

The Journal of the American West

# Ranch & Reata

Volume 2.6 \$14.95



Arnold Rojas: Who *Were* the Vaqueros?

The Hen House, A New *R&R* Series

Argentine Artist Carlos Montefusco

Saddlemaker Chris Cheney

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## FRONT GATE



photo by Audrey Hall

We are pleased to welcome a new series to these pages featuring the ongoing adventures of four very talented, young ranch women as they make their way through the college experience at Montana State University. From left, Hannah Ballantyne, Ceily Rae Highberger, Reata Brannaman and Nevada Watt all live and work together in a home in Bozeman, Montana, which they have christened *The Hen House*. Beyond being college students, Hannah builds *armitas*, Ceily is an artist, Reata works horses and Nevada is a silversmith. See their first dispatch from the trenches on page 116.

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Cover image: *Fall Gather, California* by J.N. Swanson. 32 x48, Oil.  
Prints of this piece are available from [www.vivavaquero.com](http://www.vivavaquero.com)

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

# Saddlemaking

By A.J. Mangum

A few years ago, when I was in the market for a new saddle, I took a day trip north of Denver to visit a tack retailer known for its respectable inventory from some of the West's most gifted makers. Rack after rack of Wades – floral-stamped, basket-stamped, roughouts – occupied the center of the shop. Understated white price tags, nearly too small to notice, hung from keepers, horns and D-rings, each tag bearing the name of the saddle's maker, as well as the rig's retail price. These were quality saddles, and their prices were deep in four-figure territory.

I wasn't the only one shopping for a saddle that day. Another customer made a circuit through the collection. He began with the saddle nearest the front door. It happened to be a Wade built by a renowned Idaho craftsman, an elder statesman of saddlemaking. The customer studied every square inch of the saddle, lifted it off its rack to gauge its heft, and stepped back a few paces to take it in from afar, as if judging its lines and perhaps imagining it atop his favorite horse. Only then did he check the price. He did a double-take, then



furrowed his brow as he seemed to make an attempt at willing a decimal point to another location on the tag. He moved to the next saddle, again studying it closely before checking the price. As he stared at the dollar figure, he repeated his performance, his expression showing a mix of shock and frustration. The customer progressed through the store's inventory, spending less and less time looking at the saddles themselves, and finally resorting to simply checking prices. Eventually, his effort became ambidextrous, as he'd hold a tag in each hand, summarily dismiss both saddles as candidates

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photo by A.J. Mangum / [www.ajmangum.com](http://www.ajmangum.com)

Saddlemaker Chas Weldon, in his Billings, Montana, shop.

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for purchase, then take up the next two tags in his search for a bargain that was not to be had. Who knew such entertainment could be found in a tack store?

As I watched my fellow consumer's behavior from the corner of my eye, I recalled a recent visit with saddlemaker Chas Weldon. Chas lived in a house on a quiet residential street in Billings, and had adapted his garage into a saddle shop. Tools hung from pegboards mounted to the walls, and partially stamped jockeys, fenders and other leather components lined the surfaces of two workbenches that met in a tight corner of the room. Three saddles, each at a different stage of construction, occupied the floor space. It was early in the evening and Chas had just arrived home from his day job. He hoped to have all three saddles completed

by the end of the month and, to meet his self-imposed deadline, had planned a work session that would last well into the night. A saddle made by Chas, one of the West's most revered makers, isn't cheap, but as I watched the craftsman set out tools and mentally prepare for the long hours of work he had ahead of him, it was clear that saddlemaking, even for its elite practitioners, isn't the easiest way to make a buck.

It's a fact that riders take their saddles' makers for granted. We appreciate a saddle's construction and aesthetics. The hours required to build it, though, are out of mind, as most of us have no concept of the time such an effort requires. A saddlemaker might spend weeks on a saddle. Count the hours. Apply a reasonable hourly rate. Do the math. Many horsemen, perhaps



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most, might find the resulting figure staggering, but such a reaction is often the result of a warped view of saddle prices, a mindset shaped, unfortunately, by the prevalence of cheap, mass-produced work that is often, at best, merely serviceable.

Unlike their factory-made counterparts, handmade saddles are built with quality materials, using techniques no machine can duplicate, and are expected to hold up for generations, even with the slipshod care and maintenance most riders give them. Perhaps most importantly, though, handmade saddles reflect a human touch – the inspiration, decisions and style of a specific craftsman – and possess what art historians refer to as *provenance*, a unique history, a backstory worth documenting and sharing for the duration of the work’s existence.

It’s these qualities that continue to make traditional saddlemaking – that done by a maker working with his hands – integral to the West’s culture. Despite the sticker shock some of us experience when shopping for a handmade saddle, a saddlemaker’s craft is no path to an easy fortune, even if bargains on his finished product might be non-existent. In fact, I’d wager most saddlemakers earn an hourly rate that’s barely enough to justify the effort.

Especially in a challenging economy, it’s far too easy to let common consumerism – seeking the cheapest deals, rationalizing which of a product’s features we can live without – pollute our attitudes toward the age-old craft of saddlemaking. Following that path of least resistance would have us accepting low-quality, outright disposable saddles as the norm, and likewise accepting that lost arts and forgotten techniques are simply inevitable side effects of progress. In a subculture that tends to fret and obsess over changes to the status quo, it seems unthinkable that we’d let a tradition such as saddlemaking fade into commercial irrelevance.

We need saddlemakers in their shops, willing to work late into the night, fueled chiefly by their need to create and a collective drive to build one-of-a-kind examples of functional art. When we shop for saddles and study their price tags, we need to weigh those numbers against the hours craftsmen invest in their work, in a trade that might provide a chance at some level of celebrity among Westerners, but will likely never offer the hope for serious financial gain. With these notions in mind, the price on a handmade saddle might suddenly seem not so high after all.

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## CLASSICS

# Jingle Bobs

They contribute to a spur's look and sound, but their origins and intended utility may be lost to history.



By Katie Navarra

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**I**'ve got spurs that jingle, jangle, jingle." So goes the familiar tune. Conjure in your mind a western film scene in which a cowboy is afoot, and the mental soundtrack is sure to include the bell-like ringing of jingle bobs. Decorative, bulb-like pieces of metal that hang from a spur's rowel, making a distinctive sound with each footfall, jingle bobs are believed to be of Moorish influence and were likely brought to the Americas from Spain.

Early jingle bobs were forged from iron, commonly in the shape of a fist or hand. A hand with a pointing finger or thumb tucked in between the fingers was a symbol meant to ward off evil spirits.

"There seems to be no jingle bobs outside of the Spanish influence or at least examples that I've seen," says John Ennis, a bit and spur maker, from Council, Idaho. Unfortunately there are few examples of early jingle bobs to examine. "I believe the actual reason for

jingle bobs' use has been lost in history," Ennis says. "We can only speculate as to why they were used. My best guess would be for the decorative value."

As with their modern counterparts, many frontier-era spurs were equipped with jingle bobs solely for the sound they made; they were simply bell clappers. When attached to spurs with small rowels, the sound was light; on larger rowels, like those once preferred by Spanish Colonial stockmen, jingle bobs rang with authority.

The creation of jingle bobs, or their early equivalent, may have been inspired by the *anquera*, a rear skirting Spanish horsemen attached to the backs of saddles. Originally, the *anquera* covered a horse's tail and protected its haunches while allowing a freedom of movement in battle. According to Don Reeves, McCasland Chair for Cowboy Culture at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum,

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photo courtesy Ernie Marsh

These spurs, by Wyoming’s Ernie Marsh, come equipped with traditional jingle bobs, appreciated by users for the signature sound they make. Marsh suspects the design element may have had practical origins: a horse would be unlikely to be spooked by someone wearing such spurs and approaching on foot.

*coscojos*, metal elements that hung below the skirting, were eventually added to the anquera. As a horse

moved, the *coscojos* chimed, creating what became known as “horse music,” sounds intrinsically linked to the animals’ use.

“The *coscojos* were a matter of finery that one had to afford,” Reeves says. The luxury, of course, had its drawbacks in more violent times. “You couldn’t sneak up on someone with them.”

As a functional purpose, jingle bobs may have proved handy when working with horses, serving as a warning system of sorts. “Animals could hear the sound made by the jingle bobs and this might prevent you from being kicked by an animal caught by surprise as you walked behind him,” says Ernie Marsh, a bit and spur maker from Etna, Wyoming. “At least this is one idea that makes sense to me.”

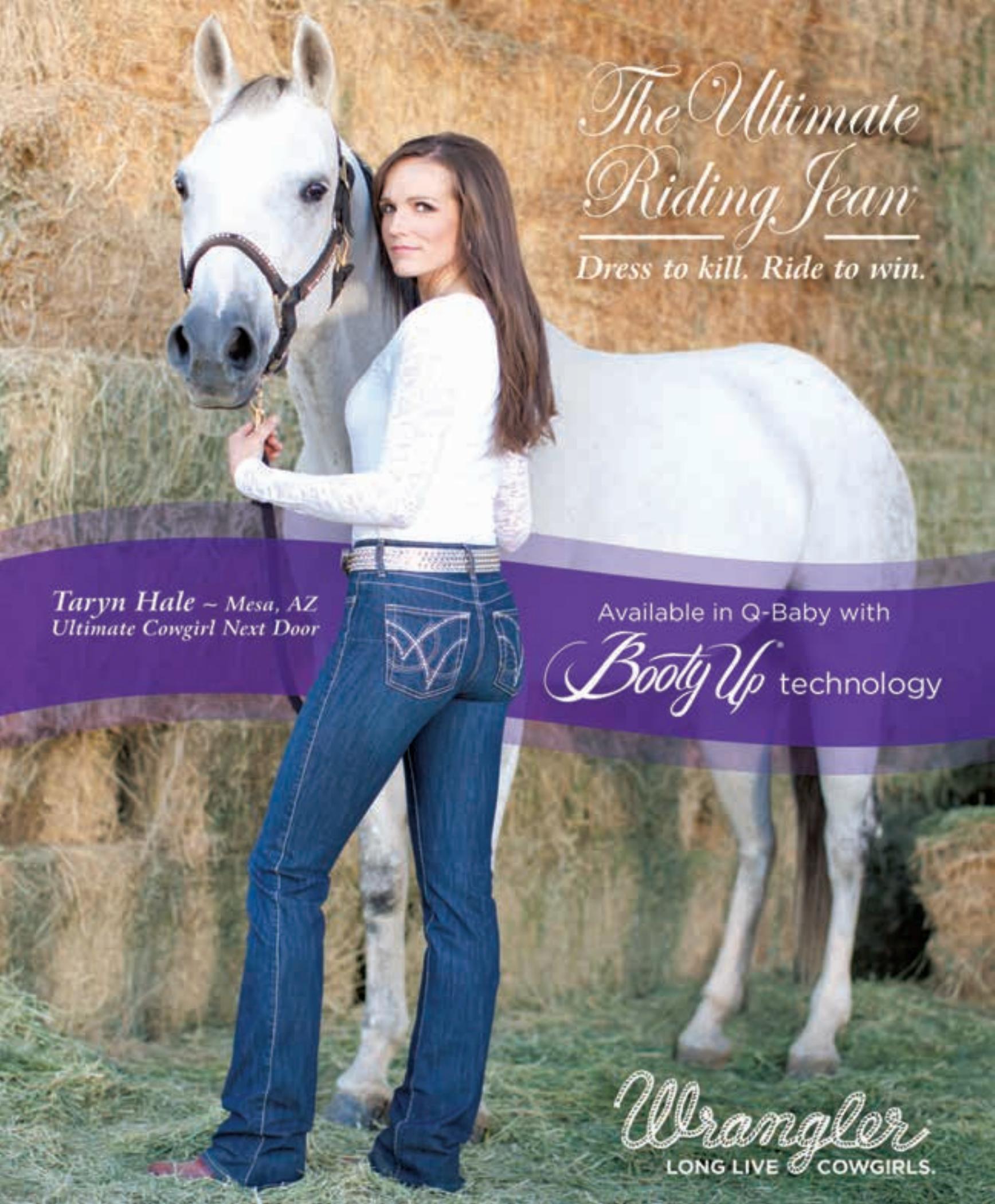


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# OF NOTE



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New and Interesting Things from Out West.

## RED LINE RAMBLER DELUXE



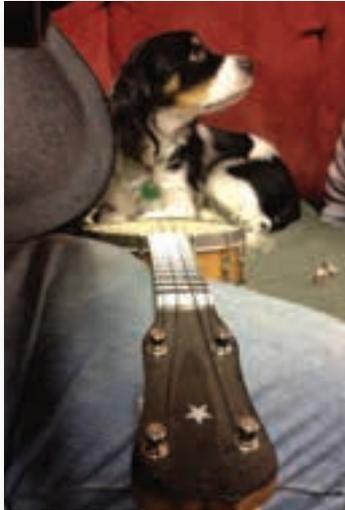
Molly, the shop dog

We start this issue's Of Note section with a tip of the hat to a little company located in Hendersonville, Tennessee – just north of Nashville. Steve and Carol Smith's Red Line Resophonics builds superb flattop parlor and classic dreadnought-style guitars, mandolins and resonator guitars – or “resos” – at affordable prices that feature the incredible craftsmanship and rich sound of instruments costing much more.

For those asking what a resonator guitar is – it's a valid question. A resonator – or resophonic guitar is an acoustic guitar whose sound is produced by one or more spun metal cones (resonators) instead of the wooden guitar top and



face. Resonator guitars were originally designed to be louder than regular acoustic guitars, and they became prized for their distinctive sound within several musical styles most notably bluegrass and the blues. Read the testimonials on the company's website and you get the picture that



photos courtesy Steve Smith

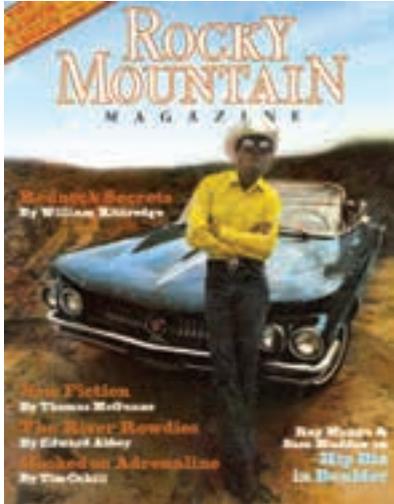
players love Red Line and their guitars and mandolins. All Red Line instruments and resonators are built within their factory – guarded by Molly the shop dog. They also know how to use scrap as they craft a killer yo-yo as well. (Steve Smith was a California State Yo-

Yo Champion in an earlier life.) So we figure any guitar maker that also makes very cool yo-yos is perfect for us. Oh, did we forget to tell you they also make electric bicycles, too?  
[www.redlinerophonics.com](http://www.redlinerophonics.com)



Red Line Rambler Deluxe

## GREAT MAGAZINE MOMENTS FROM THE PAST



One of the great magazines about the West was the short-lived, *Rocky Mountain Magazine*. Started in the late 1970s, it was art directed by the superb designer Hans Teensma. Always filled with superb writing, the inaugural May 1979 issue held a prophetic comment: “Pointing to Wyoming as ground zero of dissatisfaction with the federal bureaucracy, the *New York Times* has announced that the West has replaced the South as the most politically alienated region of the country.” Now you know.

## CHAS & “DANDY”

We had such a serious looking “in the shop” picture of our pal Chas Weldon in A.J. Mangum’s piece in the front of this issue, that we couldn’t resist showing Chas during a lighter moment, all decked in his “parade quality attire” during a civic event in his home base of Billings, MT. With Chas is his trusty sidekick, “Dandy.”



## TRAILBLAZER

The Trailblazer buckle by Montana Silversmiths features a longhorn steer head, in tribute to the hardy creatures so well suited for the rough Montana prairie and mountain terrain. Hand-painted black brings out the bright shine of the polished silver, richly detailed with elegant vines surrounding the proud portrait of the longhorn. Made in Columbus, Montana. [www.montanasilversmiths.com](http://www.montanasilversmiths.com)



## WILD RAGS

Big ’ol scarves not only look great but they really do save you in the wind and cold. Amy Mundell makes a beautiful line of scarves under the name “The Brand” and you can see them on her Facebook page at Buckaroo Brand Wild Rags or at [www.buckaroo.brand.com](http://www.buckaroo.brand.com)





## FISHING FOR COMPLIMENTS

A little different take on a plaquet buckle from artisan James Stegman at Comstock Heritage. This 2 x 3 buckle features a stream scene in three colors of 14K gold with a hand-carved fish from a piece of Australian Boulder Opal. For someone, this piece will be quite a catch. [www.comstockheritage.com](http://www.comstockheritage.com)

## JAPANESE FOLDING KNIFE

No one is better known or respected than the Japanese for their wood joinery and precision craftsmanship. A tool they rely on is worth a second look by anyone who works with wood.



With its unique curved blade shaped like a Japanese sword, this Japanese Carpenter's Knife allows precise carving and cutting of wood, and is great for everything from cutting insulation to size, to woodworking, carpentry or camping. This very cool knife is available through Duluth Trading ([www.duluthtrading.com](http://www.duluthtrading.com)) – an equally cool internet venue that offers everything from super great tool bags to what's described as "No B.S. Business Wear." So you know, the knife sells for under \$20 bucks!

## SOME FRIENDS' ARTWORK

Many of our contributors are also quite talented artists. Lynn Miller and Teal Blake continue to amaze. See more of their work at [www.tealblake.com](http://www.tealblake.com) and [www.lynnmillerartist.com](http://www.lynnmillerartist.com)



*Untitled*  
by Teal Blake



*Underbill Barn*  
by Lynn Miller

## STUBBLEFIELD

*We have shared some of Paul Hunter's writing and poetry before but he has a great new book out called Stubblefield. Paul is a renaissance man: a teacher, a writer, a farmer, a musician and above all a thinker of clear thoughts. We asked his close friend and contributor to this journal, Lynn Miller, to review Paul's new work.*

I set myself to write a review of this, Paul Hunter's newest book of poetry, *Stubblefield*, with some hesitation because I feel so completely unqualified to do the job properly – but I feel compelled to give my opinion. To help me past that hurdle I like to imagine that William Carlos Williams or Carl Sandburg had people within their circles who were there for reasons of genuine friendship rather than scholarship, and that their opinions mattered. I thought to discuss the question with others first, perhaps in a deliberate way even with him as he is a close and dear friend. But my battered conscience said “don't.” It admonished me that for all the obvious reasons of personal prejudice and literary inadequacy, if this was to work as a useful review it needed to come from a private place, full-throated yes – but private and porpoise-like. Which is to say trusting that no one need to know the meaning of the sounds I make – only that they come belonging. Within any fine art discipline, and I do include farming as a fine art discipline, the presentation of new ways of seeing, hearing, feeling, touching, smelling and tasting the world often find themselves over-cooked by the critiques of so-called peers – people who know and understand what you as an artist are trying to do. I find that lamentable, even counter-productive. That the self-appointed taste-makers and academics would set as their goal that the meat of art would, when we peons get it, fall from the bone NOT because of the heat from within that art BUT because they – the judges – have cooked it in the microwaves of their needful measurements – I find that galling. Poetry in the opinion of this old farmer occurs when the words on the page glue themselves in vibrating pattern to an overall import and impact which is inescapable, which is daunting, which continues to slip off and create beyond it's perimeters. To measure the words, to measure the measures, to pull apart phrases and intonation is to deny the cowlick its spring, to obviate the hum, to sacrifice the illusion. Paul Hunter's poetry is inescapable because it is circumspect, because it is multi-track, because it commutes us. These poems come up from behind and harvest us. Because Paul writes with passion about the intricate mappings of a farming life some might think that this poetry is primarily nostalgic in nature and need. But such is not the case. So much so that we see in Hunter's work a case being made that the contemporary trappings of an agrarian vocation and existence offer an antidote to the dehumanizing fabric of modern life. Hunter's way of aligning words, moments, glances, and timings give to the willing reader an immersion in the essential songs and callouses of farming.

*Stubblefield* is Hunter's ninth book of poetry, the fourth featuring farming lives, life and elements. It is the strongest one to date which feels like an odd assessment since the other three came to us whole and magnificent, iconic in their implications for the future. *Breaking Ground*, *Ripening* and *Come the Harvest* are testaments for the long time. *Stubblefield* will join them once its introductory parade is complete. How fortunate we are to have this grand poet in our very midst. [www.silverfishreviewpress.com](http://www.silverfishreviewpress.com) LRM

From “What the Farm Is”

*and all we do in time what's gathered in  
is weighed against what's waiting to be done  
yet farming doesn't waste a mouthful where  
what molders by the way or in the bin  
is shoveled under spread around the one  
abundance always craving some repair*





## THE WAGONS WILL SOON BE CIRCLING IN MADRAS, OREGON

Wagons, sleighs, buggies, all kinds of rolling stock, harness and old farm equipment are returning to the Jefferson County Fairgrounds, in Madras, Oregon for the 34th annual **Small Farmer’s Journal Horsedrawn Auction and Swap**. Thousands of people are once again expected from all across North American (and beyond) to compete against one another at auction and swap meet for thousands of horsedrawn items and related country antiques. Madras is dead center of farm and ranch country, where folks appreciate the heritage and the craftsmanship that has, for over a hundred years, elegantly shaped rich lives from this high desert landscape. It’s the



perfect setting and community for the SFJ Auction, an event which is more market festival and reunion gathering than anything else. Picture a couple of hundred old wagons and carriages, mixed in with thousands of items including sleigh bells, plows, saddles, blacksmithing tools, mowers, sheepwagon bows, stagecoaches, harnesses, old books, dutch ovens, anvils, bits and spurs. Now blend in folks of every age and walk of life, all there because they share a love of the working animals of the



past and future. Then encircle these two elements with swap meet vendors, small farm trade fair booths, free clinics and demonstrations, music, food and a draft horse plowing match. What you have is a truly rich and unique family experience which also serves as both a training venue for young folks and a reunion for the old hands. It happens every April, around the third weekend, and it happens nowhere else but in Madras.



The schedule is packed full. Starting Wednesday April 17th, during the whirlwind check-in for the auction, the Jethro Tull Draft Animal Plowing Match joins up with field demonstrations of horsedrawn implements slated for auction sale. On April 18 through the 20th, three days of vibrant and fun-filled auctioneering allows thousands of items to change hands. During that time the Swap Meet, Trade Fair, Clinics, and Food Vendors all sing along together to entertain and satisfy what has come to be the warmest, friendliest bunch of folks you can imagine. Whether you want to watch buggies sell, or bid on a plow or harrow, or check out the sheep dog demonstrations or bid on blacksmithing anvils, or try on old clothes, or get measured for custom boots, or have a hat shaped for you, or learn how to harness a horse, there’s just plain too much to do and see. So bring the whole family and spread out to gather it all in.

The auction portion of this event is open to any suitable consignments. We discourage any items that aren’t related to the “horsedrawn” world. However, that said, if you have stuff you think our community of customers might be interested in we encourage you to rent a space in our swap meet. Spaces are limited and assigned on a first-come basis. There are RV spaces and dry camping on the fairgrounds, here again you need to contact us in advance. For particulars, [www.smallfarmersjournal.com](http://www.smallfarmersjournal.com) or 800-876-2893.

## HOME ON THE RANGE

*Where The West Lives: The OW Ranch  
Decker, Montana 1890*

By Alan Hess

Photography by Alan Weintraub



A young Jon Kendrick brought his bride, Eula, to a log cabin on Montana's Hanging Woman Creek in 1891. He was the ranch's managing superintendent then, but by 1897 he would own the spread. That was just the start of a career based on the Western wealth of ranching, mining, and banking that would lead him to the Wyoming governor's mansion and then to the Capitol in Washington as one of the state's senators.

The upward trajectory of Kendrick's career eventually allowed him to move his family to an opulent home in the Wyoming town of Sheridan, but until then the log cabin on the range was home. The cabin nestled

against the hills could be the model for the ranch house as it came to be constructed in the national imagination in future decades. its rustic walls were fashioned of squared-off, hand-hewn hogs, dovetailed at the corners. a plank porch overlooked the valley. Eula Kendrick filled the whitewashed cabin with \$900 worth of furnishings – drapes, lace, oil lamps, wardrobes with beveled glass, and



that icon of civilization, a piano – to make it a fit place to raise their two children.

But the ranch still kept the rugged character of the range. A natural spring ran through troughs in the stone spring house to keep milk and perishables cool. The ranch house was shingled, but the bunkhouse, stable, and barns had thick sod roofs. To support the weight, massive pine logs up to eighteen inches thick formed their post and beam structures. These solid frameworks, mellowed golden with age, are a grand memory of the work, sweat, and hopes of Kendrick and other ranchers.





The family left the ranch behind when they moved to a three-story, Flemish-style mansion in Sheridan in 1913. Kendrick named that house Trail End and decorated his son Manville's room with an Indian-pattern stencil, but those were the only nods to the ranching culture the Kendricks had left behind. Unlike Pawnee Bill's prairie mansion of the same period, there were no ceramic tiles of pioneer wagon treks ornamenting the mantelpieces. The new house looked east for inspiration.

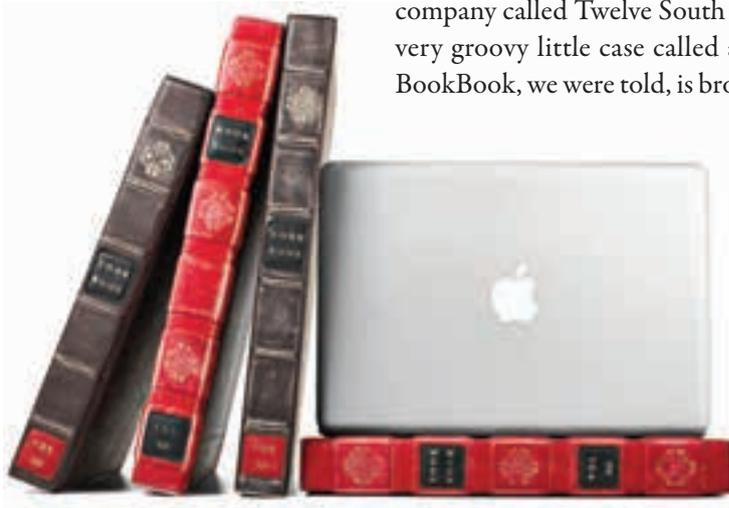
Kendrick's original ranch has been lovingly and respectfully restored by Jim and Lucy Guercio. And while the OW is no longer anywhere near the 400,000 acres Kendrick once controlled over his several ranches, it continues to be a working ranch, true to its legacy. It is one of the dwindling number of places in the West where the way of life of a hundred years ago continues to work today. [www.hallandhall.com](http://www.hallandhall.com), 406-656-7500



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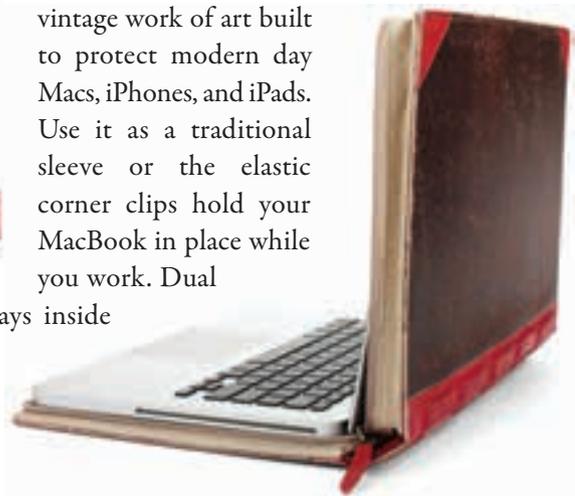
## TWELVE SOUTH BOOK BOOK

Everything about this magazine is done on a Mac. Well, more than one Mac but it is safe to say that Apple plays a large part in about everything we do at *Ranch & Reata*. One thing we found is that horses, cattle and computers don't mix well so we try to take care of all three. A grand solution came to us from a little company called Twelve South from Mount Pleasant, South Carolina. They make a very groovy little case called a Book Book – for visually apparent reasons. Each BookBook, we were told, is brought to life with hand craftsmanship and distressing,



ensuring no two are exactly alike. From dual zippers with leather pulls, that at first glance look like bookmarks, to the sturdy reinforced hardback covers, BookBook is a vintage work of art built to protect modern day Macs, iPhones, and iPads. Use it as a traditional sleeve or the elastic corner clips hold your MacBook in place while you work. Dual zippers allow you to charge your MacBook while it safely stays inside BookBook. GreatGreat. [www.twelvesouth.com](http://www.twelvesouth.com)

From dual zippers with leather pulls, that at first glance look like bookmarks, to the sturdy reinforced hardback covers, BookBook is a vintage work of art built to protect modern day Macs, iPhones, and iPads. Use it as a traditional sleeve or the elastic corner clips hold your MacBook in place while you work. Dual



## RURAL KING PARTNERS WITH RED BRAND TO SUPPORT FFA



Rural King Supply representative Josh Gordon presented a check to the National FFA Foundation at the 2012 National FFA Convention and Expo. The proceeds are the result of Rural King’s participation in Home Grown, a funding partnership with Red Brand fence, manufactured by Keystone Steel & Wire in Peoria, Illinois.

“We appreciate the opportunity to partner with Red Brand and Home Grown in this funding initiative,” said Gordon, “and as a result, we are very proud to provide financial support to the National FFA Foundation and to offer a way for local chapters to receive funding.”

Foundation sponsors make possible award and recognition programs, scholarships, service learning activities, global engagement programs, national FFA convention functions, educational materials, teacher training and much more. “Without the generous support of companies like Rural King and Red Brand, the Foundation could not be effective in our efforts to reach out to the local, state and national FFA levels,” explained Robert Cooper, Executive Director of the National FFA Foundation. “The financial assistance we receive directly impacts the lives of FFA students throughout the organization, so we are deeply grateful for this contribution.”

According to Doug Wright, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Keystone Steel & Wire and current member of the FFA Foundation Sponsors’ Board, “We’ve been supporting FFA since 1947 and FFA holds a special place in our hearts, as a lot of our employees – from people working on the manufacturing floor to the executive level – came up through FFA programs. Many of them still have children in FFA; it’s interwoven into the history of the company. We understand and appreciate the vital role that FFA plays in the lives of our country’s young people,” he continues, “and we are committed to helping to support their efforts. That’s why we created Home Grown. Today’s check is only part of the effect of Rural King’s Gold Level participation in the Home Grown program. Along with the generous financial support for the Foundation, Home Grown gives local retail stores the ability to fund their local FFA chapters, sometimes with hundreds of dollars. Home Grown is truly a grass-roots effort where the local community can support their local FFA chapter,” explained Wright.

Home Grown was launched in 2010 and has raised funds for over 700 FFA chapters annually. For details about the program, visit [redbrand.com/homegrown](http://redbrand.com/homegrown).



### RURAL KING

Rural King Supply was founded in 1960. Since that time Rural King has grown to 60 stores in a seven state area (Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Michigan and Missouri). The corporate offices, distribution center and flagship store are located in its city of origin, Mattoon Illinois. Their 60 locations carry items such as agricultural fencing, livestock feed, farm equipment, agricultural parts, lawn mowers, work wear, fashion clothing, housewares and toys. For more information, visit [RuralKing.com](http://RuralKing.com).



## TOP 50 RANCHES

Come and experience all the thrills of a ranching holiday this year and you'll wonder why you didn't go sooner. Choose from a luxury guest ranch, a working ranch or a family ranch and indulge yourself in the numerous opportunities a ranch vacation has to offer. Top 50 Ranches is the place to find some of the best. Visit [www.top50ranches.com](http://www.top50ranches.com) and get ready for family fun and horseback adventure.



## RECENTLY SEEN BUMPER STICKER.



Enough said.

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## ERNIE MORRIS' NEW BOOK



*Vaquero Heritage* – the fifth book from vaquero artist, Ernie Morris, is in the works for release this year. Ernie Morris's books from *El Vaquero* to *El Buckaroo* are considered treasured parts of anyone interested in the history of the California vaquero. Ernie is currently working on his fifth book that will include previously unpublished personal photographs, artwork and stories by the legendary artist and vaquero. Be assured we will have breaking news on its release date on [ranchandreata.com](http://ranchandreata.com) as well as on Ernie's own website, [www.elvaquero.com](http://www.elvaquero.com)

## A COWBOY COLONEL, FEED AND FORAGE AND THE FISCAL CLIFF

By Richard L. Layman, Col., USAF, Ret.



As a retired Air Force colonel, active in my next incarnation, I stand with focused attention – laser-like attention – on the business of working cattle and building saddles. I wrote somewhere in stone that I would not, should not, ever would again – talk about military policy issues in public. But the events of the last couple of months have caused the wheels to fall off that notion. I decided to give it some quality time, so as I tighten my cinch, consider the following:

By now we have all come to realize that the greatly touted and much feared “Fiscal Cliff” which we as a country were to have fallen over was more like a speed bump, although not without consequences for many of us. The Government did not shut down, food riots were avoided, and the military continued to function at home and abroad without paying so much as an institutional passing nod to

the phenomenon. It rather puts one to mind of the Y2K scare of a few years ago, the upshot of which was that all the banks would fail and unless one had converted one’s financial holdings to gold or silver coin and secreted it in one’s private vault or under the bed, there would be no way to purchase goods and services and economic ruin would be the first step on the road to a fully collapsed society as we know it.

As the specter of the Cliff loomed more and more imminent, I found myself engaged in many discussions regarding the potential impact on the military services and our commitments and operations. Of course the first response was to explain that the Department of Defense and thus the Uniformed Services would doubtless feel the impact of any large-scale reduction in spending, but the revenue generating side of the formula (notice I did not say “equation”) was directed more towards companies and private citizens – those who were on the higher end of the country’s pay scale. What came to light again and again in many of these discussions was the large-scale lack of understanding that seems to prevail amongst even the more knowledgeable and more well-informed of our citizens regarding how our military is structured and funded.

While I can fully appreciate a lack of knowledge in detail of how the Defense Department is funded, I am continuously amazed at the number of people who hold the belief that our military members do not pay income taxes. In fact, while there are certain exemptions for military members serving overseas, those in uniform are taxed at the same rate as those who do not or have never served. Having watched numerous jaws drop with this revelation, I couldn’t help but engage in discussions regarding the reputed inefficiency of the military.

Of course we have all heard the “disclosures” of wasteful spending in the military: the famous \$750 toilet seat; the \$250 hammer; exorbitant costs of weapons systems, etc. The press “discovers” such waste from time to time and there probably isn’t a cub reporter out there who doesn’t dream of taking the military to task over some perceived inattention to detail. What so many fail to recognize, however, is that the charges are almost universally mis-directed and poorly aimed.

Our military establishment is, by its very nature, inefficient. It is not the Uniformed Military Services nor the overarching Department of Defense (DoD) that makes it so – it is the taproot of our government – the US Constitution, which not only permits, but in fact demands, huge inefficiencies in military spending. The founding fathers, apprehensive about standing armies and military-backed governments, provided that although Congress had the power to raise and support armies it could not appropriate monies to that use for a longer term than two years. This assures that every sitting Congress would have oversight and control of the country’s military structure and policy, and precludes achieving economies of scale. And in the day in which weapons systems development and procurement can be expected to last upwards of ten years, it should not be surprising that defense contractors levy a high price on the uncertainty and risk





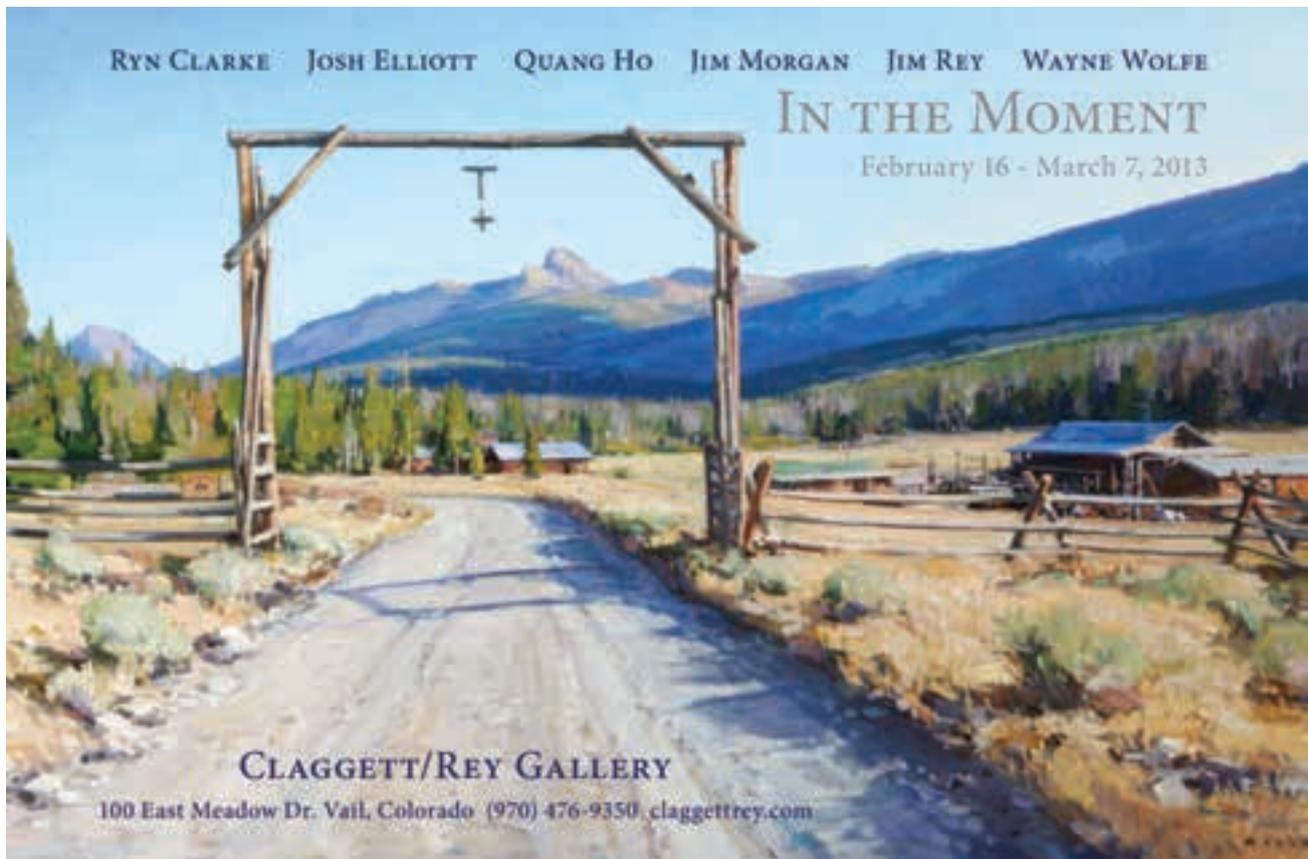
imposed by having to go back to the well at least every two years.

Limiting appropriations to two years, of course, creates a problem in the pursuit of ongoing military operations. This potential problem takes on an entirely new meaning when the President and the Congress are at odds with each other. Of course this is more and more the case these days. But as long ago as 1861 during the American Civil War, the Congress passed legislation known as the Feed and Forage Act, which allowed and still allows the Military Departments to incur obligations in excess of available appropriations for such things as clothing, subsistence, fuel, quarters, transportation and medical supplies. It also provided for costs of procuring additional members of the Armed Forces beyond the number for which funds are (were) currently provided. In short, it theoretically eliminated a situation in which the Congress could hold the pursuit of military operations hostage to concessions from the President.

Still, this did not grant the Military *carte blanche* to procure anything they wanted. In fact, it has been amended to specify that contracts and purchases are limited to elements which are authorized by law and appropriation and that such expenditures meet the necessities of the current (fiscal) year. And it requires Congressional notification and does not permit any actual expenditures until Congress provides an appropriation of the required funds.

There is a lack of specificity regarding the actual scope of coverage of the Feed and Forage Act, and thus remains controversy over whether, and the extent to which, the Act lets a President fund military operations for which Congress has not appropriated funds. Little room for interpretation exists, however, to suggest that any new operations would be covered, thus retaining the consummate “power of the purse” in the Legislative Branch. Solidifying this provision is the fact that the DoD has no power to “liquidate” any obligation on its own authority, but must obtain what it needs and then to wait for Congress to appropriate funds prior to actually exchanging money.

The legislation is limited to providing for items meant to sustain troops in the field and cannot be used to purchase additional weapons or military hardware. So while our troops can be assured that they will always be fed and housed, the two-year stipulation on actual appropriations remains, similarly assuring that economies of scale will not be realized in Defense-Department Appropriations. It does not, however, preclude their paying income taxes. That said, the branding pen awaits and there’s roping to do.



## CELEBRATING CONTEMPORARY WESTERN CRAFTSMANSHIP!

The Traditional Cowboy Arts Association teamed up with High Noon Western Americana to inaugurate the Emerging Artist Competition. The competition took place at the High Noon Antique Show & Auction, January 26 and 27, 2013, in Mesa, Arizona. The High Noon team hosted 10 silversmiths and 14 saddle makers, all competing for 2 prizes. The winner in each category (1 silversmith, 1 saddle maker) received \$1000.00 dollars and an expense paid trip to the 2013 TCAA exhibition and sale at Cowboy Crossings (National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, Oklahoma City) where they will be introduced on stage during the banquet.



photos by Kyle Amundsen

### 10 Silversmiths:

Braidie Butters, Beau Compton, Rex Crawford, Arne Esp, Scott Hall, Denise Kramlich, Ladden Ledbetter, Matt Litz, Michael Pardue and Zan Traugher

### 14 Saddle Makers:

Ross Brunk, Chris Cheney, Ryan Cope, Shane Deeter, Greg Gomersall, Darcy Kabatoff, Mike Keetch, Doug Krause, Nancy Martiny, Steve Mason, Cody Tippe, Paul Van Dyke, Conley Walker and Lester Yoder



photo by Linda Kohn Sherwood



photo by Jayne Skeff

Scott Hardy announced the competition winners prior to the High Noon Auction on January 26, 2013.

**Winning Silversmith:**  
**Matt Litz, Texas**

**Winning Saddle Maker:**  
**Conley Walker, Idaho**



photo by Jayne Skeff

[www.tcowboyarts.org](http://www.tcowboyarts.org)



## HIGH NOON WESTERN AMERICANA SHOW & AUCTION

photos courtesy High Noon Western Americana



A weekend of record rainfall in Phoenix did not deter Western enthusiasts, collectors, and those passionate about Western American history from attending the 23rd annual High Noon Western Americana Show and bidding with fervor at the High Noon Western Americana Auction. Held January 26 and 27, 2013 at the Mesa Convention Center and adjacent Marriott Hotel, the show saw large

crowds fill the halls throughout the weekend and dealers reported very strong sales. The High Noon Auction also saw a record number of bidders reporting a new high in Internet registered bidders indicating a global reach and desire for the great American West. Overall, the High Noon Auction earned just over \$1.8 million on the 308 lots offered with most lots going for within or over estimates. For catalogs and prices realized, [www.highnoon.com](http://www.highnoon.com).



Sioux quilled man's shirt c. 1890 sold very well earning \$20,700.



Artists Fred Fellows and John Moyers enjoy the show with Don Hedgpeth.



Jail Truck, complete with prison bars for windows, sold for \$21,850.



An oil on wood panel by Joseph Henry Sharp (1859-1953) titled *Indian Encampment* was offered for \$15,000 but nicely exceeded that selling for \$18,400.

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## VINTAGE COWBOY

Vintage Cowboy Winery was inspired by a family heritage of cowboying and love for ranching in San Luis Obispo County. They and their mission believe in cowboy values and keeping the western way of life alive. Vintage Cowboy is a family owned and operated winery, with Joey Arnold as



Winemaker. For five generations the Arnold family has lived and worked on the original ranch land in Pozo, raising beef cattle, horses, and farming a variety of crops, including a 32 acre vineyard that was planted in 1995. The family is approaching their 100th year of farming and ranching in Pozo, CA and each generation has strived to preserve the land for the next generation. This way the family can shoot for another 100 years. Visit their website [www.vintagecowboywinery.com](http://www.vintagecowboywinery.com) to join their wine club, The Loop.





## FIERCE PLOWMAN

by Lynn Miller

He held close, every day, the layers of his farm – the livestock, each species; the fields at their readiness or usefulness or at the fallow; the ripenings, the remainders, the margins, the rottings, the seeds, the pollen races, the droppings, the absorbent chaff, the everything of his, this farm world. Close as it all was to him it required and earned his attention. He could tell you what piece of that field had a shallower top soil, he could tell you the history of the grandmother of that Guernsey heifer and how it might influence the coming partuition, he could predict the bloom of different crops and talk of how the bees affected it all passing one to the other, he did speak of this strain of legume seed he had carefully gathered and replanted for a quarter of a century, and he could wax poetic about plowing. He loved to plow, loved the slicing of the earth, the flip, the crumbling curving wave, the evidence it allowed him. He never tired of “working” his soil and having it work for him.

Great Uncle Ephraim farmed his whole life in Minnesota. His time spanned nine-plus decades from the post-civil war years forward. He was successful and solid. He believed to his core that he knew why he was successful, it was because he was a good farmer who trusted the evidence of his years and fields and cows. When America spawned its golden era of farming, from 1900 to 1920, Ephraim was there to absorb and apply. Most of his latter years were spent alone with his fields and his Guernseys. Those pre-chemical-warfare years of

farming were rich in the profitable theories and practices of a many-layered and multitiered agriculture. Crop rotations, rotational grazing, and an applied respect for the finer moments of seasonal bio-rhythms made of his place an ever changing jewel of diversity. His was a complex approach, lacing different aspects together – the livestock were allowed and encouraged to compliment crops, cropping and soil management while the harvest of feeds always took into consideration the other components be they birthing, breeding, weather, or overall timing. For the intricate overlapping crop rotation cycles he employed, cycles that could run to six years, he designed his field sizes to advantage thinking in terms of “lands” rather than fields and keeping those “lands” at 4 to 10 acres maximum. Of his quarter section thirty acres were in woods and farmstead, the remaining were split in changing mosaic between pasture and crop land. He enjoyed giving pieces of his land three to four year holidays as pasture as much as he enjoyed plowing those up to bring them back into the cropping rotation.

Great Uncle Ephraim loved to plow. In fact he would argue fiercely that what caused farmers to fail was lack of regard for the plow and plowing. In his last years he got wind of arguments against plowing, arguments which pointed to the moldboard as the thing which caused the great dustbowl. Those arguments angered and confused him, He didn’t understand any of it and was quick to say “I don’t know what I don’t know, but



here farming is working the land and working with the land.” For him, if you were to farm in the hill country of Minnesota you had better learn to love the plow. Great Uncle Ephraim was a fierce plowman.

### The Poisons Take it All

Jumping back a ways, with a longer view, we can speak now of how it was that the great war efforts and the fragile economy saw the inevitable spread of heavy chemistry across the agricultural landscape. When the two world wars wound down there had to be a place to apply the mechanization and chemistry no longer required in European trenches. So it was force fed and dumped on our advanced and once elegant farming systems. We’ve seen the results and they have often been terrible. Chemical fertilizers, herbicides, defoliants, fungicides, insecticides, and sterilization elements all killing and misshaping our farming. The growing of food and fiber went from art and craft (as in Uncle Ephraim’s case) to industrial process and mining. The result has been a deterioration of the environment, a diminishment of genetic diversity, a depopulation of the countryside and a reduction in our farm productivity. For most of these last forty years our sorry-but political and academic leaders have argued that what we have is the best system of food production and that what we left behind was “drudgery, superstition, and poor yields”.

What our industrial system left behind was my Great Uncle Ephraim, and millions like him, and he never saw his labor as drudgery, he never felt his beliefs to be superstition bound, and he knew his yields were outstanding. He had secrets to share, he had grounded fears to pass on, and he wanted to give to young people his love of the cows and of plowing. But that was not to happen. Not directly.

### Forward to The Beginnings

Now today, out of and in spite of the wasteland that is agribusiness, we see growing evidence, even an avalanche of hopeful examples all pointing to a return to farming as art and craft.

I’ve seen the evidence, I know what it looks like, smells like, hums like. I’m speaking of the very best that farming can be. I am speaking of the trail and picture of consummate regard for the four dimensional musical composition that a handmade farming might be. I’ve

seen it, many times in my lifetime. But recently I saw it nearby. The best farmer I know is Brian MacNaughton. He has worked for us for several years, helping at the ranch all the while doing his own postage-stamp-size market garden farm huge in its production and fertility. I bring up Brian’s example because he is proof for me that the old ways, Ephraim’s ways, have become new again. And lest you think I am pointing to Uncle Ephraim’s as the old way please allow me to point out that his ways were just representative of ONE culmination of an attitude and approach towards farming that is thousands of years in the making.

The Chinese author Chen Pu (also known as Chen Fu) wrote in 1149 “Nongshu” or “On Farming”.

What follows is an excerpt.

### Plowing

*Early and late plowing both have their advantages. For the early rice crops, as soon as the reaping is completed, immediately plow the fields and expose the stalks to glaring sunlight. Then add manure and bury the stalks to nourish the soil. Next, plant beans, wheat and vegetables to ripen and fertilize the soil so as to minimize the next year’s labor. In addition, when the harvest is good these extra crops can add to the yearly income. For late crops, however, do not plow until spring. Because the rice stalks are soft but tough, it is necessary to wait until they have fully decayed to plow satisfactorily.*

*In the mountains, plateaus and wet areas, it is usually cold. The fields here should be deeply plowed and soaked with water released from reservoirs. Throughout the winter, the water will be absorbed, and the snow and frost will freeze the soil so that it will become brittle and crumbly. At the beginning of spring, spread the fields with decayed weeds and leaves and then burn them, so that the soil will become warm enough for the seeds to sprout. In this way, cold as the freezing springs may be, they cannot harm the crop. If you fail to treat the soil this way, then the arteries of the fields, being soaked constantly by freezing rains, will be cold, and the crop will be poor.*

*When it is time to sow the seed, sprinkle lime in the wet soil to root out harmful insect larvae.*

Chen Pu lived in the midst of the Song Dynasty, a period of tremendous agricultural productivity. This period benefited from the refinement of double and



triple cropping in irrigated fields made possible by new farming techniques aided by the spread of information. Chen Pu published handbooks on farming which were circulated across the country. It is said that the richness of the farming from this period resulted in dramatic growth and stability for China.

Today China is as much at risk as the U.S. of losing its productivity, heritage and biological diversity as it grants to global corporations the right to poison in the name of agri-business. We still have access to much of the information that supported our best farming though we may have lost the direct living connection and hand-offs from people like Uncle Ephraim. But do we have the will, as a people, to find our way back? I believe it may come down to what we collectively believe to be “truth”.

### **Social Truths?**

In our society, this time argues with us – each of us – that “social truth” is trapped within a moveable constantly shifting and overlapping grid. It’s almost as though “social truth” has become a circumstantial oxymoron, that in this day and age there is nothing completely true or absolute about our society. Aren’t we too various to be, all of us, of or about or dedicated to anything even the higher human pursuits? Can it be said of our society that as a whole it believes in the sanctity of life? Can it be said that our society absolutely values the natural world and bio-diversity? Can it be said that our society is on the side of spirituality? Questions of religious and political polarization as well as techno-artisinal spirit-wrestling are only pieces of a wider confusion that threatens to make of homogeneity a curious relic. We are, without always realizing it, allowing ourselves to be herded towards ‘concentration’ camps delineated by our chosen “persuasions”. I am a painter, writer and rancher. By those choices I am being herded towards a prejudged social encampment of people who are believed to be “concentrating” on “liberal” and self-gratifying endeavors and beliefs. I am seen by many as some weird kind of aging hippy with no regard for the politics of others. That, in spite of the evidence that I’ve spent my life, talents and interests working in the opposite direction. That is only important in this writing as I make a case for all of us to allow the best evidence to affect our next set of choices.

Farming is at a cross-roads right now. Industrial

agribusiness is a miserable failure which struggles to compound the damage it has done by desperately ‘doubling down’ its wager in the arenas of scientific mutation and chemical warfare. Millions of people worldwide want to farm and suspect, against all corporate propaganda to the reverse, that given half a chance they could make a go of it. So they wiggle around in corners such as this looking for answers, clues, road maps and evidence. When they find the stories of Chen Pu and Uncle Ephraim and Brian MacNaughton you can see the electricity. But they still fight that new bugaboo I call “the acids of social truth”.

In spite of the overwhelming evidence of what a rich inherited farming craft can give and has given us we still allow the linear thinkers in our midst to apply the bigger hammer at the expense of the mandolins. But that is no longer necessary BECAUSE we have hundreds of thousands of new farmers worldwide who have taken their initial enchantments with farming beyond implication and well into application. We have that strong shot at exempling and showcasing the elegant systemic solutions that ARE a craft and human-based agriculture. But still we must beware the Aha moments in the hands of the grandchildren of those architects of industrial agriculture, those who, while they shop at Whole Foods hold to the belief that the future must be shaped by police and government edict.

- Those who for wildly various reasons, want to outlaw the consumption of this or that piece of the food pyramid,
- those who point to manures and say they harbor disease and must NEVER be used as fertilizer,
- those who would, out of a concern for some empathetic connection to the bovine, outlaw the human consumption of milk,
- those who would mandate the dehorning of livestock,
- those who would outlaw the use of equine in harness because it is cruel,
- those who demand that grains not be fed to livestock,
- those who are on a mission to criminalize choice in farming,
- those who would make it illegal for amateurs to farm,
- and on and on...

I say all of this and more represents a body of folk with entirely too much time on their hands. Focus is lost. That focus that would provide some distance and clarity. While we pick at each other in these ways, multi-national corporations and store bought science continue to mutate life and sell poisons that destroy the biology of this planet. While we nit-pick and divert, war-waging governments continue to endorse the mining of the world. There are important things to outlaw, we don't have time or excuse to mess with our neighbors. If we



insist on keeping things close-at-hand, then we should be spending more time on our own farming adventure. What happened to the maturity of our culture and society? Where did it go?

I'm reminded of that line from the Dylan song, "we were so much older then we're younger than that now."

#### And on that note

It took 9 years, three separate controlled experiments, side-by-side, conducted by a wheelbarrow-load of academics from the USDA, Minnesota and Iowa to determine dramatically and conclusively that we CAN affordably feed the world, improve the environment, grow the top soil, pay the farmers for the work AND end the addiction to expensive and destructive chemicals. And that was the unintended consequence of this research. So much so that some of the architects, most notably the USDA, hope it quietly goes away.

On October 19 of 2012 a food writer for the *New York Times*, Mark Bittman, (someone who has

demonstrated a limited understanding of the culture of agriculture and a general disdain for small farms) took credit for announcing to the world that a simple fix had been found for farming. An Aha moment? This is how he opens his article entitled *A Simple Fix for Farming*:

*It's becoming clear that we can grow all the food we need, and profitably, with far fewer chemicals. And I'm not talking about imposing some utopian vision of small organic farms on the world. Conventional agriculture can shed much of its chemical use — if it wants to. This was hammered home once again in what may be the most important agricultural study this year, although it has been largely ignored by the media, two of the leading science journals and even one of the study's sponsors, the often hapless Department of Agriculture.*

Bittman references what we are calling the Marsden Project entailing 9 years of research in crop rotation systems analyzing a comparison of the industrial model of corn/soybeans with three and four year rotations. The *New York Times* has seldom bothered itself with any deep tissue analysis of our agriculture because it doesn't sell perfume ads. But it is more than notable that this study got referenced there. My own biased and deep-tissued take on this study is that it is the most important accidental agricultural discovery of these last fifty years as much because of "who done it" as because of what it says. And that, it must be said, in light of the fact that they discovered absolutely nothing new. The Marsden Project has establishment industrial agriculturalists eating their own propaganda. The Marsden Project clearly and dramatically concludes that the craft of farming beats out the industrial model of agriculture. It produces more food and fiber while improving the soil and requiring little or no chemical inputs – period – unless of course you want to go deeper in and say that it invites bio-diversity, more people on the land, improved water quality, revitalization of rural America and less hunger. Need I go on?

Karen Perry Stillerman, writing in the Union of Concerned Scientists Blog, does an admirable if limited job of presenting a suggestion of the implications of this study if not much on the application of same. Keep in mind that she as a science writer is speaking to industry NOT to farmers. Here's how she frames her discussion:



*Substantial improvements in the environmental sustainability of agriculture are achievable now, without sacrificing food production or farmer livelihoods. When agrichemical inputs are completely eliminated, yield gaps may exist between conventional and alternative systems. However, such yield gaps may be overcome through the strategic application of very low inputs of agrichemicals in the context of more diverse cropping systems. Although maize is grown less frequently in the 3-yr and 4-yr rotations than in the 2-yr rotation, this will not compromise the ability of such systems to contribute to the global food supply, given the relatively low contribution of maize and soybean production to direct human consumption and the ability of livestock to consume small grains and forages. Through a balanced portfolio approach to agricultural sustainability, cropping system performance can be optimized in multiple dimensions, including food and biomass production, profit, energy use, pest management, and environmental impacts.*

What interests me more is how she then shifts slightly to qualify this study, if only peripherally, with a nod to how it might apply in the “real world”.

*Big Ag has worked hard for decades to instill a belief – in farmers, policymakers, and the public – that its chemical-intensive industrial farming methods are more productive than low-input methods, and more profitable for farmers. In recent years, study after study has cast doubt on this view, and now a team of government and university researchers has published perhaps the most compelling data yet showing that more sustainable farming systems can achieve similar or greater yields and profits, despite steep reductions in chemical inputs.*

*The so-called Marsden Farm study is a large-scale, long-term experiment conducted by researchers from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the University of Minnesota, and Iowa State University. So no, these aren't California hippies or east coast elites. These folks know the dominant agricultural landscape of the Midwest – corn and soybeans. But they also want to better understand how systems that incorporate other crops, and even livestock, compare when performing head-to-head.*

*Keeping it simple (or not)*

*Over a period of nine years (2003-2011) on the*

*Marsden Farm at Iowa State, the researchers replicated the conventional Midwestern farming system – a highly simplified rotation of corn and soybeans on the same fields on a two-year cycle, with copious additions of chemical fertilizers and herbicides. Alongside it, they grew two multi-crop alternatives: a 3-year rotation incorporating another grain (triticale or oats) plus a red clover cover crop, and a 4-year rotation that added alfalfa (a key livestock feed) into the mix.*

I suspect we will be talking about the Marsden Project for a good long time. No doubt this is NOT what the USDA and its conglomerate brothers and sisters would prefer. It is our sincere wish that folks don't take the project findings and feel compelled to apply them as a direct simplified formula which encourages a modest return to crop rotation with a reliance on heavy chemicals and genetic engineering. That would be missing the point and the OPPORTUNITY. Some are already arguing that ANY return to grazing livestock on “crop” land would be a reversal because they would compact the soil and no-till (that bizarre cousin to chemical warfare farming) more difficult. To reference Uncle Ephraim ‘why the heck would we be afraid of straight ahead tillage when it is a proven tool for the very best of farming craft?’

This is the time to reinvoke an abiding respect for the mysteries of life and how mixing and matching, overlapping and resting systems do give us our best farming future.

### **There are greater losses and most important lessons**

Great Uncle Ephraim loved his Guernseys. They were his ladies. The herd dwindled as he aged but still, in his bachelor nineties, he never failed to milk the half dozen cows. The ritual reminded him of his entire farming history and kept him alive. His grandchildren had no interest in the farm or farming except that the land had come to be worth a great deal of money. Every morning, after milking Ephraim would drive the short distance to town and have coffee and eggs with an old friend and complain that no one was interested in what he knew.

As the family legend goes, Ephraim's grandchildren became more and more concerned for his comfort and safety. They couldn't understand how he at 90 plus years

old could safely do the farm work and take care of the domestic duties himself. One day, on a visit, they found him out in the field working while the stove was accidentally left on in the house. A family meeting resulted in the decision to move Ephraim, against his will, to a rest home. They had to secure a court order because he was completely against it. He argued “who will take care of the cows?” They promised him that the cows would be taken care of.

He still resisted up until the orderlies arrived with the ambulance to forcibly take him away. Two days later, at the rest home, Ephraim’s old breakfast buddy arrived for a visit and told of how the Guernseys had been hauled to the stockyard and sold for hamburger. The very next day 95 year old Ephraim died of unknown causes.

**Epilogue**

The family sold the farm and all the tools and divided the money convinced that they had done the right thing. The new owners of the farm ripped out the fences, bulldozed the house and barns and added the 160 acres to their 1,100 adjoining acres of corn and soybeans.

My job has always been to make sure that my Great Uncle Ephraim, the fierce plowman, always had someone hammering away at the need for better farming. Don’t know that I have succeeded. I do know that events such as the Marsden Project offer the contradiction of a measure of good news weighed against the knowledge that it’s late and that we lost so much treasure when we lost all of those Uncle Ephraims, all of those Fierce Plowmen who were waiting to lend us their secrets.

Lynn Miller is a regular contributor to *Ranch & Reata*. He is the editor and publisher of the venerable *Small Farmers Journal*, founded by he and his father in 1976. His article from the publication’s Vol. 36, No. 4 appears with his permission.

**ARTISTS AND THEIR INSPIRATIONS:  
THE T CROSS RANCH**

Claggett/Rey Gallery is hosting a show from February 12 through March 7 at the gallery in Vail, Colorado. The show will feature works by Quang Ho, Josh Elliott, Jim Rey, Wayne Wolfe, Jim Morgan and photography by Ryn Clarke created from their recent visit to the T Cross Ranch in Dubois, Wyoming. Arrowhead residents, Margaret and Loyal Wilson are part owners of the T Cross Ranch and have had a long relationship with Claggett/Rey Gallery. The Wilson’s graciously invited these artists to the ranch to explore, and to paint T-Cross’ natural beauty and Western charm.

T Cross Ranch is an authentic piece of the frontier American West with a lush river meadow fronting the jagged Absaroka range. Surrounded by the Shoshone National Forest and the Washakie Wilderness Area, which borders Yellowstone National Park, the Ranch sits in its own secluded valley at 7,800 feet. Homesteaded in the 1890s as a cattle



Josh Elliott, *The T Cross*, Oil, 24” x 48”

ranch, the T Cross is a dude ranch that has hosted generations of families since the 1920s with a classic log lodge and log cabins. This historic ranch is true to its heritage – committed to preserving the traditions of the American West.

Claggett/Rey Gallery is located at 100 East Meadow Drive in Vail. Visit [www.claggettrey.com](http://www.claggettrey.com) or call 970-476-9350 for more information.



Quang Ho *Corral*, Oil 36” x 36”



Jim Rey, *Sheep Wagon*, Sketch, Oil 8” x 10”

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## 9<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SCOTTSDALE ART AUCTION: APRIL 6

On Saturday, April 6th, 2013, Scottsdale Art Auction will hold its 9th annual sale, offering over 300 lots of the finest paintings and sculptures in Western, Sporting and Wildlife Art. The auction's facility at 7176 East Main Street sits in the heart of Scottsdale, Arizona's arts district and the artworks in the auction will be on view for two weeks prior to the auction. A catered Preview will be held on Friday, April 5th, from 6 - 8 pm. Full color catalogues will be available at the gallery and online at [www.scottsdaleartauction.com](http://www.scottsdaleartauction.com). All lots will also be online at the same web address. Owners Michael Frost, Jack Morris and Brad Richardson have amassed an exquisite collection of works for the 2013 sale. Artists's works include pieces by contemporary master Howard Terpning, O. C. Seltzer, Taos Founder E. I. Couse and James Reynolds, among other highly collected artists. For more information visit [www.scottsdaleartauction.com](http://www.scottsdaleartauction.com)



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## NATIONAL COWBOY & WESTERN HERITAGE MUSEUM ANNOUNCES INDUCTEES FOR 2013 INTO THEIR "GREAT HALL OF WESTERN PERFORMERS."

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum® in Oklahoma City will induct Wes Studi, along with the late Robert Mitchum, Leo Carillo and Duncan Renaldo, into the Hall of Great Western Performers during its annual Western Heritage Awards. The gala will be held April 20, 2013. The black-tie affair honors principal creators in 16 categories of Western music, literature, television and film. Also being honored are the Chester A. Reynolds Memorial Award recipient, Boots O'Neal, and inductees to the Hall of Great Westerners, California rancher John Lacey and the late Kenneth Eade.

For induction into the Hall of Great Western Performers, actors must have made significant contributions to the perpetuation of Western film, radio or theatre. Through a solid body of work in motion pictures, radio or stage, the inductee must project the traditional Western ideals of honesty, integrity and self-sufficiency.

The Western Heritage Awards is a star-studded event that attracts red carpet-goers from around the world. For reservations or more information about the 2013 Western Heritage Awards, call (405) 478-2250, Ext. 219 or online at [www.nationalcowboymuseum.com](http://www.nationalcowboymuseum.com).

# WESTERN HERITAGE *Awards*



Wes Studi



Robert Mitchum



Duncan Renaldo



Leo Carrillo



John W. Lacey



Kenneth Eade



Boots O'Neal



## APRIL 20, 2013

Attend this black-tie presentation of Wrangler Awards for the year's best Western movies, television, literature and music. Inductees to the Hall of Great Westerners and the Hall of Great Western Performers are honored along with the recipient of the Chester A. Reynolds Memorial Award. Celebrity award presenters add glamour to this banquet.

Reservations required  
Make reservations online or at Ext. 219

**2013 Inductees:** Wes Studi, Robert Mitchum, Duncan Renaldo, Leo Carrillo, John W. Lacey, Kenneth Eade

**2013 Chester A. Reynolds Memorial Award** Boots O'Neal

## JINGLE-JANGLE

APRIL 19, 2013 *Mingle*

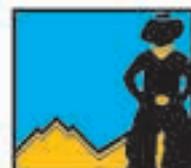
Western Heritage Awards weekend begins Friday evening with this kick-off event honoring the award winners and Hall of Fame inductees. The public is invited to take pleasure in the casual atmosphere, entertainment and hors d'oeuvres, meet honorees and special guests, enjoy a book and CD/DVD autograph session, all while demonstrating support for the Museum.

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## A “HIGH BROW” SALE



The *Wall Street Journal* reports that a Dallas investment firm recently purchased the cutting stallion, High Brow Cat for what a *WSJ* source reports was “just under \$10 million dollars.” Large dough, especially in that the stallion is 24 years of age and is sterile. Apparently included in the deal was a large semen bank whose value could well exceed the purchase price as High Brow Cat’s progeny have won in excess of \$58 million. That’s betting on the bank.

## NEW MUSIC FROM JOHN CORBETT



John Corbett’s new CD – *Leaving Nothing Behind* features songs written by some of Nashville’s elite tunesmiths including Jon Randall, Paul Overstreet and John Wiggins to name a few. This is Corbett’s newest CD since 2006, and was produced under his own label, Fun Bone/Co5. It’s a great testament to a committed musician who loves to perform. Range Radio has picked for air-play, four tracks with acoustic textures, some dark elements and romantic love notes including “Steal Your Heart”, “El Paso”, “Name On A Stone” and “Me & Whiskey”. [www.johncorbettmusic.com](http://www.johncorbettmusic.com)  
Congratulations John.



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## BY HAND AND HEART

# A Cut Above

Thanks to unbridled determination, Montana's Diane Scalse has become one of the West's most influential engravers.



By Melissa Mylchreest

40 

Chances are if you know much about western bright-cut engraving, you've already heard the name Diane Scalse. Colleagues, collaborators and students alike all repeat one key phrase when talking about her and her work: "she's one of the best." And in a field full of spectacular craftsmanship and brilliant artistry, this is high praise.

You'd never guess, though, from a conversation with Diane, that she holds such celebrity status in the engraving world. You'd never guess she's a master engraver in the Firearms Engravers Guild of America, or that she was named engraver of the year by the Academy of American Engravers in 2003, or that, just this year, she was inducted into the Circle of American Masters, an honor of which few can boast.

Diane stumbled onto the art form in the mid-1980s. Newly married, she and her husband, Bob, were ranching



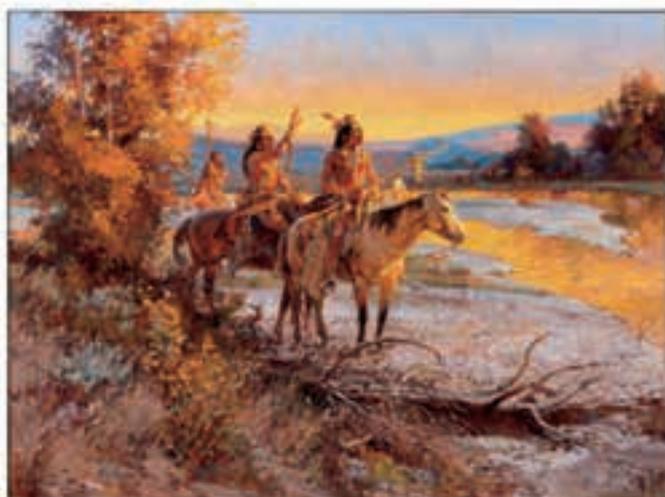
photo courtesy Diane Scalse

Buckle engraved by Diane Scalse

in north-central Montana when he began making spurs and bits. He knew something about engraving, and Diane was curious to see how the process worked.

# SCOTTSDALE ART AUCTION

## SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 2013



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**SA** SCOTTSDALE  
ART AUCTION

“I said to him, ‘Let me come down to your shop and see what it’s all about,’” she recalls. That brief glimpse was all she needed. “I bet he didn’t make three cuts and I knew instantly that I wanted to do it. It was like getting hit over the head.”

Bob set up a workbench for Diane so she could balance the demands of raising two young boys with her newly found passion for engraving. It was slow going at first. She visited other



Spurs engraved by Diane Scalese



Bit engraved by Diane Scalese

engravers and silversmiths in the hopes of learning from them, but rarely received a warm welcome.

“I was determined, though,” Diane says. “Every time someone would shoo me out the door, I got more determined.”

She pored over old silversmithing catalogs, studied old belt buckles, and practiced constantly. Finally, in 1992 she traveled to Colorado to take a two-week class with engraver John Bearclaw. The class focused on gold and silver inlay, but Diane says she came away with far more than the fundamentals of inlaying precious metal.

“I learned about shaping tools and what does and doesn’t work in design,” she says. “But I’d never seen anybody engrave who would teach and share their knowledge. It was an eye-opening experience.”

After that class, Diane’s work took off, and she has since become known as an innovative and trend-setting figure in the world of engraving, with a repertoire including bits, spurs, guns, belt buckles, saddle silver, jewelry and watches.

That formative two weeks in Colorado, though, also influenced the way in which Diane approached the engraving community. It had traditionally been closed,

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Revolver engraved by Diane Scales

as evidenced by her difficulties in finding a mentor. Beginners were told they needed to learn the craft on their own.

“If we depended on that, we would never better ourselves,” Diane says. “If I had to invent a car in order to drive, I would be in a pickle.” Having seen firsthand the value of even a few days of instruction, Diane began teaching at Kansas’ GRS Training Center in 2003. “I got a lot of flack for that,” she says, referring to other engravers’ opinions of trade secrets being shared. Soon, though, Diane’s peers began to realize the value of passing along their art, which was at risk of disappearing.

She also found unexpected benefits.

“I always learn from my students,” Diane says. “They teach me things I didn’t know you could do, or that I’d never thought about.” Diane has earned high praise from her pupils. “As far as I’m concerned, I wouldn’t want to learn from anybody else,” says Jerry Lindley, a student of Diane’s from Weatherford, Texas. He cites her lessons, efficiency in her work, and a kind demeanor. “What makes her work so unique is Diane,” he says. “It’s just her. She’s friendly, and she can talk to you about anything – horses, cows, engraving, silver.”

Diane draws her inspiration from a variety of

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sources, including the solitude of ranch life, which allows her to be more attentive to the details she discovers every day. “I’m definitely inspired by the western landscape and surroundings,” she says. “When I’m hunting, I might see the branch of a tree that’s really interesting, and I’ll try to incorporate it into a design.”

Diane’s work has drawn the admiration of other artists and craftsmen, attention that’s led to unique collaborations, such as her work with Montana Watch Company, led by watchmaker Jeffrey Nashan. “What I love about watches is that I can combine everything on one piece,” she says, “silversmithing, bright-cutting, inlay, stone-setting and bulino.” Nashan is more than happy to let Diane flex her imaginative muscles on the watches they create together. “She’s a master craftsman who has exploded in the last decade,” he says. “And she is the most even-keeled ‘artist personality’ I’ve ever had the privilege to work with.”

Diane credits a farm-girl childhood spent with two older brothers for her head-down determination, and for her belief that she could succeed in a world dominated by men. “I learned that if you wanted to participate in the fun and games, you had to keep up,” she says. “I’m a tomboy. In everything from playing baseball to riding horses, I learned to be competitive. And that just sort of carried on.”

Such determination has made Diane a role model. Amy Raymond, an engraver from Helix, Oregon, has studied under Diane. “The improvement from before I met Diane to today – it’s leaps and bounds,” she says. “She’s an amazing person to have behind you, someone to call and ask questions. And for her to take somebody like me under her wing and help me as much as she has, is pretty awesome.”

In Raymond’s case, there’s an added personal connection: the Oregon artisan, a young mother raising two boys on a ranch, is just getting her start in engraving. “Diane told me one time that she liked my story,” says Raymond. “She said it reminded her of herself.”



Melissa Mylchreest is a writer living in Montana.

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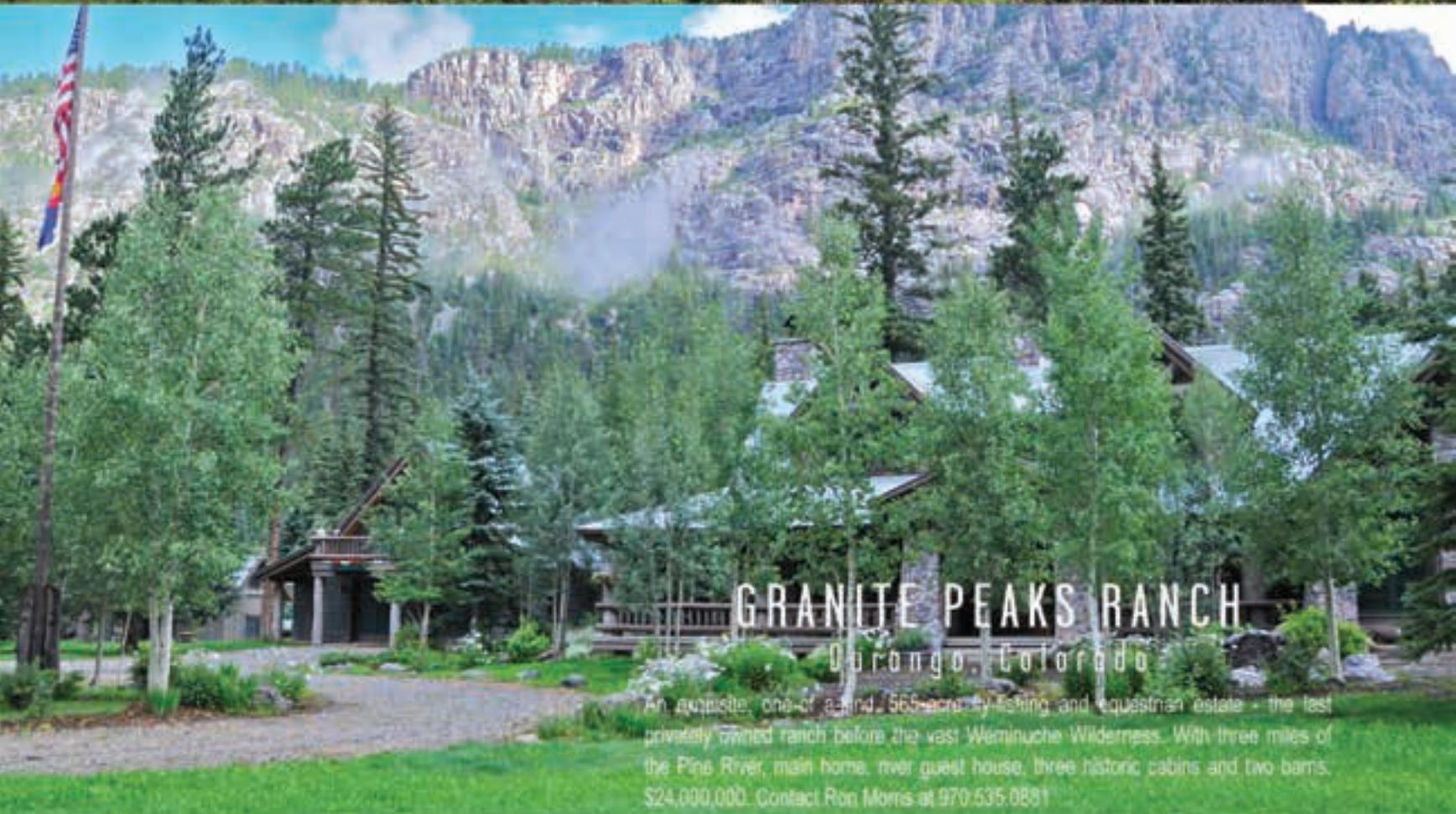
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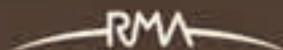
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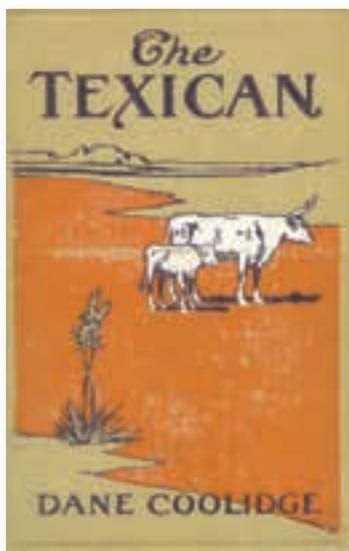
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## BOOKS TO FIND

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### *The Texican*

By Dane Coolidge

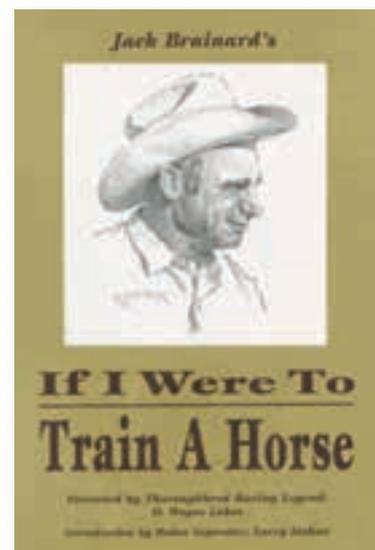
Writer Dane Coolidge worked as a field naturalist and photographer for museums, he knew the Southwest from firsthand experience. He knew flora, fauna, climates, landscapes, and the people who lived and worked in far-flung parts of the deserts, mountains, and ranch country. In his 1911 book, *The Texican*, he spoke of things he knew. Here is a little excerpt, “A heavy pair of apron chaps sure sign of Texas cumbered his limbs and the wooden handle of a Colt forty-five showed above its holster in the right leg; he wore a blue shirt, and a broad, high-crowned hat without frills.” Coolidge’s cowboys come in all kinds: “the men that could rope, the men that could ride, the quitters, the blowhards, the rattle heads, the lazy, the crooked, the slow-witted.” Sounds like today. Coolidge’s

work is a window on the West of yesterday. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

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

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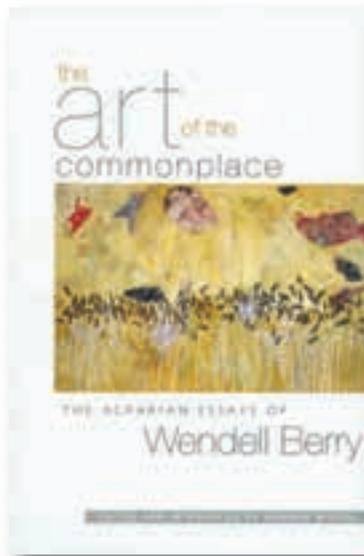
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### *The Art of The Commonplace*

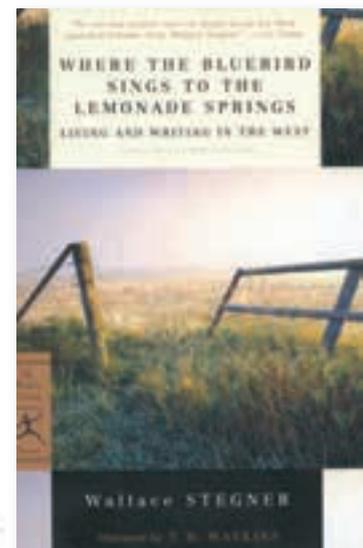
By Wendell Berry

Wendell Berry’s nonfiction serves as an extended conversation about the life he values. According to him, the good life includes sustainable agriculture, appropriate technologies, healthy rural communities, connection to place, the pleasures of good food, husbandry, good work, local economics, the miracle of life, fidelity, frugality, reverence, and the interconnectedness of life. Whew! The threats Berry finds to this good life include: industrial farming and the industrialization of life, ignorance, hubris, greed, violence against others and against the natural world, the eroding topsoil in the United States, global economics, and environmental destruction. *The Art of the Commonplace* gathers twenty-one essays by Wendell Berry that offer an agrarian alternative to our dominant urban culture. These essays promote a clearly defined and compelling vision important to all people dissatisfied with the stress, anxiety, disease, and destructiveness of contemporary American culture. His is a world where farming and ranching matter. An important read for long-thinkers about agriculture and its importance to our country’s security. [www.counterpointpress.com](http://www.counterpointpress.com) [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

### *Where The Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs*

By Wallace Stegner

A night stand is just a table without something by Wallace Stegner on it. Stegner is generally recognized as one of our most important living American fiction writers, and in that fiction he has generally taken for his physical and moral landscape the geography of the American West. It is a part of the country that Stegner knows well, having been born and reared West of the Mississippi, and having lived most of his life there. In this collection of essays, *Where The Bluebird Sings to Lemonade Springs*, Stegner looks at the changing nature of the West, at the alterations wrought upon landscape and character as reflected in its politics and economics and art. This is writing about a place that pulls people into it and helps form them. Stegner’s journey is glorious and worth the trip. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

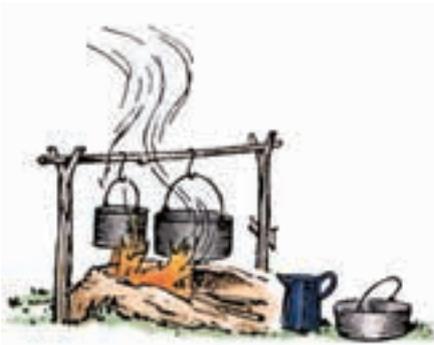




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## THE COOK HOUSE

# Noel Caniglia's Zucchini Soup



By Kathy McCraine

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Noel Cox was headed to law school in England when she met her future husband, Tommy Caniglia, a cowboy who was running the once giant Circle Bar Ranch at Sunflower, Arizona, north of Phoenix. Both sides of Noel's family had produced prominent judges, so law seemed like a logical career choice. One grandfather, though, had also homesteaded and run cattle near Phoenix, and Noel always knew she wanted to live on a ranch.

"Tommy needed a roundup cook, and he convinced me that it would be the easiest, most fun thing in the world," she says. "He said I'd have my pick



photos by Kathy McCraine

Arizona cook Noel Caniglia

of the remuda, I could cook a little during the day, and the rest of the time I could ride or go fishing. It sounded great, so I went for it, but it wasn't like that at all."

Homesteaded in 1904 by ranching pioneer H. Bernard Hughes, the Circle Bar was originally 800 sections (512,000 acres) in size, and it was still 300 sections when Noel went there to cook in the late 1970s. The desert country was so vast and rough, nobody knew for sure how many cattle were on it. They were wild as deer and, on a three-month roundup, Tommy and his crew of eight to 15 Mexican vaqueros might gather 500 to 600 head.

During the spring and fall cattle work, the crew



moved from camp to camp. With many of these camps accessible only by horseback, they packed in supplies – including ice chests full of frozen meat – on mules and horses. Sometimes Noel cooked in a tin shed with a dirt floor and an old wood cookstove, using water from a nearby stock trough. For the more accessible areas of the ranch, Tommy fitted out a semi truck and flatbed trailer with a big rectangular room that held a gas stove and refrigerator, a sink, and a long picnic table. Carefully bolting everything down inside, they drove this rig over the harrowing, steep, rocky ranch roads as it listed precariously from side to side.

Noel had traveled the world extensively before meeting Tommy and had developed a sophisticated taste in food. It soon got her in trouble.

“One morning I made crepes with orange flambé sauce,” she says. “So here it is, 4:30 in the morning. Picture all these Mexican vaqueros sitting at this long table with a knife in one hand and a fork in the other, waiting for breakfast, and I’m making *crepes*! I was putting powdered sugar and sauce on top, and these guys were popping about four of them at a time in their mouths, like M&Ms, and I’m going: *Oh no, there’s a problem here.* I didn’t know what to do. Finally Tommy gets up and says, ‘Step aside,’ and he starts cracking eggs. So the crepes went by the wayside.”

Today the Circle Bar is only a memory, gobbled up years ago by developers. Noel learned to cook ranch food, married Tommy, and they raised two sons, Dustin and Casey, now both graduated from college. The Caniglias currently live on the U Cross Ranch, a 250-head outfit north of Mayer, Arizona. In addition to her role as ranch wife, Noel chairs the graduate education department at

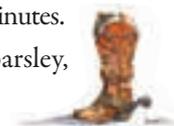
nearby Prescott College. She’s never lost her love of cooking, though, and behind their small ranch house, her flood-irrigated garden abounds with every imaginable plant – squash, eggplant, okra, herbs, carrots, peppers, tomatillos and at least a hundred tomato plants. In the summertime, when she’s putting up vegetables, she likes to make this refreshing zucchini soup for lunch.



### Zucchini Soup

- 1/4 pound butter, or more to taste
- 1 onion, chopped
- 8-10 cups shredded zucchini, about 8-10 medium squash
- 2 14-ounce cans chicken broth, or more to taste
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 handful chopped parsley

Sauté the onion in the butter until wilted. Stir in squash and cook, stirring frequently, until well cooked down, about 15 minutes. Add chicken broth and cook 5 minutes. Blend in a blender a little at a time. Add parsley, salt and pepper. Serve hot or cold.



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

## YOUR HORSE'S FEET, A SERIES

# Corrective Correct

By Pete Healey, APF

**H**orseshoeing: Hot, Cold, Corrective. This is not an uncommon business card profile for a farrier. We often consider corrective shoeing as a specialty service when in reality all shoeing is corrective to some point. Perhaps a horse is shod simply for protection, but then why is he shod after that? Not because the shoes are worn out, but because his feet are long, out of balance. So we are correcting a long “Distorted” foot. If the feet didn’t change we would just bolt the shoes on and be done with it.

Distortion is the biggest enemy to the horse’s foot. Distortion causes loss of equilibrium between the bones and soft tissue components in the foot as well as up the leg. Shoeing goals should be aimed at maximizing the biomechanical needs of the foot and leg while minimizing distortion, this is “Correct” horseshoeing.

The problem is what is biomechanically correct is a long way from the industry’s paradigm of correct. Actually there is no set measurable standard for what is correct in either the veterinary or farrier industry. A flat shoe to the perimeter of the foot is the norm. This ridged style of shoeing starts to take its toll on the foot. This can be seen as a dished or bull-nosed foot, long toe – low heel, broken back hoof-pastern axis, thin soles, crushed heels, the list goes on and on. To combat this, the industry has come up with an arsenal of products: bar shoes, pads, natural balance shoes, plastic shoes, the list goes on and on. The problem is most of these appliances are used as a mechanical Band-Aid called “Corrective Shoeing.” There is nothing wrong with corrective shoeing as long as the goal is to produce a correct foot. To do this we need to understand the biomechanical needs of the foot. The corrective shoe should create equilibrium in the foot which helps the natural foot to regenerate and eventually replace the corrective appliance if possible.

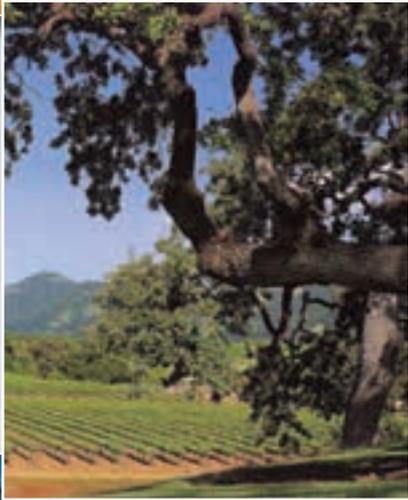
Measuring the foot can give us a direct set of directions for shoeing that are specific to the four areas of balance; vertical depth of the foot, side to side balance, heel to toe balance and the alignment of the hoof-pastern axis. This is what makes “corrective shoeing” correct. Shoeing without a measurable plan is a crap shoot. Understanding what is necessary to get the foot balanced or back into equilibrium is very important. A foot may require simply a couple of strokes with the rasp to be balanced or it may require an extensive rebuild, depending on the pathology of the foot. There may be several different shoeing options that can create the mechanical goal of the foot, but the mechanical goal should never be compromised. Doing only part of what is needed will produce less than satisfactory results.

Getting lame horses sound requires a lot of time, money and patience, and may require some ‘out of the box thinking’ by the farrier, veterinarian, trainer and owner. Learning a new approach to doing something may mean giving up an old belief. There is an old saying “A close shave will cost you a beard.”

Things can happen to any horse that are out of everyone’s control but the best way to stay away from corrective shoeing is to keep the horse correct. Horseshoeing, Hot, Cold, Correct. For more information go to [www.balancedbreakover.com](http://www.balancedbreakover.com).



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## THE WESTERN WEB

A look at all things cowboy on the information superhighway.

# CowboyPoetry.com

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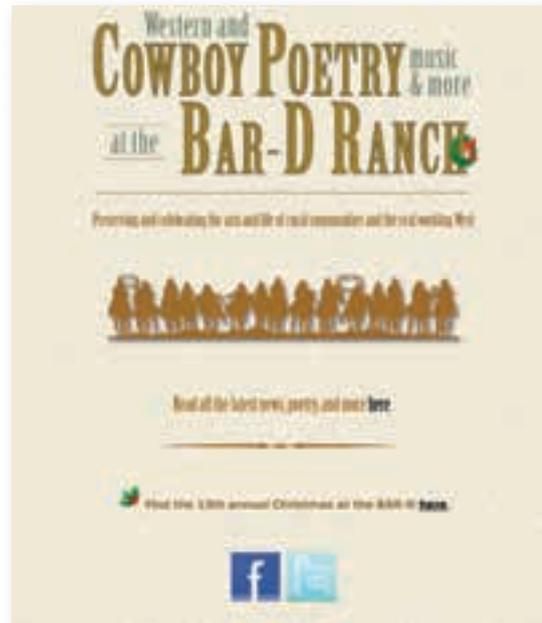
By Rod Miller

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**W**ho wrote that poem about reincarnation? When was “The Strawberry Roan” written? Where can I find cowboy poetry events in my area? What is cowboy poetry, anyway?

The answers to these and just about every other question about cowboy poetry are just a few keystrokes and a couple of mouse clicks away. Simply log on to CowboyPoetry.com and you’re tuned into a world that’s larger, deeper, wider, and more diverse than you can imagine.

Numbers tell part of the story. An exact tally is impossible to come by, but year-old estimates indicate there are somewhere north of 1,100 poets and songwriters represented on the site, and more than 6,200 poems or song lyrics posted. And it’s all easily accessible to the 70,000-plus folks who visit every month. Beyond the web site, around 4,600 have subscribed to receive the associated newsletter via e-mail, CowboyPoetry.com’s Facebook page reaches 5,000 people each week, and Twitter feeds are followed by approximately 1,770 readers.



CowboyPoetry.com is the leading online resource for cowboy poets and fans of the genre.



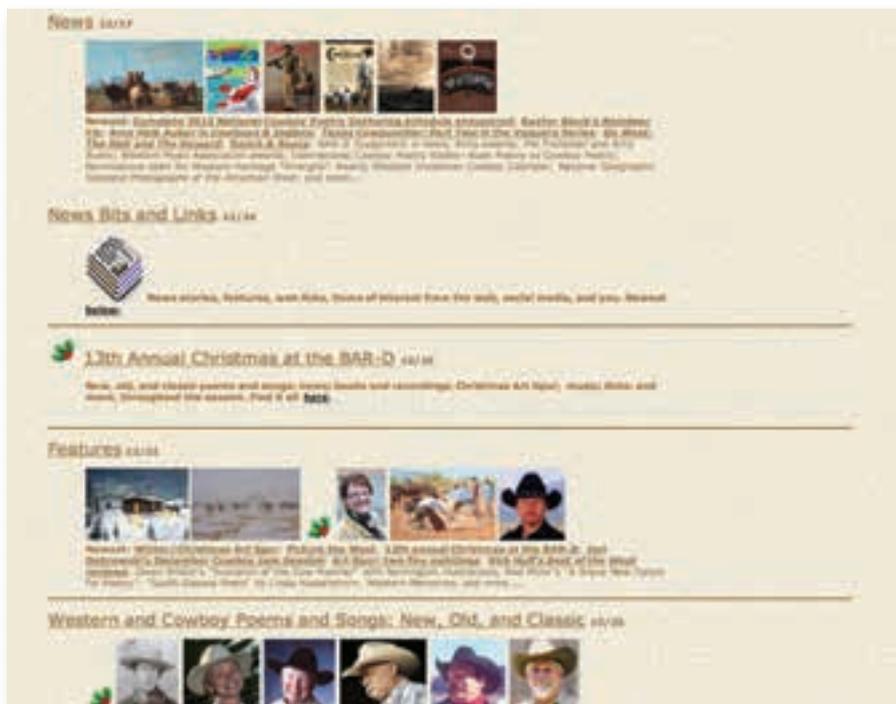
So, it seems, popularity is beyond question. But what about purpose?

Margo Metegrano, who launched the site January 1, 2000, and still manages and edits CowboyPoetry.com, says, “I see cowboy poetry, and therefore CowboyPoetry.com, as a good bridge between people in the ranching culture and the rest of the otherwise uninformed world. Coming from the latter gives me some advantage on that ‘outsider’ perspective and I hope that, and my continual reading, research and involvement, helps make up for my lack of actual experience in the culture.”

Not only does Metegrano see that cultural link as worth pursuing, she believes poetry lends passion to the pursuit. “Cowboy poetry, like other arts, can get across concepts and ideas that resonate with readers and listeners in a way other communications may not,” she says. “I know that many poets hear from people new to the genre and new to that culture who express their appreciation and wider understanding after being exposed to the poetry. It happened to me.”

The connection to the larger world the web site offers is understood and appreciated by poets, as well. Canadian poet Doris Daley says, “Everything good about community life that binds and bonds people together also happens in cowboy poetry life by checking in at CowboyPoetry.com. I feel like I’ve had a visit with all my friends – from Oklahoma to Montana to California to North and South Dakota to Washington – every time I click on ‘What’s New.’”

In addition to cowboy poetry new and old, the site offers relevant news, information about forthcoming events, reviews, essays, feature articles and more. And it all matters. According to Randy Williams, curator of the Fife Folklore Archives at Utah State University, the site “is an important tool for aficionados and researchers of the American cowboy poetry movement. Margo Metegrano works tirelessly to get the backstory on many poets and their work, and encourages poetry and scholarship.”



The site keeps visitors up to date on new releases, upcoming poetry gatherings, and happenings in the cowboy poetry community.



# A Helping Hand

Self-employed cowboys are counted on to help both large and small producers turn a profit.

By Paul A. Cañada

The baying of yellow black-mouth curs easily cut through the dry South Texas air and echoed down the draw. Nearby, two riders hurried, navigating thick brush as best they could manage. The dogs successfully tracked and located remnant cattle that had evaded their owner all summer. With the help of the dogs, the hands coaxed the remaining cattle out from heavy, thorny cover.

Much of the brush country of the South Texas plains remains as rugged as it was when cattle and sheep first grazed the land. It's an unforgiving country, blanketed by low-growing and thorny mesquite, granjeno and huisache trees. This is the country which birthed two legendary breeds – the brushpopper and the longhorn.

One of the cowboys, Hector Torrez, grew up helping his father work cattle and start horses. Like most sons of West Texas' rural families, Torrez spent as much time in the saddle as he did behind a school desk.

Torrez and his partner caught and corralled the cattle with few problems. Torrez rode a young colt he had been slowly working into his remuda. The horse had proven brush-worthy, but his mettle would be tested before the morning was over.

As the gate to the pen swung to a close, a lone heifer charged between the two riders and pushed past the gate. Torrez quickly turned his mount and roped the animal, catching it around the horns. The cow turned

back to fight the rope. Attempting to improve his leverage, Torrez slung the rope to the other side of his horse and repositioned his mount. Just then, the cow caught the colt off balance, knocking him to the ground.

Picking himself up, a sore Torrez turned to see the angered heifer standing between him and the safety of the corral, and staring with ill intent. With heavy legs, Torrez took off running. Still roped around its horns, the large animal followed.

"I tried to run, but was hurting," Torrez says. "She was so close I could feel her breath on my pants. She was fixin' to get me"

Just then, the rope, still dallied to Torrez's saddle horn, pulled taut, stopping the enraged animal. The weight of the cow knocked the colt, who had been trying to regain his feet, back to the ground.

The second cowboy finally headed the cow and was able to get the animal down. Torrez limped over to his colt. The youngster jumped up, no worse for the wear.

"Looking back now, it's funny," Torrez says. "It wasn't funny when it was happening. That cow could have put me out of action long enough to miss the busiest time of the year."

Self-employed cowboys like Torrez can't afford to be injured and unavailable. Their income derived from spring and fall roundups is critical. It's during these times when their roping and horsemanship skills are required the most.



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photos by Paul Cañada

Day hands play an increasingly important role in the ranching culture, as many outfits, large and small, have scaled back their full-time crews. For ranchers, using day help can mean the difference between making money and losing it.

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While gathering and moving cattle is done in much the same way it was a century ago, the business of ranching has changed greatly. With every passing year, it becomes harder for ranchers to earn a reasonable income. Ever-shrinking profits leave little money to cover labor, so cattle producers bolster their crews with “day hands” like Torrez to help with seasonal work – gathering, branding and shipping.

When Torrez began hiring out as a day hand, local ranchers kept him busy starting colts, gathering remnants, and moving herds to new pastures. Torrez had well-trained horses and dogs, and developed a reputation for finding and gathering cattle in the brush. However, things have changed during the last 10 years. Much of the rugged country that made day hands and their dogs a necessity has been cleared.

“Nowadays, ranches are smaller and fenced in,” Torrez says. “The thick brush has been replaced by fields of coastal grass. There are fewer jobs for day hands and their dogs. I’m beginning to think my generation will be the last of the brushpoppers.”

Considering how tough the job is, and how hard it is to make a living as a day hand, one questions what drives these self-employed stockmen to saddle up. Many were born into ranching, so it’s the only life and livelihood they know.

In Cleve Anseth’s case, cowboying wasn’t a family vocation, but rather a lifestyle choice he made early on. His family didn’t own cattle or horses, but their neighbors did. As a young child growing up in Montana, he rode friends’ horses. During their teens, Cleve and his brothers



bought horses, learned to ride and rope, and worked part-time on nearby ranches. Anseth eventually took a job in Oregon, working for the vast ZX, near Paisley. He worked for the ranch for 10 years, starting colts and working cattle, before deciding to strike out on his own.

“I married and moved into town,” he says. “I had a family and home to care for and being a day hand was my best option. It was scary making that jump. A lot of people decide to become day hands and it doesn’t work out for them.”

Day work in south-central Oregon is similar to day work done elsewhere. Day hands are called to gather, move, ship and brand cattle in the spring and fall. In Oregon, as in many parts of the West, ranchers often graze cattle on public lands, adding logistical challenges to a day hand’s job.

Much of the areas Anseth works are covered with thick forests and require tough horses and smart dogs to locate, gather and move cattle out of timber. Anseth once ran Catahoula hounds, like many of his peers, but now uses border collies.

“I chiefly use the dogs when I’m working cattle by myself,” he explained. “It’s sure easier to move 350 head of cattle with three dogs.”

Thanks to his reputation as a hand, Anseth has plenty of work. His years working on the ZX helped pave the way for his day work. According to the Paisley cowboy, the “come back” is the key to making day work a success.

“Working as a day hand is no different than being a full-time cowboy,” he says. “If you screw someone over, they’re not going to invite you back. Even worse, they may tell others about you. You want to do a good job so they want you back. It’s important to be open to what needs to be done. You’re at their place and you have to do it the way they want it done. You also need to pay attention and be responsive.”

Like Anseth, Dub Metcalf wasn’t born into a

ranching family. The Texas cowboy was born and raised on a family farm in Arkansas, but dreamed of being a cowboy. After high school, he moved to the town of Silver, in West Texas’ Coke County.

“I did a little bit of everything when I first arrived in Texas,” said Metcalf. “I worked the oil fields, because you couldn’t make a living back then off of ranch work alone.”

For 32 years, Metcalf worked a job during the weekdays and spent evenings and weekends starting colts and doing day work. Eventually, he started leasing land and began running sheep. His time was split between sheep and cattle pens. During the last dozen years, he’s worked as a self-employed day hand and sheep rancher. With the exception of the Spade Ranch, most of his customers are small producers.

“I work for the Spade three or four times a year, when they work about 200 sections,” says Metcalf. “In the past, they employed a big crew, but just like every other outfit, they now keep a minimum crew and rely on good day help during busier times.”

The smaller outfits Metcalf works for are chiefly family-run cow-calf and sheep operations. During one week this year, he helped gather and ship 500 head of cattle. A few days later, he helped gather goats out of the mountains. A day later, he was back working cattle, helping a rancher ship two loads of heifers.

Like most day hands, the spring and fall are Metcalf’s busiest times, but he doesn’t have trouble finding work in slower times. In his part of the country, self-employed hands network with one another. As soon as one hears of a job, they’re on the phone, calling friends.

Overhead costs associated with day work are tremendous. With vehicle and gas costs climbing, and the costs of keeping a remuda of horses, a cowboy needs to be smart about his expenses.

“I keep my costs to a minimum by partnering with a buddy,” Metcalf says. “We commute to jobs together



Texas cowboy Dub Metcalf has made a significant part of his living doing day work for ranches.

and split the costs.”

Montana’s Dean Delp is a fifth-generation cowboy. He works the same land his family first toiled over in 1918. Today, he runs a cow-calf operation of about 100 head on Crow Reservation land, located between Sheridan, Wyoming, and Billings. He, his wife, and his two youngest children live in Harden, Montana. Delp works as much for other ranchers as he does for himself. Most of his customers have a minimum of 300 head.

“I do day work because I just don’t have a big enough operation to make a living, doing it alone,” he says. “And so, I spend most of my time riding for others.”

Delp finds most of his work by word of mouth and

has been working for the same customers for years. Nearly all the day work he does is within a 50-mile radius from his home. On most jobs, he leaves early in the morning and returns in the evening. On jobs where he’s required to stay a few days, he hauls most of his remuda with him. Normally, he rotates three to four horses a week.

“I’m careful where and when I ride my younger, less experienced animals and when I do so, I make sure I can get back to change horses at midday,” he says. “Some of the horses are better at one thing than another, but I try to rotate them because they need to be able to do all things well.”

Delp says his region has been influenced by cowboys from the Great Basin, California and Texas, creating a



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“In some communities, if you don’t work cows exactly as they do, you’re wrong,” he says. “Here, when working for someone else, you work with a team of cowboys and you’re exposed to a number of ways of doing things.” Because Delp relies on his day-hand income, it’s hard to turn away work. The area has a shortage of part-time hands and this keeps Delp busy. Scheduling time for his own work can be difficult.

“When somebody needs your help, you answer,” he said. “That’s the disadvantage of doing day work. A lot

of times, I’ll think my schedule is clear and with one phone call it all changes.”

Day hands like Delp, Anzeth, Metcalf and Torrez are assets to the cattle industry and their local communities. They fill the labor gap created by rising fuel and feed costs, allowing producers, large and small, to squeeze profits from their operations. Without the day hand, many ranchers would be unable to conduct business as usual. In many ways, the day hand is helping preserve a lifestyle and way of living that might otherwise be lost.



Paul Cañada is a writer living in Texas.



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## THE WESTERN HORSE

# Moving On

Horses often provide metaphors that allow us to make sense of our own lives.



By Jayme Feary

*Author's note: The adventure of the cowboy life has always lured men and women west. But for many persons, realities force them to decide whether to continue working as cowboys or leave in search of better opportunities. This essay is about my own decision.*

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If only I had recognized the ominous nature of the little horse's coughing and wheezing.

I worked at a local guest ranch, the Rocking R, where part of my job was to turn out the horse herd. That summer evening, like all the others, I threw open the corral gate and released the herd into the gathering darkness. Forty horses, eager to graze the buffalo grass on the bench section above the ranch, nickered and flowed through like sand through the pinch of an hourglass, raising dust that filtered through my nostrils and settled on my tongue with a hint of loam and manure. The flow came slowly at first, held back by the

narrowness of the gate; and then, free, the churning throng fanned out and rumbled into the dusk.

Then came Patches. The little red and white paint horse trotted head-down out of the gate, phlegm oozing from his nose. He coughed. Wide-eyed, he watched the herd lope away without him. He tried to run but fell back to a walk. He lowered his head and followed, alone. I thought about catching him and turning him back into the corral, but I told myself he'd be better in the morning. Herd-run ranch horses often get sick. They usually heal just as fast. Their immune systems are among the most effective of any species. I'd check him in the morning.



artwork by Sandra Merrwin

*Patches*

I rode out to gather the horses at dawn during that cool, still hour between night and day, when the whole world pauses to take a breath. The peaks etched their silhouette against the sky. A burgundy sunrise slid over the Absarokas as if red plums had burst onto the horizon. The smell of fir and spruce hung moist in the dew. Off in the distance a sand hill crane honked. Bands of horses, ghostly silhouettes, grazed quietly, grass-tearing and tail-swishing the only sounds in a land otherwise so silent that a cowboy could hear his own

breath, could almost fall asleep a-horseback to the lullaby of horseshoes against sand, of chaps brushing through sage. Mostly I remember the quiet, the kind that either calms a man or drives him insane.

I loved and loathed this type of morning that eased my mind and unsettled it, too, with thoughts of the future. Ten years earlier I had quit my career and traded in my suburban existence to live and work as a cowboy. I'd grown up on a cattle farm in Alabama and had wanted to get back to my roots and move west to feel



*Patches Down*

more alive. Go west, young man. I began working for outfitters and ranchers and dude ranchers and, during the long winters, took whatever jobs I could find. Despite the financial struggle, I loved my life and did not want it to change.

But every dream has a dark side, and as I passed the age of 40 and my body showed the first signs of aging, as the years accumulated and my finances fell to pot, a little voice began chirping. You can't work these ranch jobs forever. I know you love your lifestyle, but the day is coming when old age will catch you and you'll have nothing to show but a worn saddle. Will memories and stories sustain you then? The voice always ended with the same statement: You are wasting yourself. But in the freshness of each morning the life of a hand didn't seem wasteful. It felt like adventure and looked like beauty and smelled like leather and ponderosa pine.

One by one I pushed each band into a loose herd in

the middle of the main meadow and triple counted the heads. One missing: Patches. He had not been with his friends in their normal hiding spot in the draw behind Roundtop Hill.

I needed to hurry, to bring in Patches before the rest of the herd drifted and dispersed. The morning grew brighter and made the animals easier to spot. I trotted my horse over the 640-acre section, riding a grid of coulees and draws and meadows and patches of timber, scanning for color differences and movement.

Perched in a limber pine, a Clark's nutcracker, a lookout, spotted me and squawked a warning to its flock. I rode closer and a dozen of them swooped from different trees to perches at a safe distance. I trotted my horse back to the herd, hoping the animals had not scattered. On a hill a couple hundred yards out, I feathered back my reins and scanned the meadow, searching for clues in the terrain, the sky, the breeze. Where was Patches? The horses had scattered but still grazed in a loose group. Had I missed an area? Had I ridden by him? Had he fallen into a ravine? A redtail hawk – supposedly an Indian sign for direction – screeched. Barely mowing its wings, it surfed the rising currents and angled off toward the ranch. I reined my horse in the hawk's direction and kicked him into a lope.

Patches stood huddled in an isolated draw near the ranch. It was as far as he'd traveled. He stood still, head almost to his knees, his chest laboring for breath, his



lungs rattling like a set of worn valves. He labored to draw in every possible gram of oxygen. I rode up, dismounted, and knelt next to his muzzle, stroking his forehead. I thought about trotting my horse to the ranch and retrieving my pistol just in case Patches had to be put down, but I needed to bring in the herd. I left Patches and trotted off on my horse to get the others, hoping the sight of their passing would motivate him to follow. When the herd roared by, coating Patches in dust, not even his pals in the Hide-n-Seek Gang whinnied to him. I galloped behind, squinting through the cloud at Patches, waving my arms and whooping and slapping leather, hoping he'd find the energy to join in. He raised his head and watched the remuda flow past and downhill toward the ranch. The dust and the snorting and the rumbling and the hollering fell into freeze frame. In slow motion I floated past Patches, his expression so clear and humanlike – a mixture of sadness and resignation – as if he realized that his body and life were not his own anymore, that he no longer had a choice in this world. Patches hung his head, and something like acceptance washed over him.

Patches' countenance so consumed me that I forgot I was galloping in rough country. His expression felt familiar, though I could not place it. I thought, Why do I feel so unsettled? My stomach tightened into a knot. I'd come back for Patches later. I rode off downhill, punching the herd toward the ranch.

Patches was what some hands referred to as a "Mexican" horse, a

smaller-sized animal that picked his feet up high when he walked and bobbed his head like a chicken pecking corn. No one was sure about his color. A "paint" is what most called him, a collage of red on white. He didn't look like a paint to me. His splotches were too small and random, like a shorthorn bull.

Patches was a dude horse. The personality mix of any dude string is similar to a group of people. Some are mischievous; some troublemakers; some flashy and attention-seeking; some quiet and unassuming; some humorous, businesslike, bold, or lazy. Many work without complaint or need for attention. Every day they roll out, go to work, and do their jobs. They do them the next day and the next until years pass and hardly anyone has noticed.



Like schoolteachers, we wranglers always focused our attention on the troublemakers. Patches was one of the good horses, a 10-year-old who sat midway back in the class and never made a peep. He paid attention and did not act out. Did his best. Over the years he had hauled hundreds of guests, most with minimal riding ability, across some of the roughest and most scenic country in the lower 48. Years later, guests who'd ridden Patches often forgot our names, but none forgot Patches. They uttered his name with reverence, a mix of thankfulness and admiration for his role in their finest hours – moments of Levis against saddles, of green sage against blue sky, of dreams recaptured and worries loped away.

One guest from New Mexico loved Patches so much that she drove 12 miles, several down a hollowed-out road, to buy him carrots. An attorney said he felt invincible on Patches, that he wished he could ride Patches to every court appearance. And then there were the children. Patches understood them. The sweet blue-eyed girl who begged her parents to let Patches sleep with her in their cabin. The smart-ass teenager who spewed vitriol at his parents and siblings but sat on the top rail every afternoon sketching Patches on loose-leaf paper, his face peaceful and relaxed. His drawings depicted a muscular and noble horse that arched its neck and looked forward.

Why had Patches' expression spooked me? Sadness? No, I'd seen many ranch horses die. It's part of the job. Galloping behind the herd, pushing them toward the ranch, I had an epiphany: Patches' expression reminded me of my own face in the bunkhouse mirror, the look of an individual who is beginning to understand that one phase is drawing to a close, that no matter how much he loves his life – his location, work, friends, and family – he must consider moving on. This is what I had seen in Patches: his certainty that he would never again lope across a country so vast. I saw in him an animal that

wanted to remain, but his life was galloping headlong away from him toward an infinite unknown.

I didn't know it at the time, but my need to rescue him – and to project on him some of my own human thoughts and emotions – was really an effort to save myself.

I slowed my horse, peeled off, and circled back uphill. If I got Patches to the ranch, he might have a chance. I thought, We can medicate him and call the vet. I should've treated him last night. If only...

Patches did not look up. He stood there like a Remington bronze, head hung but coughing and heaving and staring off into the sage with a slack face. I had never seen him like that, in the way of old horses and old people who know their time is coming. But Patches was not old. He was like me, a middle-aged male with the rest of his life before him. I rode by and nudged him in the ribs with the toe of my boot. He halfway looked at me. "Let's go, Patches," I said. "We've got to get you some medicine."

Patches didn't want to move. I slipped my hand down the reins to the last foot of leather, slapped him on the rear, and screamed, "Hey-ya. Get up!" Patches' eyes widened. He threw back his head and looked at me, questioning. I popped him harder. "I said 'Get up!'" Patches tucked his butt and scooted off, and I rode behind, whirling my whip above him.

I let Patches stop 50 feet before reaching the corral, and he conked like a stalled pickup. The wranglers were already catching and tacking the day's horses. They carried blankets and saddles on their hips, trudged back and forth from tack room to hitch rails, glancing at Patches. Clearly he was sick.

The area's only vet was out of town for a few days, so we quarantined Patches in the round pen and doctored him ourselves with medicines on hand. In two days he began to breathe easier and his eyes showed some life, but after several more days he stopped eating



*Feast for Griz*

and struggled to stay on his feet. Before nightfall, while sounds of conversation and laughter wafted from the lodge, Patches wobbled and then dropped to the ground, wheezing, and congestion overtook his lungs. At 1 a.m. his eyes turned milky and dull. He lay heaving, head up with his front legs folded underneath. The dew froze on his back and I covered him with saddle blankets to conserve his body heat. At 2 a.m. he began rocking like a mother in a chair and periodically he leaned harder and tried to stand as if making a surge at life. Then he fell flat and convulsed. The sign every horseman dreads.

The ranch owner, Mr. Hansen, slept in an office chair, a .38 on his desk. I touched his shoulder and startled him awake. "He's suffering," I said. "It's time." He nodded like any good rancher accustomed to bucking up and doing what he dreads, and he slipped the pistol into his coat pocket and trudged outside with me.

Mr. Hansen's eyes passed over Patches as if he was, in tribute, remembering every moment in the horse's life, how he owed his family's livelihood to such animals. He seemed to acknowledge what, at times like this, every rancher admits: he hates horses and loves them

with all his heart. Patches raised his head a bit and Mr. Hansen kneeled in front of him. I focused the beam of the flashlight on the imaginary crisscross between ear and eye, ear and eye. Focusing on the x and not daring to lose the mark, Mr. Hansen extended his arm, cocked the hammer, and winced.

The muzzle flash lit the night and Patches fell flat. He shuddered and then suddenly, wide-eyed, raised his head, folded his legs underneath, and rocked as if trying to stand. Open-mouthed, Mr. Hansen and I stared at one another. And then Patches plopped over. He seized and then went slack. Under his head, a stream of crimson flowed out and pooled around my boot, steaming like a warm lake.

Patches was one of many ranch horses I saw die in its prime. Farmers and ranchers, people who live close to the land, tend not to sentimentalize these passings, for they are too common and too much a part of life. But any rancher who tells you that no animal deaths affect him is a bald-faced liar. Sometimes, only in the most private of places, hardened men and women cover their faces with their hands. But to me Patches' death felt more like weight than sadness, like carrying a bag of sweet feed on each shoulder. Something about his passing felt personal. If only I had noticed him sooner and done something when I first had the chance.

Word of Patches' dying spread through the valley. What sickness had killed him? The vet called from the road to tell us she was almost home and needed to analyze some tissue. She needed samples of blood and brain. If the sickness took hold in the herd, every horse in the upper Wind River Valley would be at risk.

Mr. Hansen directed another hand to chain up Patches to the tractor and drag his body through the sage for a quarantine burial in a coulee in the lower meadow. I kneeled in the red mud, held out a coffee cup, and put my knife to Patches' neck. "We need a brain

sample, too," I said to the wrangler. "Go the tool shed and fetch an axe. Crack the skull. Work the handle back and forth and reach in there and scoop some out. Drive the samples to the vet's office. She'll get there about the time you do."

The wrangler wrapped a chain around Patches' back legs, looped it around the three-point hitch, and dragged him bobbing through the sage, leaving a swath in the dirt.

Three mornings later I herded horses high along a ridge overlooking the lower meadow. A bird chortled, "Chick-a-dee-dee-dee." Breathing in the musk of sage, I peered downhill toward the coulee two hundred yards away. Buzzards circled. Was Patches' body visible among the sagebrush?

The hint of his silhouette showed through. Ravens cawed several yards away from the carcass, moving closer like a platoon creeping toward an enemy. Suddenly they scattered, flying in every direction. I pulled my field glasses from my saddlebag and scanned the carcass. The ravens flapped their wings, fussed, and reorganized. Movement stirred behind the silhouette, and a grizzly appeared and charged the ravens, scattering them again. The bruin returned to the carcass and buried its crimson snout. I watched the bear tear pieces of Patches' flesh. Then more movement near the carcass.

Covered in blood, two cubs waddled beside their mother, feeding, stripping pieces of muscle and swallowing as if they were playing more than eating. One of the babies climbed atop Patches like scaling a slide in a park, and it slid off and rolled to the ground. The little ones ate and frolicked. Play and survival intertwined.

The breeze picked up and soon the mother caught our scent. She stood on her hinds and though she was downhill and away, she seemed to rise to my level and gaze into my eyes. She stretched, craning her cinnamon neck from side to side to get a better view, but we were



too far for a bear's poor eyesight. She didn't need her eyes. She pointed into the air one of nature's most sensitive noses, one able to smell a dead carcass from 15 miles away. Once she had us in her nose, she dropped back down, her nostrils flaring, taking us in and gauging our identity, the distance, the threat. And then she turned and bound down the draw and out of sight, the two cubs close behind. Until the bears returned, the ravens and buzzards and coyotes could have their fill. The carcass posed no risk to the community. The vet had said Patches was not contagious.

Across the meadow and far down in the valley, cattle, black specks in a sea of green, grazed and digested grass into meat and manure. The creek ribboned down valley, searching for its river. Later in the day, the temperature would rise and a portion of the water would evaporate into the clouds, gathering and falling again as rain.

Before long, the country would brown like a biscuit in a Dutch oven and the aspens would turn the color of cornbread. Then the snows would paint the entire world white. Spring would bloom green, followed by another summer and another fall and winter, until, lost on the continuum, I would awaken one day a hollowed-



*Moving On*

out cowboy with nothing to show for my life but a prattling of stories that no one cared to hear. Deep down, I knew my choice: I could continue on my path and die destitute and happy, or leave in search of financial stability. Go east, young man.

The real opportunities were elsewhere – beyond the clear water – across the bridges to the kinds of places



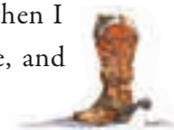
where people outnumber cattle and the sky might as well be the ground because they both look the same. If only I could find a way to earn a decent living doing the things I loved.

How does a person know if he should stay or go?

I thought about Patches, and that's when it hit me, his place in the cycle of endings and beginnings. I needed to move on from the life of a hand and make something of myself, but I did not want to go. I wanted to live out my days near Riphorn Peak, Hiawatha Pass, and the

North Fork. I wanted to dip my toes in Horse Creek and hunt the trophy bull elk hiding up on Colter Pass.

Slowly I wheeled my horse 360 degrees and took in the scenery, trying to sear it into my memory so that as an old man I could tell myself the stories. The mountains stood between me and the whirling world. I held my face to the wind and inhaled, holding the air in my lungs as long as I could, and then I let out a deep sigh, squeezed my horse, and trotted east.



Jayne Feary is a writer living in Jackson, Wyoming.

## Upcoming Clinics

### Buck Brannaman

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

March 7-10, Cave Creek, Arizona; (623) 742-7285

March 15-18, Grove, Oklahoma; (479) 927-3688

March 22-25, Belton, Texas; (325) 396-2461

April 5-8, Riverside, California; (951) 763-9580

April 12-15, Ojai, California; (805) 643-2555

### Peter Campbell

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

March 2-3, Congress, Arizona; (518) 260-9594

### Tom Curtin

[www.tomcurtin.net](http://www.tomcurtin.net)

April 6-7, Los Angeles, California; (310) 345-3274

April 12-14, Geelong, Victoria, Australia;

[stevecrowe@live.com.au](mailto:stevecrowe@live.com.au)

### Paul Dietz

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

March 8, New River, Arizona; (623) 742-7285

### Dave & Gwynn Weaver

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

March 1-3, Maricopa, Arizona; (406) 425-0744

March 23-25, Grass Valley, California; (530) 896-9566

March 30-April 1, Orland, California; (530) 896-9566

### Joe Wolter

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

February 23-25, Geelong, Victoria, Australia;

[myhappytrails2000@yahoo.com](mailto:myhappytrails2000@yahoo.com)

February 28-March 3, Seymour, Victoria, Australia;

[bodytechsmash@bigpond.com](mailto:bodytechsmash@bigpond.com)

March 22-23, St. Martinville, Louisiana;

(337) 788-7531

April 5-7, Alpine, Texas; (432) 364-2234

April 9-13, Aspermont, Texas; (940) 989-2570

## Upcoming Horse Sales

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April 19-20

Yellowstone Boys & Girls Ranch, Billings, Montana

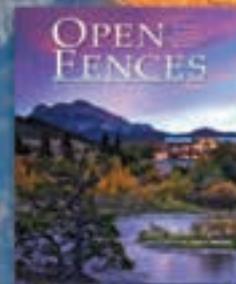
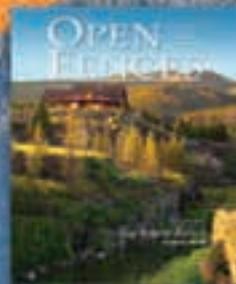
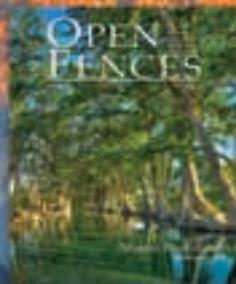
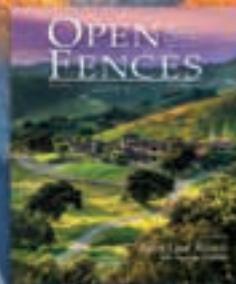
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COAST TO COAST



# Tom Dorrance: A Personal Recollection

The iconic horseman had an uncanny ability  
to bring out the truth.

By Hal Cannon

I first met Tom Dorrance in October of 1996 when he came to conduct a horse clinic at Maggie Creek Ranch near Elko, Nevada. At the time, my wife, Teresa, had a wonderful horse named Badger who panicked any time she tried to touch his ears. Teresa hoped that Tom could help. I too wanted to meet this legendary horse trainer and possibly interview him for a story for National Public Radio.

Tom Dorrance grew up on a cattle ranch in northeastern Oregon, in the Wallowa Mountains. Born in 1910, he was about the same generation as my father. When we talked, he told me his people came west in the 1880s. Tom grew up in a world of horses and did not see his first car until he was five. Though he was a sickly kid, he found ranch life endlessly fascinating. "I never finished eighth grade," he told me. "I don't worry about that. For what I was interested in, there was not a college or university. It was right there beside me."

Sitting in the stands that day at the horse clinic, I watched as horse after horse, and horse owner after horse owner, was brought into Tom Dorrance's world. As each participant came forward with a problem, Tom unwearingly focused on the issue brought before him. His manner was respectful. His style was not showy, but in every case I could see the intensity of his observation.

Then there was a clear explanation presented which offered a possible solution. I could see that sometimes his comments unnerved people, revealing deep patterns of behavior that resisted correction. Sometimes the frustration hung in the air like dust being kicked up by an out-of-control horse.

Tom seemed to have infinite patience, yet he was firm with both horse owner and horse. Often it took several attempts for people to get what Tom was asking them to do differently, but eventually they usually succeeded. Teresa, for instance, told Tom about the horribly painful infections we had found in Badger's ears when we got him and how, after he was cured, he was still so afraid of being touched that it was nearly impossible to bridle him. Tom observed that Teresa was still giving Badger minute signals telling him to protect his ears. Within minutes of Tom's help, Badger lost this fear. These years later, Teresa still muses on Tom's lesson and wonders how often we telegraph our assumptions in a way that reinforces fear and bad behavior.

As I watched, it almost seemed as if the owners were unmasked by their own horses. I recalled reading how Shakespeare used the way in which characters treated their steeds to reveal their true worth as people. The horse does not know how to lie, to cover up, to allow

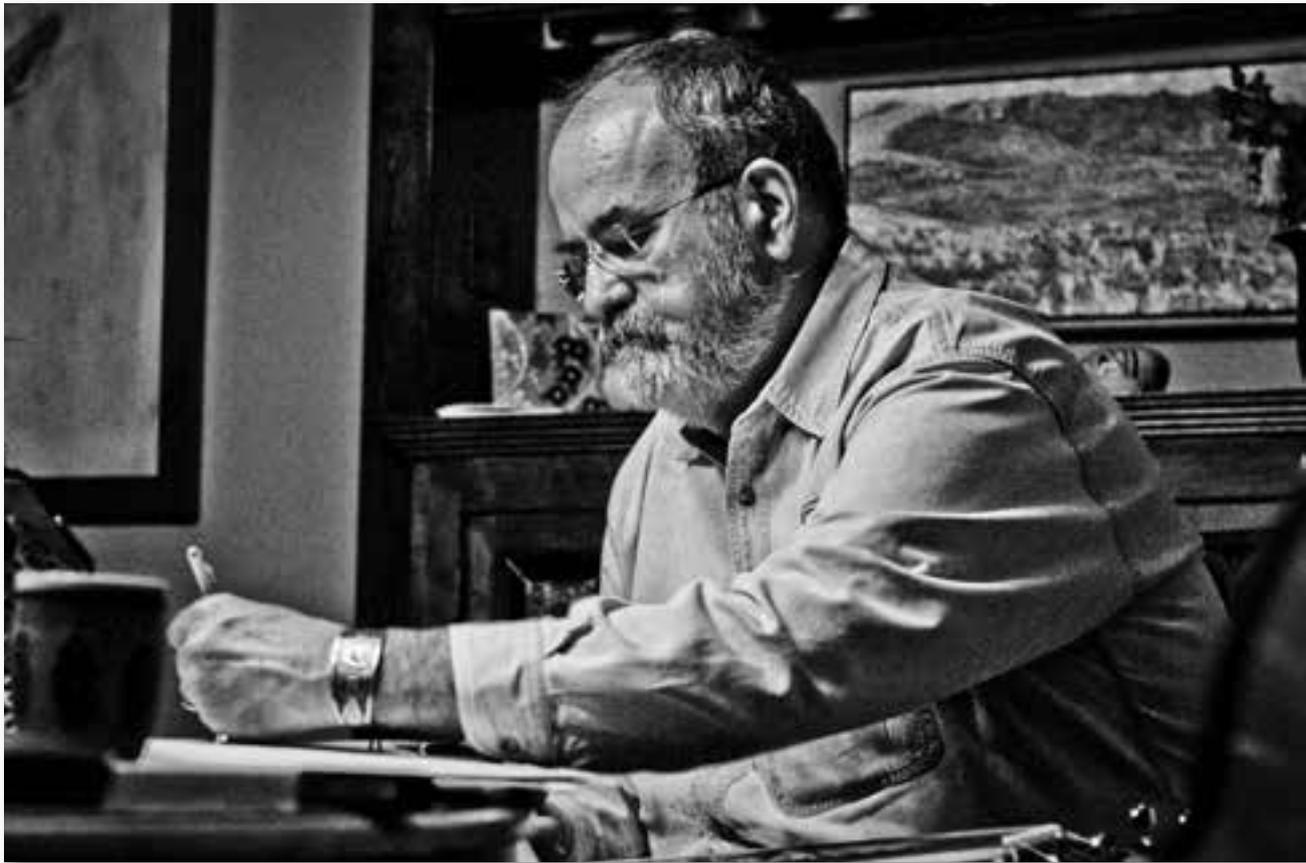


photo by A.J. Mangum

Writer and folklorist Hal Cannon, Salt Lake City, Utah.

money, position or class to get in the way of its relationship with man.

Frankly, I was glad I had no horse with me that day. I had come to interview Tom. I would be the one asking the questions. I felt safe, but I did carry a small confession. I wanted Tom to fill in the blanks in a story that had begun a few years before.

Around 1992, I answered a phone call from Patrick deFreites, an acquaintance who owned a bookstore in Salt Lake City. He told me his brother's neighbor in London was researching a book on the West and asked if he could he call me. I agreed and later received a call from a gentleman with a high-tone British accent who, with little prelude, asked if I'd ever heard the term, "horse whisperer." I hadn't. After some conversation, I

learned that I was talking to Nicholas Evans, who was working on a novel about people who had an uncanny ability to communicate with horses.

I explained that I was a folklorist and though I had spent much of my career working with ranch people and grew up with horses, my expertise was with cowboy music, poetry and other expressive arts of the occupation. I mentioned that, in the cowboy world, a revolution was going on, one which challenged the old methods of horse breaking. People were working with horses in a new way, not so much as masters but as partners, "making the right stuff easy, the wrong stuff hard." I mentioned the Dorrance brothers, Tom and Bill, and Ray Hunt. Evans immediately took interest. I believe I told him where Tom Dorrance lived, but that

was as far as the conversation went.

In 1995, *The Horse Whisperer* came out. It was Evans' debut novel and it immediately became a bestseller with 15 million copies sold. Shortly after, Robert Redford took an option on the book and consequently made a movie, which was released in 1998.

I was invited to the film's premiere in Provo, Utah, where I hoped to meet Evans but he was not in attendance.

I was always curious if my phone conversation had taken him to visit Tom Dorrance or Ray Hunt. I remember at the time several

men in the horse clinic business started using the term "horse whisperer," and some claimed they inspired the book. In researching this article I finally found out where Evans gives credit. At the time I didn't have a clue. Here's Nicholas Evans:

"Researching the book was a life-changing experience for me. I traveled for many weeks around the American West and met three astonishing horsemen: Tom Dorrance, Ray Hunt and Buck Brannaman [who did the horse work for the movie]. One day, at Tom's place in California, I watched him sort out a traumatized horse in the course of a few hours. He turned him from a terrified and terrifying wild creature into a soft and gentle one. Tom said afterwards: 'He'd just forgotten how to be a horse. All I did was help him remember.' He showed me the trick with that piece of cord that Tom Booker shows Annie in the book. I still have the cord he gave me."

But the story does not end there. When I finally sat down with Tom after the clinic that day in Elko, he had quite a different perspective on *The Horse Whisperer*. He told me that when the book came out, Evans had send him a copy. Though I was not recording when he

told me this, I'll always remember his words and will quote them as accurately as I can. "I opened up the first chapter and read it. The people in the book were clearly in trouble. Then I went to the final chapter and read that and the people were still in trouble. Then I threw the book in the fire. I don't have patience for a book where

the people are still in as much trouble at the end as they were at the beginning." Tom did not want to be associated with the book. He told me at the time, "I asked him to take my name clear out of it. It is so far from what I represent."

I was surprised that Tom felt so strongly and now, after reading Evans' credit to the value of meeting Tom, it dawned on me how lopsided their transaction was. Evans got what he needed for his story, but I doubt very much that he got what Tom could have given him. Having been a journalist and having worked with many journalists over many years, I know that too often we go into a story already knowing what it is going to be in the end. We are simply looking for material to substantiate what we already know. With Tom Dorrance, Evans tapped into a potent subject, but did not take it very far. To be fair, I don't think it was ever Evans' intention to make a biography of Dorrance or any other horse guru. And, whether adequate redemption of characters is a prerequisite for good literature is not the point. Tom's focus in life was understanding horses and their humans and helping both man and beast out of trouble. For Tom, that is what counted.

As I watched Tom work that day at the clinic, he would listen, observe, then he would find the key to the big issue and turn that key to unlock it. It was like one of those personal diaries with a lock and clasp. Tom saw people and horses as open books and though the diary

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**THE HORSE DOES NOT KNOW  
HOW TO LIE, TO COVER UP, TO  
ALLOW MONEY, POSITION OR  
CLASS TO GET IN THE WAY OF  
ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH MAN.**

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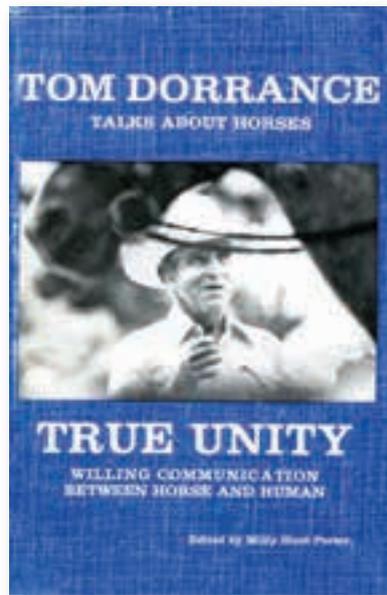
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might have had the word “personal” printed on it, Tom could bring in the personal because he was focusing on the horse. I was surprised to see so many people knocked from their basic assumptions, knocked from their moorings, when Tom gently turned that key of truth to a greater awareness. He cautioned me to not think of his powers as spiritual when he said, “I speak about mental and physical. I don’t use the word spiritual because people go off the deep end quick. It is what is within the horse and people. That horse is just another friend of mine, no better, no worse. He will do so much for you if he has a chance.”

I had always been uneasy about showing Nicholas Evans the way to

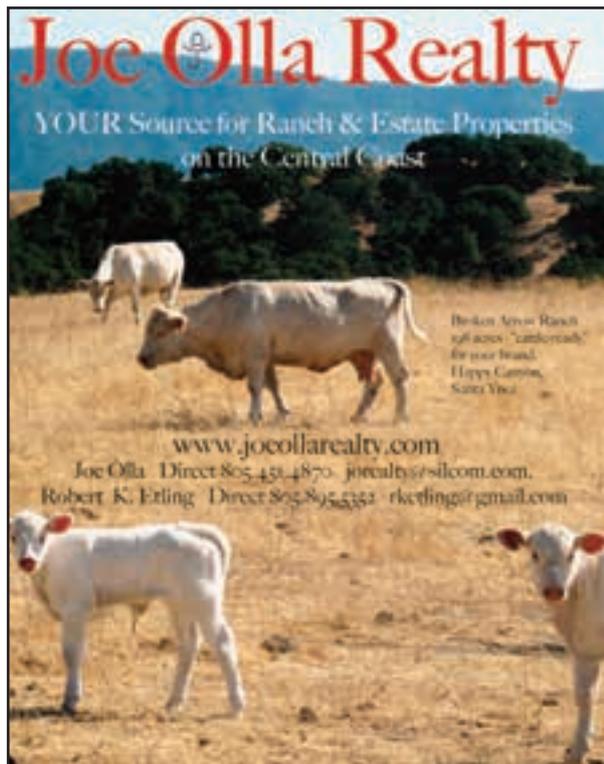


Tom Dorrance's book, *True Unity*, was published in 1987 and is a must read. It is still in print and widely available.

Tom’s door and I never talked about it with anyone until now. I’m ambivalent yet. I admire Evans for introducing this wonderful subject to a vast number of people who might never have had a chance to hear about the connection possible between horse and man. But there is also a purist part of me that wants it “real,” uncompromised. It’s really not too different than those who say that when we took cowboy poetry out of the cow camp and brought it to the Cowboy Poetry Gathering, the poetry was ruined forever.

It had been a long day. Tom was tired and I could tell it was time to turn off the tape recorder. When I went to say goodbye, he came up to

me close and put his arm around me. I’m a big guy and when a smaller man puts his arm around me it often seems comical and awkward but with Tom it was different. He looked at me seriously and said, “Hal, remember, you’re a good man.” I was surprised by his words but even more surprised when tears sprang to my eyes. I was caught off guard and all I knew to do was thank him. There was nothing solicitous about his saying this to me. As I think back, it was no different than Tom putting his arm around a horse’s neck and saying, “You’re a good old horse, aren’t you?” But to me, at that moment, he had seen into me like an open book intuiting my old wounds, the parts of me I keep hidden, and by acknowledging them, reinforced the greater part of me that moves with confidence and honorable intentions. In saying I was a good man, he turned the key ever so gently and I’ll always be grateful to this man and will remember that moment he disarmed me.





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## NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION

# Reaching the Stars in Agriscience

By Courtney Leeper

**T**aylor Runyan's Oklahoma ranch roots led her on an incredible FFA ride, which ended in reaching the stars.

Last October, the National FFA Organization



In October, Taylor was named the Star in Agriscience during the 2012 National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis.

recognized 20-year-old Taylor as the 2012 American Star in Agriscience for her research involving produce, primarily tomatoes. Categorized into four areas – Star Farmer, Star in Agriscience, Star in Agricultural Placement and Star in Agribusiness – the American Star awards represent the highest honor FFA can bestow on its members. Her work has contributed to both the agricultural and medical science communities and is part of studies presented by her supervising scientists all over the world.

Taylor is a ranch girl with a knack for scientific research, and she combines her background and skills to fulfill her greatest desire – helping people.

### **A Blessing in Disguise**

“Growing up, I was always getting up early in the mornings to take care of the cattle,” Taylor said. “Ranch life and the culture of hard work and perseverance really has defined me as a person.”

Taylor's early years were spent on a ranch in Gene

Autry, Oklahoma. In 2001, when Taylor was 8 years old, her dad Carl, a ranch manager, moved the family – mom Micki and siblings Lyndel, Ty and Taylor – to Antlers, Oklahoma, to manage an 18,000-acre ranch.

The 10-plus years spent in Southeastern Oklahoma wasn't always easy, Taylor's mom Micki said. However,



“We are partners in just about all we do,” said Taylor of Mom Micki Woodward Runyan. “My mom is really my best friend. She always has my back. But believe me she corrects me to!”

84

she firmly believes God had a reason for them being there as it provided Taylor with opportunities in the science field.

One opportunity, working for the United States Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Research Service, became instrumental in Taylor's life.

### An Introduction to Agriscience

Taylor credits her mom, a science teacher, with encouraging her science interests.

“My mom's had a huge influence in my life,” Taylor said. “She's so interested in learning and is always curious.”

“I encouraged Taylor to learn as much as she could about the workings of a ranch – the business and labor end, such as taking care of the animals, wildlife, grazing

practices, building and maintaining fences, and always checking water,” Micki said.

Taylor got her first taste of science under Micki's direction as her seventh and eighth grade science teacher at Lane Public School in Lane, Oklahoma, where one class assignment required all students to participate in a science fair project.

Taylor's love for animals developed at a young age, and she wanted to be a veterinarian. Knowing this, Micki encouraged her to do an animal science project in eighth grade. Taylor developed a research project on deworming practices in horses, lambs, goats, cattle and hogs. By the end of the project, she discovered she enjoyed and was good at science.

“She took to it like a duck to water,” Micki said. “She was very good and was able to understand the concepts and data very easily.”

### Starting her Supervised Agricultural Experience

Taylor eagerly awaited the day she could join Atoka FFA in high school. Growing up, she watched her cousins and brother go through FFA.

Taylor's brother Ty was very active in FFA and agriculture shop and mechanics classes. His involvement on the ranch and guiding deer and hog hunts led to proficiencies recognized three times at the state level and twice at the national level. Taylor wanted to do the same, only better.

“Sibling competitiveness drove me to do well in FFA,” Taylor said.

As a freshman, she decided to continue agriscience as her supervised agricultural experience (SAE), a year-round program made up of projects or enterprises that apply agricultural skills taught in the classroom. Her FFA advisors encouraged her to compete in agriscience fairs at the Tulsa Fair and Oklahoma State FFA Convention. She also competed in two international science and engineer fairs. While looking for a new project, Taylor met Dr.



Penelope Perkins-Veazie, a postharvest research scientist at the USDA-ARS center in Lane, Oklahoma. Perkins-Veazie needed someone to assist her on a research project involving tomatoes.

“Taylor just took an instant liking to Dr. Penny,” Micki said. “It grew from there.”

During her freshman year, Taylor studied more than 5,000 tomato specimens from various area grocery stores to determine their lycopene and sugar contents. Lycopene is a carotenoid, or pigment, that gives tomatoes their color. It’s studied for its potential health benefits, according to the American Cancer Society.

During the summer, she gained experience in the field growing and harvesting tomatoes as part of the “Farm to School” project. In this field experiment, she planted more than 96 tomato varieties to see which would have the most appeal to schoolchildren. The project was challenged when heavy rains drowned more than half of the plants, but Taylor didn’t give up. She harvested what was left and tested for lycopene and sugar contents.

### **The Possibilities of a Tomato**

When Perkins-Veazie was offered a position at North Carolina State University, she introduced Taylor to Dr. Angela Davis, a plant geneticist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



Three generations of Woodward-Runyan stand before the family ranch homestead: Taylor with mom Micki Woodward Runyan, grandmother Frances Woodward and brother Ty Runyan. The family continues to raise foundation bred quarter horses and crossbred cattle in a cow/calf operation. Frances and late husband Carl Woodward bought and raised cattle in a small feed lot. When the bottom fell out, they were able to keep several heifers, a lineage that to this day is still going strong. Standing in the “heart” of it all is family, along with the core values of working together, treating others with respect and honesty, and keeping up with the trends and challenges in this ever-changing world.

One day, Taylor came across an article on a study finding lycopene’s ability to block the sun’s ultraviolet rays. Intrigued, she decided to talk to Davis.

“She approached me about volunteering in my laboratory to study a very complex set of experiments using natural plant pigments as potential UV protective additives for sunscreen,” Davis explained in her letter of recommendation of Taylor as the American Star in Agriscience.

Taylor used the lycopene to develop a skin cream, and then tested it to see if it would block ultraviolet rays.

“We started playing with it, and surprisingly it did!” she said.

Bolstered by success, Taylor decided to take her



Taylor plants live cancer cells to be treated with a lycopene barrier to be exposed to ultra violet radiation.



Taylor weighs out skin cream to be mixed with selected lycopene amounts to be tested on UV blocking capabilities.

“Looking back, I don’t know how she did it all to be honest!” Micki said.

“I didn’t have a lot of time to just hang out,” Taylor said, though she recalled having a few weekends off to enjoy being a teenager.

Taylor’s many activities and responsibilities helped prepare her for college, she said. They taught her time management, which became very important in college. After graduating from Atoka High School with

findings to the next level. She worked with Dr. Theresa Golden, a microbiology pathologist at Southeastern Oklahoma State University, to see how effective the lycopene-based cream could be on human skin health.

Taylor applied the cream to human cancer cells as a topical barrier and then experimented to compare it to sunscreen. The cells were exposed to the same light exposure for different periods of time.

The findings: the lycopene-based cream was as effective in blocking UV rays as SPF-50 sunscreen.

### Outside the Laboratory

In addition to lab work, Taylor played varsity basketball, rodeoed, showed pigs and lambs, and helped on the ranch. She also served as Atoka FFA president for two years and as Atoka County 4-H president and secretary. She was also active in the Victory Life Church youth group, National Honor Society, Atoka High School Student Council and various science programs.

a 4.06 grade point average, Taylor played varsity basketball at St. Gregory’s University in Shawnee, until an injury sent her home and to nearby Murray State College. Currently a junior, she’s playing basketball at York College in Nebraska. She plans on graduating from Oklahoma State University with a degree in biological sciences and a minor in agricultural engineering before going to medical school there.

### Rewarding Research

On the final day of the 2012 National FFA Convention & Expo, Taylor and three other agriscience finalists stood on stage next to their parents and advisors. Finally, the news Taylor hoped to hear came – she won!

She said she feels blessed to have had such a great FFA career.

“If it hadn’t have been for FFA I wouldn’t have had all the great experiences I’ve had,” Taylor said. “FFA has shaped me into the leader I’m supposed to be and try to be.”



Taylor said FFA gave her opportunities to push herself in competitions and meet lots of great people whether she was at an agriscience fair or in the show ring.

Becoming the American Star in Agriscience was a bittersweet icing to the cake, as it was her last award through the organization. However, she doesn't dwell on that fact.

"I don't look at this as being the end," Taylor said. "I look at it as the beginning to a great career up ahead."

Taylor isn't completely sure where she wants to end up in her career. She does know whatever it is she wants to help people. Currently, she serves as a firefighter and medical team member in the Gene Autry Volunteer Fire Department.

One option for the future goes back to her love for animals. "Animals can provide physical and emotional health benefits", Taylor said, and she is considering starting a therapeutic riding center someday.

"Both my loves are animals and helping people, so why not put them together?" she asked.

### **Making a Difference**

Agriculture is a deep part of Taylor's family, Micki said.

"From planting wheat and harvesting hay to the cow-calf operation, or hitting the rodeo trail or show ring scene, as a family we share in every aspect of it – the good and the bad, lots of early mornings and many late nights," she explained.

Agriscience expanded Taylor's agricultural background, and it provided new opportunities for her to make a difference.

"Studying the human culture cells was where she really found her niche," Micki said. "It was taking her agricultural experience and putting it to bigger use."

The scientists Taylor worked with used her research

to benefit the scientific community, even at the international level. While Taylor was awaiting the American Star results, Davis was presenting research she was involved with in France, and Perkins-Veazie was doing the same in China.

### **Giving Thanks**

Taylor said she couldn't have done any of it without her supervising scientists: Perkins-Veazie, Davis and Golden; FFA advisors: Bart and Michelle Harper, and Bailey Platt; or her family.

"Those three amazing women really taught me a lot." Taylor said of the research scientists. "And, Mr. and Mrs. Harper encouraged and advised me in so many areas of my agricultural experience, challenging me in ways that allowed me to grow in my FFA career. Ms. Platt was so great at helping me put together my American and National Star packets."

Family means a lot to Taylor, and she appreciates their support. She counts her grandmother Frances Woodward Maxwell, who still runs the original cow-calf family ranch in Gene Autry, Oklahoma, and a real estate office, as one of her greatest inspirations.

"She's the backbone," Taylor said. "If it wasn't for my family I wouldn't have this success. Yeah, they pushed me, but it was for the right reasons."

"I'm just glad I got to be around for the ride," Micki said. "I'm blessed. She has a beautiful soul. She's beautiful from the inside and it just radiates out."

"I give all the glory to God," Taylor said. "My hope is that what I do will encourage some other young person to find something they're passionate about and go for it."



Courtney Leeper is a sophomore science and agricultural journalism major at the University of Missouri–Columbia. Leeper's family raises corn, soybeans and beef cattle on their farm near Trenton, MO, and she was a member of Trenton FFA.

# Chasing Form and Function

Idaho's Chris Cheney represents a new generation of saddlemakers balancing tradition and the progression of an age-old craft.

By Elizabeth Clair Flood

Down a few icy stairs, through a plain door decorated with the word *Welcome* spelled out in old horseshoes, 36-year-old saddlemaker Chris Cheney sits hunched over, carving a flower on leather. The sound of his kids' footfalls upstairs mix with the tune of an old western ballad, as Cheney chases the thread of his imagination.

“I like to look at historic catalogues, old classic patterns, but I always want to find something new, to infuse my own view of art,” he says. “The sky is the limit on what you can do.”

Cheney has made custom saddles and silver professionally for about 13 years, working in and around Rexburg, Idaho, where he lives with his wife, Shaney, and their three children. Pushed further on the idea of saddlemaking as

art, Cheney eschews a bashful stream of “goshes and shucks,” behavior the craftsman’s good friend, saddle collector and rancher Richard Baker, recognizes immediately.

“Chris is a humble guy,” Baker says. “You gotta crawl up under his hat with him to see what’s going on.”

He’s a young artisan, but Cheney and his work has captured the attention of cowboys and collectors. He spends much of his time in his basement, filling saddle orders and creating one-of-a-kind silver for western tack. The first few years in his craft were rocky, Cheney admits, but he now builds a saddle a month for clients willing to wait a year and a half for elaborate, floral carved rigs.

Baker owns several Cheney saddles, and is a student of Cheney’s engraving. “Not only does



photos by Elizabeth Clair Flood

For 13 years, Chris Cheney has made his living building custom saddles



he build a working tool, but his saddles are a form of art,” he says. Cheney’s trophy saddles for the annual Californios Ranch Roping & Stock Horse Contest caught Baker’s attention early on. “He’s so dang picky about everything. He’s precise and his tooling is deep and stands out. He builds a saddle like he was going to ride in it himself.”

Cheney grew up in Salmon, Idaho, working on his grandfather’s ranch and starting colts. While working as a carpenter, Cheney found himself drawn to saddle-making, and built his first rig in the living room of a friend, rancher Jack Adkins. The result, Cheney says, was nothing special. (He keeps the saddle hidden somewhere in his shop.) The project, though, inspired him to pursue the craft. After earning an associate’s degree in animal science from Rexburg’s Ricks College, Cheney worked in construction, repairing and making saddles in the evening. “Then I just got so busy, I decided to take a leap. Orders started to come in.”

Nearly 10 years ago, the Idaho Commission on the Arts sponsored a two-week apprenticeship with master saddler Cary Schwarz, of Salmon. Schwarz, who recognized Cheney’s passion for the trade, encouraged the young maker to apply. Cheney calls the chance to work with Schwarz “a real eye-opener about what a guy’s possibilities were.” He paid close attention to Schwarz’s sewing, carving and lines, his attention to detail and

craftsmanship. The experience would profoundly influence Cheney’s work, which still reflects Schwarz’s approach to design and technique. “I can’t say enough



Cheney’s style is heavily influenced by that of fellow Idaho saddlemaker Cary Schwarz, one of the younger craftsman’s key mentors.

good things about Cary,” says Cheney, who still seeks out Schwarz’s teachings. “He’s a good friend, a mentor, a good example for me.”

Schwarz values quality, detailed work, and appreciates Cheney as a talented and dedicated student. “He’s one of a small handful who’ve taken every word I said to heart,” he says. “He’s self-effacing, but there’s fire in the stove. Don’t be misled by the modesty. He’s pretty handy. The best saddles made are a successful blend of function and art, where one isn’t sacrificed for the other, and I think Chris is doing that.”

One day, Schwarz spotted a saddle that he thought

he recognized as his own, but didn't remember making. After catching up with the owner, he was pleased to discover the finely tooled rig was actually built by Cheney. The veteran maker says he looks forward to watching Cheney continue to push away from known patterns and develop his own designs. "What makes the art in a saddle is often that element of something new," he says.

Both makers agree that today's climate for aspiring saddlemakers is good. In the last 15 years, they say, there's been a resurgence in quality hand-made tack. Because of the Internet, social media and numerous trade shows, saddlemakers have easy access to other makers' insight. Cheney rattles off 10 or so names of craftsmen working in his immediate vicinity, makers with whom he communicates regularly. "It doesn't seem like anyone has a problem sharing things," he says. "And

I think that's the way it should be for us to better our craft." Schwarz doesn't remember his own early years this way. "The old makers," he says, "kept a much stiffer lip when it came to sharing ideas."

Cheney attributes the public's demand for quality to their exposure to refined horsemanship, such as that taught by the late horsemen Ray Hunt and Tom Dorrance. "With refined horsemanship comes attention to refined gear," Cheney says. "I think your working cowboy always knew the value of a quality saddle, but now the everyday person is more aware. More people are appreciative of a saddle's artistic elements."

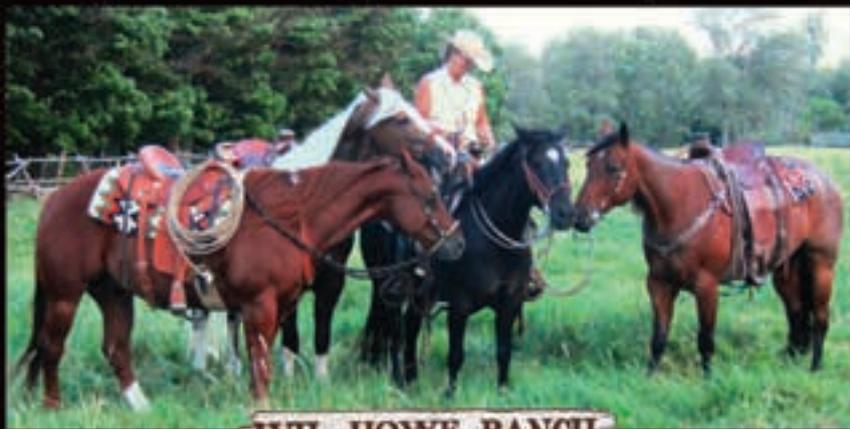
To have more control over his work, Cheney felt it was important to make his own trees. Having a background in carpentry, the process came naturally. He honed his treemaking skills under the guidance of

saddle- and treemakers Dale Harwood and Dan Mayer, and now builds trees with laminated Baltic birch forks and tightly handlaced heavy rawhide.

An appreciation for classic saddles – in particular those from Visalia and Ray Holes – drives Cheney's approach to design. Inspiration, though, often comes in unexpected forms. "Necessity is often the mother of invention," Cheney explains. "Sometimes I'll get into a spot where I don't have room for the leaf I was planning, and I have to create a different leaf. Or maybe a skinny-petaled flower will work better than a large-petaled flower. It's always a matter of just figuring it all out."

Breck Hunsaker, a veterinarian and owner of a cow-calf operation in

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“I always want to find something new, to infuse my own view of art,” Cheney says. “The sky is the limit on what you can do.”

central Idaho, grew up with an appreciation for custom saddles. “I wouldn’t buy a factory built saddle,” he says. “I have more pride in what I do.” Hunsaker met Cheney some 12 years ago, and immediately saw something special in Cheney’s work. “Being a rancher, I’m always looking for a good, quality outfit. First and foremost a saddle must fit the horse. If a saddle makes a horse sore, it gets useless quick. It’s got to be functional, useful and comfortable because you spend a lot of time in them.”

But for Hunsaker, and most other cowboys, the look of a saddle is just as important. “I like to have

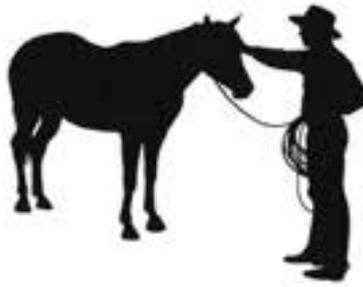
something with eye appeal,” he says, “so that when someone rides by, they wish they had something like it.”

Back in his basement shop, Cheney picks up a cantankerous Campbell Bosworth needle and awl, circa 1940 and procured from King’s Saddlery, and gets back to work.

“I just want to build something I hope will be around for a lot of years, something for people to enjoy, something for them to cherish,” he says. “I’ve been lucky to be able to do what I do, and hopefully I can do it well enough to make customers happy.”



Elizabeth Clair Flood is a writer living in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. She has authored several books on the contemporary West, including *Cowgirls: Women of the Wild West* and *Cowboy High Style: Thomas Molesworth to the New West*.



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## A VISIT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN

# Working with Fear

## Part 2

*Fear is really about despair.*

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Overcoming fear is a slow process. It's a bunch of baby steps and is kind of like eating an elephant. And you damn sure can, but its going to have to be one bite at a time – it will seem like when you get started, you will never get it done. I have found that the thing with fear is you have to acknowledge that it is real in your life. Most people know when they are afraid. They may not admit it but we all have come to that sobering realization when we've been afraid of something. When it comes to horses, one has to always remember that the horse is really aware – he knows whether you can move *his* feet or whether he can move *yours*. Think about that for a minute.

Through your body language, through the way you carry yourself around the horse, you help the horse see whether he can move your feet and can cause you to yield. Well, lots of times your yielding is motivated by your fear of this big animal sort of pushing you around. You are afraid to get stepped on, afraid of getting kicked, or run over the top of. And people will say to me, "I want to conquer my fear of riding." They aren't going to jump on the horse and conquer it just like that. That's jumping in the middle – literally – and they need to

start at the beginning.

Anyone who has been to my clinics knows that I am fanatic that people do ground work with their horses. A lot of it is to get the horse to relax, remove resistance and help him tackle some of his own fears. We as riders expose the horse to a lot of new things that he is naturally going to be afraid of. And in many of these situations – you know innately that horse is going to be afraid. So calmly helping him through his fear is one of the greatest ways of conquering your own fear – just by helping him with his. By helping him, the horse finds out you *can* move his feet.

Remember, if you are going to conquer fear, it must be replaced with confidence.

Consider this, when you start a young horse on the end of the lead rope or the end of your lass rope, you are trying to cause him to get more comfortable. This causes him to move his feet and in turn gives you the confidence that you can do something with the horse. *You* have the idea of the task, *you* act on it, and the *two of you* get the job done. Gradually, the more ground work you do, the more you will realize that you can control the situation. I have seen this countless times.

October 26 & 27

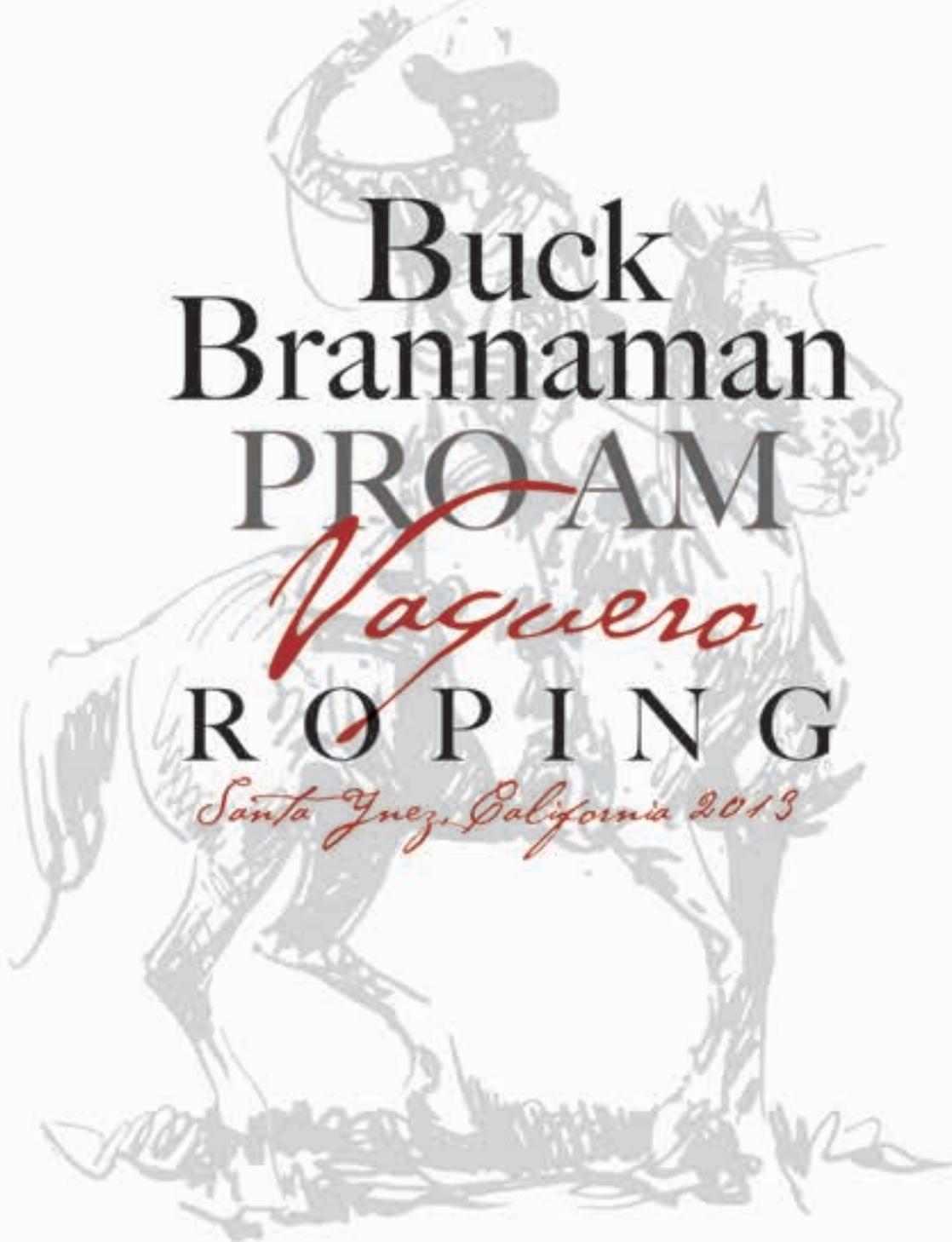
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Fear is really about despair. It puts you in a kind of victim mentality. But when you start to realize *you* can control that horse, it's amazing how confident you will get. And along with that confidence, you can get up in the saddle and apply the same techniques. You will have that "moment" and realize "Hey I can move his feet...from his back as well." The more control you have of the horse, the less you have to be afraid of him. But you must take those baby steps, do a little bit at a time, don't get too carried away. I have seen people get over-confident and cocky and then have a huge setback – and they are right back where they started. They forget, it's not just about them.

I have directed some people in my clinics to work more on ground work with their horse, just because its what that horse needs. They may not be particularly afraid (the person), but the horse might be. In what I do, I stress it is all about your horse's needs. You are taking care of the horse's needs, but you are also taking care of your own. And there's so much to be learned from him – through the body language of the horse, through what he is telling you, by the way he moves, and the way he responds to you, it's all there. He may move physically with his feet and legs just the way he needs to. But at the same time he may actually be moving through tightness, moving through trouble. He's moving through self-preservation, and in that tightness you realize, "I can't reward him here, I can't back off right here, because I realize now that I told him to operate afraid." So because of that, you might alter your process. You might be a little slower, a little easier, a little softer with him. Sometimes, you may end up being a little bit assertive. But you have to read the horse's personality and understand what he needs. While at the same time, he's reading yours. The horse can sense the tension in you.

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THE HORSE IS REALLY  
AWARE – HE KNOWS  
WHETHER YOU CAN MOVE  
HIS FEET OR WHETHER HE  
CAN MOVE *YOURS*.

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They have a great sense of knowing whether or not you are afraid, whether you are aggressive, whether you are timid, whether you are confident. It's remarkable how much they can feel and sense.

Let's take this a step farther. Over the years I have found that when people discover this sense of feel, once they become somewhat confident about operating a horse and in turn getting their horse confident – helping him to feel good within himself – something interesting happens. They start to notice what other people transmit in terms of the way they walk, the way they carry themselves, the

way they address other people, the way they address them. They start to learn things about other human beings – as we are all animals. They start to see things differently, rather than just working with the surface, and they see things a little deeper in other human beings. And that bit of confidence, that they started to gain working with horses, starts to permeate *their* life as well in interacting with other human beings. That confidence is sort of an attractor to other human beings.

Consider this (and I have seen this countless times), possibly because of fear you realized you were, in a lot of ways, socially withdrawn – you didn't feel a part of things. But as you became more confident working with horses you realized that it started to change you as a person and how you interacted with other people. And that confidence was something that started drawing people to you in a real positive way. Obviously that is going to help any of us who may have, whether we want to admit it or not, some social issues that cause us not to feel comfortable around other people. What a liberating thing to be able to achieve a sense of confidence in being around horses *and* humans. It's one of the most freeing things a person can experience. Take it a step further and imagine getting the experience and



studying to the point to where you feel you can honestly say that there isn't a horse alive that you are afraid of. Of course there might be a few horses you are cautious of because you know there is some danger based on how the horse is responding. But there is a big difference between caution and fear. Remember – fear is all about despair and feeling like a victim. So be cautious, and imagine what working with horses would be like if you said, "I am no longer afraid of any horse." Well, all of that can be accomplished through study, through practice and through hard work, but only work hard in doing the right things for you and your horse. A lot of people work hard their whole life but don't do anything that's fitting to their horse. And what happens? Neither will really change much. So don't go there, work towards the "perfect practice" – that's how you strive toward perfection even though you may never be perfect – it's doubtful you will. But work like you are trying to be – for both you and your horse.

It's no different with me; I don't have any real fears of horses after all these years. But believe me, I have fears. Lots of people who knew of my experiences as a little kid would have never believed I was going to end up speaking for a living – confidently, in front of a bunch of people and work with horses. They would have bet everything they own against it. So I have had a lot of fears to conquer over the years too. And believe me, sometimes when I get out in front of a bunch of you, when there are herds of people in the stands watching me work with horses, I get a little tickle once in awhile. But I am confident in what I am doing so I am able to overcome it. And day-by-day I get more confident. The bottom line is, we all have fears if we are just big enough to admit it and then do something positive to overcome them. I hope this gives you some things to ponder, to think about, and work on. I hope to see you on down the trail.



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# The Falconer

## A Journey into the Western Outback

By Tom Russell

*GoHawks were psychic, like red setters, and rage was contagious between unconscious hearts.*

*The Goshawk, T.H. White*

**W**e were seated for dinner. The table was set with a large bowl of freshly chopped salad and a sizeable pot of homemade *posole*. Southwestern-style *posole*. Mexican stew with wild pig meat and *frijoles* and I don't know what all. The cook was Libby, an archeologist, mountain climber, musician, and chef. Four feet away, the Peregrine falcon was perched on the gloved arm of her husband, the falconer. The bird watched us with its sharp, raptor's eyes, and then began tearing away at chunks of frozen quail which the falconer held out with his opposite, ungloved hand. The chunks of quail flew across the dinner table. We covered our plates and reached for the Mongolian vodka.

Outside we could hear the baying of coursing hounds, *Russian Tazi's*, as the moon floated up over red

mountains. Welcome to Mongolia. My wife's father, visiting from Switzerland, was sitting across from me.

He has abandoned his trepidations about hounds, falcons, flying quail meat, bears, and the Wild West, and had fortified himself with the Mongolian firewater. His eyes glazed over with the drink and the promise of medieval spectacle. We were getting that all right. Full dose. The stories were flying now and that falcon kept staring us down, in between its attack on the quail meat.

Yes, we could have been in Mongolia. True enough. Riding across the steppes on a Mongol pony, a giant eagle on

our arm, hunting for a wolf hiding up yonder in the low rocks. Our hosts had certainly been there. Hunted with the Mongols. Drank the vodka. Wrote the book.

Time to uncork the wine. Truthfully, for a sober





Steve Bodio

moment, we are in Magdalena, New Mexico, a half hour from Socorro, and two hours from Santa Fe. It's exotic enough. The West goes on forever and connects with the Moors and Mongols and falconers and all of it. Ancient hunters and mounted hordes. We've come to visit the falconer, Steve Bodio. I was tipped off by the renowned Western photographer Jay Dusard. He said Bodio was a man I should meet. I might like his writing.

Dusard told it true. I have enjoyed and learned much from the books Bodio has written: books on the Southwest, falcons, eagles, hawks, pigeons, coursing dogs, hunting, and on and on. Eight books and numerous articles for *Sports Illustrated*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Grays Sporting Journal* and such. He is not only one of our foremost "nature" or "sporting" writers, he's a top level American writer. Period. Now he was

sitting across from me with a Peregrine falcon on his arm, and the raptor is slewing chunks of meat across the table. Pass the wine, please.

To draw a bead on this falconer, consider the words of Annie Proulx, in her introduction to Bodio's new history of eagles – (*An Eternity of Eagles*):

*Bodio...was a man who collected insects, raised pigeons, and hunted with falcons and hawks; collected rare books on the natural world, was vastly well read in history, paleontology, archeology and climatology; knew about ancient horses, the history and habits of the dog, and Egyptian mummification process...*

And on and on.

We'd stopped in Magdalena at the tail end of a Western journey in which I was determined to show my Swiss father-in-law a portion of this still-wild Southwest, and the remarkable characters who inhabit it. The trip would take ten days through the back country: from West Texas, through Arizona and New Mexico. From the Chihuahua desert into the Sonora desert, and back. A one week odyssey where I had to sandwich-in four music concerts. After all, I earned my daily bread as a troubadour. This was a working vacation.



photo by Steve Bodio

Falcon after a quail



photo by Steve Bodio

Eagle Parade Nomad Riders

## II The West Still Wild and Wild Again

*Leave the ponies to run free, far as the eye can see  
I'd ride the range forever, just to see them once again.  
Let the wild, flying things, soar above me on their  
wings  
The stars fill up the night sky and the moon light up  
the plain...*

Mary McCaslin, *Prairie in the Sky*

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We left El Paso at sunup. Myself and my wife, master guitarist Thad Beckman, and Rudolpho, my father in law. We call him *Poppi*. Poppi doesn't speak English. Okay, he knows one phrase that a wise guy up in the Alps taught him: *F\*\*\* you, cowboy*. I don't think Poppi knew what it meant. I tried to warn him, through my wife, the interpreter, of the consequences of muttering that phrase in a cowboy bar in Tucson, Tombstone, or Flagstaff. Or *anywhere*. I think he understood, but I didn't like the gleam in his eye. We were not in Geneva anymore, Rudolpho.

You want trouble, Poppi? The West was still wild enough. Juarez was just over yonder and all the bullets you might wish to catch in your teeth. In fact stray bullets sometimes fly across the Rio Grande and hit the

courthouse in downtown El Paso. The Mexican Revolution never ended. Poppi wanted to visit Juarez, but we talked him out of it. I asked him to clean up his English before we hit Tombstone. So he started singing the first line of the chorus of "Tom Dooley." *Hang down your head, Tom Dooley*. Over and over. Poppi's a funny guy, alright.

We took the back roads west, out of El Paso, and rolled down Highway 9 into the desert towards Columbus, New Mexico. Columbus is the town Pancho Villa attacked in 1916. The U.S. sent Black Jack Pershing, with young George Patton in tow, into Mexico – chasing after Pancho with horse soldiers and bi-planes. They never caught him. Funny thing about Villa. He attacked the United States, but everywhere in this desert border country are cafes, cantinas, and state parks named after the old bandit. There's a giant statue in a downtown park in Tucson. The Villa legend outlived his blood history. We kept running into his *bandito* specter.

On we drove, westward, through blown-out, ghostly towns like Hachita and Animas, where hard core desert rats made their final stand in trailers, cabins, and adobe hovels. Off the grid. We hit Arizona and turned south towards Douglas. Deep Apache country. We stopped at the monument commemorating *Geronimo's*



*Surrender* and squinted up towards Skull Valley, where the Apache chieftain rode down carrying a white flag of truce. He regretted it.

The government shipped Geronimo to Pensacola, Florida, and he was finally moved to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. In his old age he became a celebrity. He appeared at 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, where he rode a roller coaster and a Ferris wheel, and sold souvenirs and photographs of himself. He learned to print his name in block letters. The image of Geronimo on a Roller Coaster is as American as you can get. I wish I had a photo of it. I'd like to paint that one.

The old warrior died after falling off a horse in 1909. *Cowboy'd all to hell.* His last words were: "I should have never surrendered. I should have fought until I was the last man alive." So be it.

In Douglas I showed the crew the Gadsden Hotel lobby, and the vintage cowboy watering hole: *The Saddle and Spur Bar*. Outside the bar, in the grand lobby, there's a historic chip in one of the Saltillo tile stairs. Pancho Villa again. He rode his horse into the hotel and up the stairway and took a chunk out of the architecture. Maybe Villa was riding *Siete Leguas*, his favored mount who could run *seven leagues* without tiring. There's a fine *corrido* about it. Your local mariachis will know it – in fact there's dozens of songs about Villa. As I've said, there's no escaping Pancho's ghost.

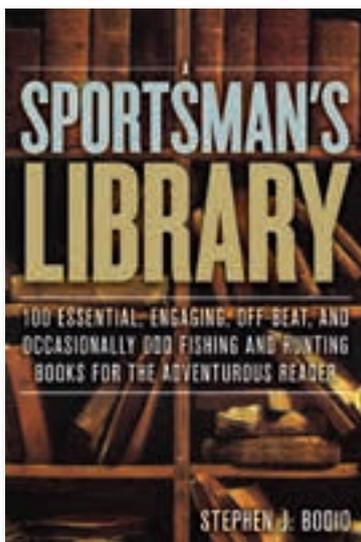
Next stop Bisbee. The deep, open copper pit mine. Renovated miner's shacks shimmering across high desert hills. A winding, historic main street with decent restaurants and art galleries. I owned a cabin here once, but the town got too *discovered*. We were performing a concert that night in Bisbee for a writer named Bill

Carter, who wrote a fine book on salmon fishing in Alaska (*Red Summer*) and another on Copper Mining in The West (*Boom, Bust, Boom.*) There are damn good Western writers and artists all over this Arizona country – J.P.S Brown is down in Patagonia, and Jim Harrison has a place there. The legendary photographer Jay Dusard lives near Douglas.

I'm a desert rat by nature. I travel all over the world but never feel at home until I return to the arid regions, flying into El Paso over a beige, sandy landscape pocked with mesquite and *Palo Verde* brush. The land below looks like the scorched top of a *crème Brule*. But we're in Arizona now, and this area of the Sonora desert is richer with desert plants: agaves, *Palo Verde's*, *cholla*, *saguaro*, organ pipes, yucca, prickly pears, barrels, creosote, devil's claw, Mormon tea, Queen on the Night...and more.

A peculiar form a human character is drawn to this parched land. There's always something to learn from the resident buzzard in a desert café or *cantina*. I recall running into an old guy once in a bar in Douglas who told me his grandfather packed camels for the U.S. Army. In the Arizona desert. *Camels*. He said their hooves couldn't adapt to the difference in sand density in our American deserts. I thought he was pulling my leg. Until I read up on it.

The U.S. Camel Corps was created by the Army in the 1850s. It was an experiment in employing camels as pack animals in Florida, and also the Southwestern deserts. Almost one hundred camels were shipped over, in two loads from *Smyrna* (now Turkey). The camels worked out for awhile. They could travel long distances on little water and cross inaccessible terrain. But the army horses and mules were frightened of the foreign-



Steve Bodio's new collection

looking beasts, and the camels had *unpleasant dispositions*. They spit, bit, kicked, fought, and even killed each other during the rutting season.

One of the head camel drovers was a man named Hi Jolly (*Hadji Ali*), an Ottoman citizen. After his death in 1902, he was buried in Quartzsite, Arizona. His grave is marked by a pyramid-shaped monument topped with a metal profile of a camel.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, the Camel Corps was dismantled. Camels were sold off to private owners and zoos, and the rest escaped into the desert. The bones of a famous white camel, named *Seid*, wound up in the Smithsonian Institute. Feral camels were sighted in the Southwest through the early 1900s. The last reported sighting was in 1941 near Douglas, Texas. Imagine being hung-over one morning, out hunting jack rabbits in the desert, and your field glasses draw a bead on a feral camel. Or how about a jaguar? Sobering desert moments when you figure you'll cut back on the tequila.

Camels. And that's right, *jaguars*. Spotted leopards. Near Douglas, Arizona, a few years back, a rancher out hunting mountain lions with his dogs came across a large Mexican jaguar, thought to be extinct in those parts. The big cat was up in a tree fighting off the dogs. Unlike mountain lions, jaguars will turn and fight. The Mexican jaguar is the only extant North American wild cat that *roars*. Jaguar sighting keep reoccurring in Arizona.

The west is still wild and wild again. Cowboys, jaguars, and feral camels. But we've got to keep moving towards our final destination. The falconer's adobe. Hundreds of miles away.

We were now driving deep into *Saguaro* country. The mystical cactus trees appeared on each side of the road out on the passing desert. *Poppi* wanted to stop every time we saw a huge one. Europeans consider the giant cactus an iconic symbol of the American West, as much as a cowboy on a bucking horse, or an Indian in full headdress. The Saguaro's are almost exclusive to the

Sonora desert of Arizona and Northern Mexico. They grow as tall as seventy feet, take seventy five years to grow an arm, and live up to 150 years. Gila woodpeckers, purple martins, house finches, and gilded flickers live inside the saguaros.

The saguaros are protected by law, but that doesn't stop thick-headed amateur gunslingers. In 1982 a man was out firing away at *Saguaros*, knocking them over, when a one hundred pound cactus arm fell down and impaled him. Our tom-fool hero was pin cushioned, crushed, and killed. *Desert justice*. Hard way to die. You don't mess with the mighty *Saguaro*. They have a long memory and a short temper. They are well armed.

Time to return to the back roads, heading due east now, through towns like Payson and Show Low. Aiming for New Mexico. Somewhere on a high pine grade in Arizona we stopped for a coffee at an isolated gas station. One of those places where the coffee, milk cartons, sandwiches, tuna cans, and even the jokes – have all exceeded their shelf life.

The owner was persuaded to make us a fresh pot of coffee, as my father in law, *Poppi*, kept mumbling to my wife that this looked like *bear country*. Were there any bear around? He asked in Swiss-German. He wished to see a bear.

I translated this for the gas station owner, a big 'ole rough cog in a Pendleton shirt. A *Paul Bunyan* type fellow. He hesitated, coffee pot in and hand, and looked toward Poppi. He spit out: "*Tell your father in law to tie a pork chop around his neck and go sit out in the woods. He'll see plenty bear.*"

We thanked him for that advice. I was glad Poppi didn't use his one English sentence in reply. Things could have gotten *western*. We walked out into the parking lot and spit out the bad coffee and drove the truck down the long grade, into New Mexico. Poppi had gotten over his yen to see a bear. He kept his mouth shut. Next stop, Pie Town, New Mexico, population 25.





A slice of pie was now required. A western tradition in this country.

We found a small joint and slid up to the counter and eyed the goods: boysenberry, blackberry, blueberry, apple, and mixed berry. Grandma-style thick crust. The great vanishing American dessert. Homemade pie. Hot coffee.

There was an old codger sitting there who looked like a regular. Maybe he was the mayor. Long white beard and coveralls. Might have been age eighty-five or one hundred and ten. The old gent was working on his dinner, which consisted of a large bowl of clam chowder into which he'd crumbled at least a dozen saltine crackers. For *bulk*. He was chopping away and refining the mix. I figured he knew all the deep mysteries of Pie Town, but I didn't want to disturb his meal. Pie Town is one slice away from turning into a ghost town.

We left 'ole Pie town and traversed *The Plains of Augustine*, with its *planetary observation dishes*, and finally came down into Magdalena, New Mexico, as the light was dimming. It was that time of day when the desert turns a light red, like the colors the old Hopi carvers put on traditional Kachina dolls. There is a mystical, late afternoon light which washes across the deserts of New Mexico. It's a different tint than the sunset colors in West Texas and Arizona. A peculiar New Mexican glow, reflecting off red sand and rock, filtered through the spiny plants. That late afternoon light which attracts painters and poets to Santa Fe.

Magdalena could have been used by Sam Peckinpah as a location for *The Wild Bunch*. One main street and backstreets of adobes and cabins. A cowboy bar. We found the Falconer's red adobe, on an unpaved back



street, and knocked on the door. Steve Bodio peered out at us. His Russian coursing hounds were barking behind him. He opened the door a little further, to welcome us in, and we spotted the hooded falcon on its perch. Poppi looked scared, but he kept his mouth shut.

Soon we were imbibing the above-mentioned Mongolian vodka

### III Hunting Wolves with Winged Dinosaurs

*My mother showed me a photo, in some lost magazine, that I never forgot: a dark man in a spotted fur coat and shaggy hat, seated on a horse, holding on his arm an immense black eagle...the story of my life-long pursuit of that image is told in my last book, *Eagle Dreams*.*

Steve Bodio

All I knew about falconry at this point was maybe a half verse from the old Yeats poem, *The Second Coming*. You know the one: *The Falcon cannot hear the falconer*. The blood dimmed tide was loosed and a mythical beast, like *The Sphinx*, was slouching towards



Bodio in Mongolia

Bethlehem. Quite a poem. We studied it in high school and I visited Yeats' grave in Ireland, with a line of his inscribed across the stone: *Horseman Pass By!* That was the title to Larry McMurtry's first novel, which became the movie: *Hud*. The West goes on forever.

I did a little

research before our trip. I wasn't aware that falconry was practiced much in America. And I was ignorant of the rich history. I'd imagined it something from the Middle Ages. I found a standard definition: *Falconry is the hunting of wild quarry in its natural state and habitat by means of a trained bird of prey*. OK. Somewhere I came across a mention that Golden Eagles have been used to hunt wolves in Kazakhstan. I couldn't believe that. It sounded like a tale from an old children's tome about the exotic Far Orient.

Then Steve Bodio sent me his book: *Eagle Dreams: Searching for Legends in Wild Mongolia*. On the cover was a hunter mounted on a pony, with a three foot tall Eagle on his right arm. This was not eight hundred years ago. *This was now*. Kazakhstan, the largest land-locked country in the world. Still inhabited by nomadic horse tribes. *Tonight we ride, boys*. Bodio and his wife Libby had been there and written about it. They'd ridden with the Mongols, drank their vodka, and heard their primeval legends and stories. They'd witnessed an eagle taking down a fox, and heard tales of eagles going after deer and wolves.

The whole enterprise sounded pretty damned *cowboy* to me. I'm always interested in the roots of Western culture, but up 'til now had focused my attention on Mexico and Spain. Never thought about Mongolian horsemen. And hunting horseback with eagles. There was a long, wild, historic strain running through our horse culture.

That image of a man on a horse with an eagle on his arm is haunting. Years before I'd heard of Steve Bodio, I'd purchased an antique wooden statue – a Mongol horseman in a Chinese antique store in New Mexico. In The 1960s I'd also bought five small horse bits in a street stall in Northern Nigeria. They've been carbon-dated at an estimate of six hundred years old. They're probably Mongol pony bits. But let me tell you about that Mongol statue.



**IV The Mongol Cowboy**  
(On the Trail of the Ancient Horse)

*In terms of square miles, Genghis Khan was the greatest conqueror of all time – greater than Alexander the Great. His success was the result of unparalleled leadership and mobility. There was simply no mounted force able to hold its own against him. His were the world’s best riders on the world’s best horses.*

**True Appaloosas,  
Ranch Brochure**

A few years ago I stopped for a double espresso in Deming, New Mexico and noticed an anomalous looking little store across Spruce Street: *Xian Antiquities*:



photo by Steve Bodio

Mongol Pony

*Cultural Antiquities of the Northern Buddhists. Peculiar. Out of place in this roadside, desert town.*

I went over and entered a crowded little room filled with ancient Chinese antiquities. The owner had

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brought them over from China, where'd he taught school for many years. Up on a high shelf I spied a Mongol horseman on a small pony. An ancient wood carving. The surface was patched with reddish-white



Dog and falcon on a jack rabbit

hues and the wood was notched and molted from the centuries. He took the statue down and handed it to me.

The horseman had a secret door carved into his back where prayers and small charms were stashed. *Homage to the ancient spirits of the horse? The first cowboy song?* I bought the carving for a few hundred bucks. It reached out to me. I carried the little Mongol horseman back to El Paso. The proprietor wrote out providence for me – a sheet of paper which told the history or the statue:

*“I collected this piece at a village market in the North China Village of Tai Shan in the late spring of 1968. It is carved of fir or poplar in the first or second quarter of the 18th century, about the year 1730. It depicts a Mongol ancestral figure and was probably displayed in elaborate home shrines. These are known as effigy images. It was originally covered in colored paper.”*

Maybe it was Genghis Kahn riding across the Asian steppes. An ancient-day Pancho Villa. The carved Mongol could damn sure sit a horse. I am a man who

comes from horse culture – my father was connected to his grandfather through the family business: “*Russell and Sons: Horses and Livestock for Sale*,” back in North-Eastern Iowa. It was horses that got my father’s blood moving and it was the betting on them that brought him down. My brother, Pat, is a renegade horse trader. The blood of all true horse traders goes back to the Moor and the Mongrel. I was surmising this. It all leads to that little prayer door carved in the back of my Mongol rider.

One day and I pried open the carved prayer door on the back of the Horseman. Out popped a miniature fossilized *sea horse* and a paper scroll with Chinese writing on it. I’d like to surmise it was an early Chinese version of the *Streets of Laredo* or *The Alleys of Shanghai*, but I’ve yet to have it translated. And the sea horse? The horse image keeps reappearing in our search.

Consider this conundrum: the first horses originally came from the Americas. Most of the evolutionary development of the horse (54 million years ago to about 10,000 years ago) actually took place in North America, where they developed the strategy of grazing.

At some point the ancient horse crossed into the Old World via the Arctic-Asia land bridge. Then, suddenly, around 10,000 years ago, the horse disappeared from North and South America. No one knows why. The horse was gone from the western hemisphere. The horse didn’t appear back on its native continent until the Spanish explorers brought horses by ship in the sixteenth century.

What’s it all mean? Something tells me the answer might be on that prayer scroll in the back of my Mongol rider. At least that’s what I was vodka-day-dreaming about as I was peering at Steve Bodio’s photos of his far flung adventures involving Mongol ponies, nomadic horse tribes, and hunting with eagles in Kazakhstan.

Which brings us back around to Magdalena, New Mexico.



V **Happy Hour in the Shadow of the Peregrine Falcon:**  
**Magdalena**

*Cast a cold Eye*  
*On Life, on Death.*  
*Horseman, pass by!*  
**W.B. Yeats**

In Steve Bodio's words: "*Magdalena started as a town in the 1870s after the Apaches were pushed back. It was first a mining town, but soon became the greatest cattle shipping terminal in the United States. More cattle came out of it than even Dodge City – it was at one point the biggest town in Socorro County, bigger than Socorro, over 10,000 in population... all that's gone. We're down to one bar. Our house is one of the oldest in town. Not really adobe. Underneath is stone...*"

Now, in Magdalena, we were drinking ourselves back through a crack in space and time, and found ourselves in that Mongolian scene I was speaking about at the beginning of this essay. We were invited into the kitchen, where Steve's wife Libby was cooking that very large pot of *posole* made from fresh wild pig. Five little shot glasses on the table were filled with very cold Mongolian vodka from the freezer. It was an old Mongol tradition to welcome people into the house with a shot of distilled nectar from the potato plant.

The vodka changed the course of the evening. The look of apprehension was wiped off Poppi's face, replaced by a wild grin. I had him perform his only sentence in English, because I felt we were among friends. Everyone laughed. Except the falcon. (A few weeks later Steve and his wife informed me they had to sell this particular falcon. They knew the falcon *didn't like them* and its presence in their front room was becoming uncomfortable. Evidently some falcons are friendlier than others.)

I picked up assorted bits and pieces as I stared at the Falcon and wondered if they ever went for your eyes. Steve informed me that birds of prey will usually not peck out your eyes. *Initially*. The danger lies more in the tremendous power in their talons and feet. If they grab you on your opposite, ungloved hand, you will soon discover deep religion and the ability to make deals with God. *It hurts*. Since the Falcon sits on your gloved arm, with a tether attached to that hand, if the bird were to get

  
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disturbed and jump to your ungloved hand you might experience what Bodio called *handcuffing*.

In his words:

*I've been "handcuffed" a few times. Gloved to bare hand by a goshawk – ouch! The eagle with concrete-blunted talons who cracked my hand went all the way through a glove – they can exert hundreds of pounds of pressure.*

We chatted on and I picked up a few details: there are more than 2500 Falconers nationwide and several associations, and one big club: *The America Falconers Association*. There are state laws and rules dealing with becoming a legitimate falconer. There's a wealth of falconry history, and much can be gleaned from Bodio's books. I'll leave it at that.

Then it was back to a horse discussion, and Bodio's observation that some Mongol ponies have Appaloosa markings. Bodio said: *"Appaloosas! Of course the actual breed was defined in the Palouse and descends from Nez Pierce Indian horses, or so I am told, but the classic Appy pattern – spotted behind – is not rare in Mongolia, and I have seen photos in ancient Chinese paintings as well. So how did this pattern get from Asia to Spain to Indians?"*

My head was too filled with Mongolian vodka to figure that one.

Bodio showed us more photos, saying: *"Imagine this photo an old Chinese Mongol hunting party – with horses, hawks, and Tazi dogs. The men are wearing Snow leopard hats."*

*Enough.* The vodka and wine were distorting my sense of time and place. The dogs were hungry and the falcon was giving us the evil eye.

Besides his eight books, Bodio has also written introductions for a series of archetypal "sporting" books published by The Lyons Press in the late 1990s. These books, most of which he sent me, opened a back door into another world I was not only unaware of, but, to



Steve Bodio with "A Cooper's female I caught in my loft today. I want one but she is a breeder, too old to be legal – a 'haggard'. I'll set her loose to make more..."

tell the truth, was not even the slightest bit interested in. Until I read the books.

Rat Hunting in England? Shark hunting off the Scottish Isles? Ranching in the 1800s in Patagonia? And, at the top of the list, T.S. White's wonderful tome: *The Goshawk*. The books are sporting classics. What unites these books is the unique, wild subject matter, mixed with plain old *great writing*.

T.S. White went on to write *The Once and Future King*. *The Goshawk* is an early book in which White is holed-up in an isolated cottage in the British Isles and orders a young Goshawk from Germany. He intends to train to the bird to hunt. What follows is a "storm of emotion which blows between





photo by Steve Bodio

Mongol riders

man and bird." A damn good read. Recommended.

At midnight we drove out of old Magdalena. I felt confident we had shown Poppi a wild West soaked in legend, myth, saguaros, Mongol ponies, feral camels, Russian coursing dogs, and falconers. Then Poppi suddenly sprung loose with a new English phrase he'd rediscovered. The vodka had unleashed it. *Your light is not on.* The first time he'd been in the U.S. he'd been pulled over by a Florida highway patrolman, because Poppi's headlights weren't on. Poppi memorized what the cop had yelled at him. *Your light is not on. Your light is not on.* This now amused him.

I told Poppi to chill out or I'd find an all-night grocery and buy a pork chop and tie it around his neck, then I'd drive back to Magdalena and set the Peregrine falcon and Russian dogs on him. Poppi laughed hysterically, then fell asleep singing *Tom Dooley*. We drove into Socorro and found a motel.

We were almost home. And the West was still wild and went on forever.



Tom Russell's book of songs: *120 Songs of Tom Russell*, was recently published by Bangtail Press. Tom's art and song books, along with his 28 CDs, 3 DVDs, and International touring schedule, are all available on [www.tomrussell.com](http://www.tomrussell.com)

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# Paintings from the Pampa

The work of Argentine artist Carlos Montefusco celebrates and documents the gaucho culture.

Text and Artwork by Carlos Montefusco



*Paramos*

When I was a small child, I lived in the city and was part of the first generation to grow up with television. Unbeknownst to me, I was being influenced by American cartoons and 1960s Disney movies.

My father was a graphic artist and illustrator, and

was passionate about art. By watching him work, I learned, at the tender age of 18 months, how to properly hold a pencil in my hand. He taught me to enjoy a work of art and instilled in me the importance of art in our lives. He was not involved with the rural environment, but he safeguarded in his library numerous prints of



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photo courtesy Carlos Montefusco

Argentina's Carlos Montefusco against the backdrop of his beloved country.

Don Eleodoro Marengo's paintings depicting the Argentine countryside and the gaucho. Marengo was to Argentina as Remington was to the United States.

My maternal family members were immigrants who came to Argentina from the plains of Ukraine. From them, I inherited my love for nature. They instilled in me the passion for the horse and the importance of friendships. At the age of 7, I vacationed with my family in the Argentine countryside and fell in love with the vast Pampas. It's a passion that grows every day. After my discovery of the Pampas and its people, I began my quest for images created by Argentine painters of the 19th century – Rugendas, Monvoisin and Palliere, to name a few – who portrayed the gaucho of yesteryear, as well as his horses, the countryside and the colorful period clothing.

I was determined to live in those endless plains, near horses and under open skies. When the time came to

select a career, I pursued zootechnical engineering. Upon completion of my studies, I moved to the countryside in the province of Cordoba. While there, I noticed in many homes illustrations by Don Florencio Molina Campos. He was capable of portraying the Argentine countryside, its rural people and their habitats in a humorous style, but with a realistic, warm feeling. This placed him in a category of his own. Molina Campos' artwork was reproduced in volume for many years, and played a significant role in educating city people about the gaucho culture. I believe his artwork helped unite the people of Argentina.

When I started as an artist, Argentines mistook my paintings for those of Molina Campos. People

attending my exhibits approached me believing that I, in fact, was Molina Campos, and I had to share the news that Molina Campos had died before I was born. Such cases of mistaken identity do not happen anymore, but there is a similarity: Molina Campos and I both depict the gaucho in the Argentine countryside and use a humorous style.

My main source of inspiration is the vast Pampa region and its people. When I mention the Pampa, I visualize the arid western region with its dense forest, or the wet region with its sea of grass and the rugged plains of the Patagonia desert, covered by sand and rock. The themes for my paintings are mostly my own experiences. My stories are based on what happens every day, little things to which we all can relate. When I observe my wife working in the kitchen, preparing a meal for our family, and being pestered by a dog begging for a bite, I can imagine her dressed as a country woman. When I'm



*Bayo*



*Con una Guasquita*

in the pen and my green-broke horse defiantly pins his ears and attempts to get away as a chicken wanders around picking worms from the soil, all I have to do is get the brush in my hand.

In the last few years, my work has become more realistic and I've drifted away from cartoons. However, there always will be some humor in my artwork. A colleague once told me that, over time, an artist becomes an impressionist and I feel that's true. I noticed a change in the way I use colors; one must learn to have fun with them. Think about the first time you approach a horse. You don't know him and might be nervous and tense. The air will feel dense because of that flawed energy. Over time, you and the horse become acquainted and confident. You relax and begin to enjoy. It is the same as an artist with his approach to his work.

It's always a challenge to capture the right amount of light, the wind, the dust in the air, or the raindrops that slide along the hide of the horse. But I notice the gratitude for what I do when I see a child laughing in front of one of my paintings. It's rewarding when a young man consumed by the technological world disconnects and becomes interested in one of my paintings. He learns about his ancestry and culture.

When I was a young man, Don Luis Landriscina, an old scholar of the gaucho culture, told me that my message was powerful because, with humor, my art could "reach the children." I'm often invited to

conduct lectures and it amazes me that Argentina's youth do not know their own historical legacy. Many don't even know the Pampas Indians existed, and that there was a frontier in the Pampa region to separate the Indians and white settlers.



*Ni viento le echaron*



*Sacando pan del Horno*



*Máma, Viene Gente*



*Va Con Choricito*



*Ta Con Hambre Ya!*



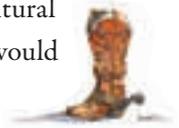
*Engualichao*



*Vá Ser Mansito*

In my opinion, I was born with a gift. With help, determination and hard work, my artwork is now recognized for its style, accuracy and creativity. I'm grateful for my gift and to acknowledge my gratitude, I'm finishing a piece which will be signed AMDG, an abbreviation that, in the Spanish language, means "For God's Greatest Glory," an expression used by Jesuit missionaries as a gesture of gratitude upon completion of a job.

For me, it is a great responsibility to re-create these beloved themes. I'm aware of my duty and I attempt to transmit factual information of a bygone era and the cultural heritage of the gaucho. I would like that to be my legacy.



*Y Pa Cuando Vendrás*



*Venao*



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## THE HEN HOUSE

# Four college cowgirls dance gracefully through life

One houlihan, one smile, one cup of coffee at a time.



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

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**F**our college girls living under one roof. At first glance, we're as different as marshmallows in a box of Lucky Charms. But when you fall into the always-welcoming arms of the Hen House, you realize our common connection, and our love of the West and each other.

A silver engraver, an artist, a chap maker and a horsewoman. Among the four of us, we know how to make a two-story house in the middle of the thriving metropolis of Bozeman, Montana, a western oasis – one littered with leather scraps, silver bits, bedrolls and an occasional bottle of the pinkest nail polish known to man.

Mingled in, yet sheltered from the normal hustle and bustle of a college town, our lifestyle allows us to pursue education and carry on the western traditions

with which we were raised.

Our artist, Ceily Rae Highberger, born and raised in Red Lodge, Montana, grew up leading a pack string of mules up the Beartooths and carving winter slopes with her ski patrol/Forest Service parents, Tom and Denise, and their dynamic cow dog duo, Tucker and Luna. Ceily, a cute little blonde-haired, blue-eyed, snap-brim-wearing, oversized-shrink-to-fit-Levi-wearer, is the most mechanically inclined of the four of us. Not only can she out-weld most grown men, but with her pen and ink, she rivals many of today's most famous artists.

At a young age, Ceily began working for a ranch in the Beartooth Mountains. She grew to love roping, working cattle and riding good horses. She worked on the ranch until she left to attend Montana State, where



photos by Audrey Hall

Meeting of the Hen House Board of Directors

she's majoring in agriculture relations, with a minor in animal science. She spends her spare time working on commissioned artwork and other artistic endeavors, such as her new business venture, Big Circle Graphics. Ceily designs custom logos and brands, taking orders via her Facebook page.

Our chapmaker, Hannah Ballantyne, was born in the shadow of Heart Mountain, in Cody, Wyoming. She's lived a gypsy lifestyle, growing up on ranches in California, Montana and Wyoming, living in Scotland and traveling in Europe in pursuit of art and culture aside from her western heritage. Now Stateside again, Hannah, the lone brunette of the house, never ceases to amaze with her outbursts of eloquent vocabulary and worldly, if random, memoirs of her travels. She's

majoring in English writing, with a minor in business.

While working on the Padlock Ranch (in Montana and Wyoming) with her father, Jesse Ballantyne, Hannah learned to recognize quality cowboy gear. After working with local saddlemaker Matt Moran, Hannah discovered her natural talent for chapmaking, a craft that allows her to exhibit the sense of artistry she inherited from her mother, painter Carrie Ballantyne.

Perhaps the sweetest and most jovial gal of this wild bunch, Nevada Watt, our talented silversmith, hails from the oak-covered hills of California. She's from the land of the sun, but in the Hen House, she's affectionately known as the "Ice Queen" because of her love of the snowy, frigid Montana weather. Nevada has taken knowledge imparted by her father, Jeremiah Watt,



Oh, yes, then there's going to classes



Ceily Rae Highberger

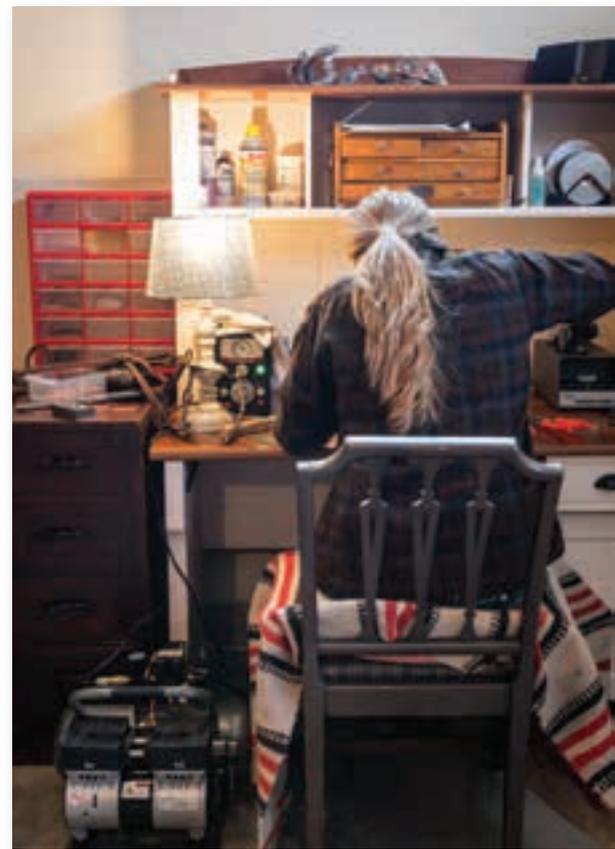


Reata Brannaman



and created her own style and approach to silversmithing. When not in the workshop, she's busy as an exercise-science major, with a minor in small-business entrepreneurship. In a recurring household theme, Nevada loves nothing more than sitting a good horse with a rope in her hand.

Finally, we turn our attention to the lovely Reata Brannaman. A Sheridan, Wyoming girl through and through, she loves the wild Big Horn Mountains. Whether she's on the open road with loaded-down pickup and trailer full of horses crisscrossing the States with her father, Buck, or at home at her parents' Houlihan Ranch, Reata is happiest surrounded by horses, good dogs and friends. Here in Bozeman, she's majoring in business marketing, a perfect fit given that Reata has a mind



Nevada Watt



Hannah Ballantyne

focused on business and a creativity that allows her to see opportunities others would miss. When she's not busy with school or running her business, Reata Ranchwear, she's usually in our kitchen, cooking up a gourmet ranch meal while trying not to smudge her freshly applied pink nail polish. (She has every shade.)

Even though we're all so different, there's a common thread that binds us: our love of the western lifestyle and the traditions of the past. It's a challenge to preserve old ways and styles of work, but it's a challenge we gratefully accept. We invite you to join us on our sometimes random, yet always entertaining adventures through our college years, into the sagebrush and beyond.

To be continued...



# The Frontier Project

## New Writers Initiative



**A** Colorado-based media venture founded by *Ranch & Reata* editor A.J. Mangum, The Frontier Project Inc. published its first books in 2012. They included works by saddlemaker Cary Schwarz and silversmith Scott Hardy; photographer Con Haffmans; horseman Peter Campbell; and writer Deanna Dickinson McCall. In each case, the author worked closely with Mangum on the development, editing and design of the book, which was then released via The Frontier Project's partnership with a global distributor. The effort gave life to works that might not otherwise have been published due to changes in the publishing industry that make mainstream book deals, already elusive, even more difficult to attain.

For 2013, The Frontier Project is launching its New Writers Initiative, an effort to develop fiction and non-fiction titles for the contemporary western genre, while creating opportunities for writers who have not yet published their work in book form. The company is seeking book-length manuscripts for review. Manuscripts received by June 30, 2013, will be evaluated as candidates for publication. Authors of accepted works will be offered partnership arrangements with The Frontier Project Inc., and publishing contracts with

royalties of up to 50 percent of net sales.

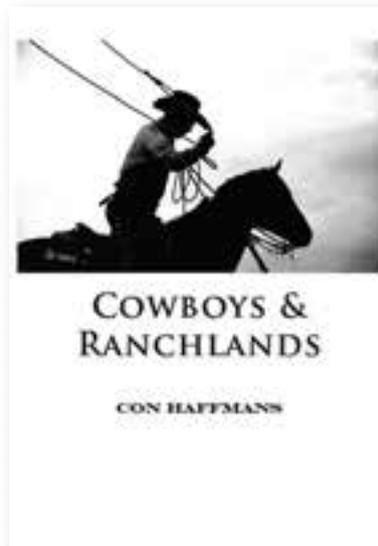
Content parameters are, by intent, loosely defined. Manuscripts may be fiction or non-fiction, poetry or

prose, and may consist of one book-length work or a collection of shorter pieces; collections of art or photography will also be considered, as will instructional works. Submissions, of course, must be the original work of their authors, and manuscripts should consist of at least 25,000 words, with longer manuscripts, up to 50,000 words, preferred. Each work should have some connection, even if tangential or purely geographical, to the contemporary American West.

Prose and poetry manuscripts must be submitted in their entirety as Microsoft Word files, and should be sent as email attachments to [thefrontierproject@gmail.com](mailto:thefrontierproject@gmail.com). For submissions of art or photography, authors should be prepared to share

online galleries or downloadable folders of their work. No phone calls related to the New Writers Initiative can be accepted. A manuscript's arrival will be acknowledged within one week, but updates as to a work's status in the review process will not be possible. All works will be reviewed by July 31, 2013, and subsequent offers, if any, will be made by the fall of 2013.

Learn more at [www.frontierprojectinc.com](http://www.frontierprojectinc.com).



*Cowboys & Ranchlands*, by Con Haffmans, features the Utah photographer's portfolio of cowboy images, with author commentary on horses, ranching and the modern West.



# Alive and Kicking

Jess Leep's photography brings the West to life on the page.

Jess Leep's love affair with photography began in his teens in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, where he was raised in a ranching family rooted in the west. After serving four years in the Army – his duties included gathering photographic intelligence – Jess balanced raising a family with running a stock-photo business and serving as a staff photographer for several magazines.

In 1999, Jess stepped out of the corporate world and back into the West he knew as a young man, photographing wildlife and the outdoors and providing images to clients such as *Sports Afield*, *Outdoor Life* and *National Geographic*.

Riding in the mountains around his home, near the convergence of Idaho, Montana and Wyoming, Jess often thinks of his younger days, and hours spent rummaging around bunkhouses and ranch buildings abandoned by an increasingly urban society. The world has changed, thanks not only to mechanization, but also to a loss of contact with a lifestyle built around working the land. Through his photography, Jess knew he could give meaning to his roots, create a purpose for himself, and reflect his western heritage.

For many of Jess's generation, western films and television shows provide the only basis for understanding the culture. Most never realize there's more to it than "good guys" and "bad guys." Too often, those who view Jess's work remark that they're "some great, old-time photos." For Jess, such comments bring to mind Chris Ledoux's line about the West that still exists: "you just can't see it from the road."

As Jess's images show, there are still men and women renewing the traditions of the West's old days. His passion is showing both urban and rural viewers that the West and its culture are still very much alive and worthy of admiration.



*Double Trouble*



*Watching the Herd*



*Wild Horse Race*



*Breaking Storm*



*Chasing Big Medicine*



*Saddle Check*



*Run Down*



*Ain't for Show*





*Training Time*



*Valley of the Gods*



*Out of the High Country*



*Catching Morning Light*



*Back from Winter Range*





*Head Shots*



*Hoping for Rain*



# Who *Were* The Vaqueros?

There is a Providence that protects children, drunkards,  
vaqueros and buckaroos.

By Arnold Rojas

**T**he blood of the caballeros, bullfighters, Jews, Moors, Basques, and Indian heroes ran in the vaquero's veins. He was a strange mixture of races. He admired his Iberian father, but sided and sympathized with his raped Indian mother. If food was short he fed his horse before he fed his wife. Though often a strange contradiction, he was, without doubt, the most interesting man in the New World.

He was a descendant of the old conquerors, and retained the language of Spain. In living the free life of the nomad he imitated the Spaniard in the trappings of his horse, and the Indian in his adobe. He spent his wealth on silver-mounted bits and spurs and often left his home destitute of necessities. He slept on the ground, but rode a silver-mounted saddle. He may not have combed his hair, but his horse's mane was trimmed, with one tuft for a colt and two for a bridle horse. He was named after the saint's day on which he was born; it was often Jesus who was the most proficient in stealing cattle.

The vaquero would lie on the ground with his saddle for a pillow even though the rain was falling, and sleep without a word of complaint, yet he would grumble when his saddle-blanket got wet. (Wet saddle-blankets make a horse's back sore.)

The vaquero's way of life gave him virtues which do not exist in this modern day, and at this distant time no man can judge a man of that era. His life was hard. He

would stand shivering in the early morning cold, holding a cup of coffee in his shaking hand, then sit a horse all day in the driving sleet, chilled to the bone. He would ride from dawn to dusk in a cloud of alkali dust, his tongue parched and swollen, with rippling water in a mirage shimmering in the distance, with visions of all the water he had ever drunk or seen wasted haunting his memory, for memory plays queer, cruel tricks. The want of water was the vaquero's greatest hardship in the burning heat of a San Joaquin Valley summer. He often rode in a daze with visions of springs of cool water bubbling out of the pine-scented Sierra, of canals of water from which he had never bothered to drink. And when he came to drink it would more than likely be out of a reeking waterhole that contained the putrid remains of some animal.

But there was another side. A matchless sky overhead. An expanse of wild flowers that spread over the great valley like a purple carpet, so vast that a day's ride would take one only to the middle of it. The bold Sierra standing in grim outline that stretched away to the northern horizon. A wild chase down a mountainside in the fall when the air is like wine and life is good. The feel of a good horse between one's knees as he sweeps and wheels around a herd of restless cattle. The evening campfire when men broil *costillas*, ribs, on chamiso root coals, and gather around to tell tales of

long ago, of Murieta, Vasquez and Garcia.

“Me crie entre los Indios.” When a vaquero was especially skilled, and he was asked how he reached such a degree of proficiency, his answer would invariably be: “Me crie entre los Indios.” I was raised among the Indians. Or when some vaquero had performed his work with great skill, the other men would look at each



The vaquero was a romantic who put up with suffering and hardship because he loved horses. Nacho Herman, about 1921. Note wooly chaps.

other, smile approvingly, and say “Se crio entre los Indios pues.” Well, he was brought up among the Indians.

Contrary to a lot of false statements, a man took pride in calling himself “Indio.” The Indian vaquero was highly respected for his skill and good qualities – that is, by those who knew him. And the proof is that very few of the men who have ridden on the Tejon stayed there any length of time without becoming “Indios del Tejon,” Tejon Indians, whatever their true race may have been.

At night around the fire a note of awe would creep into the old man’s voice, as he told of hard riding Indian vaqueros who had roped grizzly bears and led wild cattle out of the Sierra, men who had become legends on the Tejon Ranch.

Cattle ranching was the Californiano’s preferred – his sole – occupation for the first hundred years after the state was founded. Indeed, from 1769 until the turn of the present century, cattle raising was the most important industry in California.

In the beginning the ranches were Spanish and Mexican land grants. After California became part of the United States, big cattle companies formed the greatest cattle ranches in North America. The Tejon, Kern County Land Company and Miller and Lux are examples of these huge ranches.

It was boasted, in his many bunkhouses in California, Nevada and Oregon, that Henry Miller could ride from the Mexican border to British Columbia and sleep on his own land every night, change horses every day from his own *caponeiras* (a *caponeira* is a band of horses, usually geldings, kept for the use of vaqueros) and eat beef from his own herds on the entire journey. Of course this was an exaggeration, but nevertheless the Miller and Lux holdings were enormous.

One might say that cattle ranching in California did not lose its paramount importance until after 1927, when Miller and Lux started selling out their land. The Kern County Land Company with its three and three-



quarter million acres is still the largest producer of range beef in North America.

The vaquero or buckaroo who herded the cattle on the ranches of California was sometimes a Cahuilla, a Piute, a Mission Indian, or a member of one of the other numerous tribes which populated California. Sometimes he was a Sonoreño, that is to say, a native of the state of Sonora in Old Mexico, or a descendant of Sonoreños born in California. Sometimes he was a Californiano of pioneer colonial stock, like Don Jesus Lopez. At other times he was from Baja California like Frederico Lamas, and sometime he was a gringo. Once in a while a Chilean was met among the vaquero crews.

The vaquero of California was the North American counterpart of the Argentine *gaucho*, the Brazilian *vaquero*, and the Chilean *buaso*. But our histories have ignored him. This rider was called a “vaquero,” a word derived from *vaca*, cow. He was never called a “cowboy.” In fact, the Anglo rider of the West (if an Irishman can be called an “Anglo”), particularly of California, Nevada and Oregon, so disliked the word “cowboy” that he coined the term “buckaroo” from vaquero, and by this he was known.

Perhaps this Hispanicization came from the padres who were the vaquero’s teachers. They were almost invariably good horsemen and could balance a lance or throw a *lazo*, a lasso, with the best leather jacket soldier. Indeed, they sometimes solved the problem of bringing their neophytes into the fold by lassoing them. Often some recalcitrant Indian, who later became a good vaquero of the mission herds, got his first object lesson

in throwing the lazo when a zealous padre rode after him and roped him, thus literally leading him into the bosom of Mother Church.

It is doubtful whether the first padres brought

vaqueros with them from Velicata. The first cattle were probably driven into Alta California by *harreros*, muleteers, and cavalrymen. The padres trained native Indians as vaqueros as the herds increased, despite the Laws of the Indies which forbade Indians, on penalty of death, to ride horses. The Spaniards feared the Indians would become warriors like the Apaches. Subsequent events

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THE PADRES TRAINED CALIFORNIA INDIANS TO BE VAQUEROS DESPITE A LAW FORBIDDING INDIANS, ON PENALTY OF DEATH, TO RIDE HORSES. (THE SPANIARDS WERE AFRAID MOUNTED INDIANS WOULD BECOME WARRIORS LIKE THE APACHE.)

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proved that the Spaniards were not wrong. The padres were good teachers. A few years after the arrival of the first cattle there were a number of good Indian vaqueros at Monterey.

The *rancheros* (ranchers of the old Spanish and Mexican grants) used Indian vaqueros almost exclusively until the gold rush period. Then Sonoreños who had migrated to California to seek gold began to take over the herding of cattle. Some ranches, however, use Indian vaqueros to this day, as do the Tejon Ranch and the Paubo Ranch. The Santa Margarita used them until it became Camp Pendleton. The vaqueros, who drove the first great herds out of California in 1836, when Ewing Young began supplying the Oregon ranchers with cattle, were probably Californians and Indians, but when Pete French and John Devine stocked the eastern Oregon and western Nevada ranges with California cattle their vaqueros were Sonoreños.

The gringo came into the vaquero picture in numbers after the 1850s and from his advent the crews



Indian vaqueros of the Tejon Ranch. The respect accorded Indian vaqueros is demonstrated by the fact that very few of the men who rode on the Tejon for any length of time were not honored with the appellation, "Indios del Tejon," regardless of their race or tribe.

became mixed. These riders were, for the most part, sons of immigrants or small ranch owners. These gringos had been reared with Spanish-speaking children and, more often than not, spoke Spanish. All riders, no matter of what racial background, used the same type of equipment – spade or half-breed bit, rawhide riata, “shotgun” or “wooly” chaps, and flat, hard-brimmed hat.

It would be unjust to say that men of one racial group were better at the work than those of another racial group. There were good Indian vaqueros, good Mexican vaqueros, good Californian vaqueros, and good gringo vaqueros, and the only Negro vaquero this writer ever knew was a good one too. He would ride any of the other vaquero’s broncos for ten cents. If that price was too high, he would ride the bronco for a sack of Bull Durham tobacco which cost only a nickel, and few if any horses could buck him off.

It is only when they have ridden together stirrup to stirrup, and depended on each other in the thousand

emergencies which arise when working wild cattle or riding bronco horses, that men really know each other. Differences in race are forgotten as they learn each other’s worth.

Contrary to the “western” writers who have written so much of hatred between the Anglo and the Latin peoples of California, the relations between the gringo and the paisano, as far as the vaquero and buckaroo were concerned, were good. Skilled men of any race were respected and usually had a large following. Such men were Juan Olivera, Lupe Ortiz, Juan Gomez and many others. By the same token

the Bowers, the Hathaways, the Brunks, the Roses and the Pascoes were respected as first-class buckaroos. As a matter of fact, a man took more pride in calling himself *Indio* than in calling himself anything else. Regardless of what malicious writers may say, the Indians were liked, by those who knew them, for their good qualities. The Indian vaqueros Carlos Valenzuela, Bill Nichols, Vic Cordero, Nacho Montes and many others earned the respect of all men.

The Indian vaquero was sparing in speech, and serene under all circumstances. He was pithy in all his expressions and often spoke in metaphor or ironically. One would have to be well acquainted with him to know his meanings. He had a knack for giving names which never failed to correspond to something risible in their owners. His nicknames told the characteristics of the victim. There was a man in Bakersfield who every year managed the Frontier Days parade. He had a long, thin, straight nose and little blue eyes. He would have



filled the description of Ichabod Crane in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Agustín Hinio named him *El Pajaro Carpintero*, the Woodpecker. A vaquero stationed at Fort Tejon liked to ride up and down Highway 99 so that people could admire his figure on horseback. The other vaqueros named him “Highway Bill.”

To a man whose color approached that of roasted coffee, the Indians would apply the term *El Guerro*, the Blond, or *El Gringo*, the Gringo. Or if the luckless one happened to be of Yaqui extraction, which was quite often the case, he would be named *El Yori*, the White Man. To a man on Tejon who rode humped up over his horse the other men applied the name *El Tacuachi*, the Possum. They would say of a man who showed much Indian blood in his makeup, “*Ese no le debe ni los Buenos Dias a los Españoles*” – that one doesn’t owe even a good day to the Spaniards. Or if person’s hair was stiff, they would say “*Ese lo tienen que peinar a martillos*” – that one has to be combed with a hammer.

**Vaquero talk.** In my stories I use the Spanish of the vaquero, who is now gone forever, even if the dialect does not conform to the best Castilian. The reader will, no doubt, search through Spanish dictionaries for some of the words. He will either fail to find them or they will have definitions which do not agree with those in the text; because of that circumstance, some explanations are in order.

The Spanish spoken in California was a dialect of old Castilian which was brought by the Catalanian soldiers who accompanied the missionaries into this part of New Spain. Even today the paisano counts his money in *reales*. Often the vaquero adopted terms to suit the occasion or circumstance. The word *nuqueador*



Left to right: Frisco Sal Carmelo, John Gomez, Jake Smith and Jim Gorman, 1917. The California vaquero was Indio, Sonoreño, Californio, gringo, Negro – or, more likely, some mixture of these.

– one, who slaughtered cattle by stabbing them at the base of the neck, the *nuca* – is an example.

Many of the vaquero’s words had gone out of use in Spain long before the gringos came in 1846. From that time the paisano’s language began to die out in California. Few of the old people could read or write, but spoke a clean, simple Spanish; and it was not until the gringos erected schools and the paisano sent his children to them that the young ones began to interlard their speech with English words. Those who retain fragments of Spanish today speak it with a Yankee accent.

The children did not have a chance. In the hands of that peerless civilizer, the Yankee schoolmarm, they were taught the three Rs – and to think in English. It is safe to say that the school, more than the barbed-wire fence or the plowing up of the range, was responsible for the decline of the vaquero.

It is not true that many Indian words were used, as some writers assert. About the only Indian word (said to be derived from the Yaqui and that is debatable) is *pochi* or *pocho*, lopped off or bob-tailed. A bob-tailed horse was

called “El Mocho” by Californians, and “El Pocho” by Sonorans. Californios became “pochos” or “pochis” when Alta California was severed from Mexico.

Another word of doubtful etymology is *coche* or *cochi*. In Spain it means coach, in Mexico an automobile, but in California it meant hog.

The word *bravo* is often translated as brave in English. In California it was used in the sense of fierce. A *toro bravo* was a fierce bull, not necessarily a brave one. The word also meant sharp or keen. A knife with a fine edge was said to be *brava*, barbs on fence wire were *alambre bravo*, rock which cut up a horse’s feet was *piedra brava*, and an awl with a fine point was *brava*. Anything that drew blood or would attack, as a wildcat, was *brava*. Even chili, when extra peppery, was *chili bravo*.

The best interpretation of the term *bravo* I have ever heard was given by Russell Hill, who spoke Spanish fluently.

A rodeo was in progress at the old fairgrounds in Bakersfield. One of Russell’s vaqueros was standing under the grandstand. He was holding a lady’s hand and looking into her eyes, probably telling her she was beautiful and that he couldn’t live without her. Russell, mounted on one of his fine Morgan horses, rode by, and seeing the soulful little tableau, said, warningly, “*Muncho cuidado, es muy bravo el marido.*” Look out! The husband is very fierce.

Whether the lady had a husband, we do not know. It is very probable that Russell was joking.

The vaquero never used the proper *mucho*, much. He said *muncho*.

The cowboy expression “broke in two” may very well have been derived from the vaquero’s *se mocho*, meaning a horse bucked, and similarly, the phrase “part out,” to separate cattle, came from *apartar*.

Whenever a vaquero plunged after a runaway beef, or raced after an animal to lasso it, it was said he *arrebato una res*, assailed a beef. The same term *arrebato* was used when one person attacked another.

Quite often the vaquero, when at a loss for a word, called a thing he had no name for by an unchaste name, as people called a thing that has no name a “doohickey” or a “hootenanny.”

The Californiano – writers on California to the contrary – called himself a Sonoreño. I have heard third or fourth-generation descendants of members of the De Anza expedition (Don José Jesus Lopez for one) say, “*Nosotros somos Sonoreños. Sonora es nuestra tierra.*” We are Sonorans. Sonora is our motherland.

This prideful distinction stemmed from having descended from the actual colonists, not from the convicts who were introduced in subsequent expeditions.

The gringo vaqueros – by gringo vaqueros I mean the Anglos, sons of Yankee parents, who could handle a sixty-foot riata and a full spade bit, and there were many who could – interlarded their speech with Spanish words, and more often than not used them correctly.

Whenever they became loosened in the saddle and they were forced to grab the saddle horn, as sometimes happened, the gringo vaqueros would say that they had “grabbed the apple.” The paisano’s equivalent for this term was “agarrar la comadre,” clutch the comadre. Perhaps they called the horn “comadre” because the word means literally co-mother. The comadre is the woman who sponsors one’s child when it is baptized. Since a comadre or *compadre* would never fail one in time of emergency, it was quite logical that the saddle horn should be called “la comadre.”

There were many stout youngsters on the ranches who could rake a bucking horse from shoulder to flank with their spurs, and hit him with their hat at every jump, but it was no disgrace to clutch the horn when the rider felt himself getting loosened in the saddle, because he “he bought the horn when he bought the saddle.” Sometimes, however, a rider did not have time to grab the horn. He often found himself on the ground twenty feet away, with a handful of dirt.



Every now and then in some musty old Spanish book one meets with the word *jinete*. In Spain and Latin American *jinete* means simply a man on horseback, but in the language of the vaquero it has much more significance. To us a *jinete* is an expert rider of bucking horses. No ordinary rider who just managed to stay on a bucking horse was called a *jinete* in California; such a person was merely a *travieso*, a mischievous one, a rascal. Used in the sense of a verb, *jinetiár* meant to ride a bucking horse.

At the vaquero camp on Tejon Ranch one day many years ago, the following conversation took place between Don Jesus Lopez, the mayordomo, and Don Porfirio Valencia, the *caporal*, or foreman. The object of their discussion was a new vaquero who was as yet untried.

Don Jesus: “*Y ese vaquero, podrá andar en El Canelo?*”

And that vaquero, will he be able to ride the Roan?

Don Porfirio (By the way, Don Porfirio lisped.): “*Pues, él dice que es jinete y amansa caballos.*” Well, he says that he is a bucking horse rider and tames horses.

Don Jesus: “*Bueno, bueno. Vamos a ver.*” Good, good. We shall see.

Don Porfirio: “*Adolfo dice que está enfada de andar en ese caballo.*” Adolfo says he is fed up with riding this horse.

Don Jesus: “*Sí, sí. Pobre muchacho.*” Yes, yes. Poor boy.

The outcome of this conversation was that the new vaquero was given the Roan, and in the course of events was thrown as high as a kite.

**Love of Craft.** More often than not the vaquero and his gringo counterpart, the buckaroo, stood the long hours, bad food, extreme heat and cold incident in their calling

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because of their love for horses. Surely in the southern San Joaquin Valley of 50 years ago there were jobs that paid more money and were much less strenuous. The oil fields were booming; even the farmer paid better wages than the cattleman. But the vaquero was a romantic. He liked to make his living riding a horse even if it entailed hardship and suffering.

Moreover, he was a perfectionist. His way of life was passing, but he still tried to perfect himself in his work. Though the ranch management frowned on the practice, he would put his rope on anything that walked and often with dramatic results. Many of the comical situations the vaquero found himself in came from his penchant for experimentation. He would rope a grizzly bear, wild horse, wild cow, buffalo, wild hog, elk – even ostriches on the Tejon and Tracy ranches – and work out the problem of extricating himself as best he was able. He roped wherever he could, whenever he could, whatever he could with a serene disregard for consequences. The results were seldom if ever tragic. There is a Providence that protects children, drunkards,

vaqueros and buckaroos.

Coyotes were the hardest of the wild animals to rope

and the man who caught one was respected far and wide as a *lazardor*, a roper. But when a vaquero snared one, while he took justifiable pride in the feat, he would say with becoming modesty, “*Ese fue un sapo*” – that was a lucky throw.

Whenever the vaqueros caught a coyote they would mark it in some way. Once a coyote was caught on the plains west of Los Banos by Miller and Lux vaqueros. This time the vaqueros branded it with the S Wrench, bobbed its tail, and put the Miller mark in its ears. This coyote was caught in a trap two years later on the Tejon Ranch by Jerky Johnson, who was trapping for Tejon that year. The distance from where the coyote was caught and

branded to the place where it was trapped is well over a hundred miles.

Once it came to the attention of Henry Miller that his men were chasing coyotes. He waited until they were all together. Then he stormed into their camp and at the top of his voice, screamed that he was not raising horses for buckaroos to stove up chasing coyotes. But the men



Jesse Stahl at the Bakersfield Rodeo in 1919. Rojas remarks that the only Negro vaquero he knew personally was so good he'd ride any other vaquero's bronc for ten cents – or if that price was too high, for a nickel sack of Bull Durham.



would never stop trying to improve their skills. There has never been, in the history of the world, a man who took more seriously the skills of his craft than the vaquero; and though the range rider has been depicted as a man of violence, that is far from the reality of the true vaquero.

The vaquero spent hours in preparing his riata, stretching and smoothing it with loving care. He knew that the condition of the rope would decide whether the throw would be accomplished successfully. There are several ways to throw a riata. The whirling of the rope overhead, horizontally or vertically decides where the loop will meet its target. *Mangana*, from *manos*, hands, is the skill of lassoing an animal by the forefeet, and *pial*, from *pies*, feet, is the skill of catching one by the hind feet. These, of course, were in addition to the skill of catching an animal by the horns.

But all this must be done gracefully. A vaquero was proud of being able to lasso his animal without undue haste. To the vaquero it was undignified to throw a rope hurriedly. The loop could be thrown crossways, from the left, from the right, underhand, overhand, or backwards, but it must be done without hurting the animal roped or the vaquero's horse. This to the vaquero was of the utmost importance.

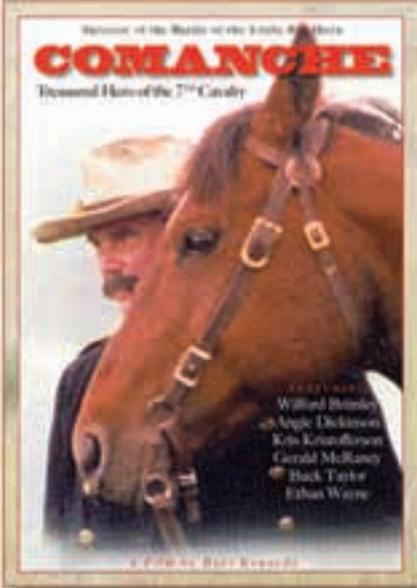
Although he often did not know it, the vaquero's beliefs, myths and superstitions about horses came from the Arabs and their influence was predominant in all the vaquero's relations with his mount.

The Arab's belief, shared by the vaquero, was that a horse had more than 40 whorls or verticils – circlets of hair radiating from an axis, that is, spots on the horse's coat where the hair is in spiral form or pattern – and that of those 40, 28 were lucky and the rest were unlucky, depending on where on the horse's body they appeared.

If he came upon a horse that had more lucky spirals than unlucky ones he would try to get that horse in his string. Unlucky spirals are found just above the cheek, on the hip, beside the tail, and on the inside of the leg. Fortunately, there are more lucky spirals than unlucky ones. Those that are on the ears, neck, belly, and flanks are all lucky.

Another Arab tradition the vaquero believed in was the worth of certain colors in horses. Dark shades were preferred to light ones. Light colored horses were distrusted. The old Arab prejudice against the spotted or yellow horse with white mane and tail prevailed among the vaqueros, although pseudo-Hispanophiles, in writing of the early history of California, disseminated the myth that Californios preferred the

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palomino. In fact, the California vaquero preferred the chestnut, *alasan tostado*, above all other colors in horses. The black came next, then the gray. However, the tradition that no Arab chief would ride a yellow horse or allow one to remain in his stable overnight was unknown in California.

The third-hand belief—from Arab to Spaniard to Californio – that it was a despicable act to ride a yellow horse with white mane and tail was not widely accepted in California, perhaps because the Spaniards that came to California were not Moorish Spaniards, but Catalans. The stamina of the yellow horse with black mane and tail, the buckskin or *bayo*, was proverbial among vaqueros.

A horse of solid color without a trace of white was a prize, indeed. Though Arab traditions and myths are not pertinent yet it still holds that there is no bad color on a good horse and that a perfect horse is hard to find.

White feet meant white hoofs, which are inferior to black hoofs. The Arabs believed that a horse with one white forefoot and one white hind foot was a lucky horse, since they could mount on a white and dismount on one. A horse with white hind feet was preferred to one with white forefeet.

The vaquero, like the Arab, believed that a horse had three ages: the first seven years of animal's life was the period in which it could be left with the trainer. A horse is never fully developed before the age of seven. The second seven are the best or prime years of the animal's life, and then the owner should use it. According to the Arabs, the horse should be lent to an enemy the third seven years, if he can be prevailed upon to accept it.

But if the horse had a good mouth, it could be of any color and have only three legs for all the vaquero cared. A good mouth was the vaquero's greatest pride. A horse that would not turn up, stop, or back at the slightest twist of the rider's wrist was worthless in the vaquero's eyes.

However, in judging the vaquero's horse we must take into consideration the fact that the vaquero and his horse had been together over a long period of time and in many a tight squeeze. Through association the horse had learned every mood and quirk of its rider and could, to a large extent, read its rider's mind and from the rider's movements anticipate his slightest wish. This affinity between horse and rider was what made good horsemen. It also was the reason a vaquero stayed on a ranch year after year. He did not want to leave a string of good horses.

This applied only when each rider used certain horses exclusively. The old adage that two of the best riders will spoil the best horse is true in the sense that the horse will be confused by different signals, since no two men signal a horse in the same way.

To slide to a stop, back at a trot, and spin to the right or left without opening its mouth or throwing its head was the test of a good horse. And all this with only a slight pull on the reins – an open mouth indicates a hard tug on the reins.

Of course, being human, a vaquero would be more skilled in one thing than in another. One was better at riding bucking horses, another was better at throwing the lazo, or at teaching horses to rein; but this does not mean that they were specialists. They could handle all the skills of the trade with more or less expertness. It has often been said that a *jinete*, a bucking horse rider, was good for nothing else; but that it not altogether true. There were good reinsmen on the ranches that a good bucking horse would have trouble in throwing.

One of the skills of the vaquero, that of throwing a beef by a pull on its tail, though common in early California, had gone out of its practice at the turn of the century. Although old vaqueros speak of it as often done on the ranches, the last time this writer saw it attempted was on the Tejon Ranch in 1920. The attempt was a failure. When the vaquero, Mike Tapia, bent down to



grasp the beef's tail, his horse, El Machucado, lit into bucking. The rider straightened up and grabbed the saddle horn to stay aboard. Nepomuseno Cordero, who did not like Mike, for a long time afterwards would give us instructions on how to tail a beef. He would until Mike could not avoid seeing him and then go through the exact motions Mike had gone through. This made Mike angry but there was nothing he could do but *pelar los ojos* – show the whites of his eyes – at Nepomuseno.

George Hoskings, who worked for the Kern County Land Company at Bellevue and at San Emideo, was very skilled at doing this trick, and often gave proof of his ability by turning some refractory beef heels over head. The skill had its risks. If the tailer did not have a hazer he had to crowd the beef. If he permitted his horse to lag, the beef could cross in front and cause a pile-up. Perhaps the introduction of modern beef, tamer but much heavier than the Spanish cattle, made it risky to continue the practice. Hereford and Durham cattle did not need the rough treatment the Spanish cattle got. Besides, they were too valuable.

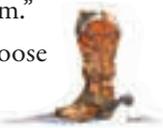
Of late years the San Joaquin Valley has become a cotton producing country. The farmers of the

Buttonwillow area have brought in large flocks of geese to eat the weeds which grow in the cotton. So my friend Buford Fox acquired a large flock of geese. True to the western tradition, he looked around for someone to herd them. He went into Bakersfield and there ran into the old Adolfo Eincinas, and offered him the job of herding geese. Adolfo's daughter, Carmen, somewhat dubious about her father's being able to cope with the new job, warned Buford, saying, "My father doesn't know about geese. All he knows is herding cattle and breaking horses."

But Buford put Adolfo's bed in the pickup and took him out to Buttonwillow. Buford raised Arabian horses then (he has quarter horses now), so he mounted Adolfo on one of his Arabs and turned the geese over to him.

I learned about Adolfo's new job one day and was surprised to run into him the next day, back in town. So I asked, "How come?" Adolfo is a good raconteur but this time he would not talk. All he would say was, "*Esos gansos estaban locos.*" Those geese were crazy. "They would run here and there like sheep. I couldn't drive them."

And that was the end of his goose buckarooing.



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



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## LIGHTING OUT

# Red Rocks, Ranching and Red Wine

Utah's Red Cliffs Lodge offers visitors a ranch setting, redrock scenery, film history and award-winning wines.



By Rod Miller

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Follow the Colorado River upstream from Moab, Utah, and you'll soon find yourself in close quarters. Sheer sandstone cliffs more than a thousand feet high form a narrow gorge that leaves room for little more than the river and the two-lane road. But just about the time you reach milepost 14, where Castle Creek flows into the Colorado, the gorge opens up to form a spectacular valley that looks like something out of a Western movie.

And it's no wonder, for a number of classic films, including *Wagon Master*, *Rio Grande* and *Comancheros* were shot right here. Among the many stars who plied their trade in this valley are John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara, Ben Johnson, Henry Fonda and James Stewart. The Moab area still serves as a location

for numerous films, with the new Lone Ranger movie a recent visitor.

But the silver screen is no substitute for seeing this country in person. And there's no better place to set up housekeeping for a visit than Red Cliffs Lodge.

Straddling Castle Creek, hugging the banks of the Colorado River, and flanked by emerald pastures where herds of horses graze, the resort offers guests a unique taste of the West. Part of the reason for that claim lies in the fact that the ranch is also home to a winery and vineyard. More about that later.

Red Cliffs Lodge is the brainchild of Colin Fryer, a Salt Lake City businessman with family roots in agriculture. "Cows and horses and farming were in my blood, and I always wanted to get back to that," he says.



A guest lodge, in the grand style of those once built in national parks, had also been on his mind for a time. But southern Utah's redrock desert was never in either picture.

Then one day Fryer found himself stranded in Moab, thanks to a faulty wheel bearing on a trailer, with little to do but sightsee. Happenstance sent him up the river road past an old family ranch. He saw a for-sale sign on the property. And he saw an opportunity. After a year or two of consideration and negotiation, Fryer sold out most of his other holdings and took up following cows.

"As part of the deal, there were 200-and-something mother cows and about 40,000 acres of leases, a mix of state land, BLM land, and Forest Service land," he says. "They ranch here in the old style. Everything is done on horseback, and with very few fences. And that was another thing that intrigued me, and I really wanted to try and do that. I'd always had horses and always been around cows, but never in this wild country where you're sometimes 10 miles away from the next cow."

While learning the ropes, Fryer added another small ranch in nearby Castle Valley to serve as



Utah's Red Cliffs Lodge occupies a scenic valley near the town of Moab.

headquarters for the cattle operation. "It took me a couple of years to get my legs under me, just to find my way around, 'cause the cows drift with the seasons," he said. "We'd be on the winter range – BLM desert in the winter – and then we'd gather to Castle Valley and do our cow work in the spring, and then start drifting up to the LaSal Mountains for the summer. End of the summer, we'd repeat the process – gather and come down and stay on the state land in the middle, then back onto the desert."

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Fryer was building Red Cliffs Lodge and other facilities to lure vacationers. "It's a homemade lodge. It's not a cookie-cutter kind of place," he says. "Many of the iron fixtures were made in our own metal shop. We cut some of the wood off the mountain and used as much local material as we could. We created a place that would blend in and be part of the natural viewscape. We get comments on that every



photos courtesy Red Cliffs Lodge

Castle Creek Winery offers an award-winning lineup of whites and reds, all produced against the backdrop of southern Utah's redrock country.



Red Cliffs Lodge guests can ride in the scenic canyonlands, take float trips, explore the region's film history, and more.

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day, and that's one of the things that I'm most proud of. Every cabin has a private patio that's right on the river or on the creek, so you have these majestic red rocks in the background with the water in the foreground."

The guest ranch features lodging and a restaurant. Experienced wranglers guide horseback trips through the remarkable scenery. Float trips and jetboat tours on the Colorado, off-road trips through the redrock country by motor vehicles or mountain bikes, hikes, and canyoneering are available. Within minutes are Arches National Park, Canyonlands National Park, Dead Horse Point State Park, and more.

That seems more than enough to make Red Cliffs Lodge unique. But that's just the beginning. Make your

way downstairs at the Lodge and you'll find yourself immersed in movie history.

"I have a kind of personal interest in the old cowboy movies," Fryer says. That interest became more intense when he moved to Moab, which has a history of moviemaking that stretches back to the 1940s. "I thought, this movie heritage will be something that will attract people and attract interest. After all, if John Ford thought this area was pretty enough to make movies in, it surely would be pretty enough for people to want to visit."

Moab's film commission had accumulated a lot of memorabilia and material from movies filmed in the area, but had never had the wherewithal to properly display it. Fryer offered to provide a home for the collection at Red Cliffs Lodge. "That gave me the beginnings of the museum," he says. "Since then I've collected lots of other stuff. In fact, now I have enough stuff to fill two museums. In the next year or two, I plan to build a building that's strictly a museum."

If you've worked up a thirst from all this activity, not to worry. Red Cliffs Lodge also offers a tasting room where you can relax and sample wines crafted on site at Castle Creek Winery.

And that's another story.

"When I travel, I have always liked to visit wineries," Fryer says. "Not that I consider myself any kind of connoisseur or expert. I just like to drink a glass of wine once in a while and I'm always fascinated to see people making stuff. I consider wineries kind of agricultural businesses, and that's the sort of thing that interests me."

When a small winery in Moab came up for sale, Fryer saw another opportunity, but it didn't exactly come knocking. "It's been a very humbling but gratifying journey," Fryer says of the venture. The new owner and the winemaker in his employ soon parted ways, and Fryer found himself facing an unlikely challenge. "In the early days, when I was the winemaker, having a cowboy winemaker was not



something you'd run into every day."

Add to that the fact that the cowboy knew next to nothing about coaxing the beverage out of grapes. "I talked to this guy at a wine lab in California and told him the situation I was in. After he got done chuckling, he kind of took pity on me and said, okay, I'm going to teach you as much as I can over the phone. I would send him samples of my wine and he would analyze it and tell me what to do, tell me what to add, what filters to use, and I learned to make wine over the phone." Fryer claims he got by, but only just.

Things improved when Fryer moved the winery to the ranch and systematically replaced outdated equipment, then took a decided turn for the better when Fryer's son, Will, took an interest. He attended classes at the University of California-Davis and did his homework in the real world of the functioning family winery. "I'm really proud of him because he's taken our winery to a whole 'nother level," Fryer says. "We're competing nationally, we're winning medals. I think we've won pretty close to 10, if not more, medals this year in national tastings in Texas, California and New York."

Fryer says Castle Creek Winery as it stands today, and the wines it offers, are Will's creation. "The last five or six years, my son Will has become my partner and taken over the winemaking. He's a heck of a lot better winemaker and since he's started running the winery we've doubled our business."

Castle Creek Winery's award-winning offerings include Kid Red, Outlaw Red, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon on the red side of the menu, with Lily Rose White, Uintah Blanc, Chardonnay and Late Harvest Gewurztraminer on the lighter side. Annual production is around 20,000 gallons, and each bottle is filled, labeled, and boxed by hand.



The Red Cliffs Lodge museum is a tribute to the area's long history as a favored location for Hollywood westerns.

"Cowboys making wine in Utah is a unique thing. People are always surprised that the desert can be a place where you can grow grapes and make wine," Fryer says. "And they're surprised about Utah, because we have this heritage of the LDS culture."

Fryer sold his cattle a few years ago. "The Lodge had grown larger than I initially intended, and was doing really well, but was taking a lot more time. It got to be more than I could do, doing the cows and the Lodge. Everything has a season and I decided I would let that part go, although that's the part I loved the most."

In spite of the lost love, Fryer is content with what's become of his dream. "I thought that people would be interested in visiting a place that had a winery, as well as a museum, as well as this spectacular scenery, as well as having a history as a working cow ranch. So those were the ingredients that I stirred into the soup, you might say."

The recipe seems to have worked, as it's a thick, rich soup they serve up at Red Cliffs Lodge, with a glass of wine on the side.



Rod Miller lives in Utah. He is the author of several books, including *Go West: The Risk and the Reward* and the forthcoming novel *Cold as the Clay*.



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RANGE RADIO

# Adrian, is Nashville calling?



By Bruce Pollock





Adrian – The Buckaroo Girl, has been a core artist on Range Radio for the last 5 years – since she was 15 years old. Adrian, now 20 and a singer-songwriter beyond her years in voice and talent, now has Nashville pulling at her and we asked her how she was feeling about that.

“I love the old Nashville, but I am not moving to Nashville now,” she told us from the road. “I cannot relate to the pop country music coming from Nashville today. Just because they add a truck to the song and a pair of blue jeans, they think it’s country music.”

Certain Nashville folks believe they could help Adrian “evolve,” enhance her singing talent while presenting the same style of lyrics and pop sounds that have given great success to Taylor Swift or Carrie Underwood. “Not going to happen,” says Adrian.

See, Adrian is proud of her family heritage growing up on a ranch in Williams, California and working and holding close to her family values that she gained from her parents, David and Alison on the merits of truth and an honest day’s work. It’s not that Adrian is sheltered from the world, as she was “raised” all over with stops in Scotland, Switzerland, the Ukraine, and Washington D.C. as well as ranches in California and Nevada. She is happy traveling the United States now, just being herself.

Adrian is a throwback to her roots growing up and a renaissance woman writing about her cowgirl life – whether she is in Nashville, Elko, Nevada or Williams, California. Adrian clearly has her own music and lyrical textures, similar to her friend Tom Russell. Tom has been an inspiration to Adrian with his help and guidance on her CD, *Boots & Pearls*, and the song “Smile at Me.” Tom has told Adrian to always “try something different,” and she has.

Tom has reminded Adrian “when you are writing about love, heartbreak and when you share your life in words and song, you are giving someone else a voice when they are hurting just like you. So, just write and be brave and go for it.” Great advice from the master story-teller-songwriter-musician!

Adrian writes all her own material and as she says about her writing, “...it releases the many varied moods from the spirits of her soul.” Per Adrian, she is a “hint of gypsy, a lot of cowboy ‘old school’ with a little hint of Cowgirl Biker.” Adrian still is in training to become a great guitar player, and strives to record with vintage equipment on a ribbon mic and analog tape. “I like the sound and the authenticity,” she says, “It suits me, I guess, I will just always be Adrian.” [www.buckarogirl.com](http://www.buckarogirl.com)

Adrian, we believe that is enough. Thank you~



# The Road Trip List

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

## Emmylou Harris #20

Littered across the floor of the backseat of the pick-up, as I creak my neck to look around back there, are about six or seven hundred thousand



1975 press photo

CDs that I can't live without. Maybe a bit of an exaggeration but it seems like that many. And in searching amongst the headstalls, torn spur straps and dog leashes are little jewel cases filled with memories and launch points for great driving soundtracks.

Amongst the bunch, are a plethora of Emmylou

Harris records. One could throw a dart at Ms. Harris' discography and come up with a must-have. Check the stats: Twelve Grammy Awards, countless Country Music Awards, *Billboard's* Century Award, Country Music Hall of Fame...on and on. But those awards are not the reason our Emmylou lands on the Road Trip List. It's about the writing – and the performance found in her 2011 release on Nonesuch Records (her fourth solo effort with them), *Hard Bargain*.

The songs which were to become the *Hard Bargain* album were, according to the artist herself, recorded within 4 weeks in August 2010. Only three people can be heard on the album, namely Emmylou herself, the producer as well as Giles Reaves. In December 2010 six video clips were filmed at Laughing House Studios, Nashville, Tennessee, and these videos, with additional commentary, can be





found on the bonus DVD of the album's deluxe release. Between the album and the DVD, one gets a true sense of where Ms. Harris wanted this album to go.

Regarding the tracks, there are many personal and historic tributes. The opening track "The Road" speaks to her memory and relationship with the late Gram Parsons, her musical mentor who died in 1973.

"Darlin' Kate" is a tribute to the late Kate McGarrigle who died of cancer in 2010. Kate, as well as her sister Anna McGarrigle, (see Vol. 2.5 for a review of the landmark record by Kate and Ann McGarrigle) who collaborated with EH on numerous efforts since the 1970s.

We picked this album of Emmylou Harris and many of you we know have your favorites as well. Her grace and poise can be found on any of her records from *Quarter Moon in a Ten Cent Town*, to *Elite Hotel*, or back to her 1975, major-label debut album, *Pieces of the Sky*, that featured Herb Pederson playing 12-string guitar on her epic "Boulder to Birmingham."

We leave you with some of the lyrics to her song, "Boulder to Birmingham" – written by the artist and Bill Danoff – and the suggestion that any ride in the pick-up is way better with Emmylou Harris along for the ride.

I don't want to hear a love song  
I got on this airplane just to fly  
And I know there's life below  
But all that it can show me  
Is the prairie and the sky

And I don't want to hear a sad story  
Full of heartbreak and desire  
The last time I felt like this  
It was in the wilderness and the canyon was on fire  
And I stood on the mountain in the night and I  
watched it burn  
I watched it burn, I watched it burn.



Album art

I would rock my soul in the bosom of Abraham  
I would hold my life in his saving grace.  
I would walk all the way from Boulder to Birmingham  
If I thought I could see, I could see your face.

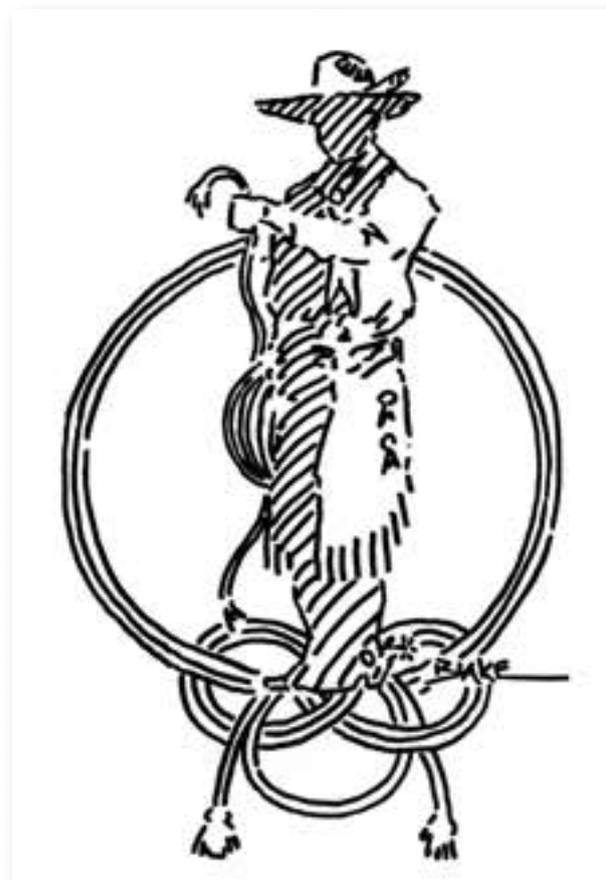
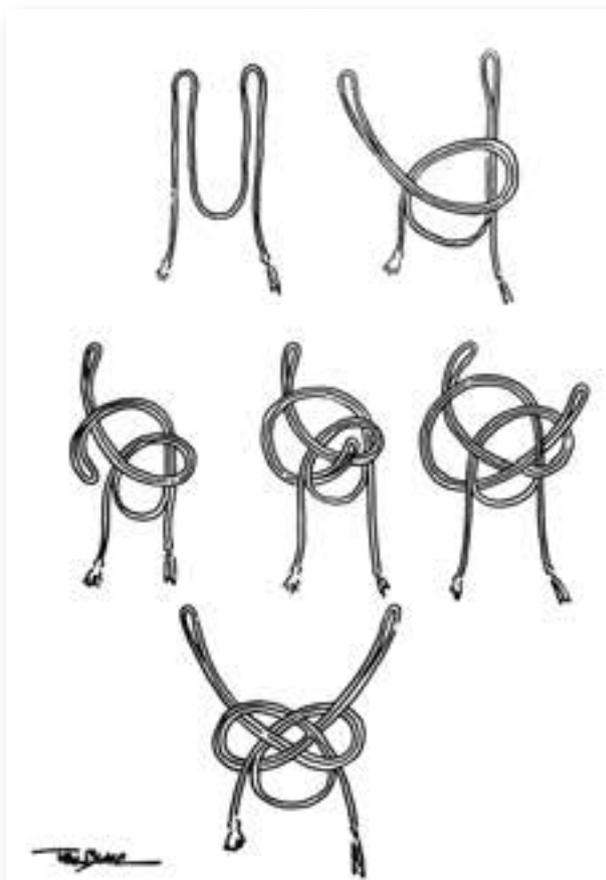
Well you really got me this time  
And the hardest part is knowing I'll survive.  
I have come to listen for the sound  
Of the trucks as they move down  
Out on ninety five  
And pretend that it's the ocean  
coming down to wash me clean, to wash me clean  
Baby do you know what I mean

I would rock my soul in the bosom of Abraham  
I would hold my life in his saving grace.  
I would walk all the way from Boulder to  
Birmingham  
If I thought I could see, I could see your face.



# A Western Moment

## The Alamar Knot



One of the most interesting knots to have become synonymous with the California vaquero culture is the alamar knot. A purely decorative knot, the alamar has evolved into a symbol that a horse can be ridden straight up in the bridle. Usually seen on special occasions, a vaquero would take his 20 - 22 foot mecate and wrap it around his horse's neck several times, tying it into an alamar.

The origin of the alamar is said to have been seen on packages arriving by ship from Japan. Similar in pattern to a nautical carrick bend or a Japanese "package knot," the alamar is a fun and challenging knot to tie – so with a little help here from Teal Blake's drawings, see what you can do.



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## TWO WRAPS AND A HOOEY

# Remembering Gil Favor and Rowdy Yates

A couple of nights ago I was visually reminded of a special western TV show from our collective past. The moment happened while sitting at the bar at the Ranch & Reata Roadhouse. I realize this sounds like a shameful self-promotion for the Roadhouse – which it is – but while sitting there I glanced up at one of the flat screens positioned at either end of the bar and was greeted with a black and white scene from an old episode of *Rawhide*.

Now for those of you who weren't around in the late 1950s; 1959 saw the start of an eight season, Friday night run of one of the most popular TV westerns of all time. *Rawhide* ran on Friday nights from 1959 to the fall of 1965. With ratings slipping – it was the mid-1960s after all and westerns were falling from favor – the CBS network moved the show to Tuesday nights where it lasted another four months before being cancelled. The show involved a group of men on a cattle



drive, originating from San Antonio, Texas, that headed up the Sedalia Trail to Sedalia, Missouri. The nonsense trail boss, Gil Favor was played by actor Eric

Fleming. His character was at once cow boss, father figure and roll model to the twenty-twenty-five drovers who pushed some 3,000 head of cows up the trail. To them, Gil Favor was “the man.” The show was CBS’ answer to another popular Friday night show of the late 1950s – ABC’s *77 Sunset Strip*. A

detective show set on the glamorous Sunset Strip in Hollywood, *77 Sunset Strip* featured a diverse cast as well in the sage-like, boss and owner of the detective agency, Efram Zimbalist, Jr.; a handsome, up and coming young detective in Roger Smith and the teen idol, car attendant with a comb, Ed “Kookie” Burns. CBS put *Rawhide* right up against *77 Sunset Strip* and added their own “Kookie” teen, heart-throb type in a young actor with similar hair, Clint Eastwood.



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Eastwood starred as Rowdy Yates, a young, sometimes hot headed cowboy who usually needed the guiding eye of Gil Favor to help him see the “right trail ahead.” *Rawhide* had a simple message – as so many things back in the ’50s did – do your job, honor your word, and be loyal to the

“brand.” So as I sat there watching Gil and Rowdy, reading the newly added closed-caption dialogue, it started to sink in that here were people who respected each other. Who had a job to do. The cows in the herd had been trusted to these men by many different ranchers and Gil Favor had



given his word to get them to the railhead and finish the job he promised them he would do. Every week, along the trail, problems would arise and Favor and Yates would “multi-task” and solve these many times, unrelated problems while never losing sight of their primary task. For almost eight years, we rode with these characters in their simple, forthright world of honor and hard work – all the while with the turbulent ’60s, the Vietnam War and an evolving nation as a background.

Watching and remembering all this from my trusty bar stool, I wondered how Favor and Yates message would faire today, in today’s TV environment – missing their direct and honorable ways. Here was a show that cost a \$1,000 a minute to produce – big money in the 1950s – that had great stars and above all, great writing and for seven and a half years, *Rawhide* was the fifth-longest-running American television Western, beaten only by eight years of *Wagon Train*, nine years of *The Virginian*, fourteen years of *Bonanza* and twenty years of *Gunsmoke*. So lift your glass, here’s a toast to a couple of the good ones, long gone: To Gil Favor and Rowdy Yates – we are better for having known you. BR



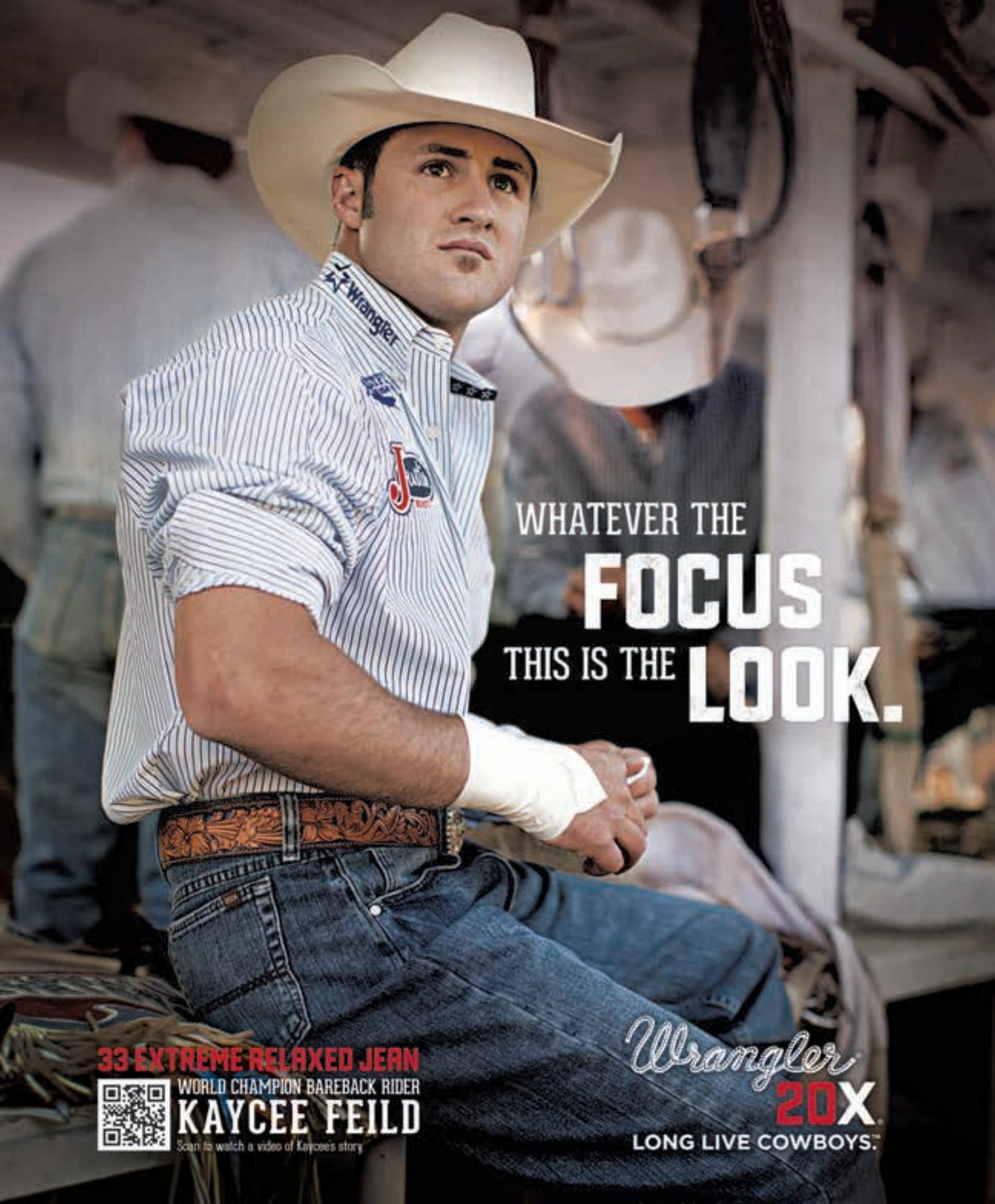


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