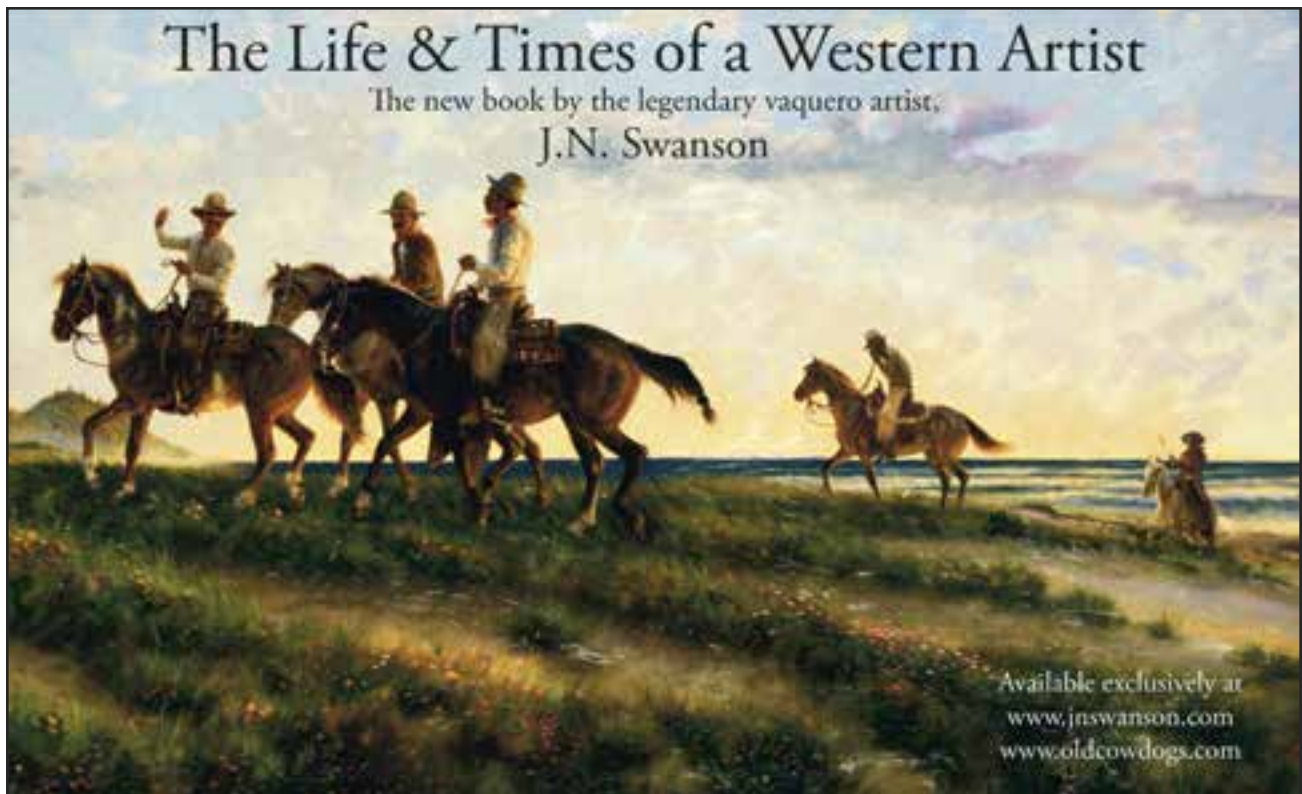
Jack’s still here. I closed my eyes, strummed another G chord, and thought back to when I first heard Ramblin’ Jack *live*.

### III Visions of My Folk Childhood

*I’ve heard a lot of wonderful stories about myself.  
Enviably – I wish I could’ve done it.*

**Ramblin’ Jack Elliott**

I used to hang out at a folk club in Hollywood called *The Ash Grove*. Early 1960s. If I was broke, I snuck through the back door. I saw Lightnin’ Hopkins, Mississippi John Hurt, Doc Watson, Dave Van Ronk, Ian and Sylvia (best folk group ever), and Ramblin’ Jack Elliott.





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photo by Heather Hafleigh

Jack and your roving reporter, embedded at a recent branding

One night Jack pulled up in a big telephone truck he was living in with his dog Caesar. Jack would later say, on stage, that Caesar drove the truck. Caesar would only drive at five miles per hour. You had a choice when you listened to Ramblin' Jack – you could close your ears in disbelief or pretended boredom, or you could listen and believe *Ramblin' Jack's Never Ending Garden of Verse, Riddles, Bullshit, and Whole-Hog Fairytales*.

That rap, which is the essence of Jack, is like going down the rabbit hole with *Alice in Wonderland*. If you

survive the story – with all its beatniks, abstract painters, brahma bulls, mad hatters, ex-wives, cow dogs, Presidents, mustangs, wooden boats, sailing ships, 18 wheeler trucks, rope horses...and who drank *what* and *when* in *whatever* town...then you become an *aficionado* of a man who has changed the face of this music we call “folk.”

Sometimes Jack would step off the stage at the Ash Grove and walk around the room, stopping at your table – playing his fingerpicked Martin guitar right in your face. It was spine tingling for this kid. *Wondrous*.



*Epiphanious*. Is that a word? Hell, I wanted to become a folksinger. A songwriter. I wanted to ride down the trail with Jack. And Bob Dylan. And Ian and Sylvia. The minstrel road. *Hand me my wild harp, sire, I'm bound for the land of song*. But I didn't have the guts. *Yet*.

But Jack! What a guitar player. I am presenting Jack here in fragments because Jack can only be *understood* in fragments (like his rap), and not in straight-time biographical detail. You must understand Jack *in the abstract*. Take what you will. Like his guitar playing. It seems to combine a little Woody Guthrie with tricks from the old rodeo clown, Brahma Rogers. And then throw in some jazz – say Freddie Green and the up-picking banjo styles of Derroll Adams, all mixed in a blender of guitar swaps from long nights on the road.

Ian Tyson has a take on Jack's guitar style:

*I heard Jack when he came back from Europe, in '63 or '62, and he was with Cisco Houston at Gerde's Folk City, and I had never heard anything like it...his style went back to the Gib Tanner stuff, the really early stuff, but I didn't know anything about that coming from Canada, cause the guitar styles we knew came from Wilf Carter, and it was a great style. And I heard Jack, and it was very syncopated. And he blew me away with his early stuff. But Jack had all the pyro-technics. He'd been blowing away all those young Mick Jagger, and AC/DC and all... but, yeah, it was great to hear. I've never figured out if Jack knew what the hell he was doing or not.*

Let's attempt to peer a tad deeper into Jack's soul and dig into one of his few original songs – *912 Greens*. Inside this *folk-rap-song* or *talking blues* you catch a

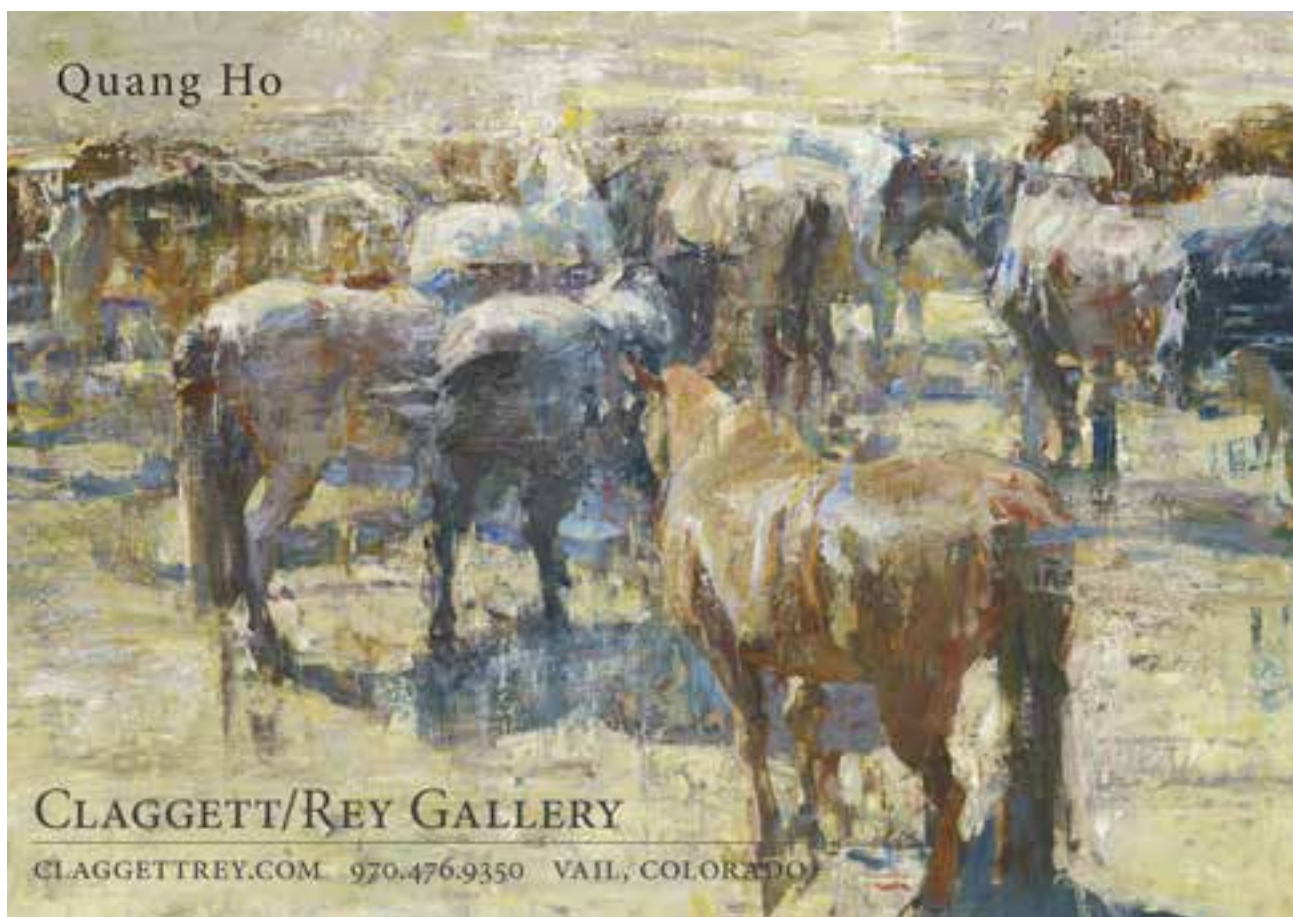




photo by Heather Hafleigh

Jack at work in the branding pen

glimpse of the oft-cultivated, deep furrows of the man's memory. Jack keeps turning the sod over and coming up with newly discovered relics, bone fragments, and fossils...relating to a journey sixty years ago.

#### IV 912 Greens

*We met a banjo picker with two different eyes.  
One eye was looking at the audience, and the  
other*

*was oogling the girls backstage...I wished I could  
do that.*

*He made that banjo sound like a train coming in  
and out of  
a tunnel. It was a **Kay** with a resonator on the  
back...*

Ramblin' Jack Elliott, **912 Greens**,  
2008 Version

Jack Elliott has written only two or three songs



that I know of: *912 Greens* and *A Cup of Coffee* are two of 'em. But that's enough. The rest of his repertoire consists of chestnuts visited and revisited through dozens of records and a hundred thousand performances – from the Paris streets to Carnegie Hall to the saloons of Winnemucca. Cowboy songs, truck drivin' songs, Woody Guthrie songs. But those two originals give us a slanted glimpse of how Jack's creative mind works.

*A Cup of Coffee*, originally recorded with Johnny Cash on Cash's record *Everybody Loves a Nut*, is another spoken word sort of deal. In the narrative Jack drives his semi-truck up to Johnny's house to say hello. Coffee is prepared. Later Johnny is pouring whiskey in Jack's coffee, *to cool it off*, and Jack passes out on the

couch (leaving his clutch foot on the floor) – but only after a long, humorous Ramblin' Jack dissertation on trucks. And Jack knows *all about* big-rig trucks. (And wooden boats and schooners.) *Ask him*. He'll take you through every gear. I later recorded the song as a duet with Jack on one of his records. We also recorded a song of mine: *The Sky Above the Mud Below*. Quite an honor for this kid.

But *912 Greens*.

The song recreates a trip Jack took to New Orleans in 1953. *912 Greens* (*greens* as opposed to *blues*) has to do with the address, *912 Toulouse Street*, the destination of the journey. *Sorta*. That's where the party took place – the central focus of the song. The bohemian pad of banjo-picker Billy Faire.

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*Round about 1953 I went down to  
New Orleans...  
perhaps I should say – many years ago...we sang  
and busked our way through the Smoky  
Mountains  
and on down to New Orleans...*

Onward it rolls like a road story from the best of Jack Kerouac. Finally, at about the seven minute mark, Jacks eases to a close...

*Stayed around three weeks in New Orleans...  
never did see the light of day...and I've never  
been back since.*

Then Jack lays-in the closing line – the only rhymed couplet of the song:

*Did you ever stand and shiver,  
just because you were looking at a river?*

Sort of a Zen question. The end of that three week party where Jack drank Billy Faire's wine, danced naked in the rain around a banana tree – with a ballet dancer, raced a three legged cat up the stairs, stared at the Mississippi River (*The Missus Miller* river he calls it), and sat in a chair where Jack Kerouac had once sat. And plenty more. It seems like nothing happened. It seems like *everything* happened.

I've heard Jack sing the song a dozen times, and there are various recorded performances, and each one is vastly different. A version in 2008 deals with the first part of the trip, with a stop in Asheville to meet several famous banjo legends, and Jack describes the color of the shirts each was wearing.

Other versions sing up: *smoke clouds of sugar blowin' off the French donuts (beignets)* in the Cafe du Monde in

New Orleans, and the smell of chicory coffee, and a long ramble about Jack hearing someone in the car singing *South Coast*, and it's the first time Jack's heard that great cowboy song, and the guy (Frank) would only sing the song if it was raining, and later Jack would learn it and sing the definitive version. Stuff like that.

*912 Greens* accomplishes what Jack Kerouac attempted in *On the Road*. The *U.K. Guardian* said of Kerouac: *He had a remarkable ear for the cadences of a phrase...the sense of how to register in words the sheer, sweet flow of things*. Kerouac considered all his novels to be one long series of books which detailed the *Proustian* history of his life. That might be a high-flown way of trying to unravel Jack's continuous rap. The stories are *Proustian. Kerouac-ian. Ramblin' Jack-ian*.

If you'd recorded every story Jack has ever told – in the last fifty years – you would arrive at that monumental 100 volume *prosaic thing* Kerouac and Proust were after. *The Remembrance of Things Past*. Welcome to Jack's life – through *the looking glass* and down that rabbit hole you might never return from. Carry water. Or whiskey. And a bedroll.

But I digress. It goes with the territory.

## V This Train is Bound for Glory

*Nobody I know – and I mean nobody – has  
covered  
more ground and made more friends and sung  
more songs  
than the fellow you're about to meet right now.  
He's got a song  
and a friend for every mile behind him. Say hello  
to my good buddy, Ramblin' Jack Elliott.*

**Johnny Cash,  
The Johnny Cash Television Show,  
1969**

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I could rave on and on. Casting chunks of paint on the canvas and attempting a raw portrait of Ramblin' Jack. But it comes out all *cubist* and fragmented like a middle period Picasso. I could tell about the time in Switzerland, when I was touring with Jack, that I watched him talk to a caged Cockatoo in a hotel lobby in Zurich. Jack talked to the bird for half an hour and the bird seemed to be talking back. You'd expect this.

Or I could tell about the premier of the film: *The Ballad of Ramblin' Jack*, in a grand old theater in New York City. The film was made by Jack's daughter. I was sitting behind Jack – who was slumped down in the seat, hiding beneath his cowboy hat – painfully having to watch this film in which three of his ex-wives, and his daughter, are trying to pinpoint and come terms with Jack's *wanderabo* personality and the *irresponsibility* of his rambling ways. Good luck.

Later on Jack and I ended up in a New York joint called *The Rodeo Bar*. Singing, laughing, and drinking away the weirdness. We were but a few blocks away from where the old Madison Square Garden used to sit. The very spot where young Elliott Charles Adnopoz saw Gene Autry and Roy Rogers sing – *horseback*. This night at The Rodeo Bar Jack unleashed his rendition of the roar the baseball crowd after a home run at Ebbets field, circa 1939. *Whoosh...*

Or consider the time, at The White House, when Jack received a lifetime achievement award from President Clinton, and Jack whispered in Clinton's ear: *lets sneak out the back door and go down the street and see Bob Dylan...he's*

*playing down there.* And Clinton whispered back, grinning: *Jack, I only wish I could...*

I was stuttering towards an end to this piece when I ran across a live tape. A song workshop in a train rolling across Canada. Tom Russell, Ian Tyson, and Ramblin' Jack Elliott. The year was 2007. A series called: *Roots on the Rails*. Roll the tape. Ramblin' Jack just got on in Winnipeg. He hasn't slept in a few days. It's around noon. Jack orders a bourbon and water. Ian orders a Chardonnay. Then another. Myself, I'm on my second coffee, hanging on for dear life, sandwiched in between two of my heroes.

Jack and Ian launch into stories and songs. You shoulda' been there. Two legends feeding off each other and telling it *like it is* and *was*. Everything I've been trying







to capture about Jack is evidenced in that one hour.

Briefly:

Jack: *The idea of being a Cowboy from New York is somehow atrocious for people to understand...Well, it came to me just a few weeks ago, that the stork that was carrying me, was supposed to deliver me somewhere near Miles City, Montana, and he was flying over...and he looked down and he saw Will James, and Will James looked up and he saw the stork with me, and he beckoned the stork to come down and have a drink. And one drink let to another. And after about 4 drinks, the stork finally said: "I gotta get out of here," and he took off. Thanked Will for the drink. Got me all secured in his beak...but he was a little off in his navigation. He dropped me in Brooklyn by mistake. Supposed to drop me in Miles City, Montana. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.*

Then Ian tells a good one about Will James and Ernest Hemingway meeting in the basement of an art gallery in Montana. Ernest had two broken legs from skiing in Idaho. Will and Ernest are drinking. Hard. They hated each other. There are words between them....end of story.

Back to Jack: *Well...My dad's nurse, Katherine, gave me a Christmas present when I was 12 years old, of a book by Will James, called: "Lone Cowboy, My Life Story," I read that very carefully. And then I read almost every other Will James book that I could get my hands on.*

Jack and Ian sing a duet of Tyson's *Will James*. Ragged and right.

Jack goes back into a rap:

*How does a Cowboy every come from Brooklyn? It's not known for any cattle...but I saw some cows when I was a kid. My grandpa had cattle. My father was born on a farm in Connecticut, and his daddy had some cows. And*

*I was chased by a bull when I was about 4 years old on grandpa's farm. That might have been some of the inspiration that made me later on wanna' ride bulls. I'm kind of what you call a **slow bloomer**. I was 47 before I ever got on a bull. And I was 47 when I **quit** bull-riding. But at least I got a chance to see of what it feels like to sit on one of them. That was the main thing, just to sit on one to say I'd been there.*

The train stops and starts moving slowly backwards. Ian remarks that we'll never arrive in Vancouver. But we are literally and figuratively backing-up into western Canada and into real folk history. The stuff that lured me into the game. The boys break into *Muleskinner Blues*. Guitars wailing.

John Graves, the Texas essayist, defined history as: *that scattered, paper parchment, half reliable racial remembrance, where people make tales, since not much of history is reliable.* Indeed. I prefer the folk tales of my childhood heroes, a few of whom are still out there, bent over a guitar, spinning the yarns, creating ballads, and *legendeering* on down the road. It's a noble task.

*Basta!* Enough. Long live the minstrel boys. And that Brooklyn kid who followed the one-horse parade towards Coney Island. On towards Colonel Jim Eskew's rodeo, and further onward to the boulevards of Paris, and the basket houses of Greenwich Village, and on up to The White house and back out on the road. Fingerpicking. Flatpicking. Rapping and a rambling. Out of the bucking chutes and down that rabbit hole. Through the *great cowboy looking glass*.

Ramblin' Jack Elliott has left his spur marks in the America Grain.



Tom Russell's records, songbook, art book, tour dates, and newest release: *Aztec Jazz* are all available at: [www.tomrussell.com](http://www.tomrussell.com) His original art can be seen at: [www.tomrussellart.com](http://www.tomrussellart.com)

Thanks to Gary Brown for photo help.

# Generation Next

The Wright family's bronc-riding dynasty is still on the rise.

By Rod Miller

No one is keeping track, but the saddle bronc-riding trophy buckles won by the Wright brothers of Milford, Utah, probably number more than enough to keep the pants hitched up on the town's entire population.

Among the six brothers' (Cody, Calvin, Alex, Jake, Jesse and Spencer) wins (so far) are three PRCA world championship buckles, several NFR go-round and average buckles, some PRCA rookie-of-the-year buckles, Wilderness Circuit championships, National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association championships, National High School Rodeo Association championships, and championship buckles from individual high school, college and pro rodeos from coast to coast and border to border.

It's a dynasty that's unequaled, and likely to remain so, since the next generation – sons of Cody and his wife, ShaRee – are already cinching down bronc saddles,

measuring buck reins, and rolling spur rowels from maneline to cantleboard to accumulate buckles of their own at a furious pace. Their third son, Stetson, is

making a mark in junior rodeo and the youngest, Statler, will likely follow suit when old enough. On top of that, Cody's youngest brother, Stuart, is saddling up in the practice pen to round out the tradition for the first generation. But it's Rusty and Ryder, Cody and ShaRee's two oldest sons, who are already shaking things up in a big way.

Fresh out of tenth grade in 2012, Rusty won the National High School Rodeo Association saddle bronc riding championship. Ryder won the trophy buckle for bull riding in the National Junior High School Rodeo Association upon completing eighth grade that same year. And, of course, both won a bunch of buckles on the way to those honors.

The collection grew in 2013, with Rusty and Ryder



Champion bronc riders, Rusty and Cody Wright.

photos by Rod Miller



cleaning up on the Utah high school rodeo circuit, both qualifying for the National High School Rodeo Association finals in saddle bronc riding. Ryder also made the trip in bull riding. At the NHSRA finals, Ryder won the first go-round in saddle bronc riding just ahead of Rusty, who went on to win the short go, the average, and his second national championship buckle in as many years.

Neither boy anticipates letting up anytime soon. Both intend to follow Dad's footsteps and make saddle bronc riding a career. Those who see the boys ride, from the grandstands, behind the chutes, or with judges' pencils in hand, have no doubt they have the talent and "try" to accomplish it. While talent and try are important, Cody Wright believes it is hard work and practice that will determine their success. "I'd say it's 95 percent practice," he says. "Rusty and Ryder have been on a lot of broncs. They have all the talent in the world and the sky's the limit. It depends on how hard they want to push themselves."

Even at their tender ages, the boys have been pushing themselves for years. Neither can remember ever wanting to do anything but rodeo. Rusty got serious about it in eighth grade; Ryder in sixth. As always, there's no shortage of help, encouragement and instruction in the family. "Grandpa Bill (Cody's father) is always there," Rusty says. The boys say their uncles are there when they can be, with advice and assistance.

And, of course, there's Dad. He started them out in a bronc saddle cinched to a spur board to learn the mechanics of the spur stroke, and put them on a bucking machine when they were ready. Then, before letting them straddle a bucking chute, Cody mounted the boys



Ryder thinks it over behind the bucking chutes.

on a tame saddle horse, leading them around the arena and in circles to get the feel of the buck rein and stirrups and spurring motion aboard live horseflesh.

Then, it was time to nod for the gate. "I got on 45 or 50 broncs before I could hear or see anything," Rusty says. "It was all black. Later, I could hear Dad and Grandpa and see what I was doing or wasn't doing, and fix it."

Then, at some point, it all comes together. For Rusty, it happened at a semi-pro rodeo aboard a horse called Rockin' Robin. "He stalled coming out of the gate, then jumped out hard, darted left, and bucked straight down the arena," he recalls. "It felt right. It wasn't about if I could ride him, but about how many points I could get. When you feel what a good ride feels like, it's awesome."

As for younger brother Ryder, Rusty claims he needs to work on his confidence. "But when he has his head straight, he can ride anything."

Rusty's confidence extends to conversation. He's outgoing, friendly and seems at ease in any situation. Getting Ryder to talk, on the other hand, is like getting



Cody Wright offers encouragement to his son Ryder.

milk from a steer. His answers to questions seldom run beyond one syllable. But, Rusty says, “When it’s just me and him, he never shuts up.”

Shy though he may be, Ryder is respectful, easygoing, and eager to please. Bronc riding is “kind of a rush,” he says. “I’m not doing everything right yet. It’s coming, slow but sure.” That can be hard to believe when you see him tapped off on a rank horse; it’s obvious he already has, and uses, all the tools and talent it takes. Cody agrees. “Ryder is right where he needs to be. He practices a lot and is doing real good. He just needs a little more experience and confidence.”

What must it be like for the boys to follow in the

footsteps of their famous father and uncles? “I’ve heard people say they need to fill the shoes,” Cody says. “But I want them to be better than me. I tell them, ‘Don’t compare yourself. Don’t stifle yourself thinking you can only be as good as me.’”

No one knows how good the next generation of saddle bronc riders named Wright will be. But, barring serious injury, both will most likely continue, in the family tradition, to accumulate trophy buckles for years to come. Cody hopes so, but says he’s “proud of them, win, lose or draw.” Still, winning is better. “I’m happy when they do well,” he says. “They’re a lot easier to travel with.”



Rod Miller writes fiction, nonfiction, and poetry as well as magazine articles. His latest novel is *Cold as the Clay*. He’s a member of Western Writers of America and can be found online at [www.writerRodMiller.com](http://www.writerRodMiller.com).



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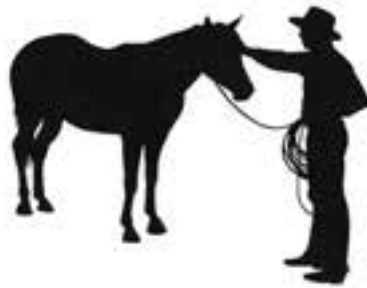
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## A VISIT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN

# Being Successful with Horses and Other Humans

## Part Two.

In the second of his two part story, Buck continues his examination of the eight characteristics horses have that he believes effective humans should have as well.

**5. A non-aggressive attitude.** Don't be a butthead. Be assertive, but not arrogant or demanding. Focus on your goal and work toward stepping with care, but stepping forward always. No horse or man ever got very far being a jerk.

**6. Determination.** The ability to stick to something through thick and thin. Even when things get very difficult, determination is the ability to stay on course. Now, that's one of those very individual things – some folks just have that inner core of determination that helps them push on, even when the odds seem their worst, even when it seems they have no chance of succeeding. I'm going to say one thing now, and I want you all to think about it: Smarty Jones.

**7. Humility.** The concept of humility is so important, I'd probably underline it as being pivotal to a person's success or failure in the world. I think of humility as

the ability to listen to and really hear what is being said, regardless of status or standing. That almost needs no explanation, but the following three words could sum up how to gain this humility: observe, remember, and compare. Observe what is taking place, whether with man or beast; remember what you've done to cause others to make a certain decision or take a certain action; and compare the results of your actions this time around with the results of actions you may have taken in the past. Which outcome was better? Learn from it! If you can observe, remember, and compare effectively, and then have the ability to change course based on the outcome of what you've done, you will map out your course for success – regardless of species.

**8. Love.** Love as a complete and powerful thing, and it includes the ability to love without being a victim. Sometimes loving can end up being an excuse for being victimized, taken advantage of, pushed around. But you can still have a huge capacity for love without being a victim or being taken advantage of.



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These are some characteristics found in horses that humans can use to become better people. They're also things that all of the wonderful people in this book are working on, at one level or another. Now just for the sake of comparison, I'm going to go back through the list and describe to you the kind of person that would probably never, ever get along with horses, or get along, period.

**1. Lack of Intuition.** People who have no insight or ability to see beyond their own needs or wants. An expectation that what is on the surface is all there is to see.

**2. Lack of Sensitivity.** Those who lack the ability or the confidence to feel or understand anything that isn't in their immediate sphere of existence – a lack of compassion for others.

**3. Stiff.** This refers to people who make up their mind that they're going to do something a certain way and regardless of the results, they will continue to do it that particular way even if it doesn't work, because their pride makes them unable to back down or change course. This will almost guarantee failure, every time.

**4. Presence.** I spoke of the almost magical presence of a person who is peaceful, self-confident, and completely at ease in his environment. At the other end of this spectrum, we have people who project a powerful, unconquerable presence, believing that their inner "might" – will make them right.

**5. An aggressive attitude.** Some folks go beyond projecting power, and begin exhibiting it. This sort of threatening behavior often backfires because the natural reaction to this is a feeling of extreme danger. Folks don't generally respond well to threats. Neither do horses.

**6. Lack of Determination.** Obviously, people who don't put their back into it, don't get much out of it, whatever it might be.

**7. Lack of Humility.** We've all met people who spend an entire conversation thinking about the importance

of what they're going to say, and then trampling all over us to say it. You can actually see their minds working, thinking feverishly about how to drag the conversation back to them and what they think about everything under the sun. How can people who will not listen, teach? Furthermore, how can they learn if all they hear is themselves?

**8. Anger, rage, hate.** Those who cannot love often believe the only way to avoid being hurt is to hurt others first. Victimize, or be victimized.

It's pretty easy to sort out what kind of a person you'd rather be in the same room with. It's just as easy for horses to figure out what kind of person they can learn from. It's amazing the amount of things horses and people have in common, and how we all learn best if taught with patience, humility, and understanding.

I have found most of my students have learned the importance of the items I've listed here, in working with their horses. Many had reached a point where they were in a life-threatening situation, and had come for help. Unfortunately, this is the state many of my students arrive in at my clinics – they're scared, worried, intimidated and confused – literally at the end of their ropes. Sometimes, with a lot of hard work and dedication, many of these dangerous relationships between man and horse can be repaired.

One truly important lesson many students seem to need to work is understanding the idea of changing eyes. A horse can see behind him, up to a point. There's a blind spot directly to the rear and out to about ten feet. If a horse doesn't really trust his rider, if he's bothered by him, he'll become very insecure every time the rider passes through that blind spot, because Mother Nature tells the horse that he is vulnerable to whatever he can't see back there. However, a horse that is comfortable



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with his rider and trusts him completely will have no problem with the rider moving through his blind spot. So the notion of getting a horse to change eyes, to be comfortable keeping you in view by turning his head slightly and watching you first with one eye and then the other, is something that needs to be repeated thousands of times in order for the horse to become fully at ease with his rider's movements. When riders learn how simple this concept is, it changes their relationship with their horses dramatically. It's all about being sensitive and open. It highlights the importance of getting a horse to hook on to you.

That begins by driving the horse around a round corral, the idea being that in a round corral, there are no

abrupt corners to force the horse to change stride or break his pace, which enables him to focus his attention on you. The round corral enables you to direct the horse's energy into a smooth, continuous, flowing circle. You can then position yourself in the corral so that you literally draw the horse's energy toward you, first by moving in the same general direction that the horse is going, and then by slightly increasing your distance from him, so that he feels compelled to move toward you. This is the essence of hooking on; it's simply a matter of getting a horse's undivided attention and being able to keep it. In building a better relationship with our horses, that lesson will serve us all well, in the round corral and in life.

An advertisement for Meredith Lockhart Collections. It features a woman with long dark hair, wearing a red long-sleeved top and a patterned skirt, standing in a desert landscape. In the background, there is a large, prominent rock formation under a blue sky with some clouds. The text "Meredith Lockhart Collections" is written in a cursive font in the upper right. In the lower left, it says "Fashions Accessories Jewelry" and "MeredithLockhart.com 913.886.2247".

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Peter Stacy riding Bucky © Tom Meinhold Photography 2012.

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## LIGHTING OUT

# Unbuilding

A young couple embark on a long-term adventure in barn deconstruction.



By Melissa Mylchreest  
Painting by Anita Badami

130

It sounded like a windfall. “Free for dismantle: 4 old barns. Stevi.” Right there in the classified section of the *Missoulian*. We were looking for an apartment, but being both poor and cheap, we also checked the “give-away” section often. Craig called the number, and a few hours later we were headed south on Route 93, rolling through Montana’s heat-scorched Bitterroot Valley toward Stevensville.

There was a precedent, at least. We had spent the previous few months working on a ranch outside of Turah, a little place tucked away by the river. In our spare moments we poked around the reaches of the property, and over the course of the summer had salvaged a small stack of old, useable lumber from burn piles and scrap heaps. Remarkably, it wasn’t just two-by-fours from Home Depot, but burly, weathered three-by-tens or square beams from old structures, cast by the wayside years ago. We

weren’t really interested in the weathered barnwood aesthetic, necessarily, but we did need a kitchen table, and maybe a couple of bookshelves. Both woodworkers, it seemed silly not to build our furniture ourselves, and free materials are hard to pass up. We worked on our projects in the evenings in the old pole barn, the moon hanging over the slough and the ranch dogs, Louie and Maggie and Kriegler sleeping in the sawdust.

Pretty soon we had a dining table, shelves, a coffee table and a desk, but while our enthusiasm had never been higher, our supply of free wood was used up. Which is why, on that August day, the ad seemed like it was written just for us. We like a good challenge, we like working outdoors. Besides, we thought, just think of all that barn wood. We’d never use all of it, and figured we could sell the extra to contractors or builders to use in the nouveau-rustic homes sprouting up all over the valley.



“Rich people love this stuff!” was a phrase we’d come to repeat many times over the course of the project, during the cold snaps or when eyeing our dwindling funds.

Harold Hand is a good old boy, but the world’s getting the better of him. He’s the new manager of what once was a Hereford ranch, a thousand-acre spread along the Bitterroot River, the home of the barns. The cattle were sold off long ago, and now the place is owned by a well-intentioned absentee landowner who hopes to turn the area into a bird sanctuary. I think it’s a great idea, but to Harold, it’s a whole bunch of new-agey hippy nonsense. What good is it to make habitat for the goddamn birds, he says, if you can’t then go out and shoot them? He grumbles about this in between hunting forays to the eastern plains of the state and training sessions with his bird dogs. (“The best bird dog you’ll ever find is a wire-haired griffon,” he shares in his unplaceable nasal drawl, “wire” coming out like “wahr.” He then launches into the longest stream of words I’ve

heard from him, a dissertation on the griffon’s ancestry that goes on for almost a minute.)

Harold meets us at the property on that hot August day, but he’s late, so we spend a few minutes looking around. Three broad old barns stand in an open field, white paint peeling in the sun. A three-story stock barn, a hay barn, and a big equipment barn nestle near one another, and at a bit of a remove sits a small shed, which turns out to be a bunkhouse of sorts, with a tiny wood stove and one whole end of the place walled off and insulated for cold storage. Everything is in varying stages of disrepair, but all the structures are still sound and certainly still useable. We mull over why they need to be torn down while we stand in the dry grass, grasshoppers ratcheting around our feet.

Eventually we see a white minivan coming up the dirt road. Can this be the manager? In a minivan? Nah... But it is, and we will learn that Harold, for unknown reasons, owns a whole fleet of identical, aged white minivans. Utterly incongruous with his image, they

seem to be one more thing that he bears up against, one more sign of the world slowly going to pieces. He steps out into the sun, slowly. Slight and short, barely taller than me, his age is hard to pinpoint, somewhere between 55 and 75. His eyes are small and perpetually squinting, his face red and almost boyish, but under his ballcap his hair is thinning and he moves with age in his joints. He sizes us up.

“Welllll...” he says, an upward-inflected commentary that we come to discover is his default in just about any situation. It’s not a question, quite, and always ends in a sigh. I imagine he is thinking “What in the hell are these two wet-behind-the-ears, shiftless youngsters doing here? Waste of my goddamn time.” I find out later that this was, nearly verbatim, exactly what he was thinking.

I know what he sees when he looks at us: two kids in shorts and flip-flops, although at the time Craig is 32 and I’m 26. We’re both wearing sporty sunglasses and the accompanying inverse raccoon-face tans. Really, there’s nothing that would distinguish us from anyone else in Missoula – Montana’s liberal hub that, in the summer, is a hotbed of leisure and laziness, scantily clad folks floating on inner tubes through downtown on the Clark Fork River and drinking away the long daylight. Our little town is the bane of the rest of the state’s conservative existence.

And now here we are, standing before Harold Hand in his sensible boots and his Wranglers, and we’re wracking our brains for ways to convince him we’re not what we look like, trying to hide our shabby footwear in the weeds. Ranchers don’t approve of sandals. Next time Craig meets with him, he’ll be sure to wear his Whites, boots that in the West are a symbol of manliness and competence.

For the moment, though, he’s studying us through heavy-lidded eyes. If he looks beyond our attire, he’ll see in Craig a tall, broad, capable-looking guy with big

hands and forearms, a quick smile. He appears to be someone who can get a job done. Me, however – I’m not sure Harold sees much promise in me. Five-foot-three, petite, with a long brown braid snaking down to my waist and a young face, I don’t evoke thoughts of manual labor. I feel compelled to roll up my t-shirt sleeve and flex my arm – “See? Look at that bicep!” – but I resist the urge.

At the outset, we may not look like we’re worth the gamble. He should clearly give the job to someone else. But what he can’t see are all the ways we *are* prepared to handle this project: We’ve got strong, inherited work ethics – Craig from the steelworkers of Western Pennsylvania, and me from hard-nosed Yankee stock of New England. Whatever job either of us begins, we finish it, and we do it well. We’ve both worked hard labor, and though my experience has mostly just been odd jobs and landscaping, Craig worked for years as a hotshot firefighter, one of the most physically demanding jobs imaginable. We’re smart enough, both working on our master’s degrees at the university in town. And most importantly, we’re newly in love; the world awaits and we can accomplish anything.

Granted, I have my doubts about the project. Craig and I had begun to discuss plans to move “back east” after we finished our graduate degrees in December, closer to our families and potential jobs, and I can see that embarking on this barn adventure might throw a wrench in those plans. But, enamored as I am, I hold my tongue. Craig’s enthusiasm is captivating, and, even though I’m concerned about our other plans, I’m excited about the magnitude of the challenge as well. I figure we can always move east a little later, after the barns are finished. What’s a few months? And besides, as we stand there under the high summer sun, I’m aware of how we appear and I’m certain he’ll give the job to someone else, someone bigger and burlier and wearing more denim.



Despite any misgivings, Harold shows us around the hundred-year-old barns, laconically pointing and gesturing. The property owner wants the barns gone, so the field can return to bird habitat. He says he was told just to burn the buildings down, but thought someone might want to try their hand at saving some of it. Somehow we convince him that we are the right people for the job. We all shake hands, and as he climbs back into his van he shakes his head. “Welllll...”

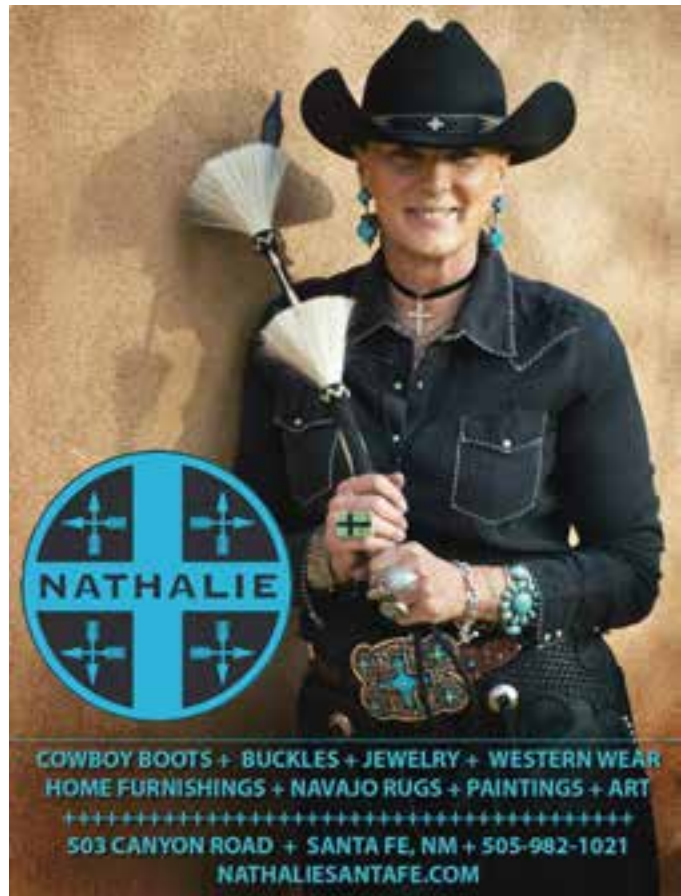
He drives off and leaves us there in the dust and the heat with the barns and the grasshoppers.

We will come to know Harold well over the next several months, and in fact, he will hire Craig on to work for him the next summer, logging and thinning the property. It doesn't take too long for him to come to the conclusion that we are not quite the bumbling newbies that he originally assumed, although he still, I think, considers us pansies in some regards: He can't figure out, for example, why it's such a big deal that we're absolutely *sure* the power to the barns is disconnected before we cut through the lines. “Well, I don't know,” he says when we ask him about it. “I just figure it was turned off a long time ago.” He seems to think that calling the power company out to check is a lot of fuss.

But he warms to us nonetheless, and stops by occasionally while we're working just to watch or complain about the woman who owns the place. I get a kick out of his views on the fairer sex; he seems to get along with his wife, who does the books for the ranch and who seems to be somewhat of a mystery to him. On the other hand, he loves coming across situations or problems on the property that will irk the landowner. When a whole section of the riverbank washes away in a spring flood, he looks at it and says “Welllll.... That'll make her piss down her leg!” and cackles. When newly planted native shrubs die off, he merely comments, “Yep, that'll really blow her skirt

back.” But on the other hand, he seems to put some stock in my work and my attitude, and refers to me on occasion as “Boss Lady” with something resembling fondness.

He is a curmudgeon, but we get to know him in bits and pieces as he talks, always staring off into the middle distance. He came from Virginia. He's a pilot, and owns several small planes as well as pieces of several more, which he intends to cobble together into patchwork flying machines. He owns mules, and had a big kennel full of dogs. He was a wrestler, a good one, and thus has bad shoulders. One day he tears the tendons in both of his shoulders while sinking fence posts, and both require surgery and long-term rehabilitation. “This,” he tells us often, “is just a goddamn piss-off.”



Eventually, we get started on the project, after two months of legal logistics: if we fall and break our necks, whose fault is it, and more importantly, who pays for it; who deals with the cement foundations; what's the contract going to say and who's going to write it. Together we agree that the whole thing will be done by the end of March, giving us just over five months. Though we're both finishing graduate school and I'm working a part-time job, we figure five months is plenty.

The first day of real demolition is bright and cold. Unsure where to start and a little giddy at the enormity of the project, we wander, getting acquainted with "our" barns. We point out certain boards that strike our fancy, because of the grain pattern, or the sheer bulk of them, or because they have brands burned into them. "Just

think," Craig marvels. "By the end of this we will have touched each one of these boards. We will have held all of them in our hands. We will know them all."

We have decided to complete the project all by hand, no power tools, maybe a chainsaw if it becomes necessary. We will end up making one major concession to this vow, but it's a spectacular and utterly efficient rule-breaking, so we think it's worth it.

We pull a board here, a couple there, start mapping out a plan of attack. We've never done this before; I've built barns, but much smaller than these, and I've never done the process in reverse. We make a list of things that need to be addressed quickly; we need buckets for nails, we need to determine if we're dealing with lead paint (which would render the wood unsellable), and the







dozen, thousand-pound industrial sacks of “organic fertilizer” (turkey crap) stashed in the hay barn need to be moved, by some kind of machinery we don’t have. (Several months later, we will have the barn half dismantled around them before Harold finally trundles over in his skidsteer to take the reeking obstacles away.)

Eventually we embark on the project in earnest by tackling the loft in the main barn, scooping out the evidence of generations of pigeons, feathers and nesting material and the bones of the unlucky or old. I am fascinated by the smallness, the perfect roundness of the birds’ skulls as I uncover them, the startlingly large eye-sockets and incongruous beaks. The grime piles up on the ground beneath the loft doors, where eventually it will be trampled down and then freeze. Knapweed will

bloom ebulliently from these patches in the spring.

There is a photo of the two of us on that first day, standing in the doorway of the hay barn. Craig is holding a broad pine board, and there are several more leaning against the wall behind us. We are eating apples and looking smug in sweatshirts that read “Treeline Timber Salvage.” (One of the permissible criteria on the application for an independent contractor’s license in the state of Montana is to submit a receipt for apparel printed with the contractor’s logo. We made up a name, got some shirts printed, and got ourselves a contractor’s license. Simple.) Surrounded by the doorway of the massive barn, with winter coming on, we look surprisingly optimistic.

Straight through until the end of March, we spend

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every weekend and spare weekday moment there. We set the alarm for 6:00 on Saturdays, and while I groan and cover my head with a pillow, Craig puts the coffee on. I wear the same pair of Carhartts each day, and rotate through pairs of long underwear. Layers of thermals and sweatshirts, everything is filthy, everything smells like dust and turkey poo.

But we make progress and we learn fast. The months go by, and slowly piles of boards appear neatly stacked in the field, while the skeletons of the barns stand stark against the sky. The process is one endless blur of bluebird days and snowstorms, packed down snow and hard-frozen ground, and endless boards, coated in a hundred years of dirt.

Throughout the process, I would occasionally find myself stalled in my work, looking out over the valley from one of the roofs, or staring off towards the property's creek with a board in my hands. We weren't sure when the barns were built, exactly, but sometime around the turn of the century. There weren't any square nails, so we figure it must've been around 1910 or shortly thereafter. I couldn't shake the sense of history there, the notion that each board was a witness to the past of the place.

The barn was built almost entirely of pine, and probably local Ponderosa, most likely cut and milled right there on the property. Some of the boards were 16 or 20 inches wide, and clearly were cut from grand old trees. I liked to imagine those trees when they still stood, towering over the valley. They weathered seasonal fires and east winds in the winter. They would have stood above encampments of Flathead Indians, overwintering in the sheltered valley where their horses could find enough forage for the lean months. They would have seen the migration of various native bands through the mountains, headed from the Columbia Plateau out to

the Plains, going to buffalo. The arrival of Jesuits, with their black robes and new notions. St. Mary's Mission, now encircled by the town of Stevensville, was the first white establishment in Montana, built in 1841. The site of the barns was less than a mile as the crow flies from the Mission. I imagined the trees watching the first telegraph lines strung down the valley, the smoke from the first trains curling up across the river. Hundreds of years old, the trees must have watched Chief Charlo lead his Salish people north, out of the valley, through a world that was rapidly changing.

Eventually, the Ponderosas were cut, sawed to length and shaped into buildings. Cattle came and went, horses were replaced by machines. Ranch hands slept in the bunkhouse, and then moved on. The creek kept flowing, the woodchucks kept raising families under the floor, the pigeons established an empire. And now, there we were, painstakingly unbuilding the past, so that it could continue.

If you want to take down some barns, there are a few things you'll have to learn. First, get a shovel for the pigeon shit. Then, wait until winter. Pigeon shit doesn't smell nearly as bad after it freezes, and neither do the dead woodchucks under the floorboards. Just as important, the flies are all asleep. There are few things as satisfying as pulling down a wall board, finding the backside caked with hibernating flies, and killing them. It's sweet revenge for all the insects of summer.

Get a hard hat, and several pairs of good work gloves, not the chintzy kind. Find a tool belt that suits your needs, and a hammer that suits your personality. You must have a reliable pair of boots. You'll buy all kinds of crowbars and prybars, and you still won't have exactly the right tool for every job. We named the crowbars: the diplomat, the ambassador, the plenipotentiary, and relied on their skills of leverage and



persuasion. You'll learn to carry a small block of wood, a few inches across, to give you better leverage against stubborn nails. Even though it seems impossible, you will figure out eventually how to back a loaded trailer into a tight space.

You will carefully corral and collect hundreds of pounds of nails in big plastic buckets. We wracked our brains up until the moment we brought them to the recycling drop-off, and couldn't come up with a good use for thousands of bent nails. We even talked to the blacksmith up the road, to see if he could smelt them and make them into knives. Not enough carbon, he told us. Toss 'em.

The best way to keep your fingers from freezing is to use them. For the days when even that doesn't work,

you'll want a burn barrel. The best way to warm up after all day in the cold is a shower and stew. It is not getting so close to the wood stove that you accidentally back into it, and bear a scar across your left butt cheek to this day.

You'll discover that shingles are perhaps the world's most unwieldy building material, but that there are few more satisfying activities than scraping shingles off a roof side-by-side with someone you love. When your friend shows up with beer at the end of the day, it's a nice treat. When your friend shows up with beer and a shingle shovel and an offer to help, early in the day, it's a beautiful thing.

Some of the most interesting moments will be when the voices of another time show up before you. One board was penciled with a request to "Stop the war in

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Nam.” Another had the name “Verne Hames” gouged into it long ago. We found the old ranch sign hidden in a pile of junk, a placid-looking cow painted on it. A stash of glass apothecary bottles emerged from a dark corner of the hay barn, with directions for dosing cows still legible on the labels. The tops of old tin cans covered the knot-holes in the walls.

You’ll listen to a lot of Rolling Stones and public radio. You might develop a taste for energy drinks and Combos, if there’s a gas station up the road. If you have to drive past a bakery on the way to the job site, you’ll probably acquire a passion for cheddar-jalepeño scones for breakfast. On the gorgeous days, when the sun breaks through the clouds, there’s a rainbow perched improbably astride the equipment barn, and a herd of elk grazes at a safe distance, you’ll think that you could do this stuff forever. When it’s cold and wet and your shoulders ache from wielding a prybar overhead all day, you’ll yell at each other and wonder whose stupid idea this stupid project was in the first place.

On the bad days, I hated the whole thing. It wasn’t the physical discomforts or the long hours. I don’t generally mind that sort of thing. But on those days, when we argued and I stormed off with my crowbar to vent my frustration on some unsuspecting rafter, I knew exactly why the cold seemed colder, the work harder, the disagreements more dire.

I was the type that needed to plan. I had put more stock in our “going back east” plan than I had realized, and I regretted holding my tongue, back on that sunny summer day. Harold trusted us enough to give us the job, and I suddenly found myself bundled up in the middle of a Montana winter, prying cold metal out of cold wood, 2,500 miles away from my family and friends. I was homesick, but more than anything, I didn’t have a plan. Would we go east after we finished

the demolition? I had no idea, but I had a hunch it wouldn’t be a priority for Craig. He didn’t miss his family and his home-place the same way I did, and we had a steadily growing pile of pine that tied us to this spot in a very real way. I felt untethered on those bad days, and wondered if I had enough perspective, if I was doing the right thing by standing side by side with this man I had only known for a year, while so much of what I cared about was so far away. And all because of a couple of goddamn barns. I blamed Craig and myself, but most of all the barns, for derailing my intentions. On the bad days, pulling boards felt like pulling apart the safe and comfortable life I had imagined, piece by piece.

Years later, we still have piles of wood everywhere – in the garage, in storage, in our friend’s field – and I still don’t have a plan. I don’t mind as much now, although there are still days when I want nothing more than to be back in the Northeast woods, among family and ancestors. Events have conspired to keep us here though, and I haven’t fought them. Along with callouses and splinters, the barns gave me a chance to take stock, forced me to slow down, to acknowledge the malleability of the future. All that history around me said, “Don’t worry. Don’t make plans. You cannot predict and you will only be disappointed. Whatever comes next will get here, eventually.”

By late December, we have the shell peeled off the hay barn and just the frame remains, with a few stubborn bits of board hanging dejectedly in the wind. After days of planning and much drawing of diagrams, we have the place rigged for destruction. Steel cable threads through the building, hitched every so often to the joists, and out about a hundred feet to our friend Josh’s truck. This is our major breach of contract with ourselves: having pulled everything salvageable off the outside, and removed as much of the frame as possible without endangering ourselves, all by



hand, we're going to topple everything that remains with this big old Ford.

While I prop plywood over the truck's windshield (we'll be pulling in reverse, and if the cables snap, they'll smash the glass), Josh and Craig blitz through the barn with chainsaws, putting face cuts in all of the supporting posts. Then, while we stand clear, Craig throws the truck into gear and slowly backs up. The wheels spin, even though we've put on chains, and mud flies. From where we're standing, we can see the frame lean forward and settle back at each tentative attempt. Finally Josh hollers over, "Give it the onion!" which, in so many words, means "Floor it!" Craig does. The engine whines, the snow chains break on the tires, but slowly, the barn tilts, pitches forward, and then all at once, buckles like a huge animal going down on its knees. It settles exactly how we had planned, and the three of us clamber over the pile whooping and hollering, "I can't

believe it worked! Would you look at that? It worked!"

We will eventually do the same with the stock barn, on a numbingly cold day in January. Our friend Johnny offers the use of his giant diesel Dodge, and the behemoth of a building comes down in a cloud of dust and snow. The bunkhouse and the equipment barn will follow close on their heels, and with a few days to spare, the project is finished by the end of March.

Every now and then we drive by the property, the space just a big meadow now, the footprints of the barns slowly filling in; mostly with invasive weeds, but they've seeded it with native grasses, and are trying to get them to take. Harold has retired, and I always imagine him flying one of his small planes over the eastern reaches of Montana, a wire-haired griffon riding in the co-pilot's seat, going to hunt birds.

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We've stored a lot of the wood down on Josh's property, a little 20-acre spread back off the road where no one will care if big bunks of boards clutter up the view. We told him it would just be temporary, just for a few months, tops, because all those rich people and those contractors would be buying it all up. Turns out, rich people *do* love the stuff, but their contractors like to buy from wholesalers, not two-bit barn busters like us. We shopped it around for a while, sold a few thousand board-feet, and then the economy tanked, and everyone stopped building houses. So we decided to keep it. We had planed down a bunch of boards and realized just how beautiful the wood was underneath the patina. Craig started building furniture – nice furniture – and getting commissions, so it made sense not to sell off our supply.

We asked Josh if we could keep our stock on his property just a little longer. He said sure. The months stretched into years: In the time our wood has lived there, Josh has built a house, gotten married, and his wife just gave birth to their second kid. He used some of the barnwood in their house, framing the windows that open out to the Sapphire Mountains, through which he and his children watch the deer cross the creek, and listen to the pair of barn owls that nest up in the pines. He lives just a few miles from where the barns sat, from where the trees grew. This is the right thing. I'd rather have our barns live on in these small places and intimate ways than in some rich folks' house any day.

We aren't in any hurry. Imbued with history, the wood seems to ask for contemplation and reflection. Oftentimes I'll find Craig in the

woodshop, just staring at a board. "Just look at it. It's beautiful. See here, you can see how the cambium grew back around this fire scar, and over here, see the way it discolored around this nail hole?"

And now, it continues. Here, I sit at a desk built of those boards, some of which I can remember in their places in the barns. One leg is made of a piece I saw on the first visit to the site, a beam from the hay barn with a small 7 branded into it. The top is made of joists from the loft, planed down to smoothness, the color of honey. Nail holes trace along the front, and in two places, small bits of metal glint: barbed wire strung a century ago, that the tree grew around and took with it, through history, up to now.



Melissa Mylchreest is a writer living in Montana.

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## THE HEN HOUSE

# Unlikely Candidates



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

According to Merriam Webster the definition of Stewardship is the activity or job of protecting and being responsible for something. More often than not, when one envisions a steward of the west, they see the picturesque well-worn cowboy astride a magnificent steed, overlooking the sun-swept hills and sagebrush sea, keeping watch over his milling herd of bovines...or similar overdone images of grandeur. Though that is the image that many see, there are

unlikely candidates strewn across the country of all ages and cultures. Everyone who knows us Hen House girls,

is aware that we like to have fun; whether it's roping on the weekends, hiking random mountains, or cooking for our ever-growing circle of friends; each of us is striving towards something much bigger.

In our view of stewardship the "something" that is in need of protecting

and being responsible over is only the West, its resources, and its heritage and traditions, no big deal right?



photos courtesy The Hen House Archives

Ceily, Hannah, Reata and Nevada





Where we would rather be, on any given day

Wrong, the people involved in agriculture and the West are all part of a huge cornerstone that holds up the routine of everyday life. This idea of stewardship means so much to us because not only do we owe it to one another to preserve what we have but also we owe it to the earth to take care of and maintain our agricultural resources so they continue for generations to come. In our ideal world, every generation of stewards would be able to leave the earth in better shape than when they first utilized it. As some of you may already know, Ceily is majoring in Agricultural Relations. She focuses on the preservation of our agricultural resources and the education of their users. One of the few times you see Ceily fired up is when she encounters bad drivers or knapweed. We can only imagine her reaction if

stuck behind a bad driver while passing an overgrazed pasture full of knapweed! Though Ceily is choosing agriculture as her focus in college, all of us have been instilled with the importance of caring for the land, its creatures and the things it provides.

A lot of us grew up watching Roy Rogers, Gene Autry and The Lone Ranger...now imagine if you will, taking out all of the noble steeds that they were astride, there would be no Hi-Yo-Silver aways! Or great chase scenes, or posses... just people stumbling though the sage. This proves our point, that horses are an integral part of our

culture and heritage. Not only the breeding and raising, but also the horsemanship.

In her effort to continue the legacy of the great horsemen before her, Reata is not only applying those lessons of stewardship to her own education and career,



Ceily Rae and Hannah



Reata and Nevada, always serious

but also to improving that of others. This year, Reata has been hired to teach the Colt Starting and Young Horse Development class at Montana State University. Though she will always consider herself a student of the knowledge that preceded her, Reata is using her inborn stewardship for the horse and its impact on the world to educate others about the traditional methods of horsemanship that need to be passed on from generation to generation. From Tom Dorrance to Ray Hunt to Buck Brannaman to Reata, it's a legacy that needs to be continued and the fire kindled from those who have the passion. Reata is never, nor will ever be bored, she always has a list, and is always adding to it. She not only has her own stallion that she manages and breeds but seems to have a pretty consistent turnover rate with her horses. Reata

and her family are striving to produce a type of horse that is a "using" horse, one that you could show, rope a bull on, and make into a bridled horse. Her goal is to produce a type of horse that will improve the horse industry. The purpose of these efforts is to educate future stewards in order to maintain the integrity of our heritage.

There are many facets to this heritage. The everyday apparel of the working ranch folk and the weekend warriors (a lot of the supporters of the trade!) utilize gear that has been around in some form for centuries.

While maintaining their colorful

heritage, younger generations are finding ways to put their own stamp on the traditions of the past. Although there may have been a few mutilated hides and dropped stitches in the beginning, Hannah is quickly building a name for herself as a quality chap and gear maker. Chaps



Hannah



are a tool that every cowboy in every corner of the world has a use for. Not only are they functional but they are also an outlet for personal expression, and for Hannah, an outlet for her vogue styles to merge with tradition. Like Ralph Lauren and his designs, Hannah strives for timeless class in every piece. In recent years the Armita style has become a 'trend' in the western world. However, this 'trend' is one of the oldest pieces of gear, dating back to ancient Spain. Armitas have morphed through the years, fringe has gotten longer, colors brighter, reflecting the style of the user while maintaining their purpose. Gear is a channel for people to show pride in who they are and those who taught them before. Just like the land and its creatures, the tools used to maintain and care for them, is a piece of the lifestyle that can't be overlooked.

Nevada does silver. She does good. That's all.

Just kidding...

OK, we know at this point you are just as tired as we are of the words tradition, heritage, generations etc. etc. but bear with us for one more shining aspect of the Western culture, literally. Though a cowboy's life is filled with dust, sweat and long hours in the saddle, they can still appreciate the beauty in a finely engraved bridle bit or conchos that adorn their gear. Nevada Watt is becoming known as one of the finest young silversmiths of our time. There was a time when Nevada showed little interest in the art, but with the encouragement of her saddle maker/

silversmith father, Jeremiah Watt, she tapped into her natural talent and within a few years, has built her own reputation. Nevada is one of the youngest in her trade, and therefore carries the weight of tradition on her shoulders. By continuing on with her trade, she is proving a steward in her own right. With her own modern flair, she is bringing the craft to the forefront of the public's knowledge... while managing to make it her own.

For all of us gals, being a steward of tradition doesn't mean you can't be an innovator. Like Will Rogers once said, "If you want to be successful, it's just this simple. Know what you are doing. Love what you are doing. And believe in what you are doing," that my friends is what keeps our ponies trotting. 'Till next time.

— The Hen House



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# Simple and Soulful

Julie Chase Baldocchi's portfolio documents northern California's cowboy country.

Julie Chase Baldocchi was a successful 20-something commercial photographer living in San Francisco when, in 1984, she landed an assignment to photograph cowboys on a ranch near San Juan Bautista, California. The job would change her life, for it was on this shoot that she met her husband, Donald, whose family owned the ranch.

These days, Julie and her family spend weekdays in San Francisco, where they own Pacific Nurseries, California's oldest operating wholesale plant nursery. Julie's also involved in several non-profits and youth education programs.

Outside the city, though, she's an active participant in the family's cattle operation, the Gabilan Cattle Company, working beside her husband and sons, Chase, 24, and Will, 22. Julie confesses she's always had a "little bit of Annie Oakley" in her, ever since portraying the frontierswoman while in eighth grade in Marin County. Growing up, she had a horse named Miss America.

"When I gave up riding as a girl, I kept my saddle and my box of tack," Julie says. "I knew it would come back in my life. I just didn't know how."

The photos on the following pages are part of a large private collection Julie calls "Contemporary Western Images." Many were taken in the early 1990s in Monterey and San Benito counties, as Julie became acquainted with neighboring ranchers.

Julie's photographic technique is simple and soulful. She uses available light; large-, medium-, and small-format cameras; and a tripod she's had since high school, when she started earning her keep snapping portraits of children.

Most of her preparation goes into getting to know her subjects. Images of cowboys, ranchers and saddlemakers – people who represent a timeless way of life – have become Julie's photographic legacy.

"I have tremendous respect for everyone in my photographs – for who they are and what they've taught me, for what they do and what they're preserving," Julie says. "I hope this comes across in their portraits because this, to me, means more than anything I've ever been paid to do."



Jayden Brown

So I asked Jayden if I could take his picture and he said "no, no!" Five minutes later he struck this pose, and looked me in the eye.



Bill Dorrance, Ray Hunt, and Tom Dorrance  
Personally the most meaningful photo I've ever had the pleasure of making. Three of the great ones.



Luke Neubert

You just can't teach feel. This boy still has it at age 27.



Ron Brown and Chase Baldocchi

Love that dry, summer, dusty morning light. Fun times parting calves with Ron and my son Chase.



Oscar Thompson

Twenty-two treasured years riding, learning and laughing with this gifted horseman. We sure miss him.





Kate, Patty, Jim, Brian and Luke Neubert  
This is how it starts. They all still work to keep true horsemanship alive.



Ron Brown, Donnie Baldocchi and Oscar Thompson  
The Gabilan Ranch team on a classic California spring day in Steinbeck country.



Donald Crosby and his son Brett  
Nothing better for this boy than a day with his dad on the job.



Ben Thompson

There's not much this boy can't catch with a rope. Trust me.



Molly Dorrance

Another treasured day of branding our cattle with the help of Molly, her parents Steve, Leslie and brother Drew. Seamless.



Molly Dorrance

Molly as a young girl on her family's ranch on Mount Toro, California. That little reata on her saddle was not just for show. Twenty years later we're having fun roping together.



Bill Dorrance

Bill on Diamond at the Dorrance Ranch, Mount Toro, California. Friend, mentor, teacher.  
Bill always liked to see all four of a horse's legs defined in a photo.

For more information on Julie's work and her upcoming book and prints,  
please visit [www.juliechasephoto.com](http://www.juliechasephoto.com).



# Nostalgia

By Arnold Rojas

**W**e were sitting on an old-fashioned porch in Bakersfield. Dusk was falling on the town as we watched the mass of traffic rush by. But without seeing it, we heard only its howl as it rushed up the freeway between rows of trees.

We spoke of many things; for we were no longer drifters, no longer youths to whom the future meant only the next payday, when we were young and able to ride into camp sitting erect on our saddles to hide our exhaustion after a stretch of sixteen hours on horseback. We thought in those long ago days of our youth that we were infinitely unimportant in the great scheme of things. We had learned that only the present is certain. The rest depends on the Big Boss Upstairs.

We were looking at the present-day Bakersfield. But were seeing, with a nostalgic eye, the “Old Cowtown” of 70 years ago; when scores of vaqueros and buckaroos swaggered along the streets of the town, for thousands of head of cattle ranged the surrounding plains and mountains. The oilfields on the West side were booming and Bakersfield did not need to take a back seat to any other town for wildness.

Between Bakersfield and Sumner (East Bakersfield) there was an open country. The circus, when it came to town, pitched its tents on the corner of 19th and Union Avenue. The Tegeler and the Southern were the best hotels in town and the gourmet restaurant was the French Café. One could get a meal there for forty cents.

A man went to a hotel, got a room, took a shower, then pulled the mattress off the bed, set it on the floor, took the fan (each room was supplied with one), set it in the window so that the air would blow over him and lay down on the mattress and tried to sleep through the terrible hot nights with clouds of mosquitoes buzzing over him.

In the late afternoon, the people would come out of their houses and sit on their porches and wait until their houses cooled down enough so that they could go to bed; for the summers then were worse than they are now. The Ridge (99) Route was still in the future. It was a long day’s journey to travel from Bakersfield to San Fernando by way of Elizabeth Lake and Bouquet Canyon.

The big cattle ranches were still intact because the farmer could not always get water. It was not until the deep-well turbine pump was invented or developed that the agriculturist came into his own in the southern San Joaquin Valley. There wasn’t enough water in the canals for everybody who needed it. The big ranches began to gradually disappear and the land which was used to run cattle was put into cultivation. Even The Sinks of Tejon, where a band of wild horses roamed, was planted to cotton.

The vaqueros would ride into town, their horses keeping step to the clink, tap, clink, tap of their spur chains and tapaderas. There were many runaways. The teamsters were in the habit of leaving their teams standing





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This snapshot from Rojas' collection reads, "Nacho Herman, c. 1921." In the Bakersfield of that era, Rojas recalls, "scores of vaqueros and buckaroos swaggered along the streets of the town," and when a team of horses waiting outside a saloon got antsy and ran off with their wagon, one cowboy or another would coolly rope the runaways.

and going into the saloon for a drink. The horses would tire and start home without their driver and before they had gone far, they would be running wildly down the street. Then the vaqueros would give an exhibition of

their skill with a reata by roping the runaways.

An oldtimer told me of an experience he once had on a runaway colt on the streets of Bakersfield. He was 12 years old, when one day his father told him to ride into town and get something or other. He had forgotten what. His family owned several horses, among them a gentle colt which the boy and sister often rode. Eager to go into town, the boy hurried to the barn and picked the first hackamore he found and went out to the pasture and caught the colt. He put on the hackamore and saddled the animal, mounted and headed for town. In town he left the colt at a hitching rack and went into the store and bought the article he had come for.

He left the store, walked out to the horse and mounted. He headed for home down 19th Street. After he had ridden about a block, a dog chasing a cat frightened the colt, which jumped sideways and broke into a run. The boy pulled on the reins. They parted and left him with a piece of hair rope in his hands and no control over the horse, which was stampeding madly down 19th. Luckily, two vaqueros were riding into town. They turned into 19th when they saw the colt coming towards them. They separated so that the colt would run between them and took down their reatas, made a loop and waited.

As the colt came abreast they yelled, "*Agarrate, agarrate!*" (grab hold, grab hold). In those days any boy raised on one of the ranches understood some Spanish. He clutched the horn in a death grip and hung on. The vaqueros threw a loop around the colt's neck and racing their horses beside him, gradually brought him to stop without hurting the boy. After they had dismounted and helped him fix his hackamore, the boy rode home, none the worse for his adventure; but ever afterward, whenever he saddled and bridled a horse, he examined carefully the hackamore or bridle before he put it on the horse. For as the saying goes, "*Los golpes quitan lo bruto,*"

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which means that, “Hard knocks teach wisdom”.

We talked far into the night, bringing back to mind the fellows we had known; because we had like them, we remembered them. Alfred Fraga, the descendent of Portuguese celts, who spoke Castillian so well that he liked to go among Hispanics and surprise them with his fluency in the language because his bright red hair, snub nose and freckles made them think he was a sure enough gringo.

There was “Injun Pete” (Mariano Sanchez), the pure-blooded Yaqui Indian. He came from the most warlike tribe ever encountered by Spanish Conquistadores, but was one of the best-natured men I knew. He always wore a wide grin on his face. He was the father of Joaquin Sanchez, the rodeo clown who was known for his cold nerve in taking mad Brahma bulls away from the cowboys who were thrown and helpless. In speaking of his dad, Joaquin once told me, “My dad rode all the horses in Cuff Burrell’s bucking string just to see if he could ride them and none of them bucked him off.”

A boy came to work on San Emideo and earned the name of Salome Bill, perhaps he came from Salome, Arizona. Hank, the foreman, gave him a big bay horse called Bill. He was a good cow-horse, but he had his eccentricities. If his rider let him walk off on a loose rein in the morning when he was first mounted, old Bill would remain horizontal and docile. But if his rider turned him to the right or left, Bill would buck. If he bucked, as this writer has good reason to remember, the person on his back would think that his backbone was coming out the top of his head. Once this writer got on Bill with his Levi jacket buttoned all the way up. In the storm, the jacket was hooked onto the horse and all the buttons were torn off but the top one. He also pounded his ribs against the horn. They were so sore that he couldn’t ride straight for a month.

The foreman warned Bill about the horse’s peculiarity. Salome only grunted. He saddled Bill, led him out into the yard. He mounted, laid the rein on Bill’s neck and turned him around, then he laid the rein on his neck again, but this time Bill started bucking. He bucked around the yard for a long time. At last, out of breath, he stopped. Salome was still in the saddle. Hank asked why he had tried to turn Bill around instead of letting him walk off. “Oh,” he answered, “I wanted to see if he could buck as hard as you guys said he could.”

There were many of the vaqueros and buckaroos who couldn’t ride a buck no matter how mild the buck. But such men usually had an infinite patience and could turn out the best working cowhorses. Sutam Coway roped beautifully and never missed, unless he was in a bad humor. Then he would miss either because he didn’t like the boy who was tailing for him, or wanted to be ordered out of the corral. He was never a bronc rider.

Nepomuseno Cordero could never ride a bad one but he turned out some of the best-mouthed horses on Tejon. Don Jesús, the boss, said (facetiously, of course) that Nepomuseno’s legs were too short for his body and his behind was too big and too broad, that when a horse got it out of the saddle, it was too heavy to get back in. But Cheno, as we called him, was so good with colts that the boss always gave him the most promising ones on the ranch to ride.

Eduardo Valdez could never rope, but he rode the best horses on the ranch and in a pinch he could ride a pretty good bucking horse. He stayed on the White Wolf for many years. When he retired, this writer bought his old Visalia saddle.

Adolfo Encinas was never a bronc rider, nor ever wanted to be one, but when he threw a loop he never stopped to see if he had caught. He turned his horse toward the fire and took his turns around the horn. His



reata had eyes. He rode colts for Roland and Russell Hill, who ran the Tehachapi Cattle Company and turned out many good Morgans. Russell told me that Adolfo was one of the best men with a colt he had ever known. As a matter of fact, Russell said, the horses Adolfo turned out had too light a mouth, because when riding the colt through brush, if a branch happened to swing back and hit the colt's rein, the colt would spin around. Nevertheless, he put out some of the best Morgans the Hill brothers owned.

Salvador, for instance, was expert in all the skills of the vaquero's work. He was a good bucking horse rider, he was a good roper, he could put a good mouth on a horse, he knew cattle, he could shoe a horse and he was even good at cooking. One day when he was gathering cattle on the east side of Breckenridge Mountain,

Salvador, Jim Polkinhorn and two other men were camped at Mill Creek. I dropped in on them and had supper. Sal had cooked it. He had made biscuits. They were so good that I can still remember how good they were. I still have a pair of rawhide reins and a reata he made. I keep them hidden because I have been offered so many inflated dollars for them that I'm afraid I will some day weaken and sell them.

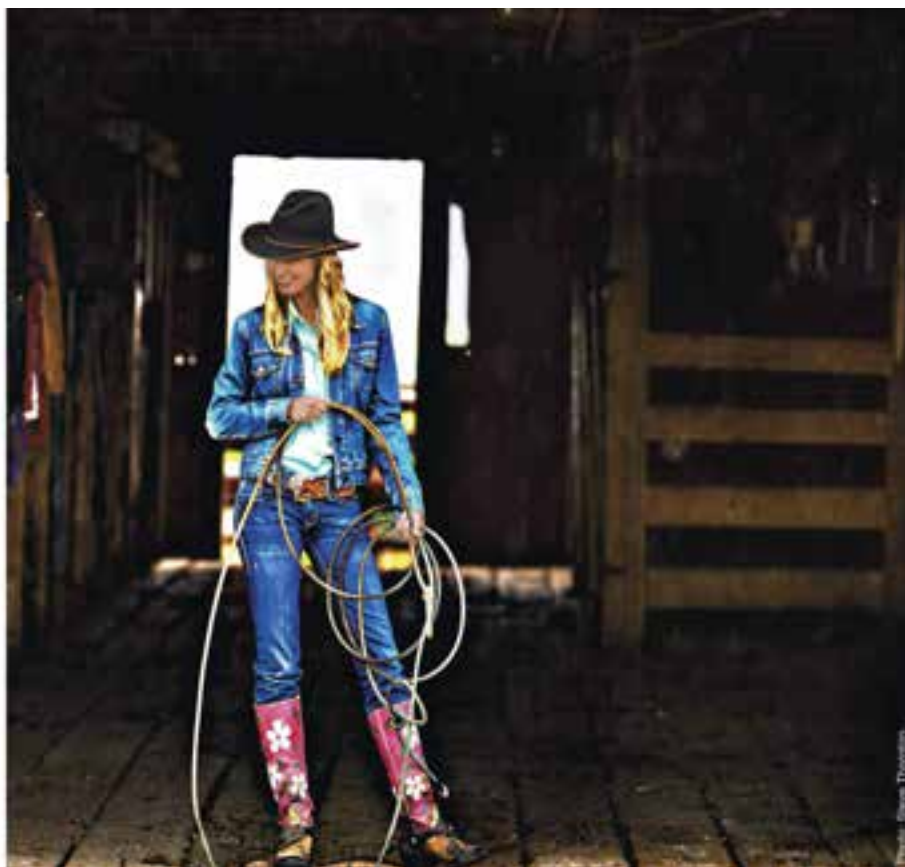
Another good man and a complete vaquero was Bill Nichols. He was an Indian from the Kernville area. He rode colts on San Emideo and turned out good horses. A colt fell over backwards with him. He was taken to the hospital and died on the operating table. He was a very quiet man. One could ride by his side all day long and the only word he would say is "Yes" or "No."

Bert Hobbs would brag all day long of the broncos

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he had ridden, until he bored Hank, the foreman, so much that Hank undertook to cure him by getting him bucked off. Hank gave him Tango Annie, who would buck at intervals all day long. Bert saddled Annie with an old slick fork saddle, put a snaffle bit with split leather reins on her and mounted. Once firmly seated, he crossed the reins in his left fist and took a firm hold on the horn with his right hand. Tango leaped into a buck and swapped ends, then bucked off around the yard. When she quit, we rode off toward Pleito Ranch. Before the morning was over she bucked three times, but she could never catch Bert asleep. She never bucked him off during the months Bert rode her. But neither did Bert stop bragging. Someone, I think it was Ed Norton, told me that Archie Reed sometime later finally succeeded in riding the buck out of Tango Annie.

Tony and Jim Campos were 15 and 16 years old, respectively, when I first went to Tejon Ranch. Under the coaching of Salvador Carmelo both became first class bronc riders. I remember Tony making a beautiful ride on "Hell-to-Set" at a rodeo in Lebec. We became friends the first time I met them and have been friends ever since. Tony lives in Cuyama Valley and Jim lives here in Bakersfield.

"Mighty on a horse." Freddie and Willie Lamas were little guys but they were mighty on a horse. It took a good horse to buck either one of them off. Freddie has passed away, but Willie lives in Pumpkin Center surrounded by his sons and grandsons. Johnny Puget, the little Frenchman, still lives on Real Road in Bakersfield. Angel Montanio, whom we called "*Chango*" (Monkey), worked for Rafael Cuen on the chuckwagon. He was the son of Santos Montanio, a good chuckwagon cook.

Uel Matthews, a boy from Orange County, wandered up this way and got a job on San Emideo. He used to ride Liver-eating-Johnson, the mule. That is, he

sometimes rode Johnson, because the mule sometimes threw him. He worked on only one ranch, San Emideo. When he left he went back to Orange and married. Years afterward I met his brother, who told me that "Booger," as we called him, was the father of big family and very prosperous.

Old Jim Gorman was one of the good gringo vaqueros in the country. He was also the crankiest. He descended from an Irishman who came to America during the famine in Ireland. On arrival here he enlisted in the army and served at Fort Tejon. Gorman Station is named after him. Old Bob Bowen, Turner and Billie Rose were good gringo vaqueros.

We must not forget Charlie Hitchcock, whom we called Curley, when he worked at Rosedale Ranch. During his stay there he bought a Model-T Ford and left it to Providence to help him find a way to make payments of 30 dollars a month. Providence in the form of a Kansas cowboy named George Knowles came to his aid. George taught Charlie how to rope Tule Elk and to pull their teeth.

Fifty-five years later the two were on a hunting trip in the High Sierra. They were sitting by a campfire having a nightcap when George turned to Charlie and said, "Johnson," he always called Charlie "Johnson", "Do you remember when you had to make payments on the Model-T Ford and I showed you how to rope elk and how to pull their teeth? And how I sold the teeth for you so you could make payments?"

"Yes," Charlie answered.

"Well, Johnson," George said, "I've got something to confess. You know I sold those teeth for you but I didn't get 30 dollars for them. I got 50 dollars." Chuck, Charlie's son, told me this story, but he didn't tell me what Charlie answered.

Rawley Buntley was an oldtime cattleman who lived on Oak Creek. He had more activities in Lancaster



than in Bakersfield. But he was well known all over the county. Another little fellow who didn't make much noise was Rafael Sanchez. He was a good little bronc rider when he was sober. Archie Reid from Honolulu was another good little bronc rider. He was a ranch bronc rider. I say that because many of the boys who never missed a rodeo in town wouldn't ride a colt on the ranch. Some of the boys from the mountains would come down and ride on the ranches. Claude Caldwell, Pinky Reed, young Bob Bowen worked for the Land Company at times.

Remick Albitre and his brother "Dutch" would come down for the rodeos. Remick was at his best as pick-up man at the old fairgrounds. He and his horse Truck were always at the right time. I liked to sit in the grandstand and watch Remick work. Whenever

something happened that amused him, I could see his grin from up in the grandstand. Jimmie and Bautista ("Boy") are the only brothers left in the Albitre family.

I often meet Doug Silica in the Pleasant Grove area when I go north to visit Bobby Ingersoll in the Sacramento Valley.

Years ago, on weekends, Salvy Rodriguez would put on a little rodeo. There was always the same group of contestants who showed up to the ride. Most of them worked on ranches, but didn't seem to get enough work during the week. Jim and Tony Campus, Dutch Albitre, Joe Garcia, Johnny Puget, Buster Clark, Tommy Condley, Alfonso Valenzuela, Vic and Bob Huntington, Pete Rivera, Willie Lamas. There was not always a paid attendance. As a result, the bronc riders didn't always get paid. If they didn't make any money, they had a lot

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of fun. However, those little rodeos were more risky than the big ones, because the arena was made of parked cars or was an open field which some farmer had good-naturedly lent for the occasion. One time Sal put on a rodeo on the McManus Ranch in a cornfield. The corn stalks had been cut at a slant and stood up about three feet with a sharp spearlike edge. Willie Lamas remarked that if some cowboy would be thrown on one of those stalks he would be impaled. Luckily no one was hurt, because all the riders hung on for dear life.

The watching of the vaqueros and buckaroos, that is, young ones, strengthened my belief in Guardian Angels. However, many of the boys who started their careers riding in those little rodeos later made good in big time rodeos.

Often around the campfire we would talk about our ambitions and how we would run a ranch if we had owned one; but we never became cattle kings, because their day had long-since passed. Cattle kings had flourished as long as the land they used was free and they paid no taxes on it. When the cattleman had to own the land on which he ran his cattle and pay taxes, he did not last long. Already, in the times of which we speak, ranching was diversified. The cattle outfits also ran sheep, raised hogs, alfalfa and other crops. About the only chance of advancement the vaquero or buckaroo had was to get the job of foreman. But that chance was remote, indeed. Foremen were a special breed of men who were hired for their experience, their ability to handle men, their knowledge of cattle and their reliability.

Many foremen became legends in their own time and they lasted on the jobs for many years. Don Jesús Lopez, 60 years, Rafael Cuen, 54 years, Joaquin Feliz, 40 years, Catarino Reese, 40 years, Russell Hill, 50 years, Johnny Green, 30 years. A foreman was known far and wide. Men from Nevada, Utah, Oregon, Idaho had heard of Marks Parks and Henry Battor on the Miller

and Lux Ranches in California.

Most vaqueros and buckaroos rode the range because they like horses. Most of the talk around the fire was about them. A rider would often talk of owning a dream horse. Now and then one would leave to ride in rodeos, like Johnny Drayer, who followed the circuits. That was long before rodeos as they are today, existed. Nowadays good performers make big money. Some fly from one show to another in their own plane.

It was romance which made the vaquero and buckaroo leave the ranch. When he left, it was to get married; for as the saying goes, "Para cada oveja hay una pareja" (for every Jack there is a Jill). Women are scarce, but somewhere, somehow, the buckaroo found a woman who would have him. Then arose the problem of making a living for her. The 30 dollars a month he earned on the ranch was too little. The newlywed had to get a job in the oilfields or in town. One or two married men worked on the ranch, but that was because there were camps where a family could live. Those jobs were scarce.

Although one sees women riding in horse shows, teaching riding, running stables, competing mostly exclusively against other women in both English and Western classes and sees them working around corrals on ranches today, it was not so in the old days. I do not believe that a woman saw romance on the ranches in those days, where she lost her femininity pumping water, feeding pigs, carrying stove wood, sometimes having to chop it, busting suds over a washboard and a tubful of steaming, soapy water and using outdoor toilets. Today there are women horseshoers and women veterinarians.

Pioneers. The experiences of pioneers are replete with incidents of trials and disappointments. This story of a pioneer woman is typical of all the struggles encountered by the men and women who came to the





West in the last century to establish cattle ranches as a way of making a living.

Where some were more successful than others in terms of wealth, it was only a matter of degree. They all met hardships in the struggle to gain a foothold in a new and hostile land. Some won, some lost, but all fought a worthy battle. In their humble way, they are a part of the history of the West.

The lady who told the story of her mother's courageous struggle in founding a home lies blind and helpless in a hospital, but she inherited her mother's dauntless spirit. She married a cattleman and when the chips were down and he needed help, she never hesitated to don chaps and spurs and ride with her husband to share the toils and dangers incident to the handling of cattle in a mountainous terrain.

Her mother was handicapped by two small children, weak lungs and a persistent cough when she came to the West. She had some education and training as a teacher, but not enough to teach in California. She journeyed to San Francisco and enrolled in a normal school. Her finances were so short that she would take her two small daughters to a little French restaurant and order twenty-five cent meal and divide it among the two children and herself. Luckily, the waiter would dish up "big helpings" as one of the daughters would say in later years.

She went to San Luis Obispo after her period of schooling and finding nothing there, hired a wagon and driver, piled her few

belongings, herself and her children into the wagon and came to Kern County. Mr. R.L. Stockton, the County Superintendent of Schools, gave her a first chance at teaching in a school in the hills where the sun shone brightly every day and her lungs could get strong again. One daughter said, "After that, we were never hungry again."

She was lent a deserted homestead cabin in which to live. The shack had not been lived in for years and was in bad condition.

"We set about scrubbing the floors and washing the windows until they were crystal clear," her daughter remembers. "We took burlap sacks, opened them, washed and ironed them, used them for wallpaper and carpets. Then we cut pictures out of magazines and

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papers and pasted them on the burlap.” Water for the household had to be pumped by hand and carried in buckets from the well.

“We made mattresses out of denim and stuffed them with grass.” After laboring so long and endlessly, they came to love the place. In time, the mother bought it. At last she and her daughters had a place to call “home.”

Being a woman of culture, her first purchase or extravagance was a piano. It brought much enjoyment in the long, lonely, winter nights.

Pupils of the school brought the little family black mission figs, purple grapes and quinces. She fried the quinces and believed the eating of them was instrumental in curing her weak lungs.

In some years, rattlesnakes swarmed over the area and her main concern was to teach her pupils how to cope with them. “Don’t let a child run who is bitten. Keep him quiet as possible. Lance each hole in the flesh made by the fangs so it can drain and apply a tourniquet above the wound to keep the poison from spreading.”

She was among ranchers who raised cattle and she saw that the cattle business was the best way for an unskilled woman to make a living and put together a competence. She started to acquire pieces of land, a plot here and plot there. After years of drudgery and saving every penny, she managed to acquire enough land to run her cattle.

She bought a small bunch of cattle. A neighbor gave her an old vaquero horse which taught the two

daughters to herd cattle. The cattle she bought were sold at a profit and she bought more.

In the winter she cleared land, foot by foot. She would wrap her and her daughter’s feet with burlap and carry sackfuls of hay to the cattle standing in the snow and she saved all of them. She also bought a horse and buggy.

A homesteader that had relinquished his claim sold her a milk cow, a team of gentle work horses and a flock of chickens. But the ground squirrels killed her chicks by catching them and sucking their blood.

She got a start raising hogs, which one pig, but the coyotes ate the pig. She started the task of fencing her ranch, a task that took years to finish.

She set out an orchard, but the cattle ate the young





trees, so she fenced it. Then one daughter began teaching school and at last life became easier. Worn out by overwork, plagued with rheumatism, she went to Delonagha Hot Springs, where, after taking the hot sulphur baths, she was relieved of her aches and pains.

Now that she had enough land on which to run cattle, the heartbreaking labor was by no means over. Running cattle along the Kern River, contrary to TV and “Western” movies, was no picnic. They would get down the river, but there was no way of driving them up or down, for the course of the river was blocked with bluffs and boulders. Cattle had to be driven across and up a mountain and along a ridge, to get them out.

Two groups would station themselves on each side of the river. Vaqueros would all rush them across. The two groups stationed on the other side would keep the cattle from going up or down the river. The entire group of riders would rush them up the mountain until they were far enough to be held there. Then the riders would go back for another bunch.

When the road was built from the mouth of the

canyon up Kern River by convicts, the ranchers were saved from all this labor, for they could use the road.

In dry years, the ranchers would be compelled to drive their cattle out of the mountains into the valley, where they could rent stubblefields to run them through the winter. It was always a problem of survival for the ranchers. Year in and year out, the rancher moved his cattle from the mountains to the valley and from the valley to the mountains, in rain, sleet, and snow and summer heat.

When there were no men available to help, the wives would mount a horse and help. Often they were more efficient than men. When there were no fences, it meant riding herd day and night to keep the cattle from straying.

In bad years, when cattle were starving, the government men shot them then paid the owners. The cattlemen would not have survived if there had not been meadows in the high Sierras, where they could run their stock with a permit and where they could be fattened on the lush grass.



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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.

# The Road Trip List

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

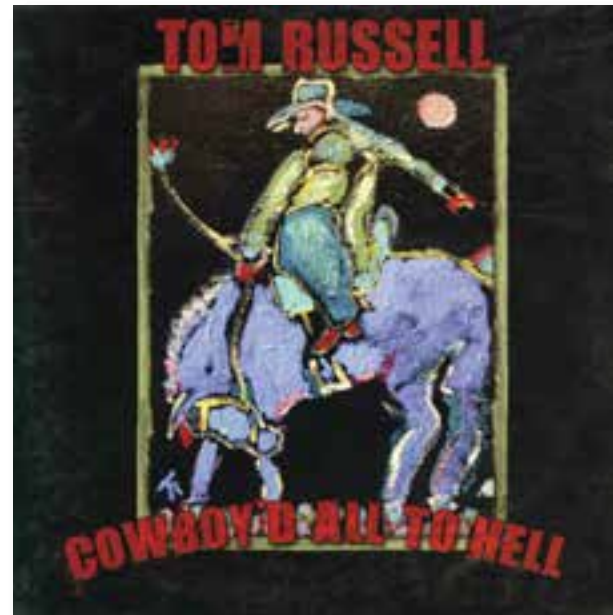
#24, 25 – Tom Russell and Linda Ronstadt

*Ranch & Reata* has been blessed since its launch way back in 2011 with the writings of one Thomas Russell – favorite son of Canutillo, Texas. Mr. Russell writes about what he sees and has seen as he travels from performance to performance – worldwide. His stories – and songs – tell the tales of the West. So it is no wonder that Tom Russell CDs are scattered about the pick-up truck and generally are not matched – CD most likely not in the right cover or “jewel box” as the record industry calls them. That is due to the fact that the truck’s single CD changer is constantly ejecting contents for another Russell moment. We have chosen to spotlight two of his 20-plus available albums ([www.tomrussell.com](http://www.tomrussell.com)) to satisfy the Russell neo-phyte as well as Russell junkies – a group I am a life member of. These two records will get you started – or act as reminders of just how great Russell is.

## *Cowboy'd All to Hell*

This album released in 2010 should be considered as standard issue for any western aficionado. Russell’s cowboy music is not your father’s cowboy music. His lyrics can cut through the BS like a K-bar knife going through a rare Flat Iron steak. Of his lyrics for “Tonight We Ride,” one of the albums cuts, he tells the story of the song – and others – in his book, *120 Songs*, published in 2012 from Bangtail Press. He wrote the song while in camp at one of the Rancheros Visitadores rides held each

spring in the mountains north of Santa Barbara. “Tequila may have played a roll,” he says of the song’s evolution. “It reads like a Peckinpah movie, with a dash of Cormac McCarthy thrown in. The song centers around the



infamous Pancho Villa raid on Columbus, New Mexico. I live “fifty miles from the town of Columbus and drive through there, on occasion, on my way to Arizona. Villa killed sixteen people during the raid (allegedly it was Villa and his army) and the U.S. sent General Black Jack Pershing after him (with a young George Patton in tow.) Using horses, mules, and bi-planes, they could never catch old Pancho.”



“Tonight We Ride”

By Tom Russell

Pancho Villa crossed the border in the year of ought  
sixteen  
The people of Columbus still hear him riding through  
their dreams  
He killed seventeen civilians you could hear the  
women scream  
Blackjack Pershing on a dancing horse was waiting in  
the wings

Tonight we ride, tonight we ride  
We'll skin ole Pancho Villa, make chaps out of his  
hide  
Shoot his horse, Siete Leguas, and his twenty-  
seven bride  
Tonight we ride, tonight we ride

We rode for three long years till Blackjack Pershing  
called it quits  
When Jackie wasn't lookin' I stole his fine spade bit  
It was tied upon his stallion, so I rode away on it  
To the wild Chihuahuan desert, so dry you couldn't spit

Tonight we ride, you bastards dare  
We'll kill the wild Apache for the bounty on his hair  
Then we'll ride into Durango, climb up the  
warehouse stairs  
Tonight we ride, tonight we ride

When I'm too damn old to sit a horse, I'll steal the  
warden's car  
Break my ass out of this prison, leave my teeth there in  
a jar  
You don't need no teeth for kissin' gals or smokin'  
cheap cigars

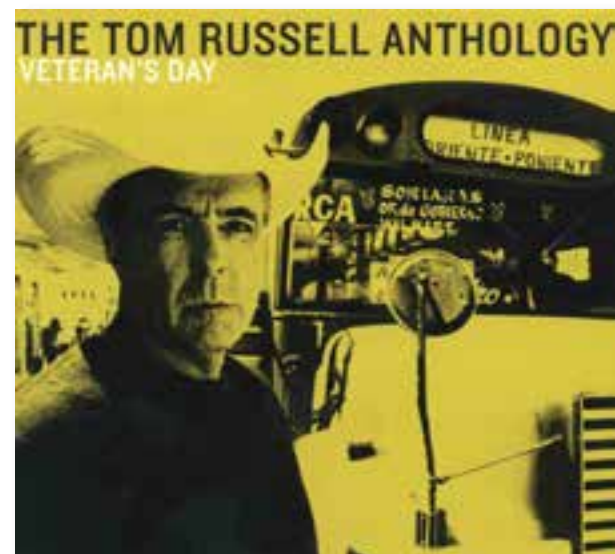
I'll sleep with one eye open, 'neath God's celestial stars

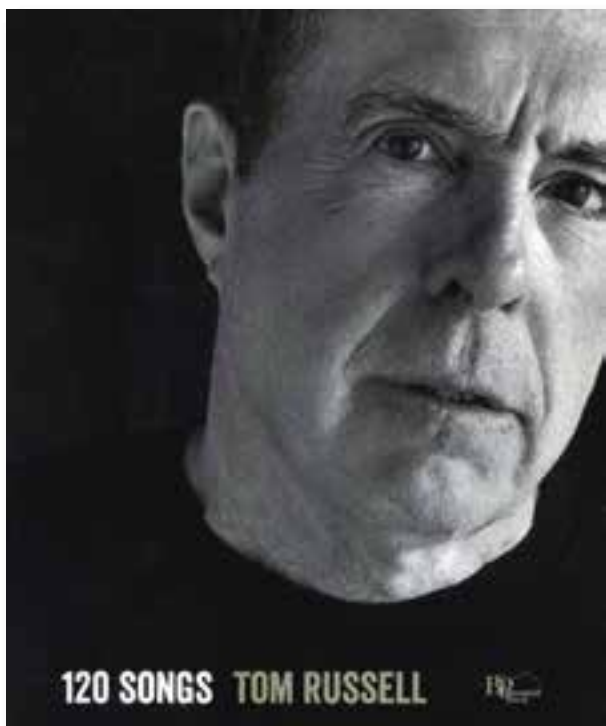
Tonight we rock, Tonight we roll  
We'll rob the Juarez liquor store for the Reposado  
Gold  
And if we drink ourselves to death, ain't that the  
cowboy way to go?  
Tonight we ride, boys, tonight we ride

Tonight we fly, we're headin' west  
Toward the mountains and the ocean where the eagle  
makes his nest  
If our bones bleach on the desert, we'll consider we are  
blessed  
Tonight we ride, tonight we ride

*Veteran's Day: The Tom Russell Anthology*

Russell's cowboy records are just part of his writing  
legacy. As John Swenson wrote in *Rolling Stone*,  
“(Russell is) The greatest living country songwriter...he's  
written songs that capture the essence of America. A





trait that can only be matched by the country's greatest novelists." And Lawrence Ferlinghetti, poet, painter and co-founder of San Francisco's City Lights Booksellers and Publishers takes it a step further, "Tom Russell is Johnny Cash, Jim Harrison and Charles Bukowski rolled into one. I feel a great affinity with Tom Russell's songs, for he is writing out of the wounded heart of America."

In *Veteran's Day: The Tom Russell Anthology*, you get the whole enchilada – thirty-seven cuts of his best work. This two-disc compilation is a nice review of Tom's music. If you're new to Tom, this is a great introduction. One of the great story songs in the two-disc set is "Manzanar" – about the Japanese internment camps that "sprung up" during World War II. Of that song, Tom writes, "The spark for this song came from a book of Ansel Adams photos taken inside the Manzanar

camp during the War. Manzanar was located up in the high-desert east of the Sierra Nevadas." The lyrics tell the story simply and with clarity.

"Manzanar"

By Tom Russell

He said, "My name is Nakashima, and I'm a proud  
American  
I came here in '27 from my homeland of Japan  
And I picked your grapes and oranges, I saved some  
money, I bought a store  
Until 1942, Pearl Harbor and the war.

"Came those relocation orders, they took our house,  
the store, the car  
And they drove us through the desert, to a place called  
Manzanar  
The Spanish word for 'apple orchard,' and though we  
saw no apple trees  
Just the rows of prison barracks with barbed wire  
boundaries

And we dream of apple blossoms  
Waving free beneath the stars  
'Til we wake up in the desert  
The prisoners of Manzanar

Fifty years, have all but vanished and now I'm an old  
man  
But I don't regret the day that I came here from Japan  
But on moonless winter nights I often wish upon a star  
That I'd forget the shame and sorrow that I felt at  
Manzanar

See all of Tom's albums, his new book, his art and musings at [www.tomrussell.com](http://www.tomrussell.com)  
(Shameless plug: Don't miss Tom's story on the one-and-only Ramblin' Jack Elliott in this issue.)



### *The Best of Linda Ronstadt*

A beloved voice is silenced

No female singer during the 1970s and 1980s could touch the success of Linda Ronstadt. From the early works with the Stone Poneys to solo albums *Heart Like A Wheel*, *Simple Dreams*, and *Living in the USA* to her work with Nelson Riddle and beyond; her thirty plus album catalog defined an era with her voice, the



soundtrack for many a road trip.

So it is with sadness when one reads in her recent book, *Simple Dreams A Musical Memoir*, that we learn of her battle with Parkinson's disease that she was diagnosed with nine months ago. "I can't sing a note," she said. She sang her last concert in November 2009 in San Antonio. "Toward the end I was just shouting," she writes. She was devastated but not entirely surprised by the Parkinson's diagnosis. Her vocal difficulties, she now believes, were the early signs of the muscle failures associated with the onset of the disease.



Her book is a wonderful read and tells the story elegantly of her life and friendships during a special time in music history. Linda Ronstadt's music and her gift live on and this album is a treasure trove of Ronstadt gems that fit on any highway.



# A Western Moment



photograph taken by William Reynolds at Templeton, California, in Mr. Morris' studio, May 2013

A quirt and left-handed reata by Ernest Morris





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## TWO WRAPS AND A HOOEY

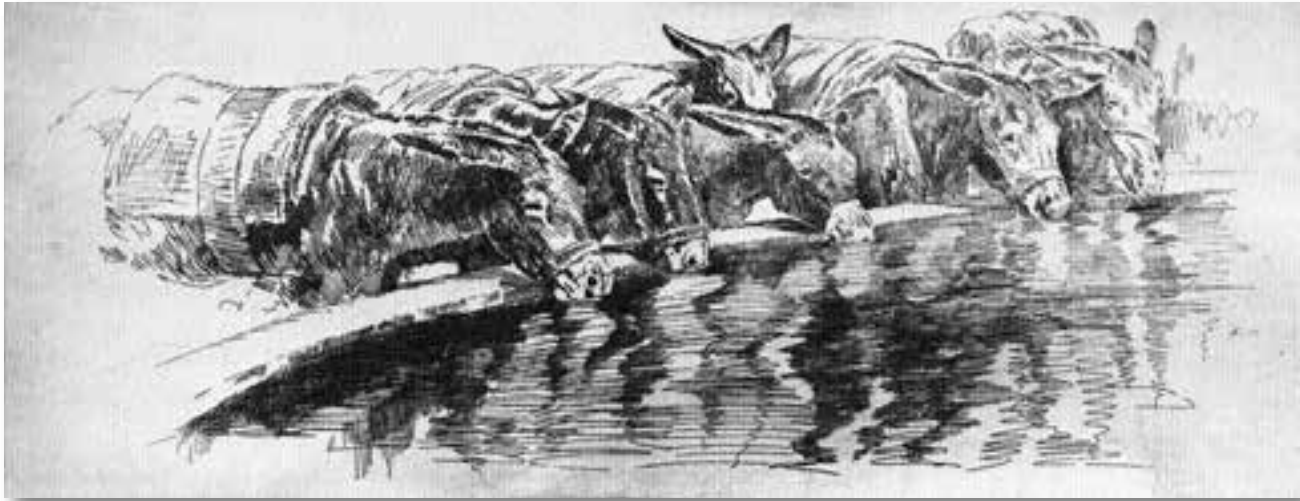
# Water, Wendell Berry and Finding Peace

I have read and been told countless times that water is the oil of this century. After going through serious drought conditions for the last several years in our part of Central California – I get it. It’s been a tough spring and summer. The lack of rain has created drought conditions all along our coast – and elsewhere of course. Cattle that normally feed and ship in late fall were gone by July and what was left behind was land begging for moisture. Many ranchers doubt they can go much longer without a return to a normal cycle of rain. What would that be like? Tell that to the people displaced by the recent rains in Colorado. Places that normally get ten to twelve inches of rain a year received over that in a week. Roads gone, people missing, lives turned upside down. But as here with drought and Colorado with flooding and the Jersey Shore with hurricanes and fires; we prove ourselves – through the worst – to be a resilient people, remembering our love of the place we live with our families, things that truly matter. These are the simplest things but that keep us going everyday. A calm repetition.

Ranching and farming have qualities that attract those who love patterns in their lives – a repetition of acts, the daily chores, the plowing of rows, the working of stock. A consistency in purpose, of action and design is simplicity defined yet with an inherent execution that demands continuity, competency, skills and above all care and stewardship.

The valuable water we speak of protecting, use for everything – and sometimes take for granted – is a catalyst that binds together the acts of those who work stock or the land on a daily basis in the West. It is something to be found, protected, directed and watched. It is a life truly impacted by weather. People who work outside seem to always be looking up, as singer/songwriter Joni Mitchell described – “geared to changing weather.” Water is more than the oil of this century; it is the *way* of this century and the people on the front line of protecting the water and resources of our western watersheds are the ranchers and farmers who care for it all everyday.

The uber, agri-author and forward thinker Wendell



*Drink Time*, Etching by John Edward Borein (1873-1945)

Berry has an ability to create a usable space in complicated conversations that we all can operate in – or should. The West is a place of unlimited possibilities but of limited resources. Water is the great example – either the lack of it, or in the case of Colorado, too much, too quickly. So whether we are in the ranching or farming business or simply civilians that eat food and drink water – we are all in this together. The growing and nurturing of food and animals, protection of the land and water resources – it's the people who do these tasks that are at the core of what *Ranch & Reata* is all about. It is the people who create the ways of the West and solve the hard problems through their very hard work and acts of care that we celebrate. They are producers and they are stewards, and they are as worthy of our concern and protection as is the water that enriches and will save this century. So in honor of those who grow, nurture and protect, we leave you with some thoughtful and freeing words by Wendell Berry. May you find your own peace in wild things. BR

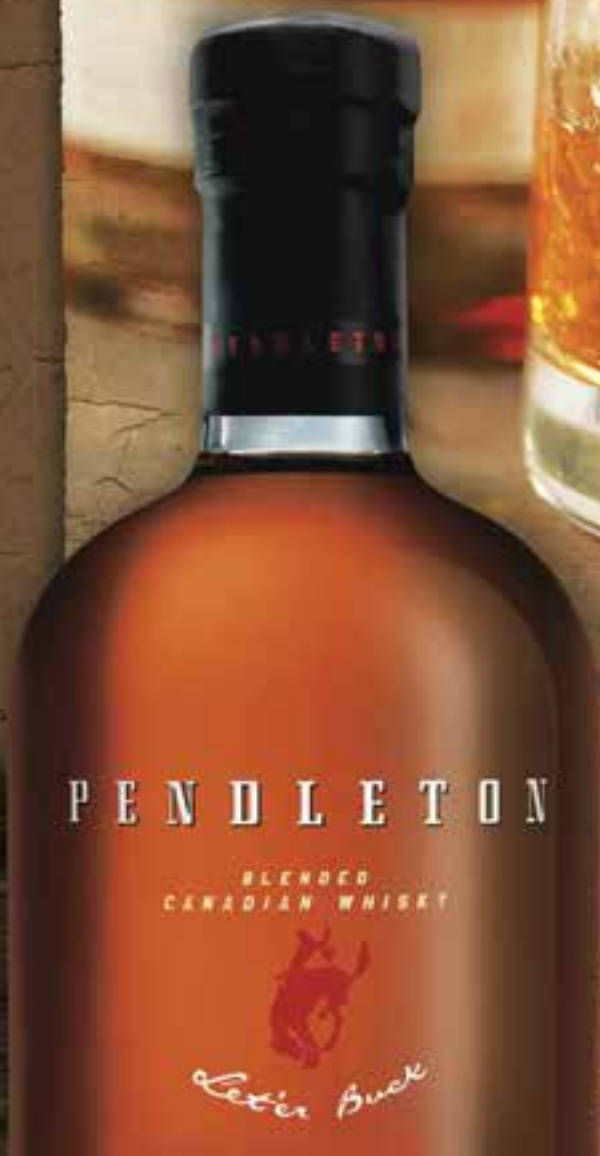
### The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

— Wendell Berry



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