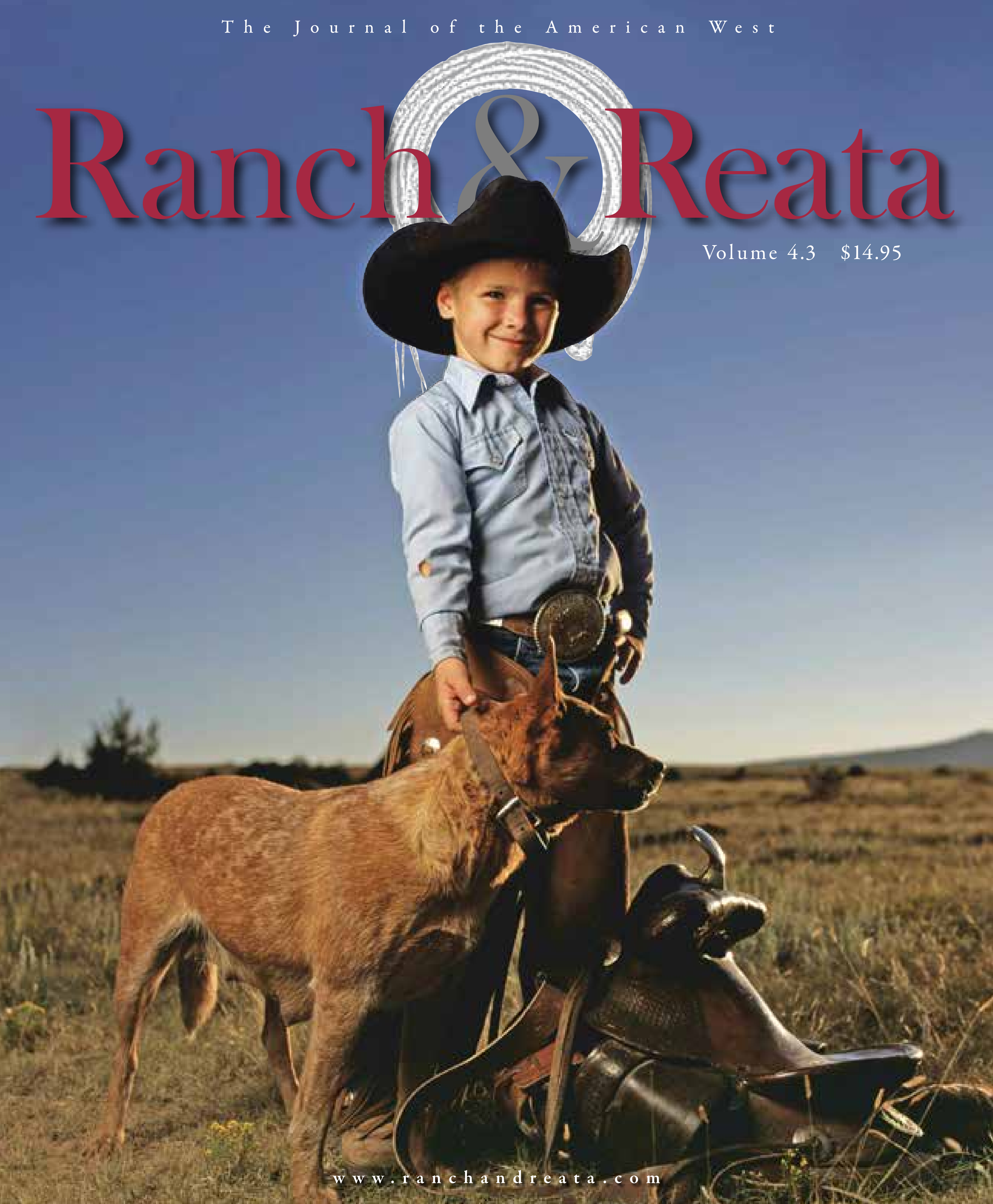
The Journal of the American West
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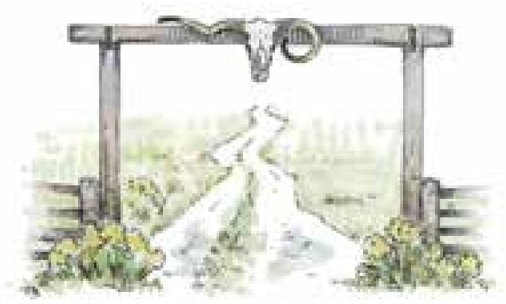

FRONT GATE

We are proud to report that *Ranch & Reata* has won the General Excellence Award for its circulation category at the annual American Horse Publications (AHP) Awards, June 21, in Charleston, South Carolina. Considered the Oscars of the horse publishing industry, the AHP presented *Ranch & Reata* the prestigious award in 2012 and 2013 as well. In addition, *Ranch & Reata* received honors for Best Cover in its category for issue #3.2 as well as Best Personal Column by editor A.J. Mangum. We are honored.

Ghost Ranch Cowboy, Abiquiu, New Mexico.
Photo by Gene Peach.

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Cover image: Austin Vincent, ranch cowboy, Union County, New Mexico. Photo by Gene Peach.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Metaphors

By A.J. Mangum

On a horse ranch south of Denver, a small crowd has gathered at one end of an outdoor riding arena, a patch of earth perhaps an acre and a half in size and surrounded by a white rail fence. Inside the arena, a man in his late twenties, wearing a camo jacket, t-shirt and jeans, leads a horse through a simple obstacle course. The pair navigate a path between two poles; they weave through a set of orange pylons; they complete a figure-eight around a set of barrels.

As the horse and handler progress through the pattern, the small group of onlookers cheers as if points are being added to a scoreboard. This isn't a competition, though. The stakes are much higher.

The duo in the arena approach the final obstacle, a pair of poles that have been placed several feet apart, forming a gap between which the horse is to be backed. The man in the camo jacket struggles to position his horse in front of the gap, and the two turn in circles for the better part of a minute before finally completing the maneuver. Victorious, the handler leads his horse toward the arena gate, and the crowd cheers yet again.

Along the rail, a horseman named John turns to me. He's smiling, mildly entertained by the scene that played out at the final obstacle. "It isn't really about getting through the course," he says. "It's about the metaphors."

John is a Vietnam veteran. He returned from Southeast Asia wracked with survivor's guilt, continually questioning why he returned from combat while so many of his fellow soldiers didn't. Post-traumatic stress disorder made it difficult for him to get along with co-workers and hold down jobs. Alcohol became a refuge. At his lowest point, he contemplated suicide.

Horses, John will tell you, rescued him. He awoke one morning inside a corral, where he'd passed out from drinking the night before. With his saddle horse nuzzling him, John contemplated the notion that his connection with his horse was one of the few positive relationships in his life. Hopeful he could reverse his downward spiral, he vowed to inject into his interactions with people the patience and quiet mindset

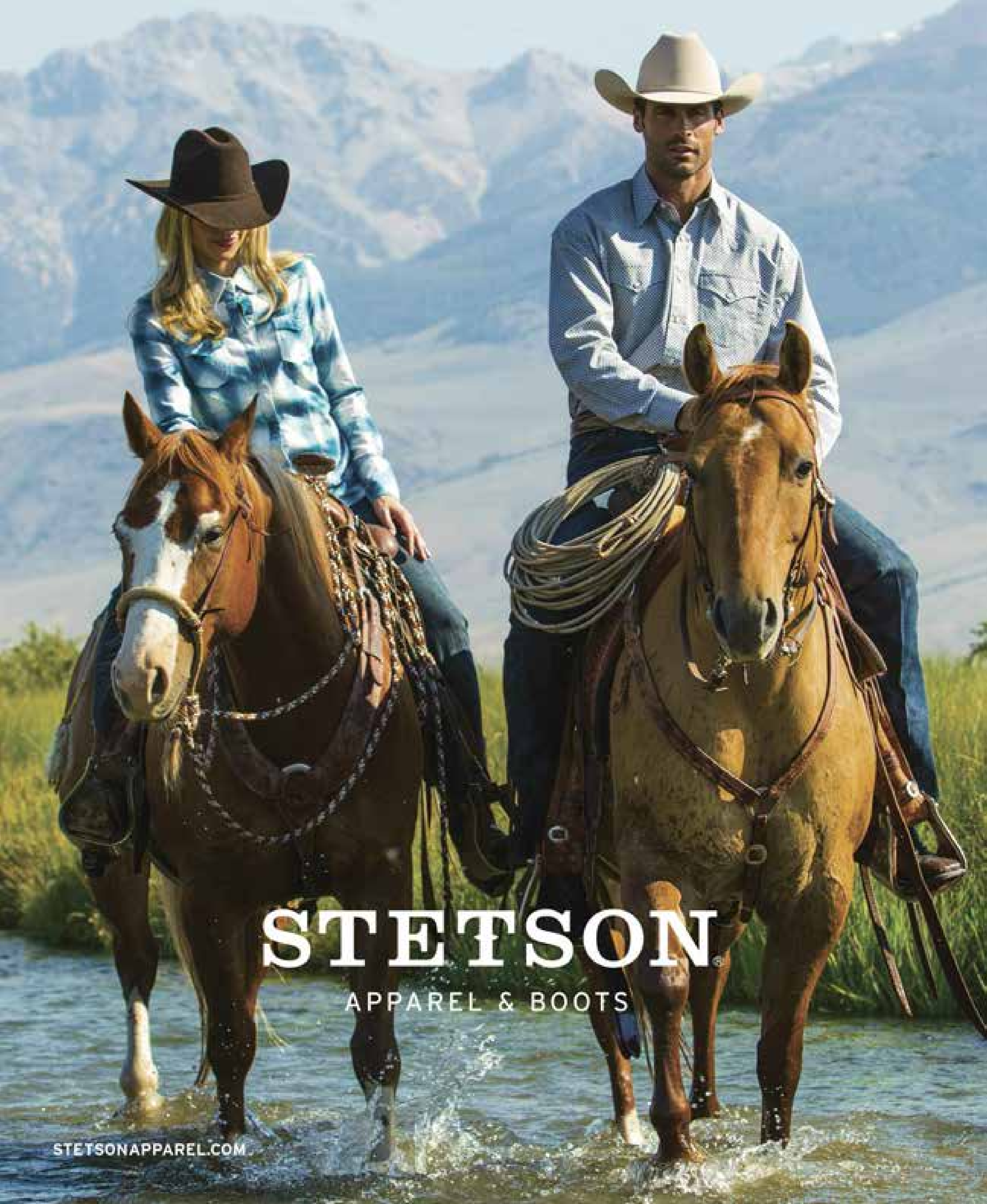
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photo courtesy Semper Fi Fund

Veterans warm up before a Jinx McCain event. The McCain program operates under the umbrella of Team Semper Fi, an athletic program for wounded servicemen.

his horse demanded.

Slowly, John emerged from the darkness that had come to define his life. Eager to help other veterans, he attended workshops on equine-assisted therapy, and reached out to counselors and fellow horsemen. He gradually formed a community of volunteers and veterans. His ranch became a refuge, a place where former soldiers could work with horses and seek the same relief the animals had offered John.

When a newcomer arrives at the ranch, John explains, he's handed a halter and lead rope, and pointed in the direction of a horse turned out on pasture. For an experienced horseman, catching and haltering a horse is the most basic of tasks. For someone with no experience around horses – someone who might not know what a halter is for – it's an assignment that can border on impossible.

The point, John explains, isn't teaching a veteran to halter a horse; the idea is to present a challenge, one that's potentially overwhelming, and let the veteran process it. If he becomes frustrated and angry, odds are he won't get near the horse, much less get the animal haltered. If the veteran controls his emotions, though, and handles the unfamiliar with patience, the odds of success dramatically increase.

At the end of each session, John and the counselors with whom he works ask the veterans in the program to look for parallels between their interactions with horses and their relationships with family, friends, co-workers. When problems have occurred – with horses or with people – what roles have frustration and anger played? If patience had been employed, how might things have gone differently? The lessons, and the metaphors, become obvious.

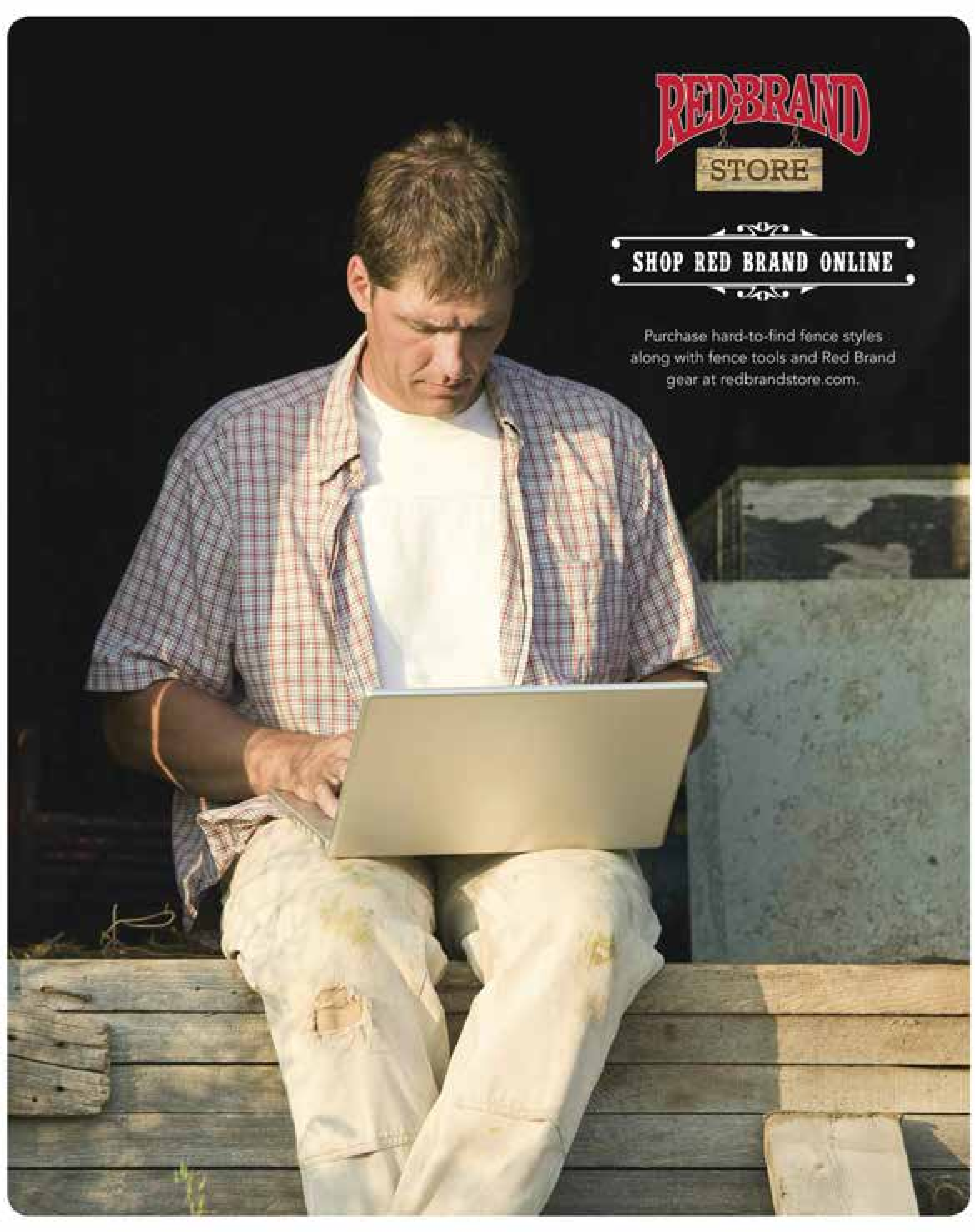
This issue includes "Semper Fi," my story on the Jinx McCain Horsemanship Program for wounded veterans, including many suffering from PTSD or traumatic brain injuries. The McCain program is part of the Semper Fi Fund's Team Semper Fi, a veterans' athletic program promoting "recovery through sport."

In researching the story, I became acquainted (by phone) with McCain program participant and former Marine Chris Lowe, a veteran whose PTSD went undiagnosed for the better part of a decade. Chris says that, before he began working with horses, he lived in a constant state of anger, with predictable effects on his relationships and prospects. Horses changed him.

"If I'm angry, cursing, no one wants to approach me," Chris says. "It's the same with horses. If I'm calm and quiet, though, they'll come to me."

Having recognized the same metaphors of which John, the Colorado horseman, speaks, Chris has transformed his relationships with people and achieved a much-needed turnaround in his life. Today, the Marine can speak of his demons in the past tense.

"Horses," Chris says, "have given me a sense of relief."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Interesting Things and Stories from Out West

Montana celebrates The American Singer/Songwriter.

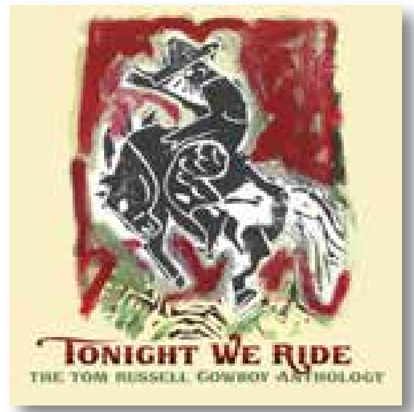
"Live From The Divide" is a Montana-based, radio broadcast created simply as a celebration of the American songwriter. The 60-minute show features regionally established and legendary songwriters based out of an intimate fifty-seat venue and recording facility in Bozeman, Montana. Quoting *Montana Magazine*'s Corinne Garcia, Bozeman is fast becoming Montana's new Nashville, "On a warm Monday evening – a weekday night that typically has little going on in the way of live entertainment here – music was pouring out of Peach Street Studios located in a historic red brick building on Bozeman's north side. The crisp sounds of acoustic guitar were accompanied by the solid, soulful voices and haunting harmonies of a Washington, D.C.-based band called Vandaveer. The next night, it was The Farewell Drifters, a hipster-esque folk band out of Nashville, the night after it was Texas country singer Dale Watson, and on other evenings Montana's own singer-songwriters took the stage."

Alaska Reid

Many of the artists we have recently featured here in *R&R*, including Brennen Leigh and Mike Beck, and Tessy Lou and The Shooting Stars, have performed at the Montana venue and are now featured regularly on our own Range Radio (www.rangeradio.com). Recently, another new Montana talent, Alaska Reid, performed during her recent tour with Texas legend Lyle Lovett.

To learn more about upcoming shows, visit www.livefromthedivide.com and find out about Alaska Reid's next shows at www.alaskareid.com

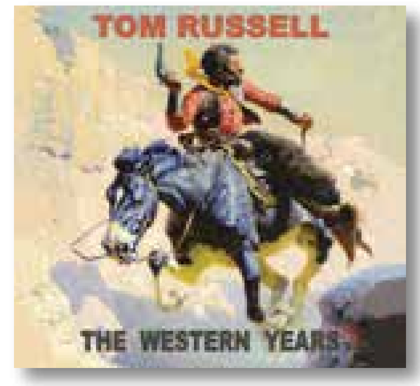
Listen to Alaska Reid's "Summer Wind" – http://youtu.be/FkNI7nPaUDE



TOM RUSSELL RIDES AGAIN.

If performing all over the world, and painting and writing for this magazine wasn't enough; Tom Russell is readying two, not one, but TWO new albums for release this September.

Tonight We Ride: The Tom Russell Cowboy Anthology features all the great Russell cowboy songs, remastered – with, according to Russell, "some surprises," along with original Russell art on the cover. www.fronterarecords.com.



LA's Rockbeat Records is releasing a special collection of reissued tracks celebrating Tom Russell in *The Western Years*. See more at www.rockbeatrecords.com. The album package is smashing and western art types will note the cover art, *Dodging Lead*, is a painting by the renowned William R. Leigh, featured in issue 4.2.

WESTERN WORDS: A LOOK AT NOTABLE BOOKS ON OR ABOUT THE WEST.

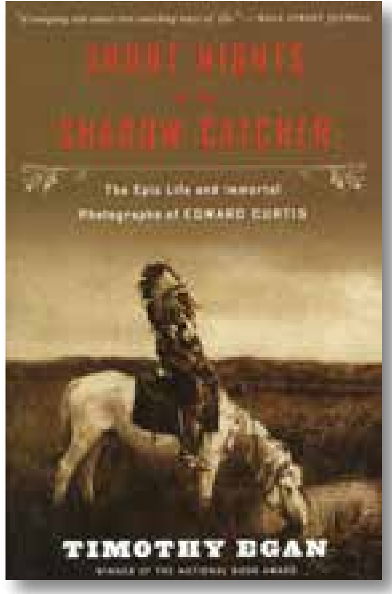
Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher
By Timothy Egan

Reviewed by Kristin Reynolds

In the 1980s I visited the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyoming, and saw for the first time an exhibition on Edward Curtis' photogravures. It was the image titled *Piegan Encampment*, taken in 1900, that astonished me that only 80 years prior this encampment was still a vital part of the West. Curtis captured this peaceful camp with wide-open views straight to the Rocky Mountains, just as if today I stepped outside and snapped a photo of my own neighborhood during dinner hour. The West thereafter was transformed within one generation, and save for the foresight of one man, the true characterization would have been lost forever.

Edward Curtis' photos have enabled us to perceive what North American aboriginal life – as well as the vastness of the American West – was like before industrialization. What may seem like a photographic adventure at the end of the century was in fact an arduous, self-sacrificing, dangerous undertaking that consumed his prime years and all of his personal income. *Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher*, by Timothy Egan, tumbles you along with Curtis on a course from Washington, D.C. to Canada, Alaska, Arizona and all parts of the West.

Since, first and foremost, Curtis was an ardent outdoorsman, he was a comrade with all of the groundbreaking environmentalists from Teddy Roosevelt to John Muir. His subjects were Chief Joseph, Geronimo, Princess Angeline



and a variety of Indian Chiefs depicted in traditional ceremony, which at the time were forbidden by the United States.

Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher vividly reveals Curtis' hunger to capture the American Indian before the modern world, westward expansion and prejudices changed their lifestyle forever. Under Timothy Egan's artistic penning, the historical perspective that drove Curtis to devote 30 years to the singularly greatest documentation of the American Indian comes to life. It is a compelling read that I have personally referenced for its historical data and heartfelt material, more than any other non-fiction book I have read recently. It is primarily a portrait of a kinetic artist who focused on highlighting humanity, but the author puts the history of that time in such clarity that you will marvel how Curtis alone had such premonition at what was to come.

I shared this book with Jack Swanson, the great artist of the California vaquero. Jack paints by memory the beauty that he witnessed cowboying, and has a similar intuition about capturing a passing era. He shared with me a piece he is currently working on. It depicts an Indian couple that had come upon buffalo that had been slaughtered by the white man in an attempt to purposefully decimate a race by depriving them of their main food source. The afternoon that we discussed *Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher*, he invited a neighbor over who currently owns Curtis' collection of master copper plates – a bit of serendipity that continues to bring relevance to this fine book.

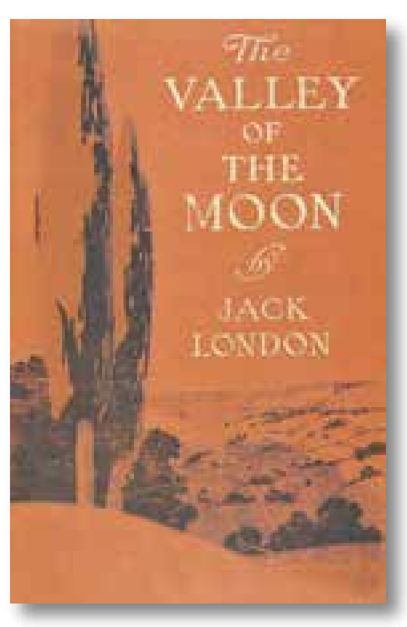
As Ian Tyson reminds us in his song "The Gift" about Charles M. Russell's similar talent and dedication:

God made Montana for the wild man,
For the Piegan and the Sioux and Crow,
Saved His greatest gift for Charlie,
Said, "Get her all down before she goes.
You gotta get her all down
'cause she's bound to go."

Get her all down before she goes. It's the stories, music, paintings and photos that will be all we have to hold of that wondrous West someday.

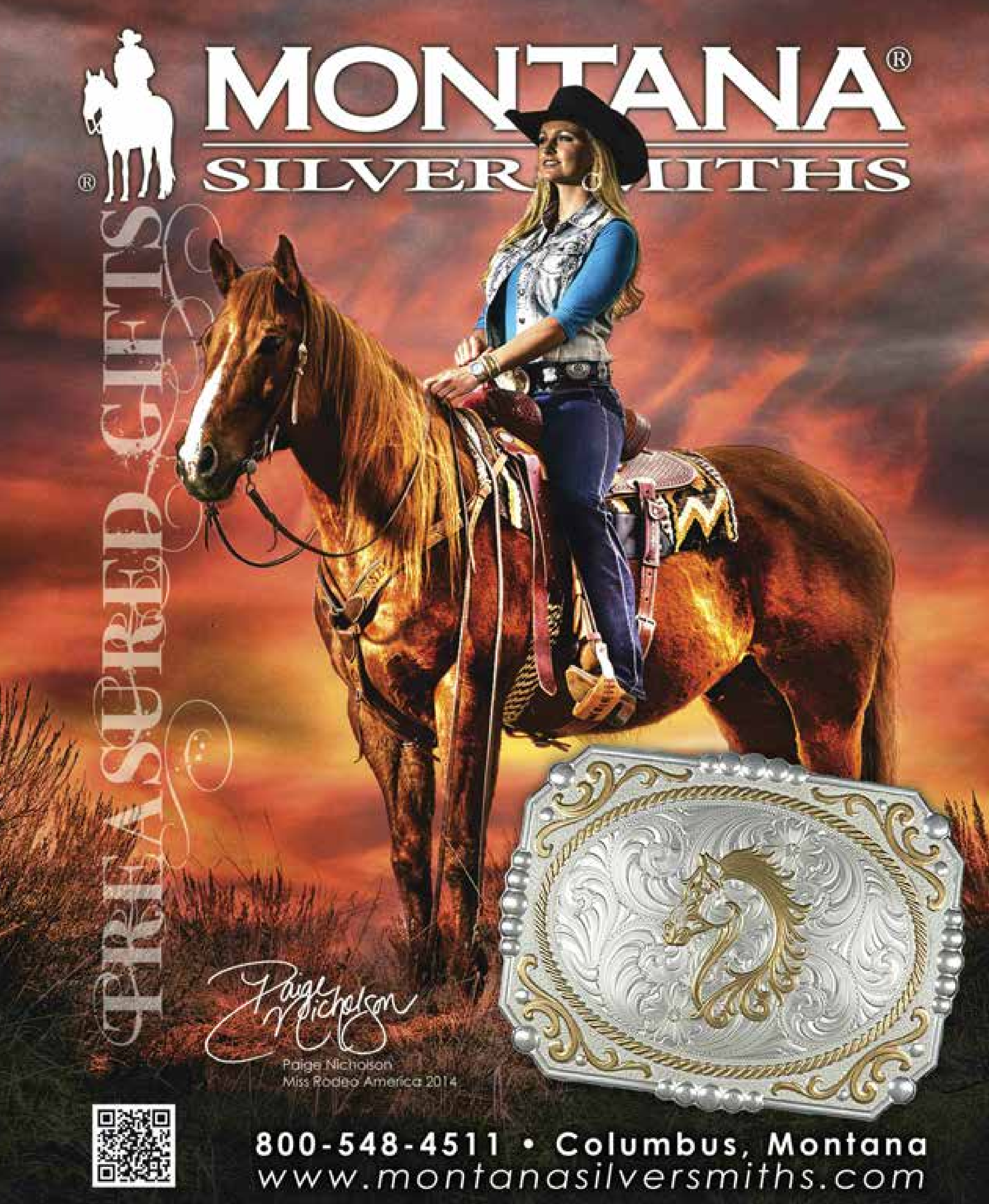
And a bit of a classic…

The Valley of the Moon
By Jack London



This 1913 novel by writer Jack London is titled with the mythic and romantic name for its location – in the wine-growing region of Sonoma Valley where Jack London was a resident and built his ranch, now a California State Park in Glenn Ellen.

It's a story of a working-class couple, Billy and Saxon Roberts, struggling laborers in Oakland at the turn-of-the-last-century, who left the city life behind



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and searched Central and Northern California for suitable farmland to own and escape the rampant industrialization that London felt would ultimately destroy the planet by using up its limited resources. Sound familiar? But this was 1900s California – just forty years after attaining statehood. The book is notable for the scenes in which our proletarian hero enjoys fellowship with the artists' colony in Carmel but ultimately seeks to settle in The Valley of the Moon – the local tribal name for the Sonoma Valley.

Historian Kevin Starr writes in the 1998 edition's forward, "In his frequently stated pleas for respect for the environment and for scientific (read: less intrusive) farming, London anticipated the rising tide of environmentalism in twentieth century California. He presents this philosophy and practice being driven by a post-frontier consciousness that America, both the people and the place, could be used up. Although London does not have the word sustainable in his vocabulary yet, that, in contemporary terms, is what he meant: The effort to create ranch communities and ways of life that are not based upon fatal consumption of resources but, rather, upon integrated cycles of use and re-use set within patterns of nature herself."

This novel has been described as a "road novel fifty years before Kerouac," and called "overly romantic" compared to other, more notable books by the author, including *The Call of the Wild*. *The Valley of the Moon* takes on the contemporary issue of living responsibly and realizing we own nothing, we simply are renting the place and should leave it better than we found it. That was London's attempt when he built what he hoped would be both a personal and scientific utopia. This is a valuable read, and still in print one-hundred-and-one years after its publishing by one of America's finest writers.

Jack London's Beauty Ranch

Glen Ellen, California, 1911

This Bruce Wolfe painting of an imagined Jack London enjoying his vineyard in The Valley of the Moon was commissioned for a nearby vineyard and is now owned by local resident Marty Lee who we thank for allowing its reproduction.

Jack London's vision of the ranch was that of a radical techno-progressive. While Charles Fletcher Lummis sought a way to express Western life as colonial history and high culture at El Alisal, while Pawnee Bill tried to blend Eastern gentility with prairie lore at Blue Hawk Peak, London looked to modern science to reinvigorate and reinvent the ranch.

London's writing interests may have ranged from socialist politics to sailing the South Seas to prospecting in the Yukon but when he went home, it was to his native California and his Beauty Ranch in Sonoma County. There he experimented in raising livestock and growing crops by

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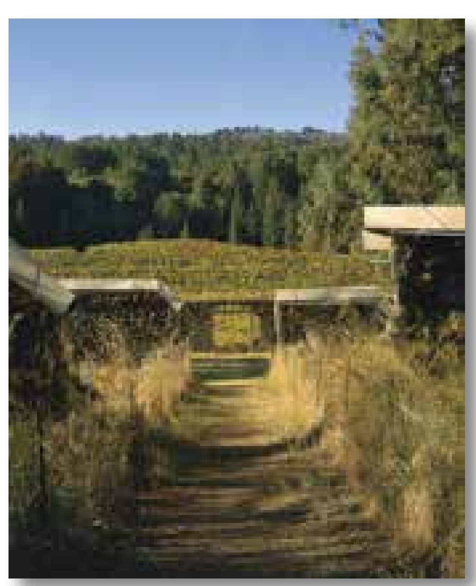
progressive, scientific methods.

London and his wife, Charmian, lived in the simple frame ranch house they had bought on the property of the old K and F Winery in 1911. It had porches front and back; the front ones they enclosed with glass as sleeping porches. By that time London was already building his dream ranch house, Wolf House, nearby. A glorious superstructure befitting of the world-famous, adventure-loving author, it would have far surpassed Pawnee Bill's ranch house as a wonder in the wilderness.

London and his wife, Charmian, moved into this ranch house while awaiting the construction of a lavish ranch mansion, Wolf House, nearby. Here he wrote, often in the study he added to the right. He was committed to making his ranch an up-to-date, scientifically based working ranch.

In the meantime London turned his energies to the Beauty Ranch. He fictionalized his ranching philosophy in *The Valley of the Moon*: the protagonists, stand-ins for Jack and Charmian, leave the corrupt city to find a better life in the countryside. They meet immigrant farmers who, through hard work and a willingness to try new techniques, turn depleted farmland to fertile soil. In contrast, old Yankee farmers, unwilling to try new ways in the new century, turn bitter and hateful toward the fresh blood and fresh ideas brought by the immigrants. Change or die seemed to be London's theme.

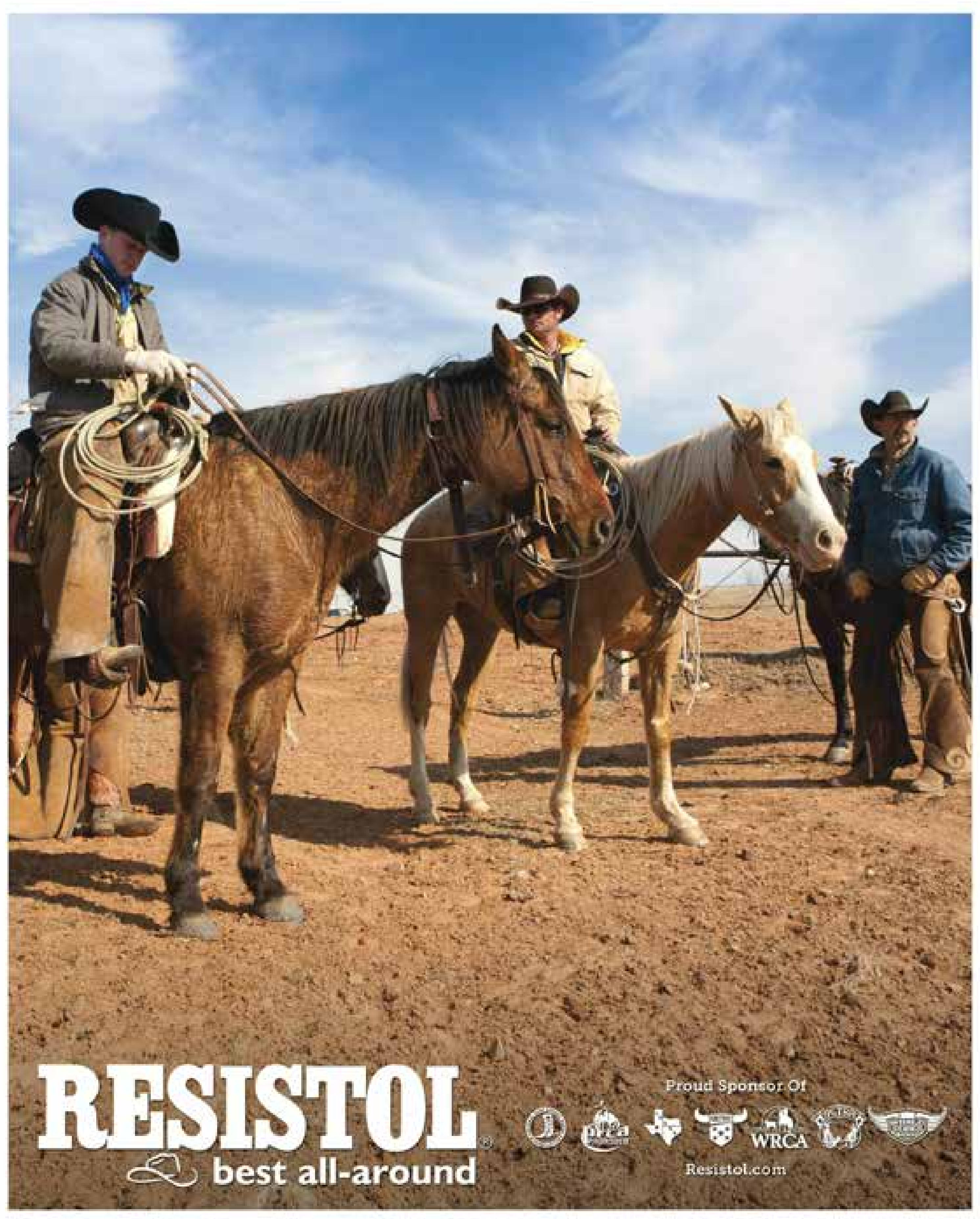


London experimented with thoroughbred cattle and horses and tried to raise eucalyptus trees as a cash crop. Today the ranch is a vineyard. The ruined foundations of an old barn are in the foreground.

London applied his scientific approach to the construction of his ranch buildings. A pair of silos were made of newly developed concrete blocks. A piggery was planned in the round, with a tower for storing and mixing feed in the center and a hemicycle of pigpens around it.

The house itself displayed London's wide-ranging knowledge and tastes. With

London experimented enthusiastically with innovative ranching techniques. He invented this circular pig sty; neat pens for each family of pigs ringed the central silo, where feed was stored and mixed.



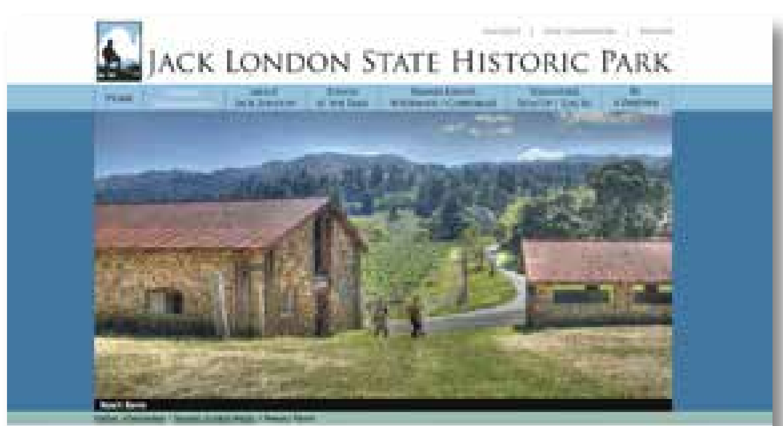
The Choice of Cowboys Since 1927

a dining room draped in tapa cloth made from mulberry tree bark and printed with native designs from the South Seas, it may have been the first tiki-style home in California.

Wolf House, which would have been the full embodiment of London's vision, burned days before completion. London never rebuilt. The photogenic and daring adventurer, one of the century's first media stars, had started out to shape the way the nation say its rural future. But popular culture would turn elsewhere to create its lasting myth of the ranch.

Text by Alan Hess, Photographs by Alan Weintraub/From the book Rancho Deluxe *Courtesy Chronicle Books, San Francisco, Ca. Used by Permission.*

JACK LONDON STATE HISTORIC PARK



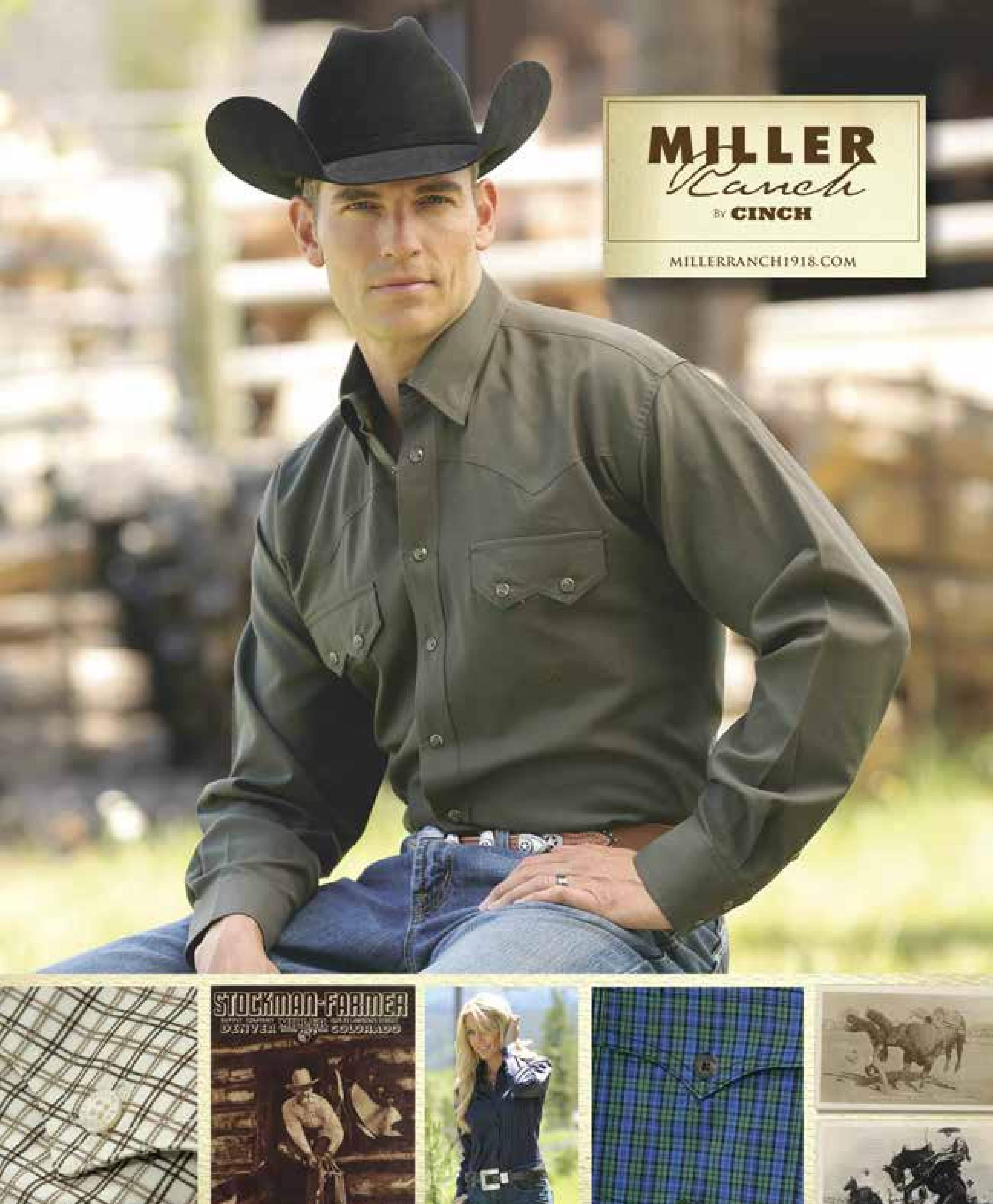
Jack London's Beauty Ranch is the legacy of London's passion for the land and features the remnants of Jack and Charmian London's life on the ranch. Combined with great scenic beauty and many miles of hiking and riding trails, the park attracts fans of the writer and nature lovers year round.

Here's some information from the park's website: In 1905 London bought the first of several ranches on Sonoma Mountain in Glen Ellen, California. Using proceeds from his prolific writing career London acquired adjoining parcels over several years and expanded his ranch, also known as the *Ranch of Good Intentions.*

By 1913 London owned 1400 acres on the slopes of the mountain and by 1916 employed nearly fifty workers building, farming, and tending prize livestock. Self-taught and inventive, London sought to improve farming methods using common sense, research, and concepts gleaned from travel. Visitors to the ranch today will see examples of his ingenuity and foreshadowing of organic and biodynamic methods popular today.

"I am rebuilding worn-out hillside lands that were worked out and destroyed by our wasteful California pioneer farmers. I believe the soil is our one indestructible asset, and by green manures, nitrogen-gathering cover crops, animal manure, rotation of crops, proper tillage and draining, I am getting results which the Chinese have demonstrated for forty centuries." — Jack London 1915

To find out more about Jack London State Historic Park, www.jacklondonpark.com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Destinations

Tennessee Valley, Part 2

By Donna Stegman

photos by Donna Stegman

Two days, six Bourbon distilleries and not even a minute hangover later, I'm leaving Kentucky and making my way to my original destination, Nashville, Tennessee. Winding through the rolling green hills and limestone canyons of the Tennessee Valley, I cross over the muddy waters of the Cumberland River into Nashville, just a quick two-hour jaunt from Bourbon country.

I was in luck for this trip – I had a longtime friend to be my tour guide, and if you want to really know a city, ask a local. My friend was excited to tell me how, over the past decade, Nashville had evolved. No longer just the home to country music and deep fried southern food, Nashville had moved on past its roots to become the most eclectic city in the South.

Nashville is divided into two areas, Opryland and everywhere else. They don't call it Music City USA for nothing. Singers, songwriters and pickers have been pouring into this town for decades hoping to be discovered. This is the home of *The Grand Ole Opry*, *Hee Haw* and all things country. It's a Mecca for anyone hoping to make it in country music and for the fans to pay homage to its rhinestone-studded stars, past and present. Live music is everywhere: cafés, shops, parks and I even listened to a great band on the all-clear side of security at the airport! They say that Nashville has over twenty bands playing on any given night and I believe it, churning out everything from classic country covers to bluegrass and the new rage, *punkabilly*. Seeing live music in Nashville is a must, but coupled with fantastic food and now it's an unforgettable night on the town.

My basecamp for Nashville was the Gaylord Opryland Hotel. This resort is palatial; outside of Las Vegas it's the largest hotel in the United States. The ambiance inside is a stunning recreation of the Garden District of New Orleans, loaded with fourteen restaurants and shops galore. Whether a fan of country music or not, this hotel has something for everyone. The colossal property includes an eighty-five foot waterfall, tropical foliage and winding "rivers" complete with a paddle wheeler ride. But did I mention that all of this grandeur was covered with an atrium that is larger than three football fields? It's always the perfect temperature inside the Gaylord, I could have spent three days alone at this resort and still not seen every nook and cranny.

If you're looking for the traditional music scene of the city, then you need to visit where it all started, Broadway. It's the gritty heart of Music City; the street is packed nightly with crowds pushing their way into the cramped bars with live bands. This is where the likes of Loretta Lynn and Patsy Cline sang while paying their dues. If you're going this route, then get there early so you can get a seat. But if you want to skip the touristy melee of downtown, then I would recommend you hop over to East

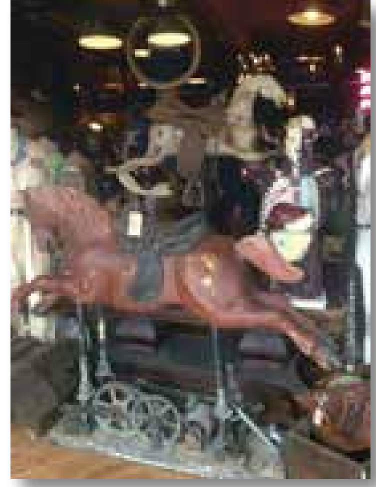
photo courtesy George Gruhn

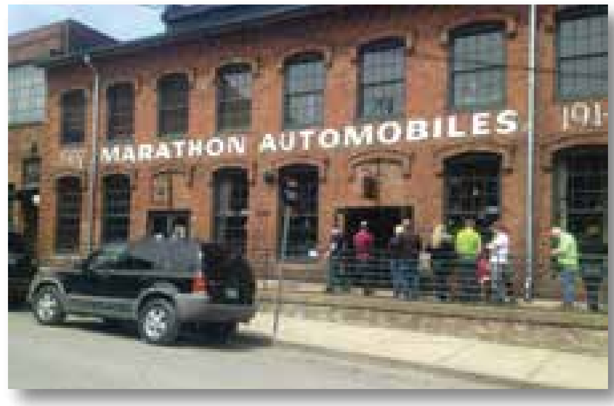
Gruhn Guitar Store

Nashville, it's a fashionable, walkable neighborhood with a bevy of trendy bistros with live music of all flavors. Nashville has so much going on that for a short stay you'll need to plan your attack.

After a rather late night, I wanted to experience a legendary Southern Sunday brunch.

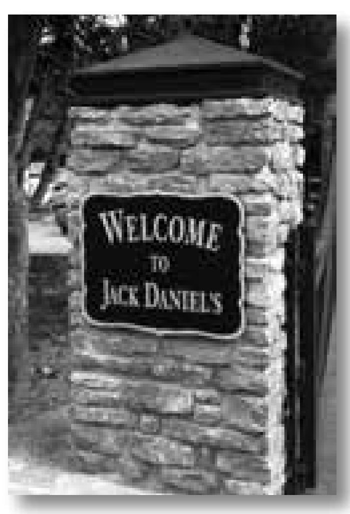
The Loveless Café was recommended for the full southern downhome experience, famous for its "Biscuit Lady" – the late Carol Fay Ellison who had baked the heavenly staple there for over 28 years. Country ham, hash brown casserole and stone ground grits round out this meal, and for the brave, it can all be doused in gravy.





Now that I would never need to eat a single thing again, it was time to explore the city and do a little shopping. My friend and guide insisted I pay homage to Gruhn Guitar store while in town. A legendary shop for pickers of all genres, whether you're there to shop or just gawk at the huge display of new and "adoptable" used guitars, this place is amazing. George says, "Ya never know who you're going to run into while shopping here." (The week before I visited, they had several members of Aerosmith mosey in for guitar refurbishing.)

Just down the road from Gruhn we stopped in at Marathon Village, this is a great one-stop-shop. The huge red brick building was the size of a city block. It was once upon a time an automobile manufacturing complex, now it houses artist studios, stores, galleries and music venues. We waited in line for 10 minutes to be granted entry to the famous store, Antique Archaeology. It was jam packed from floor to ceiling with the best Americana antiques from all over the country – if you've ever had a hankering to buy George Jones' jacket or a complete 1920s carousel, you're in luck. We wandered around for a good 45 minutes and I'm sure we still didn't even scratch the surface. It was well worth the wait.



I couldn't resist the urge to bookend my trip with yet another distillery. I figured I was in the neighborhood, so we headed south out of Nashville to the southern essence of spirits, Jack Daniel's Distillery. It's a short and scenic forty-minute drive that will wind you through the quaint back woods of Tennessee. Lynchburg is a wide spot in the road, and I'm pretty sure that Jack

owns everything here outside of the post office. Unlike the distilleries of Kentucky, Jack Daniel's is far more commercial. It's a handsome set up, very picturesque, complete with picnic area on the stream and horse drawn wagons to carry you two blocks into town. Tours start on the hour and will take you from grain to packaging, ultimately leading you to the tasting room. Now this is where it gets weird.

Lynchburg is, in fact, a dry parish. You can purchase bottles to take home, you can even have a funny little lady etch your name onto a bottle for a take home souvenir, but you can't drink a drop on site. The quote from The Rime of the Ancient Mariner came to mind, while I was sipping my complementary pink lemon-aide, "Water, water everywhere – Nor any drop to drink…" I just felt the need to give you a heads-up, for those of you not familiar with dry regions.

Nashville as a city has come into its own, making a name for itself beyond just music. They have evolved from chicken fried steak on every menu to a true foodie city. You can still find the best biscuits around, but in lieu of floating in sawmill gravy, they're topped with delicious paper-thin slices of fresh fish and a light dill sauce. They have pushed past the good-ole-boy persona of yesterday and have added style beyond the neon. It's not a city that has forgotten where it came from, but it's a reinvention that blends the old with the new that has dovetailed into something extraordinary. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the Tennessee Valley, from my unexpected trip through Kentucky and Bourbon country to the food and music of Nashville. I'm going to miss the kind people and the distinct country folk manners of the area. After all, does anyone ever tire of true Southern hospitality accompanied with a heartfelt, "Yes ma'am!" Contact Donna at dstegman@aol.com

A Nashville Holy Place: Gruhn Guitars

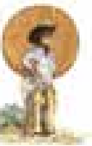
Established in January 1970, Gruhn Guitars quickly became a mecca for musicians and vintage instrument collectors worldwide. The store buys, sells, consigns and trades fretted instruments and houses one of the world's premier vintage and used collections including classic Gibson, Fender, Martin, Epiphone, Gretsch and National instruments as well as a wide selection of new instruments from Martin, Taylor, Collings, and others. Gruhn Guitars employs 20 full-time staff members including seven highly skilled repairmen well-versed in repairing, restoring, building and designing guitars and seven full-time salesmen with vast knowledge of musical instruments and instrument trading.

photos courtesy George Gruhn

George Gruhn

Gruhn Guitar's Repair Shop

George Gruhn is recognized worldwide as a leading expert on vintage American guitars and related instruments. In 1970, he established Gruhn Guitars, one of the largest dealers of vintage and used instruments in the world, and has been buying and selling musical instruments since 1963. George is the co-author of *Gruhn's Guide to Vintage Guitars*, a comprehensive field guide to vintage fretted instruments now in its 3rd edition, and the companion volumes *Acoustic Guitars and Other Fretted Instruments* and *Electric Guitars and Basses*. www.gruhn.com



PLANNING YOUR TRIP

WHEN TO GO

Like most of the south, spring and fall are the most climate friendly times to visit. Watch out for FANFEST, Nashville's population doubles during this event.

WHERE TO HITCH THE HORSE FOR THE NIGHT

Gaylord Opryland Resort – If you enjoy massive resorts with enough amenities that leaving is optional, this is for you. But even if you stay elsewhere, you owe it to yourself to visit, if only for a cocktail in the atrium. www.marriott.com/gaylord-opryland

Hermitage Hotel – This grande dame Opened in 1910, a 5 star hotel that's high-society without being snobbish. If you crave luxury, elegance, art and history all in the heart of downtown, then this is your stop. The lobby is worth the price alone. www.thehermitagehotel.com

WHERE TO EAT

Loveless Café – For breakfast or brunch, after a meal of Carol's memorial homemade biscuits and ham you won't need a refueling stop for at least 12 hours. This is the epicenter of country cooking. www.Lovelesscafe.com

Edley's Bar-B-Que – Nashville seems to leave bar-b-que to its cousin to the west in Memphis, but Edley's does a fine job. Brisket and chopped pork with a lime-soda spiked sauce makes your mouth water as soon as you walk in the door.

Patterson House – Cocktails, yes please. This place is cool, with a mahogany line bar that serves up creative libations. It's dark, it's seductive, and has dim crystal chandeliers for ambiance. Top that all off with one of the most interesting bar menus I've seen to date. www.thepattersonnashville.com

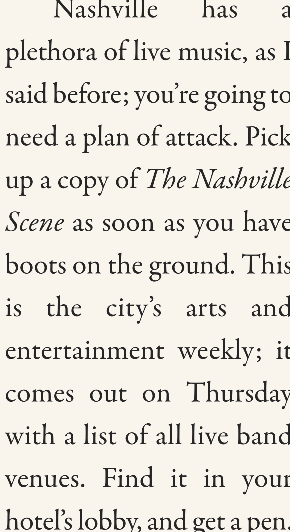
AMERICAN HISTORY 101

For those of you wanting to walk in the days of antebellum:

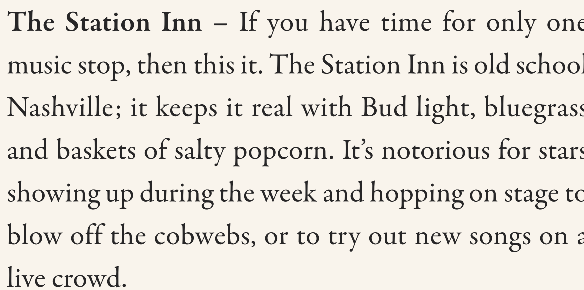
Belle Meade Plantation – Once a world-renowned thoroughbred farm, the mansion is a beautiful example of Greek-Revival Antebellum architecture. At the end of the tour they have a charming wine tasting in the vineyard.

The Hermitage House – Home of President Andrew Jackson, this place is huge. The mansion has been meticulously restored to its original condition and all its finery is out on display. Be sure to take the horse and buggy ride through the slaves' quarters, it's very enlightening.

OTHER ESSENTIALS



Nashville has a plethora of live music, as I said before; you're going to need a plan of attack. Pick up a copy of *The Nashville Scene* as soon as you have boots on the ground. This is the city's arts and entertainment weekly; it comes out on Thursday with a list of all live band venues. Find it in your hotel's lobby, and get a pen.



The Station Inn – If you have time for only one music stop, then this it. The Station Inn is old school Nashville; it keeps it real with Bud light, bluegrass and baskets of salty popcorn. It's notorious for stars showing up during the week and hopping on stage to blow off the cobwebs, or to try out new songs on a live crowd.

Nashville is a driving town. Don't even think about skipping the rental car counter; you'll need your own wheels. It's easy to navigate and parking is cheap, but everything is spread out.

Western Style with Ashley Riggs

photo by Fryd Frydendahl

I was riding the subway home the other evening, daydreaming I was driving a pick-up truck instead of inside a subway car with fifty other souls. Looking around at my fellow passengers, I spotted an older gentleman. He was about 80 or so years old, impeccably dressed for the hot summer weather. Donned in classic khakis, a vintage blue stripe shirt with a contrasting white collar, putty colored suede dirty-bucks, and a well-appointed cane... No orthopedic shoes here my friends. Looked as if he could have been Faulkner's kin. The best part was this look was topped with a beautiful panama straw fedora. A period to a well put statement that a great hat can make the look.

We Westerners know the importance of hats. They protect us from the elements. They work to make cattle move quickly in the drag. Lastly they add personality and individuality to the cowboy or cowgirl wearing them. As Charlie Russell so aptly put most of us "are mighty particular about their rig." Hats are such an integral part to our wardrobe in the West that to see someone without theirs is a rare occurrence.

I am excited to see the resurgence of hat wearing. I notice both men and women wearing hats more on my daily travels on the streets and subways of NYC. The "tomboy style" look for girls is one regularly on blogs and in magazines. St. Laurent's latest Spring collection features many hats for both guys and gals. Even Pharrell's, what I call the "Smokey the Bear" lid, by Vivienne Westwood makes me smile.

Mr. and Mrs. Cody Hammond in Nevada

The Stetson "Open Road" is my favorite. Popularized by presidents Truman and L.B.J., it is known as the gentleman rancher hat. During the summer the classic palm leaf hat by Sunbody is hard to beat. My latest acquisition is a sable brown Derby I'm having made custom and looking forward to wear come fall. It feels Western, but a bit more citified. The thing I love most about a well-made hat is along with good saddles, boots and bits the process is handmade, an important skill to keep alive.

Take a little advise from Frank Sinatra next time you wear yours, "Cock your hat, angles are attitudes."

Follow Ashley's Pinterest boards at Ashley_c_riggs and on Tumblr at nynv-ashleyriggs.tumblr.com

Some favorites...

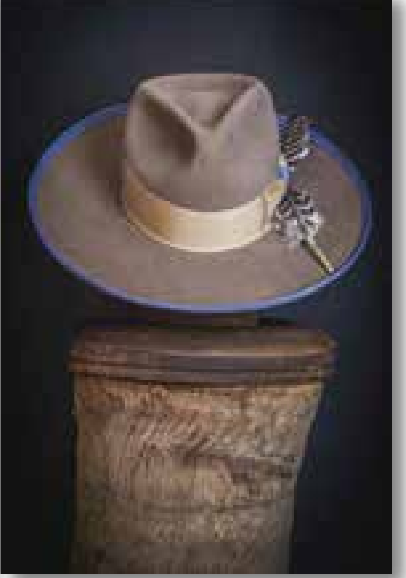
I love a great derby!

Gentleman cowboy

Tomboy style in the city

The Hats of Nick Fouquet

It is glorious to see new faces and creative ways in the headwear business. Specialty industries need new blood and as the saying goes, "a rising tide lifts all boats." So it was wonderful to come upon the shop of one Nick Fouquet located on the wonderfully eclectic boulevard in Venice, California – Abbot Kinney. Inside his bungalow/shop, Fouquet and his



Nick Fouquet

team create absolute one-of-a-kind hats using all sorts of methods – from fire to sand paper – to give each a unique look and feel to suit its new owner. From traditional cattleman styles to fedoras, flat-brims, derbies and top hats, whatever your taste, hatter Fouquet will create your own "custom-vintage" style. He describes his brand as a "psychedelic bourgeoisie bohemian experience." When asked how he started making hats, he replied, "I honestly did not know hat making was my thing as I didn't know what my thing was. It found me. I graduated with a BA in Environmental Science and Sustainable Development. My future was looking more like forestry or a recluse in the high mountains of Colorado as a field worker. I had always identified with colors, design and natural aesthetics, which I derived from my travels and working for other designers and now have ultimately implemented into my work." Here is a sampling of some of his incredible hats. Watch the video when you visit his website at www.nickfouquet.com

photos by Ashley Noelle

The Engraving Art of Phil Quigley

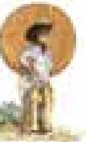
In the art of fine firearm engraving there are few who can hold a graver to the work of Tucson artisan/craftsman Phil Quigley. We caught up with Phil recently to see what he has been "cutting" lately. Here are some amazing examples of this artist's talent.

You can email Phil at quigley.phil@gmail.com

photos by Phil Quigley

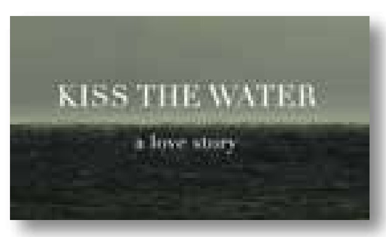
Errata

In our story last issue on Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores, we listed some incorrect websites for contact. For information go to. www.RSMYLF.org.



Kiss the Water

A film by Eric Steel

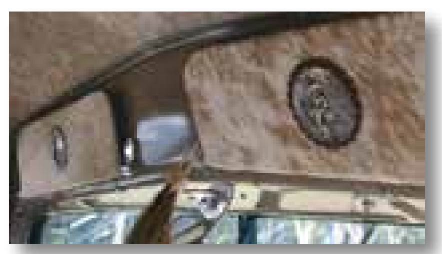


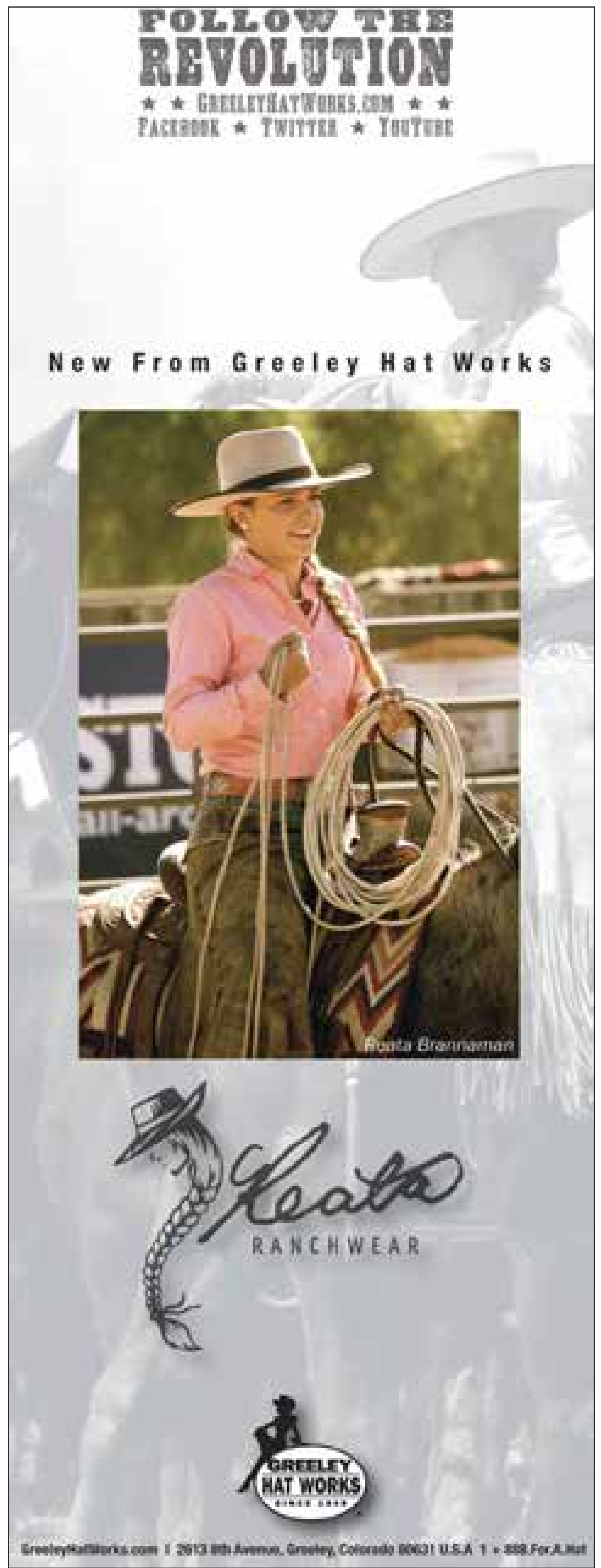
Jock Scott, Silver Doctor, Durham Ranger are names many people will not know. But if you are a passionate fly fisherman, you will recognize immediately the names of flies tied by the late, Scottish "legend" Megan Boyd. Legend? Absolutely, if filmmaker Eric Steel has his way. His loving and lyrical look at the work of a woman who lived to tie flies is something to behold. Part cinematic documentary and part hand-painted animation, Steel seamlessly merges the twisted colors of fur and feathers – tied into glorious fish catching machines. Each tied by a woman who never fished, couldn't stand the idea of killing a fish.

After seeing this film recently we thought, cowboys love fly fishing almost as much as…well anything. Here is a film about passion and dedication. About leaving one's ego at the door and simply witnessing greatness. Might just be the best and hour and ten minutes you've had in a long time. www.kiss-the-water.com

Visor Art

Sometimes you just need something unique on the truck visor… www.oldcowdogs.com



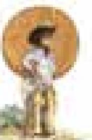


Montana Silversmiths

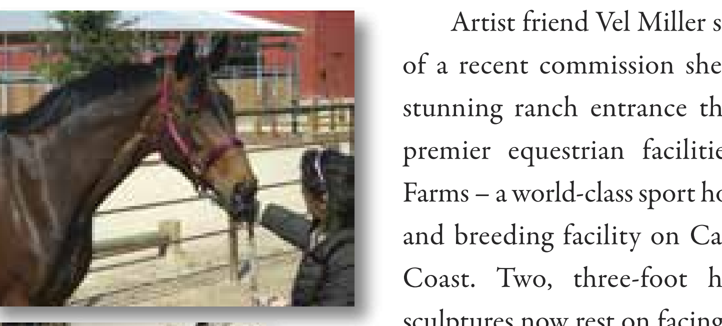
Reminiscent of vintage cameo portraits, this large oval pendant necklace features a striking, stylized horse's head applied to the center of a brightly polished silver plate engraved in traditional Western bright cut style. www.montanasilversmiths.com

New Ariat Denim

Ariat is known for their innovative design in making athlete-level apparel for competitive horseman and women – from boots to jeans. This fall's collection is no exception showing the added benefit that these jeans can move seamlessly between the barn and a trip to town or the boardroom. www.ariat.com



New Work from Vel Miller



Artist friend Vel Miller sent us these shots of a recent commission she did for a rather stunning ranch entrance that celebrates the premier equestrian facilities at Templeton Farms – a world-class sport horse training, sales and breeding facility on California's Central Coast. Two, three-foot high horse head sculptures now rest on facing eight-foot pillars commissioned by owner Gina Miller.

The horse that modeled for the sculptures is owned by the facility, Gina Miller's beautiful mare Flaming Heart. The sculptures were designed and created by artist Miller so that both face visitors as they approach the Farms' entrance.

Vel Miller is widely known for her Western Art, and with Gina Miller's approval she decided to do a new version and alter the mane from the cropped mane of the Dressage horse to the long mane preferred by her western collectors. In order to do this Vel added a clay mane to one of her bronzes of Flame, shown here. A new mold was then made. The first of the new bronzes now named Courage is also shown here in the raw bronze stage before the patina was added.

For more information on Vel Miller, email her at velmiller@sbcglobal.net

Top Fifty Ranches Getaways

If you are looking for a superb ranch vacation – your one-stop is Top 50 Ranches (top50ranches.com). Jody Dahl and her crew have put together an adventure of a website. 50 of the best places set to give you the ultimate western vacation. Each issue we will share some information on one of the ranches recommended by Top 50.

The Lodge & Spa at Brush Creek Ranch
Saratoga, Wyoming

Here is another grand getaway from Top Fifty Ranches. The Lodge & Spa at Brush Creek Ranch promises discerning groups breathtaking vistas, gourmet dining, endless adventure and the refinements of a modern boutique hotel, set in the grand landscape of a centuries-old Western ranch. Located near Saratoga, Wyoming, this historic cattle ranch turned iconic Preferred Boutique destination and ORVIS dual-endorsed Fly Fishing and Wing Shooting Lodge & Spa spans 15,000 acres of Rocky Mountain high country, between the towering peaks of the Sierra Madre and Snowy Mountain ranges. "Wide-open spaces" barely describes the setting in nature's cathedral – especially when added to the adjacent million-acre Medicine Bow National Forest.

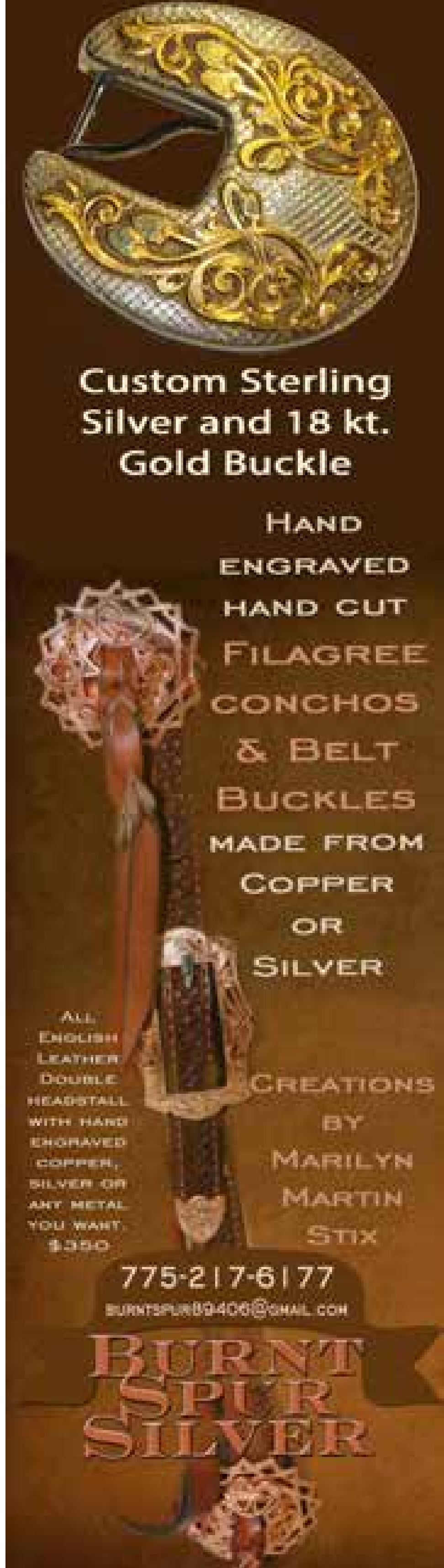
With guest facilities specifically designed for high-end experiences, guests select from a variety of lodging options, including 13 Trailhead Lodge rooms, 10 two- and three-bedroom Log Cabin Residences and 12 cabin suites. The ultra-private Magee Homestead offers a private lodge and secluded collection of seven historically restored cabins three miles from the Trailhead Lodge. All facilities come furnished with premium bedding, luxury amenities and refined Western personality. Group meeting space includes the main Trailhead Lodge, Equestrian Center's boardroom, authentic barn dance hall, spacious Falcon Peak Overlook deck and outdoor natural amphitheater and rock gardens.

For corporate events or retreats, Brush Creek Ranch offers 10,000 square feet of meeting and event space and creative planning services, making it the ideal Western destination for weddings, reunions, corporate retreats and other unique ranch events. Combining refined, rustic spaces with impeccable service, understated luxury and privacy, Brush Creek Ranch's meeting spaces offer on-site audiovisual, Internet services, attractive lighting, picturesque views and flexible floor plans.

Enjoy sumptuous culinary events on the Ranch for your entire group. Savor family-style feasts in the Lodge Great Room as the team prepares your meal in a grand exhibition kitchen. Join in for a casual outdoor barbeque at the Chuck wagon with live bluegrass music. Summit a distant ridge by horseback for a mountaintop picnic or relax over sundowner cocktails on the Falcon Peak Overlook deck. Each day, the executive chef prepares culinary experiences inspired by the Rocky Mountain West and crafted with fresh, locally grown, farm-to-table ingredients. And, the wine cellar features a huge collection of select vintages for the perfect pairing.

Brush Creek Ranch offers a variety of distinct culinary experiences included in all-inclusive pricing. From casual to sophisticated, dining on the Ranch ensures a distinctly unique and unforgettable event for any group in a variety of venues and settings.

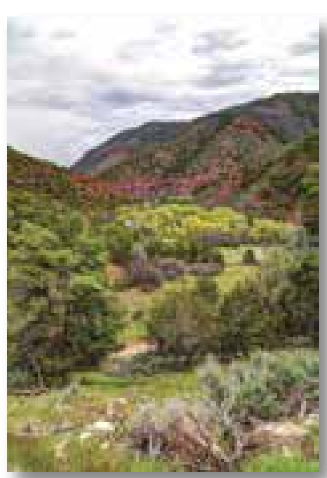
As for things to do, every season serves up an endless array of memorable adventures for everyone in your group – from horseback riding and private water fly-fishing to big game hunting and indulgent spa services. With over 50 miles of private trails on the Ranch, the activities are as endless as the stunning landscape. See more of The Lodge and Spa at Brush Creek Ranch at www.top50ranches.com



Homes on the Range

If you are looking for a new spread or just a place to call home, our friends at Mason & Morse have some great new places to dream about. Learn more at www.ranchland.com

Dallenbach Ranch, Basalt, Colorado



The Dallenbach Ranch consists of 137+/- acres and is bordered on three sides by BLM and state wildlife area with access to thousands of acres. The ranch has senior water rights and over one-half mile of the Frying Pan River offering private "Gold Medal" fly-fishing along with 20 acres of irrigated meadows. Ranch improvements include a remodeled historic home along with a garage, equipment shed, and several cabins, which have the possibility of being rented year-round. The Dallenbach Ranch is located 30 minutes from Aspen, Colorado with plenty of opportunity for skiing, hiking, rafting, biking and much more!

New Mexico Horse Ranch, Las Vegas, New Mexico

The 704-acre New Mexico Horse Ranch offers private and unique opportunities to experience life on a working horse ranch. Originally built by a cutting horse enthusiast, this exclusive property has breath-taking views of the Santa Fe National Forest, comfortable accommodations, and horseback riding adventures abound. The ranch overlooks the southern end of the Rockies in the Sangre de Cristo Mountain range and sacred Hermit's Peak. Sensational in every way, this ranch captures the essence of a true New Mexico ranch of the Old West.

MAVERICK FINE WESTERN WEAR
100 E. Exchange • Fort Worth, TX 76164 • 800.282.1315 • MaverickWesternWear.com

Cody Hammond (left) with photographer Robb Kendrick

Form Follows Function:
A Cowboy in New York

By C.F. Hammond

I have lived in New York City now going on twenty years. Even after all that time, my friends here still call me Cowboy. It is a term of endearment as I am from Texas. They think everybody from Texas is a cowboy. My first trip to New York was in my twenties. I was coming to interview for a sales job with Ralph Lauren. I was staying with a friend of mine from Lubbock Texas, a farm kid who had made it big in modeling. Upon my arrival I headed out to meet my buddy for a beer with a rig complete with ostrich boots and Wranglers starched so heavy they could cut paper. You'd have to run your fist through them just to get them on. Heading down 5th Avenue to meet my amigo, someone on the steps of the Plaza Hotel whistled one of those fingers-in-the-mouth, ear piercing whistles and gave me a big wave of the hand salute of recognition. I suddenly felt completely out of my element. New York City can feel like a human anthill, especially for a newly landed cowboy.

Tintype images by Robb Kendrick

When my western buddies ask me about the boots and jeans set and how that plays, I tell them you can walk down the middle of the street in New York City with a duck on your head and nobody will say a word, but you put on an Stetson Open Road and ropers and folks just stare. I've since learned to tone down the swag a bit. But what most people up here don't know is that I was raised on a working cattle ranch, situated on the high plains of West Texas at the seat of the XIT ranch, 'swinging a catch twine.' The XIT was, to quote J. Evetts Haley, "Established in the middle 1880s and was the largest ranch in the west with fenced range of 3,050,000 acres under wire. It had

RRL Homepage at www.ralphlauren.com

100-150 cowboys with combined *remudas* of more than 1000 ponies and 150,000 head of cattle that wore the XIT brand. It was deeded in exchange for the State Capitol." They say everything is bigger in Texas and at one time that was really true. Growing up I had the honor of being kicked at and pissed on by just about every form of livestock in the West. I know the wonderful ring of spurs as boots hit the floor. The smell of a branding, blazing hot summers and freezing winters, the beautiful sunsets and the glow of an early morning sunrise, the peace and quiet of a back porch and the sound of a fandango.

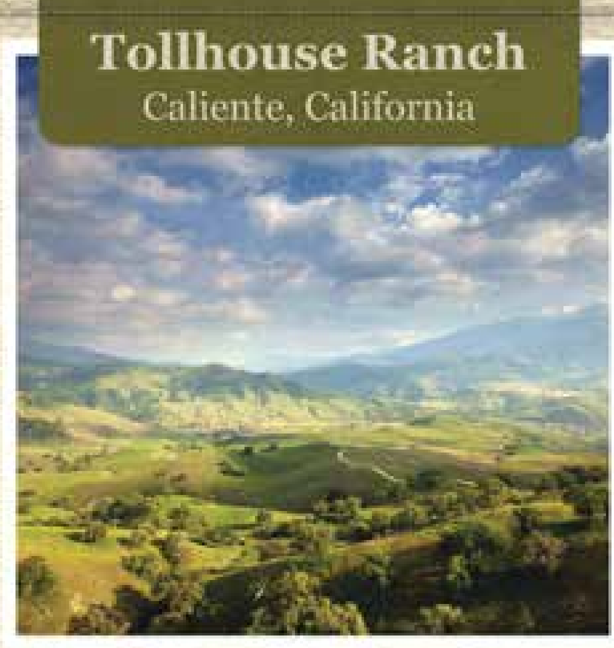
I got that job with Ralph Lauren and it turned into a life in the fashion business. All that time spent on the high plains early in my life helped me develop an understanding innate to all cowboys that form follows function. It is the reason that I so admire the work of western photographers like Jay Dusard, Kurt Markus and Robb Kendrick. These folks understand the West, all having grown up in it, and do their best to get out of the way and let it happen. Their books show the working cowboy in his 'backyard,' with elements of their trade – boots, jeans, chaps, leather, bits and spurs, ropes and hay, with a faithful dog in tow. These photos stand out for the simplicity. Depicting a singularly American icon, the cowboy, in a moment of labor, raising livestock, with pride and an honest endeavor done out in open spaces. No matter how many years pass, these books nurture my fondest memories of youth and remind me that not everything is done for commerce.

Few people in fashion understand the cowboy nor have lived the American dream better or bigger than Ralph Lauren. Since 1967 Ralph has been offering up his view of the American way of life in fashion to the world. The world of Ralph Lauren is often characterized as a movie set, heavy with detail and authentic style and nowhere is that more evident than in his work wear brand, RRL. A small brand in the large scheme of his business that is a love affair to all things workwear. The RRL team is obsessed with finding the right fit to a jean, a wash to a shirt and the detailing provenance, if you will, dating back to the particular period. These are very knowledgeable folks in the history of work wear. So it was no surprise to me when I saw Robb Kendrick's book, *Still: Cowboys at the Start of the Twenty-first Century*, that Ralph Lauren would be interested in his work. Robb and I were both raised on the high plains and I know several of the cowboys he shot, so when I sent him an email it was but a hot second before we connected over geography.

In October of 2013 Robb and I partnered with RRL for a book signing at their flagship store on West Broadway in downtown New York. Cowboys from all over the west came to eat barbeque and drink tequila under the banner of RRL and see Robb's work on tintype in full display. The art of tintype is labor and time intensive, to put it mildly. The shot is developed on the spot with long exposure times, using volatile chemicals and are exposed on actual tin. Robb's passion for the detail and exacting standards made it just a matter of time before he and the RRL design team partnered to shoot the fall fashions. Both are interested in creating the authentic – using the oldest form of American photography for the most American of designers. Take a look and tell me how they did. Form follows function.

Cody Hammond lives in New York City where he works as a creative consultant in fashion. Learn more at www.codyhammond.com

Tollhouse Ranch
Caliente, California



The expansive Tollhouse Ranch encompasses 14,945± acres, stretching 6.5± miles east to west and 5.5± miles north to south. Situated in Caliente, California of Kern County, Tollhouse Ranch is approximately 30 minutes from the towns of Tehachapi and Bakersfield. Presently under Williamson Act Contract and utilized as a working cattle ranch, Tollhouse Ranch is complemented by two ranch houses, four barns, an equipment storage building and other out buildings. Water is supplied via stock and domestic wells and springs. Sale subject to Conservation Easement. $7,475,000

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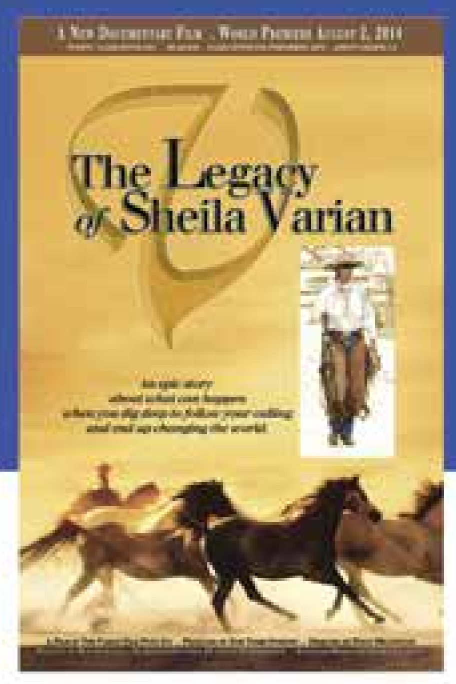
Congratulations National Cowgirl Hall of Fame Honoree Sheila Varian ...



... on the 60th Anniversary of Varian Arabians and the debut of the remarkable documentary celebrating her life.

39th Annual National Cowgirl Hall of Fame Induction Luncheon

Joining Sheila Varian in the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame are five cowgirls who will receive honors at the 39th Annual Induction. They are:

Frances Kavanaugh Hecker (1915-2009)

Shirley Lucas Jauregui

May Owen, M.D. (1891-1988)

Jean Cates and Sue Cunningham

October 23, 2014

Round Up Inn
Amon G. Carter, Jr.
Exhibits Hall
Will Rogers Memorial Center

For more information about the 39th Annual National Cowgirl Hall of Fame Induction Luncheon, please contact Emmy Lou Prescott: 817-509-8965 or emmylou@cowgirl.net or visit www.cowgirl.net.

NATIONAL
Cowgirl Museum
AND HALL OF FAME

1720 Gendy Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76107

BY HAND AND HEART

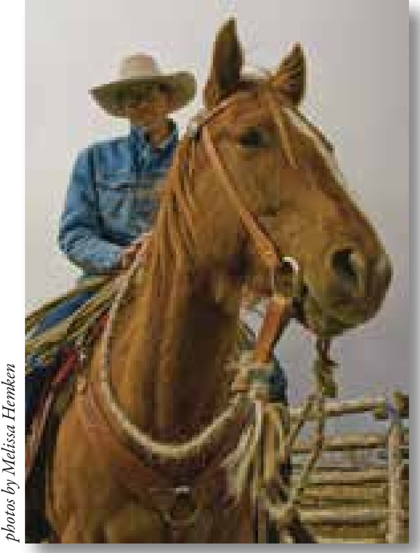
Using Gear

The ethic of self-sufficiency guides the work of a young Wyoming craftsman.

By Melissa Hemken

Wyoming mecate maker Leif Videen traces his gearmaking obsession to his days as a young camper. "As a little kid, I made all my camping gear, and was really into it," he says. "When I started cowboying, I wanted to continue making my own gear, and began making chinks and headstalls."

Videen progressed to making all manner of cowboy trappings, including saddles, selling his work to fellow cowboys looking for bargains from an aspiring maker. As he expanded his repertoire, Videen became intrigued with the practicality behind horsehair mecates.



photos by Melissa Hemken

Wyoming cowboy Leif Videen makes all manner of using gear, but has a particular affinity for crafting horsehair mecates.

"In the old days, you couldn't just go to town and buy a new nylon rope or set of reins," he says. "They'd pull horses' manes and build hair ropes. You start with nothing and just make something. That fascinates me."

Determined to teach himself to work with horsehair, Videen endured the craft's frustrating learning curve. Guidance was hard to come by, as relatively few people work with horsehair, and trade secrets are typically shared only reluctantly. For Videen, breakthroughs came through trial and error.

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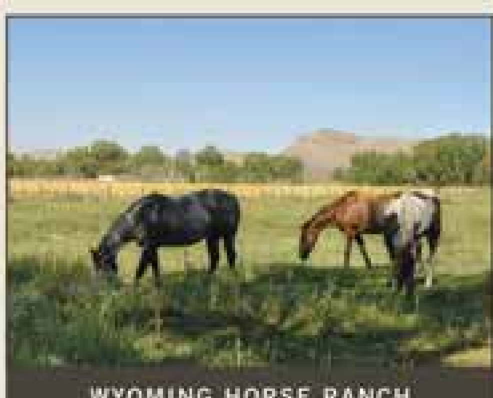

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To Videen, horsehair represents a certain self-sufficiency. "You start with nothing and make something. That fascinates me."

Today, Videen operates his own business, LV Saddle Co. A waist-high wooden frame sits outside the door to his shop. The contraption often serves as a convenient home for a coiled lariat or extension cord, but is actually Videen's homemade tool for crafting horsehair mecates, a process of complex twists and countertwists that Videen often performs in his yard.

Videen's raw material comes from draft horses used by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to haul hay in western Wyoming's elk-feeding grounds. The horses' manes are roached regularly, creating for Videen a steady supply of horsehair. (In fact, Game and Fish employees had been stockpiling mane hair for years before Videen arrived on the scene.)

"I enjoy that the hair is from local horses that are alive and working," Videen says, explaining that some craftsmen acquire horsehair from the overseas slaughter market.

Horsehair arrives at Videen's shop in what he calls a "big, dirty batch." The craftsman washes and dries the hair, then arranges it by hand into fluffy piles, which are then rolled. Spinning threads from those "buns," Videen then creates a loop that he places over a hook on a drill. When the drill is turned on, the hook spins and Videen feeds out hair.

"The hair has to be fairly consistent," he says. "If you're not careful, a whole wad of hair will pull out, or it'll get too thin and you'll have a weak spot."

The final product, a well-crafted mecate, should be smooth, with consistent tension throughout. If a mecate is twisted too loosely, it can practically come undone; when one's twisted too tightly, it handles like cable – far from ideal as a horse-handling tool.

A mecate, Videen explains, can be made from mane or thicker tail hair; tail-hair mecates can be stiff, prickly and coarse, but are often less expensive than mane-hair mecates. (Videen adds that the few prickly hairs in a new mane-hair mecate will break off over time, leaving the mecate smooth and soft.)

Still seeking to expand his skill set, Videen is experimenting with braiding rawhide, fueled by a fascination with the role of rawhide in relation to horsehair and the making of bridle horses.

Videen's horsehair arrives from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in "big, dirty batches." Videen washes and dries the hair, then forms it into "buns."

"Horsehair and rawhide go into making some of the nicest horses," he says. "Riding with a hair mecate and bosal provides the horse fast relief. The materials are right for making a bridle horse."

Making horse gear is a business venture for Videen, but he says his ultimate goal as a craftsman is to *use* great gear. For nearly a decade, Videen has ridden for the Upper Green River Valley Cattle Association, located near Pinedale, Wyoming, and known locally as the Green River Drift. He spends each spring in cow camp, doctoring stock and keeping pairs and yearlings pushed south on good grass before the herd is "drifted" 70 miles north to summer range in the Wind River Mountains.

"I should probably stick around the shop and get orders done," Videen says, "but it's pretty fun to camp out in the desert for six weeks. It's hard to give it up."

Videen used his downtime in camp to author *Bunkhouse Built*, a gearmaking how-to guide that began as a reference work for his own benefit.

"When someone showed me something, or I figured something out, I'd do it once," Videen says. "When I went to do it again in a week or two, I'd forget how the knot went. I started drawing out the processes of making gear so I'd always have a reference." The resulting book, published by Mountain Press Publishing, is available on Amazon.com.

The effort brings to mind Videen's early struggles as a craftsman learning through experimentation. By documenting his processes, he hopes to lower his trade's entry barriers for other aspiring makers.

"I like to teach others," he says. "We should pass on these skills so knowledge remains available."

Melissa Hemken is a writer living in Wyoming.

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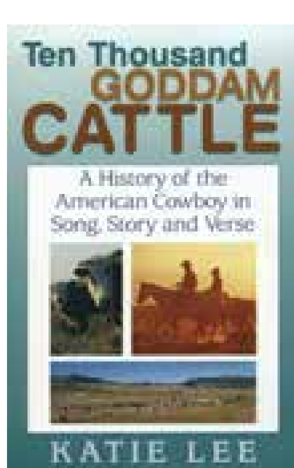
BOOKS TO FIND

Cattle, Reatas, Horses and Watermelon Sugar

Katie's World

Talking about the origin/evolution of the American cowboy and his music should not be undertaken by the easily winded – nor by one simply short on words – am I mean authoritative, been-there/done-that words. That pretty well reduces the potential author playing field down to someone like the one-and-only Katie Lee of Jerome, Arizona. This is the Katie Lee that Tom Russell has called, "Our Lady of the Adobe and Dynamite Box." (See his story on Katie in *R&R* #3.3) Katie Lee was the second woman to run the Colorado River. She's a musician and singer, an actress, a photographer and above all an adventurer. She is also an award-winning author and filmmaker. There is not enough room in this issue to tell all the Katie Lee stories people have so we'll simply say she is a western original. Her book, *Ten Thousand Goddam Cattle* is arguably one of the finest books on cowboys and their music – told from someone who sang with many of her subjects. The book sort of runs all over the place, which suits Katie's approach, but her research and background information are fascinating. She starts the book with a telling statement: "We're going to talk about songs…and their cowboys." The writing speaks loud and clear in Katie's voice and takes the reader on a tour of the West and its people as the author tells the process of her rediscovery of the sources of cowboy's music. The book celebrates



The one and only Katie Lee

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the history of cowboys through their songs along with Katie's experiences with many of her subjects along the way. First published in 1976, this current edition is published through the University of New Mexico Press.

Reading the accolades about Katie and her book – and life – is part of the fun. She is a dedicated environmentalist, cut from the same cloth as Edward Abbey and David Brower and she would like nothing better than to drain Lake Powell and set the Colorado River free again.

About the book, the late activist, Edward Abbey wrote: *"A beautiful job...exact, comprehensive and witty. Should remain a basic history of the subject for many years to come."*

And our own Hal Cannon commented: *"Katie Lee's book of cowboy songs and commentary,* Ten Thousand Goddam Cattle*, is a classic and besides all her knowledge, she really knows how to sing these songs. This woman has spirit on overdrive and opinion to match. I think she qualifies as a western legend."*

And Tom Russell:

"Katie Lee was one of the first singers to record my "Gallo del Cielo." That took courage. She has led a grand life of guts and grace, from running the Colorado River rapids, to her fine books, films, and records that honor our Western life. I hear she's past 90 now – going on age 28. She'll outlast us all. Ten Thousand Goddamn Cattle *is a masterwork."*

This is a book that tells the truth with a sense of place. Katie knows and loves the West – maybe not what it's becoming from her perspective but certainly the way it was – the high lonesome West. If you love cowboy music and cowboy songs, this is a must for you. Buy it direct from Katie at her website – www.katydoodit.com – and while you're there, you can learn more about this one-of-a-kind westerner.

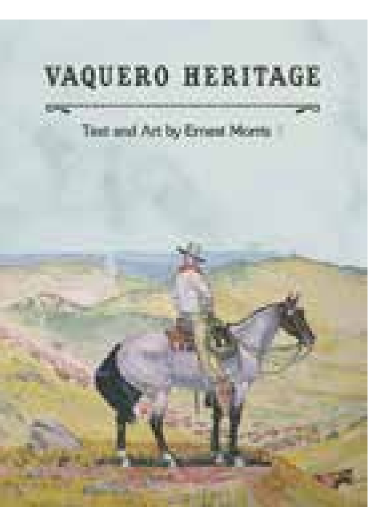
The Real Deal

Vaquero artist Ernest Morris is no stranger to this magazine. Ernie's writings and artwork have bridged the

photo by William Reynolds

Ernie Morris getting ready to ride.

gap between memories of the old vaquero ways and the aspirations of a whole new generation interested in getting their horses to operate in the California Vaquero tradition, So over the years Ernie, as he is known to his friends and many admirers, has produced four very respected and collectable volumes about the vaquero and his ways, lived through Ernie's own memories and the stories he heard from his grandfather, the vaquero Jessie Wilkinson. And now, he has published *Vaquero Heritage* – a book of his own thoughts about the people and horses that have influenced his artwork and life.



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"It's very different today. Today fellas load their horses into gooseneck trailers and ride in air conditioning to the works. We had to long trot to get there and sometimes it was pretty hot. Warmed the horses up, though. Not like that now," he remembers. Ernie has remembered a lot for this book. This will be the fifth book from Ernie Morris centered around the ways and lives of the California Vaquero, told by one of the last real ones. His is a legacy of giving, keeping the information and memories safe for the rest of us about a life unique to the American West. A life he loved and lived well. A life based on competency and capability. Of hard work, good friends, tough bosses and good horses.

This book is a treasure, just like the man who not only wrote the book, but lived it. All of Ernie's books are available at www.elvaquero.com.

Seeing Horses

Photographer Jay Dusard sent us this wonderful little book he produced with writer Thomas McGuane. *Horses*, published by Rio Nueva Publishers in Tucson, is a meeting of two masters merging the writings of McGuane and the photography of Dusard. The collaboration is more than visual; it cuts to the heart of the relationship between humans and horses. As Tom McGuane writes, "Those who love horses are impelled by an ever-receding vision, some enchanted transformation through which the horse and the rider become a third, much greater thing." More than words, more than pictures, this beautiful book is also a "third thing." It is a classic.

A Trip Back

In our continuing effort to be eclectic and culture prodding in the reading offerings for our readers – what would be better than a trip down memory lane with the writings of Richard Brautigan. Those of you who were not walking upright yet during the 1960s and 1970s missed an original. Brautigan was born in 1935 and was the author of ten novels, nine volumes of poetry and a huge collection of short stories. He came of age as a writer during the infamous Haight-Ashbury period in San Francisco and later divided his time between Montana and Tokyo. He obtained almost iconic status during the late 1960s and early 1970s with his humorous and unique vision of American life that resonated with young people everywhere. *Trout Fishing in America* is his thinly veiled novella on the theme of trout fishing as a point of discussion and often comical critiques of mainstream American society and culture.

In Watermelon Sugar, published in 1968, alludes to communal experiments of the 1960s, involving the intersection of nature and technology. The location of the novel involves a central building – in an ironic twist to today's product brandings by Apple – called iDeath. The story's sense of place is "seemingly" constructed

around nature, rather than displacing it, with many, many things made of watermelon sugar and the only fuel is made from trout oil. It's OK, it was the 60s. At the time it was viewed as a quasi-contemporary view of the back-to-the-land/communal living concept. Brautigan himself said he based the book on his life in a communal setting in Northern California. Must have been quite a time. This edition from Houghton/Mifflin was published in 1989 and contains three of his most celebrated works – *Trout Fishing in America*, *The Pill V. The Springfield Mining Disaster* and *In Watermelon Sugar*. It's a full weekend read.

We try to find you things to read that are diverse and broadening. Not just cowboy stories. Different points of view help exercise the brain and as Richard Brautigan wrote in *In Watermelon Sugar*:

I'll tell you about it because I am here and you are distant.

Laurel Denton's Black Russian Cake

By Kathy McCraine

For Laurel Walker Denton, cooking is all about making memories. Laurel grew up on her parents' Bar U Bar Ranch at Skull Valley, Arizona, and some of her fondest memories are of shipping day at the ranch.

"There would be a big crew helping us, plus the drivers of 10 or 11 cattle trucks, and my mother fed them all," she says. "There were tons of food, good food, because mother believed it was important, if people worked hard, that they got fed well."

Laurel is a third-generation Arizona rancher. At 59, she's strikingly tall with a big, bright smile and a tousle of long black hair. Her grandfather, James Minotto, was an Italian count who immigrated to the United States at the age of 13 and became a successful banker in Chicago. Her grandmother, Idamay Swift, was the daughter of Louis F. Swift of the Swift Meat Packing Company. On a trip to Arizona, the couple fell in love with the West and bought a small ranch, the Z Triangle, at Walnut Grove. By 1926, the entire Minotto family, including daughter Sissy and son Demetrius, moved to the Z Triangle. Sissy, Laurel's mother, grew up riding and helping neighbors work cattle.

photos by Kathy McCraine

Laurel Walker Denton, of Arizona's Bar U Bar Ranch.

In 1943, Sissy married Sonny Walker, who'd been a jockey as a boy,

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and later became a heavyweight boxing champion. They also settled in Arizona, purchasing the Bar U Bar Ranch, south of Prescott. At that time, the ranch was a rundown 84 sections of rugged, rocky brush country, with rangy cattle and inferior horses. In the beginning, the couple worked the ranch almost entirely by themselves, eventually building a herd of 800 quality Hereford cattle, as well as Quarter Horses that distinguished themselves both on the track and in the show ring.

Laurel and her older sister Carol grew up competing in the Quarter Horse shows of the 1960s and '70s, often handling horses that had run successfully on the track. Today, Laurel and her husband, Barry, still own part of the old Bar U Bar, where they raise and train Quarter Horses for reining and working cow horse competition. Laurel has raised and shown many AQHA champions, winning world championships in halter and working cow horse. She also judges AQHA shows, and this year is sitting out the show circuit to judge the open and amateur divisions of the AQHA World Championship Show. Barry, who has shod horses at most major horse shows and racetracks across the country, also shows horses.

Laurel no longer cooks for a big crew, but despite their hectic schedule, the Dentons love to entertain friends and neighbors. Every holiday is a chance to invite a big crowd for lavish meals.

"My mom loved to cook, so that's where I developed my love of cooking," Laurel says. "We had a small family, but growing up, it always seemed like there

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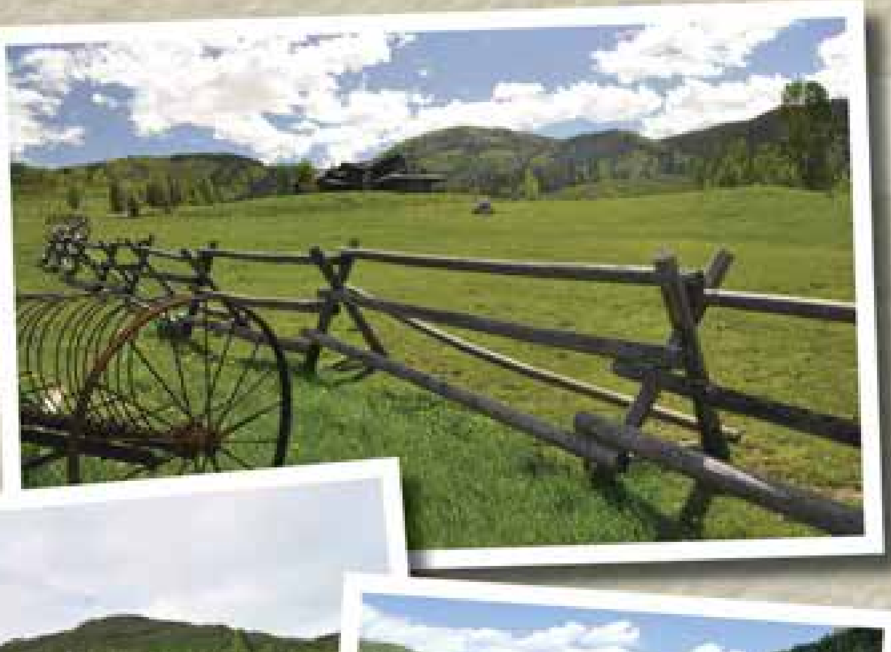

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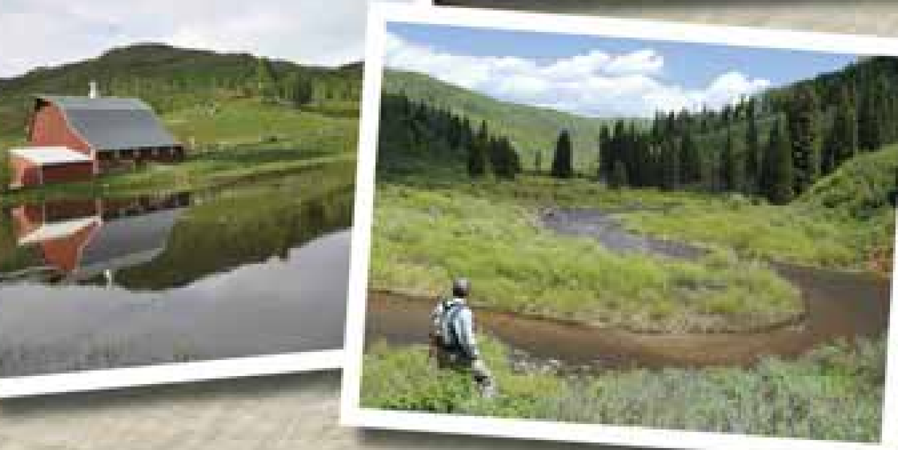

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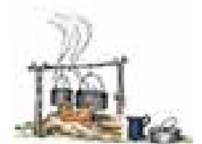

were so many people in the house for the holidays. I was raised that everything centered around food. If you have a party, you serve good food, and no matter who shows up, or what time of day it is, you fix them something wonderful to eat."

In 1962, Sonny and Sissy had the idea to put on a roping and barbecue to raise money for the Triangle 4-H Club, of which Laurel and Carol were members. They butchered a big steer that had been missed earlier in the year, dug a pit, and barbecued for the crowd. Neighbors and local grocery stores donated the rest of the food, and the event drew about 500 people the first year. By the fundraiser's third year, 2,000 people showed up, and the event was so overwhelming, it was discontinued. The club had money for scholarships, though, well into the 1980s.

Today the biggest gathering at the Bar U Bar is the Denton's annual Christmas party, when a crowd of up to 80 old-time ranchers and newer friends cram into the couple's comfortable ranch style home to chow down on prime rib, baked ham, a multitude of side dishes, and egg-nog pie. It's all served buffet style on a large kitchen island, under the watchful eyes of Laurel's 25 identical bronze horse-show trophies that line the cabinet tops.

Sissy and Laurel first started putting on the Christmas party in the 1970s. Back then, their friend Betty Favour often brought her black Russian cake, which Laurel still makes frequently for birthday parties and other gatherings.

"It was a sensation," she says. "We'd never tasted anything like it."

Black Russian Cake

1 package yellow cake mix
1 5.9-ounce package instant chocolate pudding
4 eggs
¾ cup water
½ cup Kahlua liqueur
¼ cup vodka
Oil and flour
Powdered sugar

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Oil and flour a Bundt pan. (You can use baker's chocolate to coat the pan to prevent a white flour coating on the finished cake. Do not use baking spray.) Beat eggs for one minute. Add all other ingredients and mix on high for four minutes. Bake for 40-50 minutes, depending on the oven and pan used. Let sit for five minutes before removing from pan, then run a knife carefully around the edges and invert on a plate. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and/or melted chocolate chips.

Kathy McCraine is the author of the award-winning *Cow Country Cooking: Recipes and Tales from Northern Arizona's Historic Ranches*. Visit her web site at www.kathymccraine.com.

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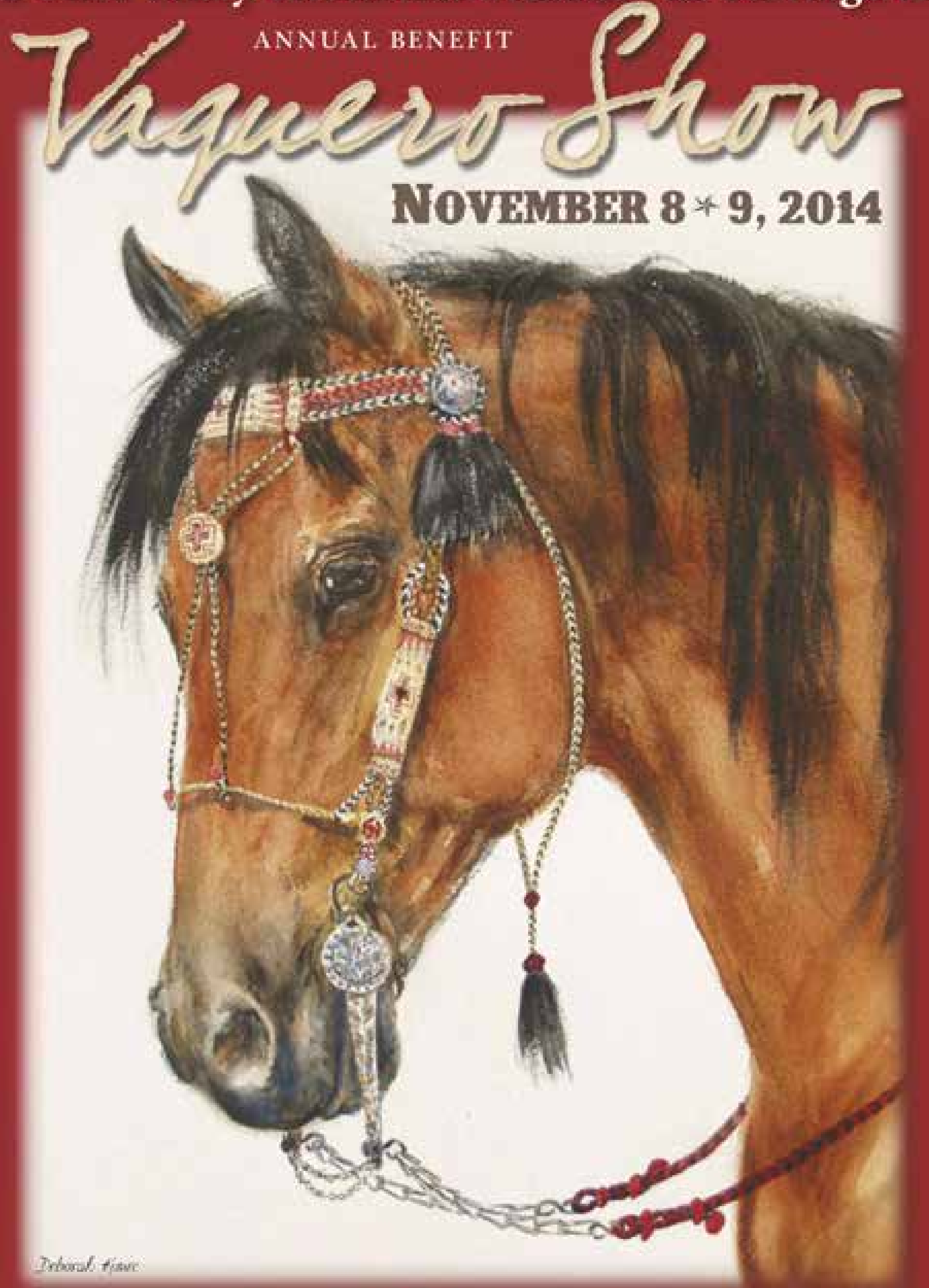

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Raise it High

Singer-songwriter Jessie Veeder breaks new ground with her literary approach.

By Rod Miller

Singer-songwriters come in all types. But if there's a truism among those who compose and croon about the West, it's an adherence to a straight-ahead storytelling style – something akin to, "This is what I've got to say, and I'm going to come right out and say it."

Then there's Jessie Veeder.

She's got plenty to say. But she has a way of saying it in lyrics that come at you from an angle, utilizing literary techniques to create images and ideas that involve the listener in an active way. Passively listening to a Veeder song is possible, but unlikely to happen. She uses engaging, thought-provoking words, layering and blending them into patterns as complex and beautiful as paintings by the masters.

Her songs, of late, have revolved around her return to the place of her childhood – a 100-year-old family ranch in western North Dakota. The home place is at the edge of the Badlands, near the Little Missouri River, and right in the middle of one of the world's biggest oil and gas booms. That, too, finds its way into her music.

"The oil boom is not black and white," Veeder says. "It's here, and it's been in our little corner of the world for 60 years. It's not like a new industry that came barreling down the road. But oil and gas have boomed because of new technology."

The most visible effect of the boom is city-size crowds trying to fit into small-town environments. Veeder sings about the problem in "Boomtown," a song from her latest album, *Nothing's Forever*, but she addresses the topic metaphorically, in a pair of lines that first shows us the crowds, then recognizes the economic reality behind them.

People lined like houses up and down the street
Bottom line below us 'bout ten thousand feet

The song also recognizes the positive aspects that have come to her country because of the boom:

Stopped by the farmhouse the other day
Jimmy's moved back home
He's helping dad cut hay
Pumps in the morning
But he gets home by five
We almost lost him there
Now he's more alive
God bless the sound
Boomtown

An oil-boom homecoming is something Veeder and her husband experienced personally. "We wouldn't be

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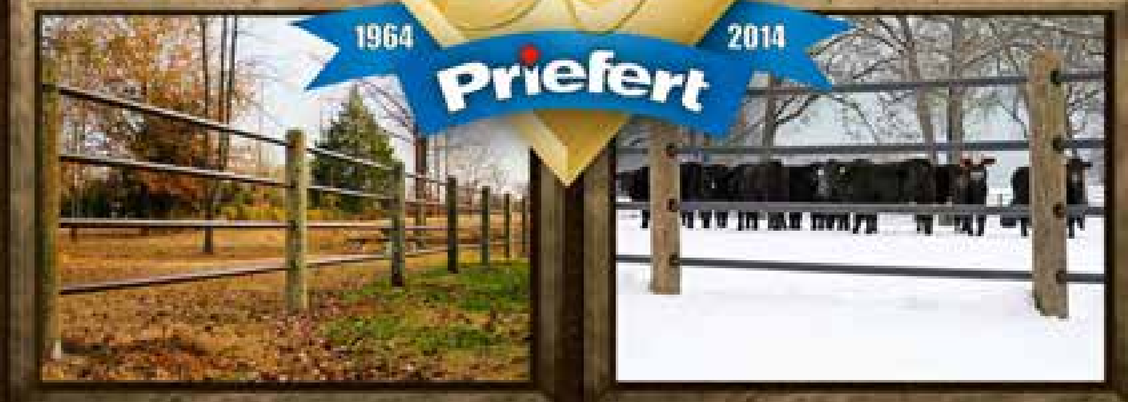

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Singer-songwriter D.W. Groethe assesses Veeder this way: "She needs to be heard.... There are those who write all around [the West], and then there are the few, steeped in the life, who reach out, grab it, raise it high and say, 'Here it is. Take it or leave it.'"

back in western North Dakota as the fourth generation on the ranch if it weren't for the oil industry," she says. And she sees the same story writ large in her community. "People are coming back at 25 and 30 years old to work on family ranches. It's given us a chance to take over from our parents, and the ranches a chance to survive for another 30 years. It's exciting and scary at the same time." All told, she's positive on the prospects. "We're going to come out of it with a bigger, better community."

Veeder credits the family she returned to as the source of her talent and her inspiration to pursue music. "My dad [Gene Veeder] has done everything in music," she says. "He was in bar bands, has played folk music all his life, and has sung with me all my life. I started singing with him in a little band when I was 10. All my musical influence was what he carried with him. He taught it to me. That was the baseline for what I wanted to sing and write."

The first songs Veeder composed were personal in nature, and found their way out of her heart when she was in her teens. With some reluctance, she showed them to her father. He liked them, and arranged a recording session. "I wasn't a confident kid," she says. "Recording was a big step, like taking my diary and going into a studio and selling it. Dad brought his musician friends into it, and helped me, supported me." The result was Veeder's first album, *This Road*, released when she was 16. There have been three albums since.

As strong as that support system was, there came a time for Veeder to break away and take to the stage on

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North Dakota singer-songwriter Jessie Veeder.

her own. She spent a few years touring the Midwest, often at shows booked through a Nashville agency. It was a big step, but probably necessary to her maturation as a performer, and a catalyst for her songwriting. The conflict it created – weighing the necessity of leaving against the comfortable bonds of home – may well have inspired the contradictory feelings in a passage from Veeder's song "Green Grass."

Don't look back dear
But don't turn away
You can't leave here
And you sure as hell can't stay

Leaving home is but one occasion for a songwriter to say goodbye; many a sad song has been inspired by the end of a romance. In her song titled "Goodbye," Veeder finds a fresh approach to blowing off a faded love:

If this is a story then you're the beginning
If this is a love song then I am the ending
If this were a rainbow you'd give up on magic
If this were Shakespeare the plot would be tragic

The title song from Veeder's latest album, "Nothing's Forever," uses a series of symbols to stand in for the often ephemeral nature of love and lovers that sometimes leads to goodbyes. But, in this song, undying love triumphs.

If you hold tight to water it will slip through your hands
The same goes for wild birds and hourglass sands
You can chase down the light of the last setting sun
But you will not catch it no matter how fast you run
Of all of the wild things that no one can tame
One thing remains
One thing still remains
My love is forever, baby

"I try to avoid the accepted lyric, the accepted rhymes," Veeder says. "To me it's not just about rhyming. I want to find some way to get there in a creative way, to say 'I love you' in a way that never been said before. I haven't written too many in-your-face love songs."

Her claim is supported by "Winter's Sweet." While it may not be an "in-your-face love song," it's certainly in-your-gut romantic. And again, the literary nature of the lyrics owes much to meaningful, if unusual, metaphors.

I'll be your wool cap and your overcoat
The broth in which your dumplings float
Wrap my arms around where your scarf has been
Wrap them tight until we're warm again

So get your body over here
Bring me those frozen feet
Come a little closer dear
Summer's hot but winter's sweet

During the winter of 2014, Veeder left the windblown, snow-covered plains of North Dakota for the only slightly more comfortable environs of Elko, Nevada, for her first appearance at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering.

"I was encouraged by a singer, songwriter and poet from our part of the country, D.W. Groethe, to apply," Veeder says. "I'd been writing about coming back to the ranch, and D.W. thought the Poetry Gathering would be perfect for my music and my message."

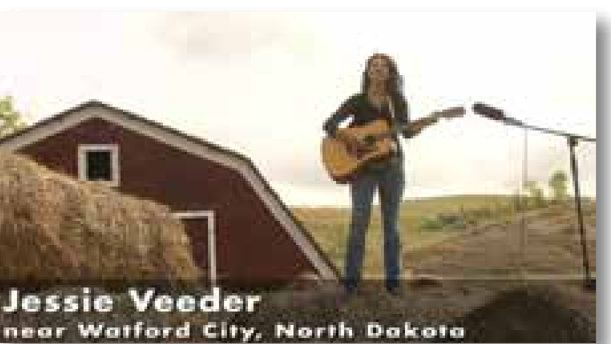
Groethe, a longtime performer at the Gathering, had a simple reason for putting Veeder on that particular stage: "She needs to be heard. I've known Jessie's father since the '70s, and it's through him playing backup for her when she was younger that I first heard her. But really, it's been the last couple of years that I've heard her on the radio and been aware of her talent. The heart of the West has always been in a state of flux. There are those who write all around it, and then there are the few, steeped in the life, who reach out, grab it, raise it high and say, 'Here it is. Take it or leave it.'"

Groethe puts Veeder in the latter category, and admires her ability to "raise it high" as a singer and a songwriter. "For me, her voice, music and lyrics are of a whole," he says. "She answers to her own heart. Even though writers are influenced by others, it's the ability to take those influences and use them as tools to create a fresh look at the world. The greater the writer, the harder it is to detect those tools, as great writing is unique to itself."

Music will always be part of Veeder's life, which now includes ranching, promotion for the county, a newspaper column and photography. And she will, no doubt, say what she has to say with style, using her literary tools to craft words that will stick with her audiences like – for lack of a Veeder-quality simile – glue.

"Home," by Jessie Veeder.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axWqwc8bGAs



Jessie Veeder performs and offers insight on her home state of North Dakota.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zosCuMC_ZAA

Rod Miller writes poems, books and magazine articles about the West. His latest collection of poetry is *Goodnight Goes Riding and Other Poems*. His latest novel is *Rawhide Robinson Rides the Range*. Visit him online at www.writerRodMiller.com.

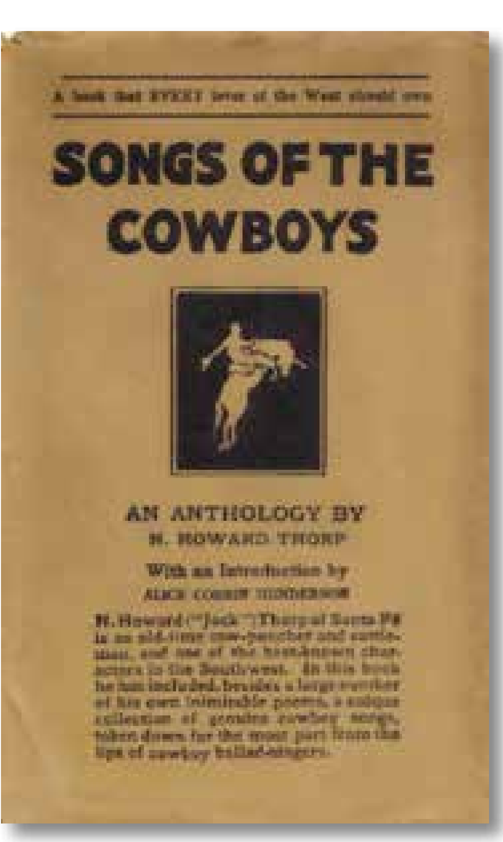
Little Joe, the Wrangler

The classic tearjerker requires a certain cowboy detachment.

By Hal Cannon

While in Wyoming recently for a concert at the Ucross Foundation, I met Frank London, Ucross composer-in-residence and a member of the Yiddish ensemble the Klezmatics. Frank and I hit it off immediately, and talked about music late into the night. He mentioned that, years ago, he'd purchased *When I was a Cowboy*, a collection of vintage cowboy songs, reissued by Shanachie Records. It's an LP I own and love.

Frank grew up in New York, steeped in Jewish folk-music traditions, and told me how foreign cowboy music sounded to him when he first heard it. While Yiddish songs are generally rendered full of emotion, he said, old cowboy singers held little emotion in their voices. I initially took this as a criticism, but Frank was actually complimenting such interpretations. He liked the fact the singer left emotions to the listener, rather than hamming it up and detracting from the listener's reaction. Ever since hearing those old cowboy songs, Frank has often asked his singers to "lighten up on emotion" – to cowboy up.



Jack Thorpe's *Songs of the Cowboys* appeared in 1908, and included lyrics to songs he'd collected throughout the West.

That night, I sang Frank a song, "The Mormon Cowboy." He loved it, and even sent his wife a video of my performance. I would've never described my performance of the song as emotionless, but with Frank's comments fresh in mind, I realized how straightforward my performance really was, not unlike Carl Sprague's in his original 1920s recording.

Certain songs, in fact, require a singer to keep his or her emotions in check. Case in point: the tragic "Little Joe, the Wrangler." There's something about the song that defines the tradition of cowboy music. It's a test for those who profess to be cowboy songsters; it's a rite of passage to learn all the verses and sing them with just the right cowboy *traditionality*. The song pulls at the heartstrings, but can go over the top in

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the hands of someone who sings it while crying real tears. In my view, it should be performed with empathy, but also detachment. Too much emotion reveals the song as the maudlin Victorian story it really is.

Little Joe, the wrangler, will never wrangle more
His days with the remuda – they are done
'Twas a year ago last April he joined the outfit here
A little Texas stray and all alone

'Twas long late in the evening he rode up on the herd
On a little old brown pony he called Chaw
With his brogan shoes and overalls a harder looking kid
You never in your life had seen before

His saddle 'twas a southern kack built many years ago,
An OK spur on one foot idly hung
While his hot roll in a cotton sack was loosely tied behind
And a canteen from the saddle horn he'd slung

He said he'd had to leave his home, his daddy'd married twice
And his new ma beat him every day or two
So he saddled up old Chaw one night and lit a shuck this way
Thought he'd try and paddle his own canoe

Said he'd try and do the best he could if we'd only give him work
Though he didn't know straight up about a cow

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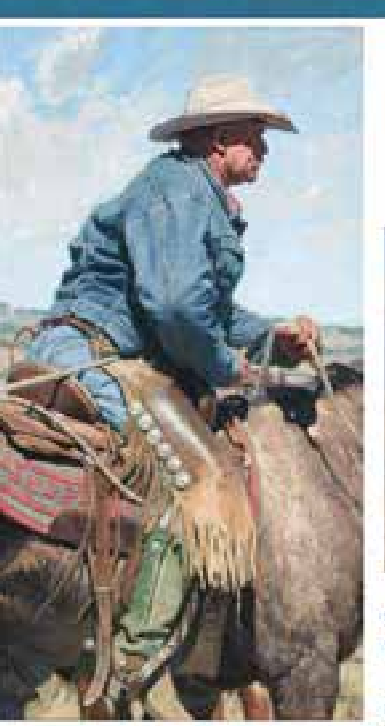

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So the boss he cut him out a mount and kinder put him on
For he sorter liked the little stray somehow

Taught him how to herd the horses and to learn to know them all
To round 'em up by daylight, if he could
To follow the chuckwagon and to always hitch the team
And help the cosinero *rustle wood.*

We'd driven to the Red River and the weather had been fine,
We were camped down on the south side of the bend
When a norther commenced blowing and we doubled up our guards
For it took all hands to hold the cattle then

Little Joe the wrangler was called with the rest
And scarcely had the kid got to the herd
When the cattle they stampeded, like a hailstorm, long they flew
And all of us were riding for the lead

'Tween the streaks of lightning we could see a horse far out ahead
'Twas little Joe the wrangler in the lead;
He was riding old Blue Rocket with his slicker 'bove his head
Trying to check the leaders in their speed

At last we got them milling and kinder quieted down
And the extra guard back to the camp did go
But one of them was missin' and we all knew at a glance
'Twas our little Texas stray poor wrangler Joe

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Next morning just at sunup we found where Rocket fell
Down in a washout twenty feet below
Beneath his horse mashed to a pulp his horse had rung the knell
For our little Texas stray, poor wrangler Joe

N. Howard (Jack) Thorpe penned the song in a cow camp in 1898, writing the lyrics on a torn piece of a paper bag. Thorpe said the song was "woven around an actual event on the trail," one the author personally witnessed. He based the melody on an old favorite, "The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane."

Thorpe's claim to fame wasn't limited to authorship of this classic song. He was the first person to publish a collection of cowboy songs. His *Songs of the Cowboys*, which he self-published in 1908, was slim edition with the words to 23 cowboy songs, including a handful of his own compositions. Thorpe advertised the book in a Kansas paper, hoping to sell 2,000 copies to readers interested in cowboy lore. He sold quite a few, although if the results were anything like those of anyone selling CDs today, he might've ended up with boxes of unsold books in his basement.

In "Banjo in the Cow Camp," an excellent essay Thorpe wrote many years later, he explained how he gathered those songs. "Today, you can find scores of cowboy ballads in songbooks accessible anywhere, and the Tin Pan Alley manufactures new ones fresh every hour. In the (18)90s, with the exception of about a dozen, cowboy songs were not generally known. The only ones I could find I gathered piece-meal on horseback trips that lasted months and took me hundreds of miles through half a dozen cow-country states."

Thorpe's obsession with cowboy songs and his efforts at documentation – which paralleled those of John Lomax, the other early cowboy-song collector – must have struck people as crazy at the time. I'm not being flippant; that's the way it is with pioneering work. Time will tell, but I believe both Thorpe's and Lomax's collections of cowboy songs will prove to have profound cultural meaning. My early mentors included the husband-and-wife folklorist team Austin and Alta Fife. They saw Thorpe's work as momentous: "The odyssey of 1889 to 1890, during which Thorpe made the first systematic effort to track down a repertoire of cowboy and western songs, may well loom in our American culture somewhat as did Homer's early efforts to gather and preserve the heroic songs and poetry of ancient Greece." (Austin and Alta Fife, *Songs of the Cowboys*)

Thorpe had grown up in a wealthy eastern family, and had enjoyed a good early education before his father lost the family fortune in bad investments. Thorpe struck out on his own and came west, reinventing himself as a cowboy, surveyor, civil engineer, horse trader and, eventually, folk-song collector. He had a healthy disdain for people who put on airs, and believed wealth was a polluting force. About collecting songs, he said, "The further you are from the gold strike, the richer it is." I'd have to agree.

He recounted running into a black cowboy crew while hunting up horses. The cowboys invited Thorpe to join them for a feed and, after supper, started singing songs. The music impressed Thorpe so much he decided to quit the outfit and devote himself to traveling by horseback in search of cowboy songs. He'd carry a notebook and ask cowboys he encountered if they knew any songs. His published collection debuted a couple of years before Lomax's first book, published by a New York outfit and boasting a foreword by President Theodore Roosevelt. (Just to give an idea of the rarity of these books today, you can purchase a first edition of Thorpe's book for $1,500. A first edition of Lomax's

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collection, *Cowboy Songs and other Frontier Ballads*, brings about one-third that price.)

On the surface, Thorpe's "Little Joe, the Wrangler" is a simple, tragic story of a kid who gets killed in a dangerous business. But the song is more complicated. My brother-in-law, Blade Jordan, grew up on a multi-generation ranch in eastern Wyoming. He learned early to be critical of Little Joe.

"The kid had no business running out to the front of a herd," he says. "He didn't know what he was doing. He was taken on to handle the remuda and help the cook. Men were going to need fresh horses, so he should've been doing his job. It was stupid, and it got him killed."

Blade inherited his take on Little Joe from his grandfather, William Lannen, a contemporary of Thorpe. Legend has it that Lannen was a night-herd cowboy at the age of eight, riding across the plains as his family moved a herd of cows to Oregon. Crossing Wyoming, they were stranded in a blizzard north of Cheyenne and found the feed and cover so good they decided to stay.

I read Blake the line, "Little Joe the wrangler was called out with the rest," which makes it sound like the boy was following orders. Blade responded, "The boy was learning. You never stop learning about cows. Eventually he would've made a hand, but his life was cut short by a bad decision on his part or a bad order from someone else."

Still, there is an undeniable romance to the song. Cowboy poet Baxter Black remembers his dad sitting at the end of his bed singing "Little Joe" to him and his brother, Bob. He's still struck by the sadness of a 12-year-old orphan riding up to a camp in the middle of nowhere to be taken in by cowboys and given a chance in life.

"America has a wonderful soft spot and a reverence for the downtrodden," Baxter says. "It's a story that has a sad ending, but it has a legitimate hero and any kid can identify with it."

If you don't know the song, it's worth hearing. Several versions can be found on YouTube. Don Edwards performs an admirable rendition, as do Michael Martin Murphey, Cisco Houston and Roy Rogers. For my money, I love the 1928 version recorded by Jules Verne Allen. Also, there are lovely old versions by Wilf Carter and Goebel Reeves. In 1939, Marlene Dietrich even recorded her own strange version – the ultimate trivialization of the song. Decide for yourself if "Little Joe, the Wrangler" needs emotion in a singer's voice or if the words and music alone tell a stronger tale.

Don Edwards performs "Little Joe, the Wrangler."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVqpAIK-j7w

Hal Cannon is a musician, journalist and folklorist. He lives in southern Utah.

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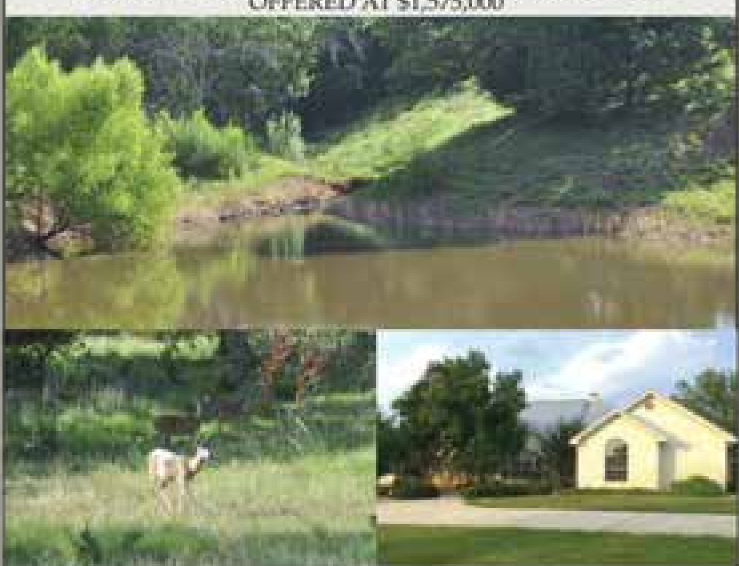

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By Pete Healey, APF

No foot, no horse, it's true. The biggest pathological condition I see is the lack of vertical depth in the foot. Vertical depth is that area of horn and soft tissue between the bone and the ground. Don't get that confused with the length of the foot. A horse can have a long foot without ample vertical depth.

A good healthy sound foot is robust with a thick sole and deep frog. The back part of the foot is critical to foot health and is made up mostly of the digital cushion and frog. You can feel this by grasping the foot with your thumb between the bulbs of the heel and fore finger in the center of the frog. On an average healthy foot this area is about 65 mm thick and has the consistency of a tennis ball. This is like the air in a tire, is it pumped-up or flat? On the upright foot this could have considerable depth but the front part of the foot under the tip of the bone is flat or "bottomed out." Either way the tires are flat. Most of this is caused from the long toe which leverages the bony column down into the capsule straining the laminar circulation and compressing soft tissue areas.

I am not a barefoot fanatic but most shoeing applications are set up to destroy the equine foot. This is the direct result of an archaic industry. Let's look at a typical shoeing job; first the sole and frog are pared away, decreasing protection and diminishing depth. Then the wall is trimmed down to this level especially at the heels, which lowers the angle and makes the toe look long. The front of the foot is then rasped back to make the angle of the hoof look right but the angle of the bone inside is not. Then a flat shoe without any break-over mechanics is nailed on to the perimeter of the foot. A horse has to have a really good foot to take this beating every six weeks. If it doesn't it shuts down and we blame the foot. We say the horse has bad feet, he won't grow heel, he won't grow sole. Or we say nothing because we don't know. The horse is lame and it's a mystery. Like I have said in previous articles; I haven't seen a good footed horse go through the MRI yet.

There are horses prone to bad feet because of bad genetics, but we must be thinking how we can override this mechanically. We need to be evaluating how we trim and shoe these horses. By the way I see a lot of horses that are being managed with the "Barefoot Trim" that have feet that are shut down. Trimming is removing foot and a lot of barefoot trimmers over trim. They want the foot to look like a mustang's foot from the Nevada desert. They need to remember that the mustang foot may travel up to thirty miles a day on rough ground. He has just what he needs, no more, no less. This is Darwinism, the ones that had too much or not enough died.

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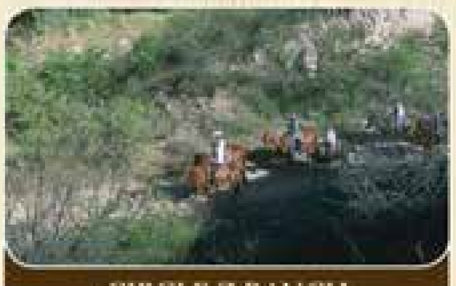

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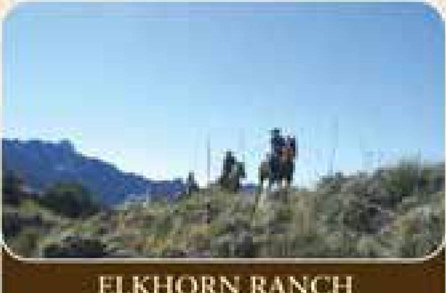

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Where They Make the Noise

Montana's Crow Fair celebrates an enduring culture.

By Carter G. Walker
Photography by Anne Sherwood

The thing is, the Crow, or more accurately, the Apsáalooke tribe, have always been movers. Shakers. Dancers. Noisemakers. They didn't want to be fenced in, kept at home, made to race their horses in circles instead of on grassy straightaways. No, the Crow do things exactly as they please. They always have. And Crow Fair – a five-day explosion of color and noise and motion that happens annually on the tribe's Montana reservation the third week in August – is a poetic example of Crow ingenuity mixed with the tribe's enduring ability to adapt and their unequivocal appreciation for beauty.

From the morning parades to the afternoon rodeo and evening powwows, Crow Fair offers abundant, and heated, competition for cash prizes and bragging rights.

What I love about Crow Fair – aside from being overwhelmed in every one of my senses – is the story of how the Apsáalooke made it theirs. And the way that, 110 years after it was started – by Agent Reynolds, if you read history books – this annual celebration is a true and lasting reflection of tribal beliefs and values. Despite every intention by Reynolds to transform the tribe into some semblance of Midwestern farmers (in a climate that was anything but friendly to agriculture), the natives took advantage of the opportunity to preserve and pass down the culture and heritage that was, and still is, uniquely Crow.

Along with photographer Anne Sherwood, I spent several days at Crow Fair some years ago. But because of the Crow respect for and devotion to tradition, it could have been last year. Or three decades past. Between parades and dances, horse races and dusty afternoons spent beneath the cottonwoods that line the banks of the Little Bighorn River, we camped and shared meals with the family of a friend of ours, Shane Doyle.

Then a public school teacher on the reservation, now a doctor of education who teaches as an adjunct professor in both the native American studies and education departments at Montana State University in Bozeman, Shane grew up on the reservation and participated in Crow Fair every year, the way his family had done for the last century.

"It has not changed as much as you might think," Shane told us. There is ebb and flow as population dynamics shift. Trends emerge and are replaced again, but Crow Fair is, at its heart, a way to preserve what matters to the tribe. It is a celebration of family and heritage. "It's allowed people to have a continuity of cultural traditions on display every year," he offered, mentioning the work it takes to raise a tepee, dress for a parade, show a horse. "If you don't have Crow Fair, I'm not sure where it really shows up."

We were outsiders, Anne and I. Still are. But we were welcomed by Shane and his family to see and share in what, for them, is a time-honored family reunion of sorts, where the Apsáalooke dance and sing their traditional songs, where they meet to tell stories and talk politics, where they bring out their very finest handmade clothing, where they honor the past, celebrate the present, and pray for the future. We listened to their stories. We watched their ceremonies. We ran our fingers across the breathtaking beadwork that had been handed down through the generations. We were outsiders looking in, and we were enchanted....

To understand what Crow Fair was, is, and why it matters, you need to go back in time.

Let's start with the name. In the Hidatsa language, Apsáalooke translates to "children of the large-beaked bird." Often called "sharp people" by other tribes – likely a reference to the cleverness of the *apsáa,* or raven, for which the tribe was named – the hand-sign for the tribal name simulated the flapping wings of a bird in flight. White men interpreted the sign to mean crow, and the Anglicized name was born. The French name for the tribe, coined in 1743 by the French La Vérendryes brothers, was *Beaux Hommes* or "handsome men," surely a nod to their tall, athletic builds, the colorful garb they donned for ceremonies, and the high pompadours and long braids that distinguished Crow men from other tribes. Even painter George Catlin could barely contain his awe at the appearance of Crow warriors when he first saw them on the Missouri River in the summer of 1832. "No part of the human race could present a more picturesque and thrilling appearance on horseback than a party of Crows rigged out in all their plumes and trappings ...."

The modern-day Crow tribe that Catlin encountered was a faction of Natives that had moved further and further west from the upper Mississippi Valley and Great Lakes, where they hunted and farmed along the rivers. As they crossed over and into the Rocky Mountains, following the bison and moving with the seasons, the tribe occupied the Missouri River Valley and Yellowstone River Valley across Montana, Wyoming and North Dakota, likely in the early 17th century. In this dramatic geography and harsh climate, the Crow realized that hunting bison was far more efficient than farming, and adapted to a hunter-gather way of life instead of the agricultural one they had known for centuries.

Not that they didn't try, Shane told me. He talked about a place near modern-day Springdale, Montana. Its Crow name means "where the corn died," he said. "Once you get into Montana, you can't grow crops anymore unless you have insurance," Shane laughed. "And sprinklers." But he makes the point because many people, including this writer, didn't know that the Crow had a rich agricultural heritage.

As pioneers moved west in greater numbers in the 19th century – sparking conflict among Indians by pushing tribes from their native lands, introducing population-decimating diseases, including smallpox, and precipitating steep drops in the number of bison that roamed the plains – the Crow continued to adapt, moving as needed, making allies where they could and waging war when they had to.

In 1851, the Fort Laramie Treaty reserved 35 million acres across Montana, Wyoming and the Dakotas for the Crow. In 1868, that land was reduced to 8 million acres. By 1884, the Crow were confined to the reservation, which was further reduced in 1905 to the roughly 2.5 million acres it occupies today, spread across southeastern Montana.

Enter Agent Samuel G. Reynolds. He arrived at Crow Agency in 1902, assigned by what was to become the Bureau of Indian Affairs to administer the reservation. A Billings banker, Reynolds was hellbent on Crow self-sufficiency. He discontinued government rations and abolished the agency farms on which many Crow had been working collectively. He worked toward and eventually was successful in opening tribal land for sale to non-Indians. Reynolds discontinued the practice of meeting the tribe in what he called "common and useless powwow or council" and upheld the1883 Indian Religious Crimes Code, which criminalized all Native dances, ceremonies and expressions of their religion. In accordance with federal policy of the time, Reynolds did what he could to suppress Crow culture so the tribe could be made to assimilate to white culture.

In 1904, Reynolds devised a plan to host a competitive agricultural event, not unlike the county fairs that were so popular in the Midwest around the turn of the century. He reasoned that by awakening the competitive spirit in what he knew to be a proud people, he could turn them into blue-ribbon farmers. Determined to make the event a success, Reynolds relaxed the ban on "Indian doings" during the Crow Fair in order to maximize participation.

His plan worked.

Reynolds established a committee of old chiefs and tribal elders to come up with a schedule of entertainment events in addition to his agricultural competitions and food and handcraft exhibitions. The Crow committee planned morning parades, afternoon races for both horses and men, and evening dances. Town criers were selected to announce the events throughout the tribe. And Reynolds agreed to it all.

From the beginning, according to an oral history from Joseph Medicine Crow, a Crow historian and anthropologist who turned 100 last fall, Crow Fair was a success. Not for the production of agriculture, as Reynolds had hoped – although the Crow did show off their skills as cultivators – but for the involvement of the entire Crow tribe, who saw it was a way to practice and preserve their culture.

The first Crow Fair was held in 1905, in an open meadow a few miles south of the Custer Battlefield. The tribe built a 1.5-mile circular racetrack for their horses. Used to straightaways, the confines of reservation life demanded changes. An exhibition hall was added and circus tents were erected for nightly dancing ceremonies. Before long, the Crow had designated fairgrounds for this annual celebration, which the Crow called *um-basax-bilua,* or "where they make the noise."

The Crow brought crops and livestock to the fair each year, delighting Reynolds. Women brought Native food, plus traditional costumes of buckskin and beads they had crafted all winter long. Even young children brought ponies and calves they had raised, and baskets they had woven.

But it was what Reynolds called entertainment that motivated the Crow. According to Medicine Crow's

Traditional Crow dancers wear colorful garb, with the men often using bone breastplates, feather back bustles and elaborate headdresses. Large sleigh bells around their ankles, and hung from their waist, make every foot movement musical. Women dancers wear beaded and fringed buckskin dresses, high-top moccasins, fur-braid wraps and eagle feathers in their hair.

account, their dancing and singing grew into battle reenactments, victory dances, recitals of war deeds and gift distributions to clan relatives, all of which were illegal the rest of the year. By the 1920s, the Crow had added such events as wrestling, tepee-raising races and a rodeo. It was their opportunism, Shane explained, and their ability to adapt, that allowed the Crow to make the most of any circumstances. "They never did buy into [the agricultural competition]," Shane said. "It was [about] what *they* could get from it."

Crow Fair ceased during World War I, drought years, the Great Depression and World War II. When the celebration resumed after the second World War, the agricultural component that was so important to Reynolds all but vanished. The spirit of competition remained, however, with cash prizes handed out in parades, horsemanship, races, rodeo, best-dressed contests and, of course, dancing. Since then, Crow Fair has been as reliable as the coming of August. Not a year has been missed.

The Crow vision for what this celebration could be has outlived anything Reynolds dreamed up. In fact,

Shane tells me, if I were to ask around the reservation, no one would know the agent's name. "He started something," Shane said. "But he didn't start Crow Fair."

No, Crow Fair was always theirs.

"Be beautiful," Shane Doyle tells me of Crow tradition and belief. "Lots of good things will happen to you." Whether they're decorating themselves, each other, animals or even pickup trucks for the parade, the Crow don't do anything half-way.

Set along the banks of the Little Bighorn River, Crow Fair is a true Indian encampment. The details shift with the decades – there are pup tents and RVs and newer and newer pickups in the parades – but the spirit of the event is timeless. It is often called the "Tepee Capital of the World" for the 1,500-plus tepees erected year after year. In addition to the Crow, Native and non-Native visitors from across North America – as many as 50,000 – come annually to compete for prize money, visit with friends and relatives, and simply take in the beauty of Crow culture.

For the Crow, during this week, all of life moves to the century-old fairgrounds. Nearly all of the tribe comes – maybe 10,000 – bringing entire households and even their animals. Families camp in spots that have been passed down, matrilineally, through generations. There are no signs. No markers. The Crow simply know where to go. Everyone else finds room, in wide open fields, beneath stands of old Cottonwoods, wherever friends welcome them.

Morning starts early at Crow Fair with the crackle of a bullhorn moving through camp. Speaking in Crow – a language that is still spoken by some 75 percent of the tribe, according to the Montana Governor's Office of Indian Affairs – the town crier chides sleepers and lazybones. "Get up," he says with increasing volume and decreasing patience. There's only five hours until the parade starts, so start getting ready. He means it.

The camps awaken slowly and the timeless ritual of preparing for the parade begins. There is hair washing in buckets. Hair cutting in lawn chairs. Tepees become salons where mothers and grandmothers dress and paint the parade competitors while fathers and grandfathers mind the little ones. Trucks are decorated with blankets and dresses and all the beautiful things a family brings with them. And there is food. Always food.

The parade is miles long, a river of color meandering through camp. There are war veterans and warriors leading the procession, all heroes in any age and every culture. The American flag flies high. And there is royalty too, a Crow Fair princess flanked by visiting princesses from other tribes.

A testament to the tribe's profound appreciation for beauty, the separation between the paraders and the

spectators is blurred. Watching from a migrating assemblage of folding chairs, older women – a group whose diminishing numbers Shane laments – dress in exquisite traditional dresses and leggings, with colorful shawls around their shoulders and scarves on their heads. Others, dressed less traditionally and with more skin showing, watch from the backs of pickups and the hoods of cars. Even on horseback. There is beauty everywhere here.

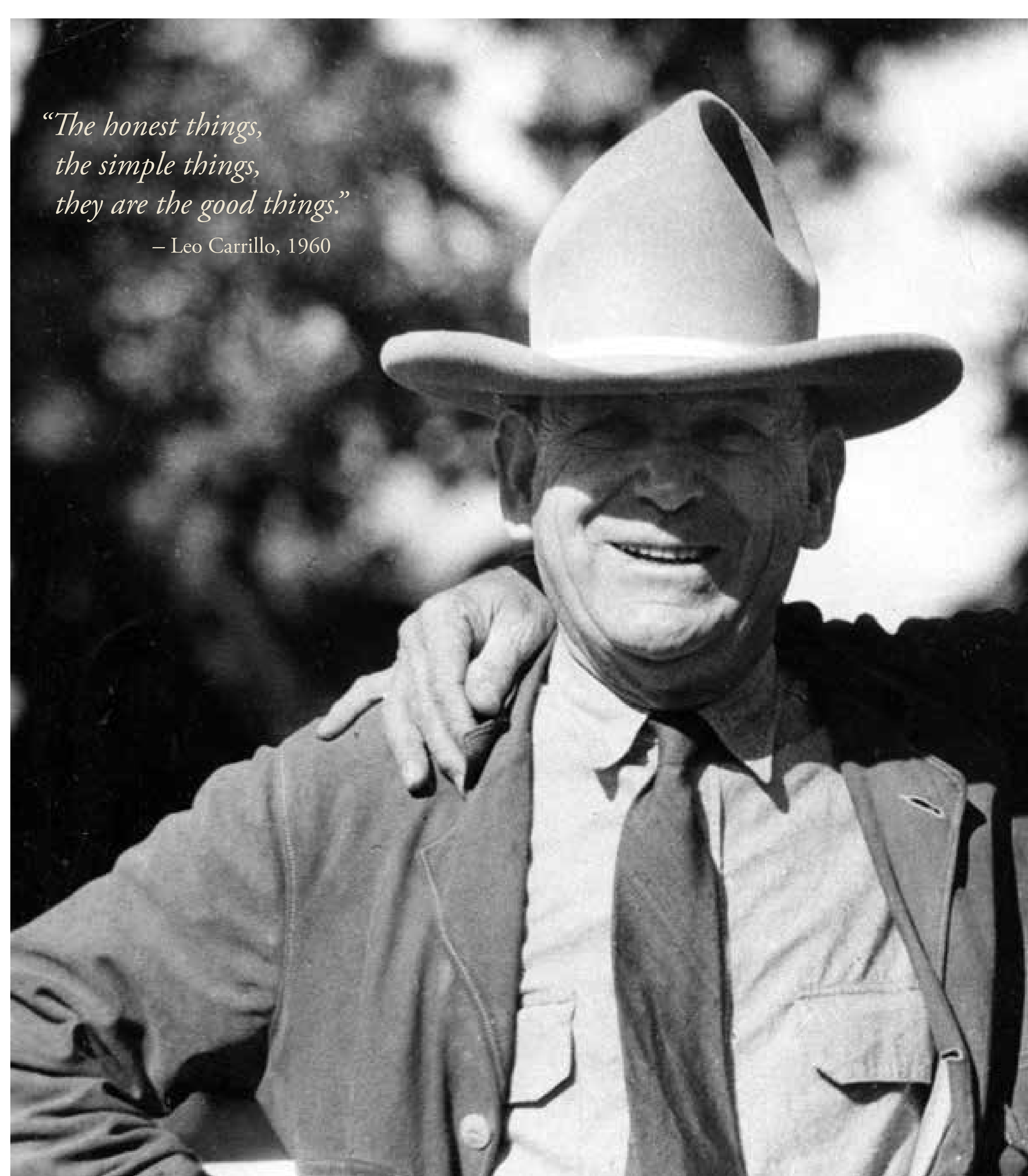
After the parade, the listed events include drum groups and dancers at the arbor for afternoon and evening powwow, plus horse racing and rodeo at the nearby arena and racetrack. But just as important, just as meaningful, is the unofficial Crow Fair activity, the life that happens outside the arbor. The meals shared amongst family and friends. The stories passed down, year after year. The splash contests in the Little Bighorn. The mid-afternoon naps when the air is still and the dust coats everything and everyone. This is Crow Fair. And this is theirs.

There is a sixth day at Crow Fair, after the visitors have mostly gone. It is a day reserved for Crow traditions, according to Medicine Crow's account. For celebrating the success of another year and looking ahead, always with hope. The outgoing officers provide a feast for the tribe and the new officers are elected to usher in the next year's celebration. The last meals are eaten. The tepees are taken down, more slowly than they went up, it seems.

"The principal difficulty to be encountered in connection with the fair is the intense interest taken by the Indians in their horseracing and dances, an interest which overshadows that of agricultural exhibits," wrote Indian Agent Samuel G. Reynolds' successor in 1912. Crow Fair has become, and will stay, exactly what the Crow always wanted it to be.

When the ground is open again and the only sounds are the cottonwood leaves rustling in the breeze, the fairgrounds will sit empty. The leaves will fall and blow away. The snow will drift in, and melt again. The river will spill over its banks, carving new channels when there is no other option. The sun will bake the mud. The grass will grow. And then, the Crow will come again. To celebrate who they are, what they have been – and will be – forever.

Carter G. Walker is the author of *Moon Montana & Wyoming* (Perseus Books, 2014) and a contributor to *A Country Bookshelf Reader* (Bangtail Press, 2014).



Artist Edward Borein (1872–1945) and Actor & Conservationists Leo Carrillo (1881–1962). Santa Ynez, California, circa 1930

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Semper Fi

Horsemanship offers veterans relief from the traumas of combat.

By A.J. Mangum

In 2002, Chris Lowe was a teenager from a small Texas town, a 19-year-old community college student with an ambition to serve his country. Following a family tradition of military service, he enlisted in the U.S. Marines. Two years later, he was in Iraq, on a combat deployment in the chaotic hotbed of Fallujah, providing security for an explosives disposal team, when an enemy mortar exploded just feet away from him. Only luck saved his life.

There were other close calls, other mortar attacks, concussions suffered in IED explosions. Lowe's personality began to change. He startled easily. He became quick to anger. His short-term memory began to fail him. Through years of additional service in the Middle East, Central America and Africa, the Marine was haunted by his combat experiences, but his symptoms of post-traumatic stress remained unrecognized. He lived in a constant state of anger, and drank heavily, typically consuming a bottle of vodka a day.

In 2010, Lowe was diagnosed with PTSD and, while stateside at California's Camp Pendleton, learned of a horsemanship program – part of the Marines' Team Semper Fi athletic program for wounded veterans – that promised a chance at something that he'd come to think unattainable: relief.

Lowe had grown up around horses, but had little experience as a rider. Still, he readily accepted the theory that the animals could serve in therapeutic roles that counselors and physicians couldn't fill. He began riding and progressed to competing in timed and cattle events. Lowe found that, despite riding's physicality, forward

photos courtesy Semper Fi Fund

Marine veteran Chris Lowe competes in pole bending at a Jinx McCain event.

progress required little more than a willingness to connect with a horse.

"I couldn't explain it," he says. "Being around a horse, I never thought about any type of trauma that had happened in my life. These animals are amazing in the way they can relieve pain and stress."

Named for the late Col. Jinx McCain, a U.S. Marine, four-time Purple Heart recipient, and horseman, the Jinx McCain Horsemanship Program got its start at Camp Pendleton in 2011, offering wounded veterans the opportunity to incorporate riding into their efforts at physically and emotionally recovering from their combat experiences. Participants come from all branches of the military, and must qualify for Team Semper Fi's athletic roster; most suffer from PTSD or are recovering from traumatic brain injuries.

On a rotating basis, around a dozen veterans learn horsemanship fundamentals at San Pasqual Valley Ranch, a horse-training operation and equestrian-events venue outside Escondido, northeast of San Diego. With longtime professional horseman Lynn Devenport, based at San Pasqual Valley, leading the effort, newly arriving riders are divided into groups based on their experience levels as riders. When the entire incoming class has a firm grasp on horsemanship fundamentals, work begins on learning arena events – barrel racing, pole bending, cattle sorting and roping – and preparations begin for the Cowboy Challenge, a

Part of Team Semper Fi, an athletics program for wounded veterans, the Jinx McCain program offers veterans the chance to make riding part of their recovery efforts.

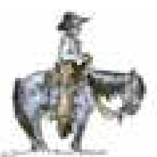
day of competition in which members of the winning team of riders earn trophy buckles.

"They progress in leaps and bounds," Devenport explains. "The first day, we can barely get some of them to speak. On the last day, they're urging each other on to do better. Seeing how happy they are at the end, it's exciting."

This past summer, 19 veterans in the McCain program traveled to Wyoming for a four-day cattle drive near the Big Horn Mountains. The outing paired recovering veterans, the vast majority with significant riding experience, with professional horsemen and ranch cowboys; no counselors or psychologists were on hand, yet participants extolled the therapeutic value of the experience.

"Most of the guys say it's the best therapy they've had, being away from all the hustle and bustle," says horseman Mo Smith, a volunteer with the McCain program. "Once in a while we'll all talk in a group, but more often there are one-on-one conversations where the veterans can talk through some pretty strong issues."

Smith travels throughout the country to connect with veterans in need of help, "tough cases" he brings to his North Carolina ranch to ride, box and work out. Some stay for months at a time. The experience, Smith says, "gets these guys grasping for life again, feeling like



they're assets and not liabilities. Working with horses, they build the confidence they need to go out and tackle things in life."

Riding and the personal connections made through the horsemanship program, Smith contends, forge much-needed support systems for veterans, many of whom lack the equivalent in their home environments. The horses themselves often come to be part of that support network.

"A horse can recognize what a person is experiencing, and can calm that individual down," says Casey Fisher, Team Semper Fi's program manager. "There's something triggered in the brain. It's almost a soul connection. Everything else disappears, the world quiets down, and the veteran can focus on riding the horse. Chris Lowe is a good example. He's been through a lot and had a hard time with things, but being around horses, he's become a different person. He's positive, smiling, relaxed."

Lowe, who left the Marines in 2012, acknowledges the transformation. Drinking, he says, is no longer an issue for him. The repetitive nature of training for certain horsemanship events has helped improve his memory. And, interacting with horses has influenced his relationships with other people.

"I've learned to be calmer," Lowe says. "If I approach a horse with a calm demeanor, he's more likely to approach me. It's helped me get acclimated to being a civilian again."

Lowe now lives in Saginaw, Texas, outside Fort Worth. After considering a career in the medical field – a profession he ruled out because of the aversion he's developed to human trauma – Lowe is instead studying to become a veterinary assistant. He hopes to one day work in an equine practice.

Check out video from the 2011 Wounded Warrior Cutting Horse Classic, featuring Jinx McCain Horsemanship Program participants.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXvQPoEouLE#t=39

A.J. Mangum is the editor of *Ranch & Reata*. He lives in Colorado. Learn more about the Jinx McCain program and Team Semper Fi at www.semperfifund.org.

Upcoming Clinics

Buck Brannaman
www.brannaman.com
September 5-8, Steamboat, Colorado; (970) 846-5151
September 19-22, Chicago, Illinois; (224) 678-7112
September 26-29, Limerick, Maine; (207) 793-4101
October 3-6, Lewisburg, West Virginia; (828) 899-2051
October 10-13, Walkertown, North Carolina; (919) 210-7473
October 17-20, Shelbyville, Tennessee; (256) 658-9244
October 31-November 3, Spanaway, Washington; buckclinicspanaway@gmail.com

Peter Campbell
www.petercampbellhorsemanship.com
September 5-8, Burke, Virginia; (831) 277-5110
September 12-15, Greensboro, North Carolina; (919) 802-1320
September 18-21, Negley, Ohio; (724) 663-5339
September 25-28, Lincoln, Nebraska; (402) 427-5244
October 3-6, Ellensburg, Washington; (509) 899-1505
October 11-14, Watsonville, California; (408) 489-1129
October 17-19, Leona Valley, California; (661) 400-8284

Tom Curtin
www.tomcurtin.net
October 2-5, Marietta, Oklahoma; (850) 929-2178
October 10-12, Marfa, Texas; (432) 358-4406
Ocober 17-19, Los Angeles, California; (310) 345-3274

Paul Dietz
www.pauldietzhorsemanship.com
September 5-8, Draper, Utah; (801) 859-1400
September 12-15, Steamboat, Colorado; (970) 879-6201
September 19-22, Grand Junction, Colorado; (970) 985-1377
September 26-29, Big Bear, California; (909) 855-9963
October 11-14, Central Coast, California; (602) 332-5038
October 17-20, Norco, California; (951) 520-7760
October 31-November 3, El Paso, Texas; (719) 357-0437

Kip & Missy Fladland
www.lariataranch.com
September 13, Winterset, Iowa; (515) 205-2249
October 11, Winterset, Iowa; (515) 205-2249

Buster McLaury
www.bustermclaury.com
September 5-7, Salinas, California; (831) 809-3455
September 12-14, Pasadena, California; (626) 824-0477
September 18-21, Fort Collins, Colorado; (970) 568-7682
September 26-28, Bay Harbor, Michigan; (231) 439-7100
October 2-5, Paducah, Texas; (806) 492-2711
October 10-12, Tyler, Texas; (903) 894-3820
October 16-19, Paint Lick, Kentucky; (859) 661-2677
October 23-26, Gay, Georgia; (678) 603-0038
October 31-November 2, Lometa, Texas; (512) 734-0234

Dave & Gwynn Weaver
www.thecalifornios.com
September 10-14, Hutchinson, Kansas; (620) 200-3287
September 17-21, Arena, Wisconsin; (608) 849-3163
September 24-28, Thermopolis, Wyoming; (307) 851-0859
October 16-26, Orland, California; (530) 865-2610

Joe Wolter
www.joewolter.com
September 5-7, Hartland, Michigan; (810) 515-0115
September 11-13, Ogden, Utah; (801) 643-3820
September 20-22, Ballantine, Montana; (806) 777-2766
September 27-29, Ellensburg, Washington; (509) 859-4949
October 3-5, Zillah, Washington; (509) 829-3500
October 10-12, Moline, Kansas; (620) 332-9597

Ceremonies of the Horsemen

(Horses of the L.A. Basin)

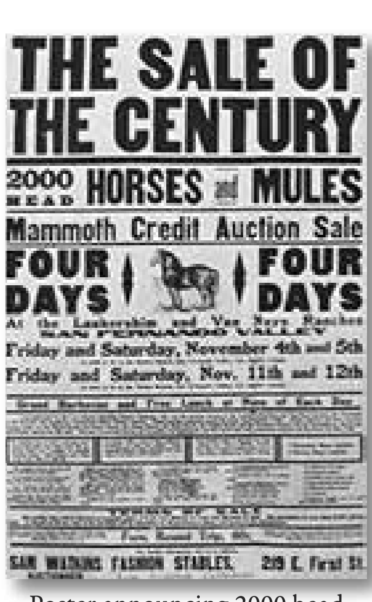
By Tom Russell (with Pat Russell)

After God, we owe our victory
to the horses.
Horses of the Conquest
R.B. Cunninghame Graham

We grew up on a three hundred thousand acre ranch the Spanish called *El Pueblo de la Reyna de los Angeles*, The Pueblo of the Queen of the Angels, or simply – Los Angeles. My mom and dad and four kids. That's us smiling from that black and white Christmas card in the 1950s. That's me holding the horse. *Tex Anne.* We bought her at the L.A. Horse and Mule Auction. That's my older brother Pat, kneeling in front. Ready to mount-up and ride off into the gunpowder sunset, across the L.A. Basin.

Our horse stables were Fox Hills Riding Academy, near the airport, and the stables on the backside of the now defunct Hollywood Park Race track. At the track my father played gin rummy on foggy mornings with Hopalong Cassidy (William Boyd) as we watched the morning workouts.

My father came out of Iowa, where his father was sheriff of Cochise County. The sheriff co-owned the *Russell Brothers – Dealers in Livestock* barn and auction yard. We're descendants of Irish horse traders and pirate queens. My 80-year-old Aunt Mary still lives in Templemore, Ireland. She keeps cows and horses. Up until a few years ago her roof was thatched straw.



Poster announcing 2000 head of horses being auctioned in the San Fernando Valley near L.A., early 1900s.

My father, Charlie Russell, came out West to sup of the American dream. He drank deep from the toxic elixirs which tempt Mid-Western farm boys. *Hollywood. Money. Fast horses.* He operated gas stations, furniture stores, clothing outlets, eventually becoming a building contractor. His passion was horses. Pleasure horses and running nags. He had a fancy saddle made at Bohlin's in Hollywood. Then the money dried up.

Even in the lean years – there were always the horses.

My brother Pat began riding the pony-horses at the track and hot

Map showing the location of the Hudkins Stables and Barns near the L.A. River in Burbank. Roy Rogers bought one of his "Triggers" there in 1943.

walking thoroughbreds. At age fifteen he was packing mules into the high sierras under the guidance of an Arkansas muleteer named Rayburn Crane. Pat came out of the mountains *cowboy to the core*, with old cowboy poems and songs on his tongue. His days, from then on, were spent horseback.

In the mid-1950s my brother built a bucking barrel in our backyard in Inglewood. The barrel was an empty fifty-gallon oil drum suspended from four telephone poles. The barrel danced on stout ropes tied to garage door springs. Powerful, badass springs.

My brother proceeded to launch the neighborhood kids into outer space. Some of 'em I never saw again. Others landed in Fergie Ferguson's chicken yard and crawled back home to their piano lessons. *Weeping*. The ones who survived grudgingly agreed to follow my brother to the weekend rodeos at the movie ranches in the San Fernando Valley, where Pat started riding bulls at age sixteen.

My brother is still in the rodeo game. The others faded. They didn't like the taste of blood, dirt and manure. But they loved to sit on the barrel while polishing up their opening lines: "Open the Chute," "Let Her Buck," "Ride a Bull," "Let's Dance," etc. They'd watched too much television. Most of them would never get on a live bull. Fear clawed at their sleep patterns, and law school or undertaker careers loomed. The barrel taught tough lessons.

Brother Pat never looked back. From bull riding, to bareback broncs, bulldogging, and on to horseshoeing, Agricultural Science at Cal Poly, to ranching, trading Navajo Rugs, collecting rare horse bits...on to rodeo contractor and stock contractor. He's at it today. If there's a major cutting horse competition somewhere near the West Coast or in Nevada, it's likely Pat Russell is behind the scenes, well mounted, moving fresh cattle through the action. He never got away from the backside of the track. The cowboy side.

Mules pulling an early water wagon near downtown Los Angeles, early 1900s.

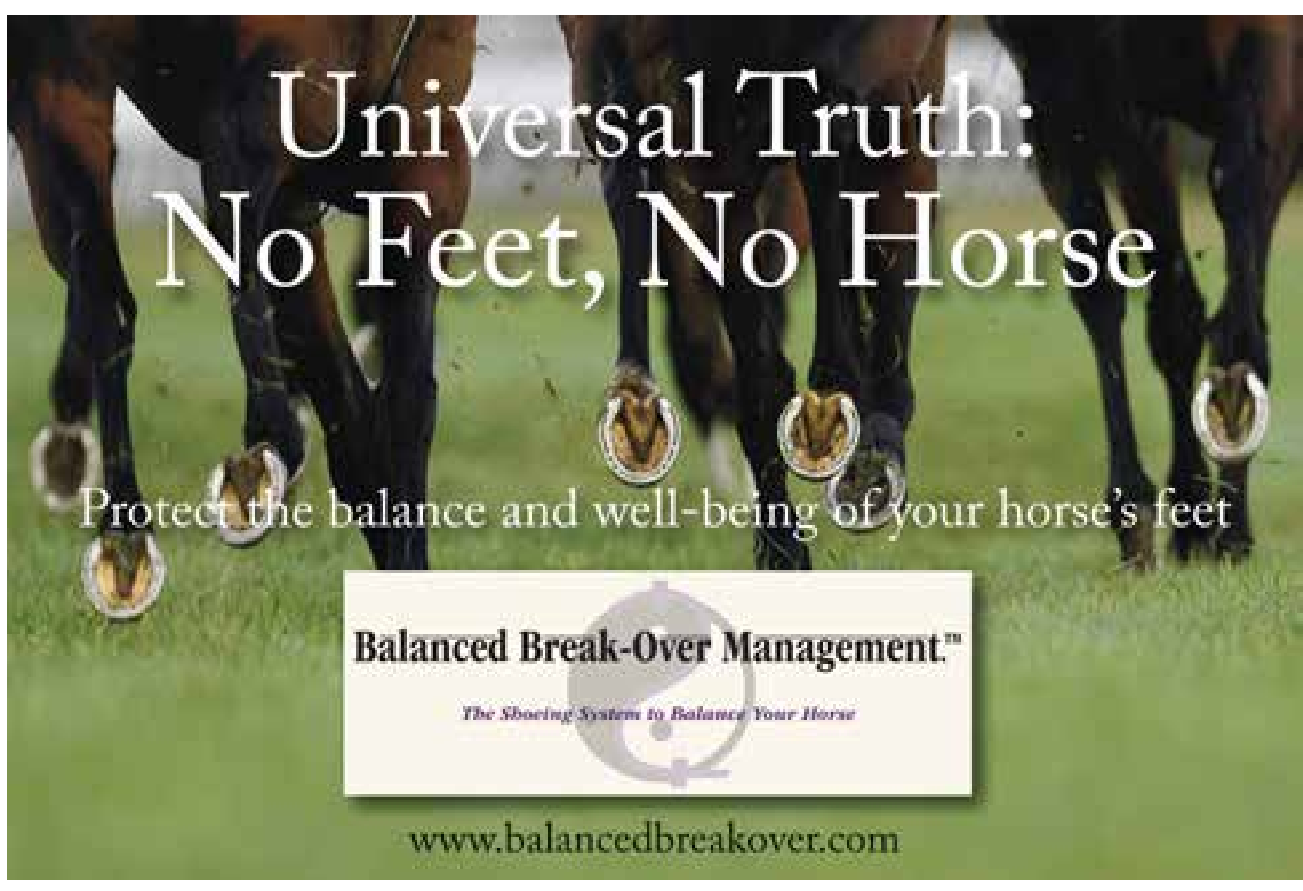
Tom's father, Charlie Russell in Hollywood with a favorite paint horse, 1940s

Myself? I figured falling off a horse interfered with my guitar playing and I became the songwriter. He's the cowboy. And a damn good one. But what about the cowboy and horse tradition in Los Angeles? Where did it come from, where did it go?

I The Russell Brothers in Deep Palaver: Horses of the L.A. Basin

In ceremonies of the horsemen
Sometimes the pawn must hold a grudge...
Bob Dylan
Love Minus Zero/No Limit

Fast forward 50 years. I'm sitting across the table from brother Pat in The Peppermill Casino, in Reno, Nevada. I have a concert that night. This is a family meeting to discuss a topic we, and editor Bill Reynolds, are much interested in: *Horses of the L.A. Basin*. Pat has 12 handwritten pages in a spiral notebook. Notes and



facts and statistics. He rips them out and throws them on the table. Then he starts in.

"What I'm talking about," he says, slapping his notes, "is *the sheer volume* of horses." He stops to spit tobacco into his Styrofoam coffee cup. I move my cup out of the way.

He takes up where he left off: "The *sheer volume* of horses that've come through the L.A. basin. In the four hundred hundred years or so. Millions of 'em."

I look down at his notes and try to keep up. He knows what he's talking about. He points at the first page. It's all lined out there in ballpoint ink, in his own hand. This was not concocted on a computer. This was not summoned forth from the shallow wells of *Google*. This came from his blood memory. *Cowboy* blood memory.

The list begins with the early Spanish haciendas and the Missions and includes the Spanish Land Grant ranches. Onward through the wild horses, the military horses, the workhorses, the Japanese farm horses, the slaughter plants, sales barns, movie horses, racetracks, amusement parks, rodeos, dude ranches and rent stables.

Then Pat is talking about *the evolution of Horses becoming pets, rather than tools of the conquest.* This was becoming a damn good history lesson in a casino in Reno: *The Biggest Little City in the World*.

My brother spits again into the cup, and goes to list the rodeo and movie horse contractors: Fats Jones, Jack Lilly and Andy Jauregui. Then the specialty horses and the trick horses. He has the rodeos in the LA Basin listed. Over fifty of them. From the L.A. Coliseum to small towns, like Norco, Castaic, Hemet, Indio and Big Bear. He's got the horse farms marked down: Connie Ring and Rex Ellsworth and others. Then he's onto the slaughter plants.

There's a quick aside about horses being shipped by rail back in the 50s, but stock trains could only roll for

From the *Los Angeles Times*, 1966. A group of actors are training on the flat which is now the Los Angeles Equestrian Center, looking west towards Travel Town and Oak Canyon. It was wide open land back then.

36 hours maximum before the horses were let out for exercise. Then he mentions of horses on the Channel Islands and on Catalina Island. I'd never thought about that. He rolls onward.

He lists the rent stables, saddle clubs, and drill teams. The Anadarko Riders. The Camp Pendleton Marine Color Guard. The hundreds of horses in the annual Rose Parade. The Sheriff's Posse. The Search and Rescue Posse. Then the racetracks: Hollywood Park, Santa Anita, Del Mar, Los Alamitos, and Devonshire Downs. Then the Amusement park horses: Knott's

Berry Farm, Disneyland, and the Griffith Park Pony Rides.

We're talking about *volume* of horses, but also the deep history of cowboy and horse culture in the L.A. Basin. The Los Angeles Basin, in a geographic sense, includes the central part of The City of Los Angeles, as well as its southern and southeastern suburbs. The Basin is approximately 50 miles long and 25 miles wide, bounded on the north by the Santa Monica and San Gabriel Mountains, on the east by the Santa Ana Mountains, and in the South by the Pacific Ocean and the Palos Verdes Hills. The confluence of the Los Angeles and Rio Hondo rivers is the center of the basin.

A million years back this basin was under water. Currently it's a snake-nest of freeways. Just 60 years ago there were hundreds of thousands of horses here. And what does it come down to, this great quantity of horses in the recent past, after the conquistadors rode away?

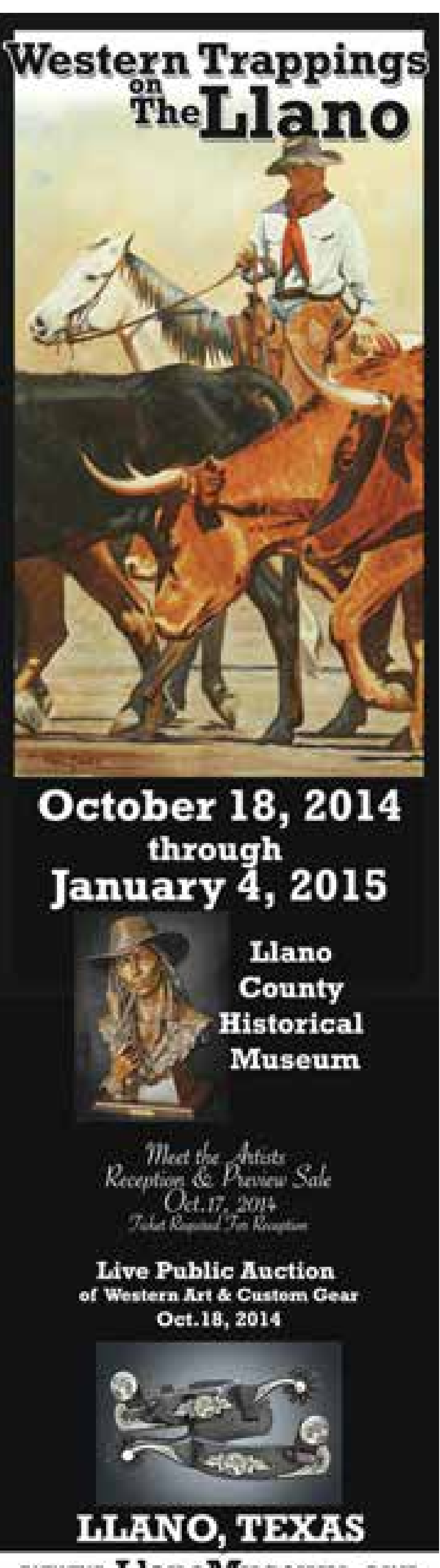
Auctions, sure. And slaughterhouses. And pleasure mounts. Race horses. Plow horses. But in the end it comes down to *Western films*. Hay burners and classics. Thousands of them.

II The Sheriff of Monterey Weighs in on Western Film History

Well Jackie and his buddies,
were hangin' out at Gower Gulch...
Waitin' for a call from the studio
for a part in a cowboy movie...
Jackie wants to be a drugstore cowboy...
Maria McKee,
Drugstore Cowboy

My friend Gary Brown, former Sheriff of Monterey, is one of our leading authorities on cowboy and Western films. I asked Gary how many cowboy movies were filmed on the West Coast during the Golden Era: 1930-1960. Gary surmised there were 2962 Western films produced between those years – the average of about 99 per year.

Sound films began in 1929. The '30s and '40s were the big years for cowboy films, and number began dropping off by the late 1950s – from



Gower Gulch cowboys – Hollywood stunt types.

over a hundred a year, down to 38 films in 1959. Numbers have been dropping since. Now there's maybe one or two Western films per year.

Between 1930 and 1960 there were over 20 operative Western Film ranches in the greater L.A. area, including Corriganville, Circle J, Disney Oak Ranch, Iverson's, Jack Ingram's, Melody Ranch, Pioneer Town and The Spahn Ranch. Each ranch kept a decent size herd of horses, ponies, and mules. Maybe you recall *Francis the Talking Mule*? He had his own T.V. series.

The most popular Southern California movie ranch was the Iverson Ranch, located in the San Fernando Valley. There were more major studio productions shot there, per square mile, than any other location in America. *Stagecoach* was filmed at Iverson's and hundreds of other Westerns, along with the T.V shows *The Lone Ranger* and *Bonanza*.

The rise of the Western film signaled cowboy work for wranglers, extras, and stunt people – male and female. And the deep need for good horses. *The sheer volume*, my brother kept emphasizing.

Gary Brown sent me a photo of cowboys hanging out at the corner of Sunset and Gower back in the '40s. They called it *Gower Gulch*. You waited on the corner, near a local Hollywood drugstore, for work in cowboy films. You wore your best cowboy gear. That's where the term *drugstore cowboy* came from.

Gary forwarded to me a copy of the bill of sale for *Trigger,* when Roy Rodgers purchased the famous palomino horse from the Hudkins Brothers Ranch. Trigger cost $2500. *Mucho dinero* back then. He was a special horse, trained for movie stunts.

HUDKINS STABLES

MOTION PICTURE EQUIPMENT

DATE

INVOICE NO.

ORDER NO.

PICTURE NO.

TERMS:

Bill of sale to Roy Rogers for "Trigger" from the Hudkins Stables

I promised brother Pat we'd work on it. The *sheer volume of horses*, and the stories which surrounded the hay day of horse culture in the City of the Angels. I figured a good place to begin would be the bars. I was comfortable with that. The infamous River Bottom's bars – those cowboy bars on Riverside Drive bounding Griffith Park, near the horse stables. The bars were a haven for great bronc riders making side money as film extras. As the fictional West unfolded in film, the real West of drinking, fighting, singing, and spinning rowdy yarns, came alive in the bars.

I went home to El Paso and dug through old boxes and unearthed a series of notes from eight or ten years ago. A folder marked: *Stories from The River Bottoms Bars*.

III Walt LaRue & Pat Richardson: Tales From the River Bottoms

Will James, he'd stay in his room for days.
Drinking. He would take a piece of soap
and draw a bucking horse on the mirror,
drunk as hell...
Walt LaRue

Walt LaRue was a bronc rider, stunt double, wrangler, cowboy singer, story- teller, artist, cartoonist, and occasional illustrator for *The Western Horseman* and other cowboy publications. I met Walt at *The Elko Cowboy Poetry Gathering* a few years before he passed away. I'd call him up at his place in Burbank and we chat about the old days and the River Bottom's bars along Griffith Park in L.A. Walt was not a man to mince words or prettify them. He spoke like the old songs spoke. Straightforward, hard edged, and colorful. *Hang and rattle, Tom,* was always his closing line.

Let's start in the middle (*en media res*) of Walt's chats and wind our way to both ends of the L.A cowboy deal. Here's Walt LaRue:

I worked on Paint Your Wagon *with Clint Eastwood and Lee Marvin...Lee could drink a little, ya know. Gawd, yes. I'd work out at the Corrigan's and Iverson's movie ranches shootin' them quick pictures with Roy Rogers and Bob Wills. I tell you Bob Wills would play in a ballroom out on the end of the Santa Monica Pier and that damn pier would be a rockin', and you couldn't help but stomp your feet to the music.*

Stunt men and musicians stayed at the same hotel over there on Santa Monica Boulevard. Paramount Studios was near there. Near Teeny's Bar. Keystone Cops and midgets and cowboys all slippin' upstairs with gals. All of 'em drunk. Same street Valentino was buried on in that Hollywood graveyard over there.

Red River Dave was around. Famous for "Amelia Earhart's Last Flight," and he had a song about a little blind kid that was gonna donate his seeing-eye dog to Uncle Sam for the war effort. Can you imagine?

I didn't know Will James. But I loved to hear Will James stories. You think he couldn't write? Go read the last goddamn paragraph of Smoky

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The Cow Horse *and that will jerk you around, kid. Read one of Will's stories and you'd want to quit school. He'd drink at The Green Spot in Victorville and get a room upstairs and stay in his room for days. Drinking. He'd take a piece of soap and draw a bucking horse on the mirror. Drunk as hell. They'd have to come up from Hollywood to get him. He went to hell drinkin'.*

He died in 1942 when I was in Montana breaking horses. He died from drinking too much. Died in the Presbyterian Hospital. Then I discovered Charles Russell and Joe D. Young and Ed Borein. Joe D. Young would draw cowboys to show the movie folks what cowboys looked like.

Unloading stock after a day's filming, Hudkins Stables.

Casey Tibbs came through those L.A. bars. I first saw Casey up in Salinas in '47 or '48. Rodeo grounds. He was in the office when I come in. He had on a purple shirt with horseshoes on the pocket. I said, "who in the hell is that guy?" Wag Blessing says "That's Casey Tibbs." I may of thought he was some kinda' dude. But later on I watched him ride and he sure showed me who he was. Nobody ever done it as good. With such class. Casey was great, cause he floated them broncs…but for my money Gene Rambo was the greatest all-around bronc rider who ever lived. It was kind spooky how he died. They said his gun went off when he was crawlin' under a fence.

Casey Tibbs come out of the chute a spurrin' em. Hang and rattle, that's what you did. Casey worked on the Stony Burke *TV show, but was so phony it drove him nuts. But he took their money. Casey would drink and play around, but he never showed up drunk to a rodeo…now Bud Linderman could ride drunk.*

I started stunt doublin' for Gabby Hayes and Audie Murphy. I doubled for Warren Oates one time. Had to jump off a train onto a horse. I saw Warren Oates ride a pig through a train. Won a 800 dollar bet. Rode the pig with a loose rope…

Well, gotta sign off, Tom. Hang and rattle.

Pat Richardson is a cowboy poet, artist, and ex-bronc rider out of Merced California. Pat shared a few River Bottoms stories with me. Most of 'em I couldn't repeat even in the most *impolite of companies*. They're blue humdingers. Raw and funny. Here's a cleaner one about the infamous rodeo brothers – the Linderman's.

One of Pat Richardson's arms has been crippled since childhood, but it didn't hurt his bronc riding or fighting skills any. Pat was 18 and riding broncs around the L.A area. He was sitting in the Pickwick Bar when a cowboy came up and tapped him on the shoulder. Pat turned around and the cowboy threw a punch that glanced off Pat's jaw.

Pat, half-dazed, stood up and decked the cowboy with one punch from his good arm. Pat sat back down to mind his own business. A few days later the same thing happened at The Pickwick. Another cowboy came in and started swinging and Pat had to deck him. This time

Pat noticed one of the Linderman brothers, behind the bar, laughing. So Pat, pissed off now, walks up and asked what was going on – what was so damn funny?

Linderman finally quit laughing and told him.

"Hell, Pat, I've been making money off you. These tough old cowboys come in here and I make a bet with 'em…I say 'you ain't so tough. I'll bet you five dollars you can't even go over and knock down that cripple kid.'"

The rest of Pat's stories will stay under the counter with the *Tijuana bibles.*

IV Blood Buckets and Bronc Riders: Glenn Orhlin Remembers

Casey Tibbs had a trick horse act, ya know.
The horse sat and counted and all that. Casey, himself, didn't have to do much but tip his hat and smile.
Casey was pretty much involved full time in being Casey.

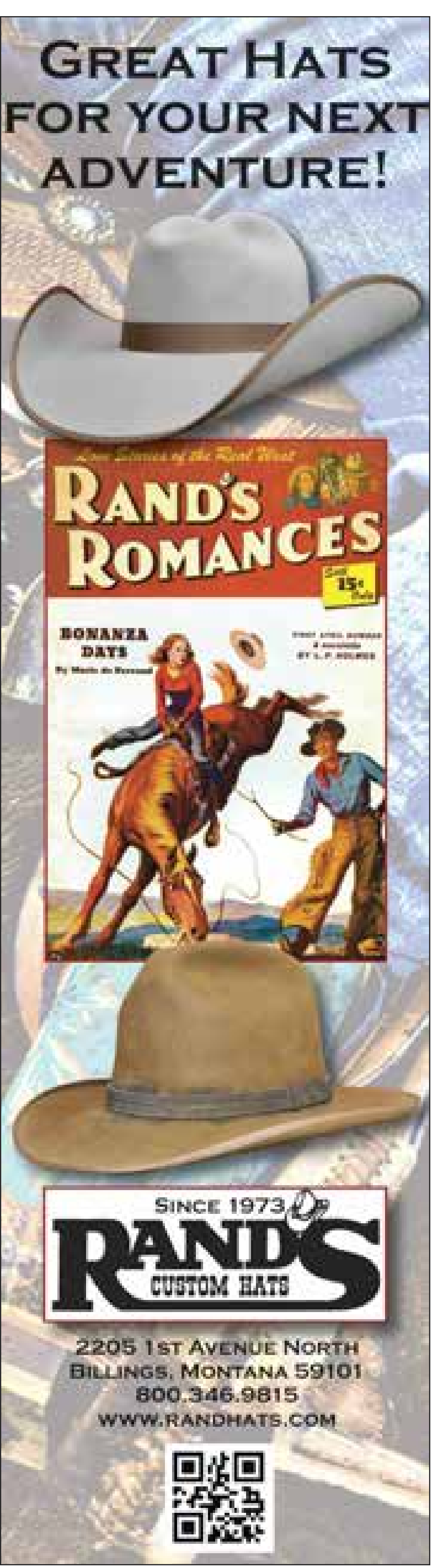
Glenn Orhlin

Another fine cowboy I met at Elko is Glenn Orhlin**.** Glenn's an ex-bronc rider, singer, storyteller, and cowboy folklorist and authored the timeless cowboy collection*: The Hell Bound Train*. Glenn has recorded several classic traditional cowboy records. He ranches in Arkansas. But in the late '40s and '50s he used to hang out in L.A.

According to Glenn:

There were the two cowboy bars there in The River Bottoms: The Pickwick and The Hitching Post. Jerry Ambler owned the Pickwick and Wag Blessing was involved. The Linderman's were around.

The Hitching Post Theater, near where the Los Angeles Equestrian Center stands today in Burbank.



All these guys were great rodeo cowboys. Cowboy actors and stuntmen would sit in there and wait for the phone to ring for a movie job. Sometimes they'd wait for months. That wasn't so appealing to me, so I went out and rodeo'd some. Came back now and then.

Ya' know you'd see these guys who were once big...Ken Maynard, he ended up doin' trick shootin' in a fancy suit. He could barely fit into it. It was kinda' sad.

Jerry Ambler was Saddle Bronc Champion of the world in 1946, predated Casey Tibbs a little, and he took up part ownership in The Pickwick Bar. Jerry would hold forth on the art of bronc riding and say that it was all balance, timing, and science...he could make a mediocre horse look better by his own motion and artistry. But Jerry claimed the best of 'em all was Pete Knight, who died after being bucked off and stepped-on at the Hayward rodeo grounds in 1937.

The River Bottom's bars were a home place for cowboys of all kinds. They weren't necessarily all rodeo or movie people. It was a gathering place for 'em...a block away, up the street it wouldn't be. Cowboys are like anyone else, they like to be with their own kind.

There were probably more that 100,000 horses in the city limits back then and a maybe a million in Southern California. The Hudkins family had a thousand acre ranch just over the L.A River...they had lots of movie horses. Over 500 head at a time, at least.

Jerry Ambler and Wag Blessing were always around. Ambler was one of the best saddle bronc riders ever, and Wag Blessing was world champion bull rider in 1947. Bud and Bill Linderman also hung out there. Bartending. Bill Linderman was the first rodeo cowboy I know to win over 40,000 dollars back then. They were from Red Lodge, Montana.

The Pickwick Stables were behind the Pickwick Bar. The Hitching Post, at one time, was owned by the Olmstead brothers, and their boarding stables were behind the bar. Their place was called The Stock Farm.

Tommy Coates was a bartender at the Pickwick. He was a stunt man. He could sing with a real New York, wise-guy accent...so he'd jump up on the bar and sing "Ace in the Hole." *I'll leave you with that one:*

There's con men and there's boosters
Card sharks and crapshooters
They congregate around The Metropole....
They wear flashy ties and collars
But where'd they get their dollars?
If they'd lose that old ace in the hole?

V The L.A. Horse and Mule Auction, Slaughterhouse Afternoons, and Crap Games on Bandini Road: The Lost Pat Russell Transcriptions

We'd get these killer horses in the alley,
and we'd rope one, put a bareback riggin'
on 'em, and that's where we'd practice...

Pat Russell

Inside the box of notes on the River Bottom's bars I found an old postcard from my parents. The message on the back stated my older brother Pat was conceived right here in El Paso, at the *The Paso del Norte*, an old cattleman's hotel downtown. It figured brother Pat was conceived on the edge of the last frontier. The card was clipped to the transcription of an old interview I did

with my brother, maybe eight or ten years ago. The missing link in this story.

Picture the dialogue below punctuated with chewing tobacco, spit out between the wild pig's teeth my brother planted into his lower jaw with crazy glue. So goes the legend. The sound of his voice and way of speakin'? Think Ben Johnson crossed with Slim Pickens, in a documentary filmed by Sam Peckinpah.

Brother Pat Remembers:

Well, you know one of the best cowboy poets ever, Bruce Kiskaddon was cowboy-ing on some Southern California ranches with Bill Gibford (father of cowboy poet Dickie Gibford), and he give it up and went to be a bellhop at the Mayfair Hotel in downtown L.A. They used his poems on the cover of the program they used at the Livestock auctions in L.A. "The Little Blue Roan" and stuff like that.

I started ridin' bulls in the early 1950s. I was sixteen. Out on all the movie ranches. There was Dee Cooper's, Devonshire Downs, and Corriganville – which was Crash Corrigan's ranch. A lot of rodeo champions where living in Burbank, working in the movies. Lots of 'em. Wallace Brooks, Louis Brooks, Montie Montana – they were all working for Fats Jones.

Fats Jones was supplying movie horses. He had hundreds of 'em. And these cowboys lived around what they called The River Bottoms, all along Riverside Drive, working for those different stables. Startin' colts or workin' in the movies.

Andy Jauregui was one of the big stock contractors. He did all the local rodeos within 150 miles of L.A., to about as far as Prescott, Arizona. He had some great animals. One of his best bareback horses was "Cheyenne." He had a little Buckskin horse called "Whiz Bang," who went on to become a National Finals horse. Jauregui sold out to Cotton Rosser in the 1960s. And Dee Cooper, who was a stuntman in the movies, had his own string of horses that did the California rodeos and the weekend rodeo at his movie ranch.

*I got a job at the track (Hollywood Park) walkin' hots in the morning. (*Walking racehorses to cool them down after a workout.*) You got to work at four thirty in the morning and work 'til about ten thirty or eleven walkin' the hots, then hand them over to the groom.*

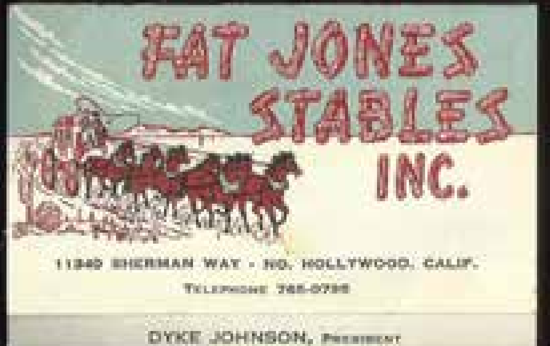
*One day a week you'd come back and walk the horses that were up in the races that day. Our dad would play gin rummy in the morning with Bill Boyd who played Hopalong Cassidy. (*Our father had worked for The Academy of Motion Pictures in the mid 1940s – handing the Oscars onstage to the presenter – Bob Hope.*)*

In L.A., there was a horse auction twice a week. They had a trader sale on Wednesday afternoon. Bob Scott, who was half Indian and half black, rode the horses through the ring, and he could make any horse lay down if he wanted. They'd come in by the hundreds and he'd never seen 'em before.

He worked with a lot of the movie horses. He could make 'em do anything. He could make a horse lay down and roll over. With a halter rope. He had the knack. And a guy named Red Foster was trying to start the American Model Quarter Horse Association, and he'd ship horses from New Mexico and Arizona.

The trader's sale was just for horse traders on Wednesday afternoon. There'd be three or four hundred horses in there and they wrote out the horses' names and held them up. They'd shave their tails down each side so their butts would look bigger and their neck would look stouter.

And a lot of those horses had their manes rubbed out, and they'd sell the mane and tail hair. They'd keep the horsehair separate. Load after load of it. The horses would come off the trains and trucks, and also carloads of hair. Bob Scott would ride those horses through, and what didn't sell they'd put on feed and sell them at the public sale on Friday. The hair was sold to guys who would use junk hair in furniture. Ottomans and cushions. And the rest would go to making hair ropes.



Fat Jones Stables was the top supplier of horses and horse wranglers to the movies for 51 years. The business was founded by Clarence "Fat" Jones in 1912 when he provided horses for a Pathe Films western. Originally located in Edendale (which today is Silverlake), the Stables moved to North Hollywood in the '20s. They shut their barn doors in 1963, but not before they had making an indelible mark on the screen with such stars as Flicka, Silver, Gene Autry's Fury, and the horses which Hoss and the boys rode on "Bonanza".

Behind the L.A Horse and Mule Auction, on Bandini Road, was Snowdon Brothers. A horse killin' plant. They'd

kill like 80 to 500 horses a day. For dog food. And Alvin Deal and I would go over to the horse killin' plant when the sale was going on back at the auction. We'd get these killer horses in the alley, and we'd rope one, put a bareback riggin' on 'em, and that's where we'd practice. And we'd have to catch him to get our riggin' off.

Over in the hay barns, behind the auction, there was always a crap game going on. One Friday night they shot a guy.

Gotta go. Adios, kid.

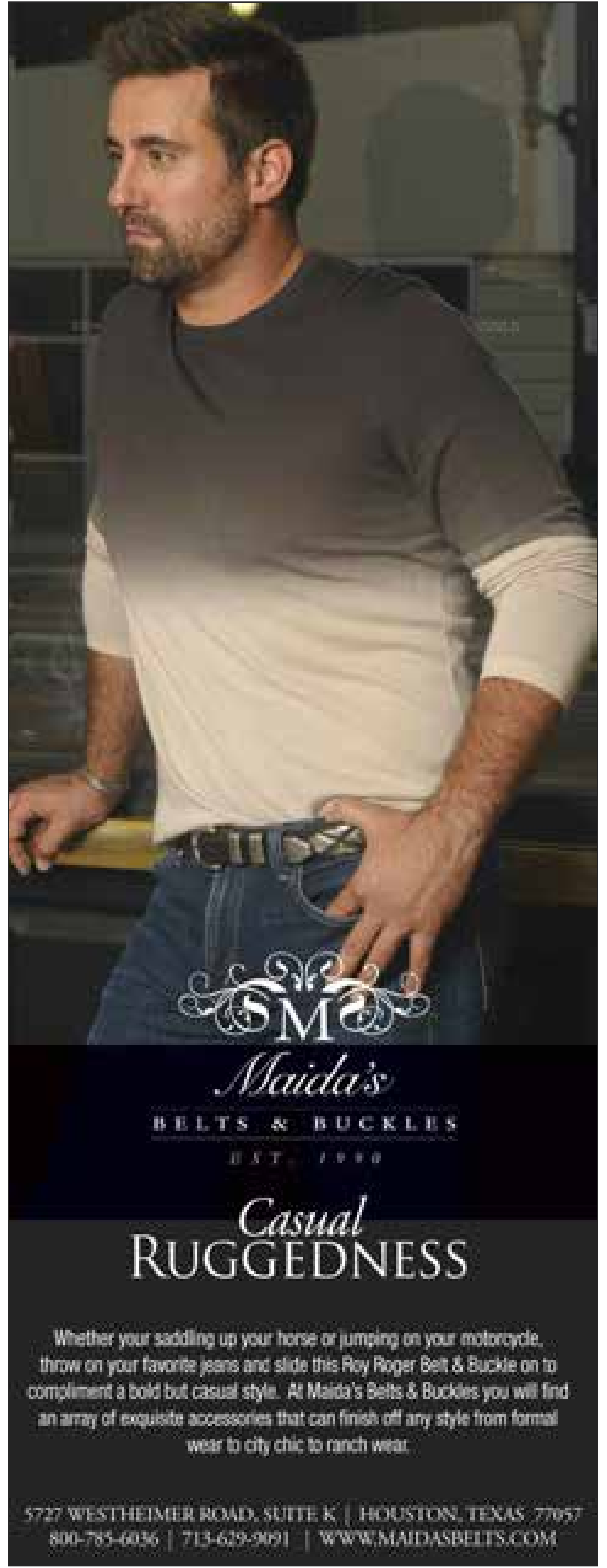
Brother Pat rides off towards the Cuyama Mountains. *Lonely Are the Brave.*

VI Coda: The Sheer Volume Thins Out – Roll the Credits.

Oh, Midnight was the champion
He is the only bronc I couldn't ride
But now I hear old Midnight's blind
And rides little children for a dime...
Paul Davis,
Ride 'Em Cowboy

I sat on a horse and watched the aftermath
of the Pickwick Stables fire, and remember
all the dead horses in the sun, bloating. So sad.
I left the River Bottoms in '53.
Sylvia Durando,
Horse Trainer/Stunt Woman

The Western film era began to decline in the mid-1960s. The bars closed down. The bronc riders moved on. *The L.A. Horse and Mule Auction* moved out to the City of Industry, in the L.A. suburbs. Dave Winn operated the auction for at least 25 years, into the late 1970s. Winn stood in the sales ring with a long stock



whip and moved the horses and mules around the ring, after he'd eyeballed the animal and shouted the starting bid to the auctioneer.

Brother Pat Russell still handles livestock behind the scenes at cutting horse competitions. His bucking barrel should be in The Cowboy Hall of Fame, along with those pig's teeth he glued into his lower jaw. And that spiral notebook with the horse volume facts.

The Russell Brothers Tom (left) and Pat, horseback in Paso Robles, CA

Pat weighed-in as I wrapped up this essay. He'd read the rough draft. He called up and said he wished there were more statistics on the number of horses. He emphasized what a huge boon to the L.A. economy the horse business was during those golden years. He didn't much take to the personal hogwash about our family and himself. It didn't interest him. He's a humble individual. I told him *personal hogwash* was my stock and trade. I'm a storyteller and a songwriter. I flunked statistics in college.

He spit into a cup, said *adios*, and hung up the phone.

We're back where we began – thinking of those *horses of the conquest,* and the sheer volume of hoof prints across the Los Angeles Basin. The research goes onward.

I'll leave you with a quote:

I who have ridden thousands of horses descended from the horses of the conquerors, have written that which I have written out of gratitude to all of them – bays, browns, blacks, chestnuts, piebalds, roans, grays, whites, cream-colored with black points, duns, skewbalds, claybanks, calicos, pintos, pangares, lobunios, grullos, zebrunos, malacaras, pampas, picazos, gateados, zainos, tordillos, melados, doradillos, overos, moros, barrosos, ruanos, rosillos, bayos, and all the rest of the infinity of colors that the Americas bring forth….for after God, we owe our victory to the horses.

Thanks To: Pat Russell, Gary Brown, Pat Richardson, Glenn Orhlin, and Dom and Christine Lazzaretto.

Tom Russell's records, books, art, and tour dates are accessed through: www.tomrussell.com
He will be appearing at the Durango, Monterey, and Elko Cowboy Gatherings.

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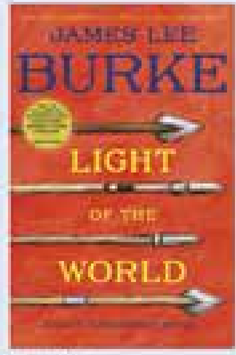
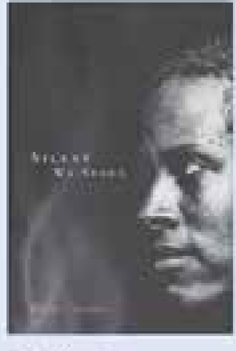
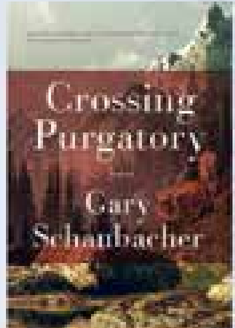


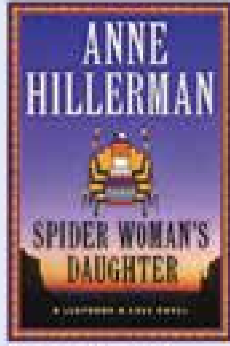
Best Western Contemporary Novel
Light of the World: A Dave Robicheaux Novel
James Lee Burke (Simon & Schuster)



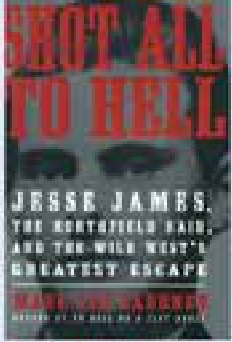
Best Western Historical Novel
Silent We Stood
Henry Chappell (Texas Tech University Press)



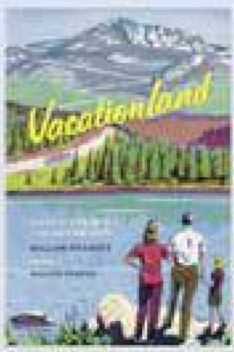
Best Western Traditional Novel
Crossing Purgatory
Gary Schanbacher (Pegasus)



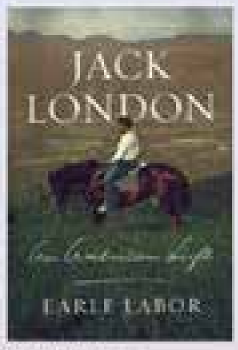
Best First Novel
Spider Woman's Daughter
Anne Hillerman (HarperCollins)



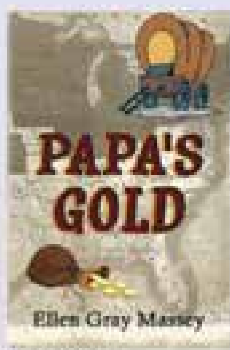
Best Western Nonfiction – Historical
Shot all to Hell: Jesse James, the Northfield Raid, and the Wild West's Greatest Escape
Mark Lee Gardner (William Morrow/HarperCollins).



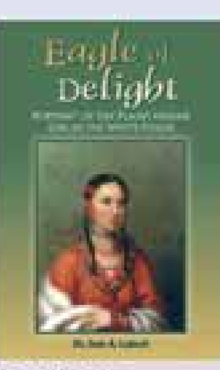
Best Western Nonfiction – Contemporary
Vacationland: Tourism and Environment in the Colorado High Country
William Philpott (University of Washington Press)



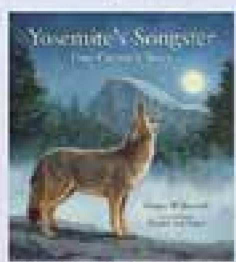
Best Western Nonfiction – Biography
Jack London: An American Life
Earle Labor (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)



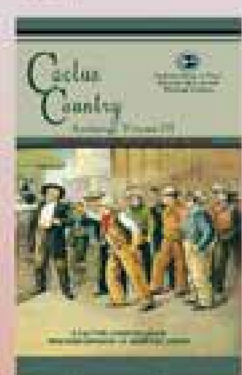
Best Western Juvenile Fiction
Papa's Gold
Ellen Gray Massey (Pen-L)



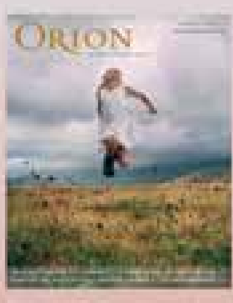
Best Western Juvenile Nonfiction
Eagle of Delight: Portrait of the Plains Indian Girl in the White House
Jean A. Lukesh (Field Mouse Productions)



Storyteller (Best Illustrated Children's Book)
Yosemite's Songster: One Coyote's Story
Ginger Wadsworth (author) and Daniel San Souci (illustrator) (Yosemite Conservancy)

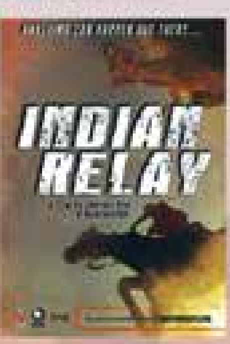


Best Western Short Fiction Story
"Cabin Fever"
Brett Cogburn (High Hill Press)

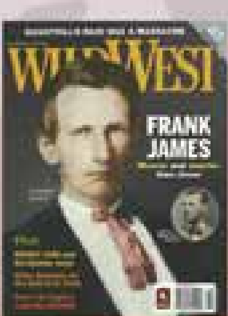


Best Western Poem
"Chamise"
Amy Glynn (*Orion*)

Best Western Song
"Still There"
Waddie Mitchell and Juni Fisher (Red Geetar Music)



Best Western Documentary Script
Indian Relay
M.L. Smoker (Dye Works Film)



Best Western Short Nonfiction
"The Other James Brother"
Mark Lee Gardner (*Wild West*)

No award given for Best Western Drama Script

The Trailblazer:
The World of Beryl Harrell

By Deke Dickerson

In today's music world, it is considered "cool" when a female rocks out with her male counterparts. Although men still far outnumber women in the field of guitar, nowadays women are encouraged to play music, and a long list of successful female musicians act as inspiration for aspiring players.

It wasn't always the case. Barely two generations ago, a woman who set out to play a musical instrument as a profession had to give up everything in order to pursue her passion, and society looked down at these women. This is the story of a female steel guitarist named Beryl Harrell, a trailblazer in every sense of the word.

Beryl Harrell is not a household name by any stretch of the imagination, yet her story is important. Here was a female steel guitarist who took lessons from none other than Sol Ho'opi'i, appeared in the 1936 Rickenbacker catalog (in a legendary photo known to all guitar geeks), played with the top Western groups in Los Angeles, turned down multiple offers from Merle Travis to join his band, recorded at Les Paul's Hollywood studio and road-tested new gear for Paul Bigsby. Were it not for the tireless efforts of her son, Don Triolo, to keep his mother's name alive, chances are very good Harrell's story would have slipped through the cracks of time. Thankfully, the photos, recordings, and stories emerge that cement Beryl's rightful place in history.

photos courtesy Don Triolo (Beryl's son)

Beryl Harrell, "The Hawaiin Cowgirl" wearing a shirt by Nudie's Rodeo Taylors.

Beryl Harrell was born September 23, 1918, in Vancouver, Washington, but her parents Cleo and Leona Harrell would soon move to a city that promised a pot of gold – Los Angeles, California. A younger brother, Christopher, was born

in 1922, but died of rubella (German measles) at a young age.

Following the move to Los Angeles and her brother's death, Harrell was pushed into show business by her "stage mother," Leona. She did not have happy memories of her childhood and may have taken music lessons as a way to please her mother (shades of today's "Tiger Mom"). Despite this, Harrell took immediately to the steel guitar.

Hawaiian music enjoyed huge popularity in America between World War I and World War II. It's difficult to imagine in today's world of endless entertainment options, but Hawaiian music lessons were sold door-to-door (along with the requisite guitars, naturally). Scores of children and adults across the nation learned how to play the Hawaiian, aka "steel" guitar during this era.

Most, if not all, of the legendary steel guitarists got their start with these Hawaiian music lessons. What is interesting about the 1930s steel guitar phenomenon is how many young girls and women learned to play the instrument during this time. Perhaps it was the allure of the "hula girl" mystique, but Beryl Harrell was one of thousands of women across the nation who learned how to play the steel guitar during this period. Her teacher, however, was not your average steel guitarist.

Sol Ho'opi'i is generally acknowledged to be one of the greatest lap steel guitarists in history. A native Hawaiian, Ho'opi'i stowed away to the mainland in 1915. (As legend has it, when he and his two teenage friends were discovered aboard the ocean liner Matsonia, Ho'opi'i's group performed their Hawaiian music and so enthralled the passengers that a collection was taken to pay for the stowaways' fares to San Francisco.)

By the early 1930s, after relocating to Los Angeles, Ho'opi'i had established himself as one of the top Hawaiian entertainers in the country, and recorded groundbreaking, landmark steel guitar discs for Decca and Brunswick Records. He was present at the beginning of the instrument's electrification, playing one of the first electric lap steels made by George Beauchamp and John Dopyera at a fund-raising party for the National company (soon to be splintered off into National, Dobro and Ro-Pat-In/Electro/Rickenbacker) hosted by millionaire Ted Kleinmeyer.

Ho'opi'i also taught lessons at Nainoa's Museum Center on South Broadway in Los Angeles. For the princely sum of 25 cents per lesson, young Harrell learned how to play steel guitar from one of the masters of the instrument.

Pushed by her mother, Harrell soon joined a group called the Sweethearts of the Air, an all-girl band specializing in Hawaiian music. Harrell was something of a prodigy, and as a result (probably through Sol Ho'opi'i's influence, since he also endorsed

Rickenbacker at the time), the group was pictured in the 1936 Electro String (Rickenbacker catalog as Rickenbacker endorsees.)

What makes the 1936 photo of the Sweethearts of the Air historically important is that the rhythm guitarist in the group, "Boots" is shown playing the Spanish (round neck) version of the Rickenbacker Bakelite electric guitar. This is the first known photo of anybody playing a solidbody electric guitar held in the Spanish (standard) way. Between 19-year old Harrell playing her Bakelite lap steel and Boots playing the Bakelite Spanish guitar, the Sweethearts of the Air were electric guitar pioneers.

The Sweethearts turned out to be a short-lived group. Boots and the ukulele player, Maxine, were a lesbian couple who had an angry, violent relationship. Eventually Maxine killed Boots in a jealous rage over another woman. This sort of thing was a huge shock for young Harrell, fresh out of her family home and not prepared for the showbusiness life that lay before her.

Following Boots' murder, Harrell joined another all-female aggregation called the Hula Bluettes. The Bluettes had two different lineups, the first of which featured two Hawaiian girls: Joyce Kalehua on ukulele and Ula Jewel Nainoa on guitar (Nainoa was the daughter of the man who ran Nainoa's Music Studio, where Harrell took lessons from Sol Ho'opi'i). This lineup of the group took one fantastic promo picture, dressed in Hawaiian garb and playing Volu-Tone equipment.

The second lineup of the Hula Bluettes. Harrell is seated with her Rickenbacker Bakelite steel guitar.

Harrell (middle) with the Hula Bluettes and their new Volu-Tone instruments.

Volu-Tone was yet another Los Angeles electric guitar innovator. Their instruments sounded great, but had an interesting feature that accounts for why Volu-Tone is not a household name today. Instead of having a permanent magnet on their pickups, the amplifier had two different jacks to plug into the output jack for playing music, and the "charge" jack to magnetize the strings before playing. The instructions on the back of the Volu-Tone amp warned not to leave the guitar

plugged into the charge jack for more than one second. Several hundred volts of current were sent through the strings for your gig, but also enough to electrocute you, should you accidently touch the strings while charging. Somewhere out there, a newspaper headline must exist: "Musician killed by electric guitar." As a bonus, every Volu-Tone amplifier this author has ever seen has a handwritten "DANGER" over the charge jack, undoubtedly written in by the players after an unfortunate incident. Despite this, Harrell played a Volu-Tone lap steel and Nainoa played a Gibson archtop retrofitted with one of the Volu-Tone electric pickups.

The Hula Bluettes on the road. Note the club didn't even bother with the group's name, they were merely "All Girl Entertainment"

The Hula Bluettes continued with a second lineup, featuring Sunny Vogels on guitar and Irene Lunning on ukulele. The group played a stint on Catalina Island at the Keyhole Club (the front door was shaped like a keyhole, naturally) and toured up and down the West Coast.

A photo of the Hula Bluettes on the road serves as a reminder of the challenges that Harrell and other female musicians endured during this time. The group poses in front of a place called the Stone House, advertising dancing as well as Chinese and Italian dinners. A hand-lettered banner of "All Girl Orchestra Entertainment" hangs below it. The women stand proudly in front of the sign, despite the fact that the place couldn't be bothered to list their band name, merely their gender.

When the Hula Bluettes disbanded, Harrell joined another all-woman band called Eva Harpster and her Four Co-Eds Orchestra. This group was a quartet that specialized in playing many different instruments, including piano, solovox, drums, vibes, saxophone, clarinet and steel guitar. One of their promotional photos extolled their record-breaking 26-week run in the Silver Room of the Glendale Hotel in Glendale, California.

Harrell was a gifted talented on the steel guitar. She was also a knockout. Those who see photos of her inevitably remark on her intense, auburn-haired beauty. Often she would receive backhanded compliments from people who remarked that she was able to be on stage due to her sex appeal. The recordings that exist prove that Harrell was a major talent on the steel guitar, but one thing was for certain – men went absolutely crazy for her.

During the Four Co-Eds era, Harrell met a fighter plane mechanic named Carl Triolo. The two married and soon after had a son, Don Triolo, in 1944. The marriage was not a happy one, and Triolo left Harrell when Don was only three months old. By 1947, they were legally divorced. Harrell faced an uphill battle, raising a youngster while playing music professionally. It was one of the many challenges that female musicians, especially in an era when most women were stay-at-home wives, had to face. Single mothers had it even tougher.

Eve Harpster and Her Four Co-Eds Orchestra.
(Beryl Harrell, top left. Circa 1944-1945

After World War II ended, country music was king, especially in California. Bob Wills' brand of Western swing was all the rage, and many Hawaiian steel guitarists such as Harrell went into the Western music field to find employment.

Post-war Los Angeles was a crazy place, booming with industry and population growth. Scattered throughout the city were dozens, if not hundreds, of dance halls and ballrooms. If you're a country music fan, you're probably aware of such legendary places as the Palomino Club in North Hollywood or Bonnie Price's Foothill Club in Signal Hill. Another such place was Al Royer's Red Barn in Lawndale, at the corner of Hawthorne and Redondo Beach Boulevard.

Harrell began working at the Red Barn in 1948 with a group called the Saddle Dusters, led by Dusty Ellison. In addition to performing seven days a week at the club, the band also performed live over KXLA radio in Pasadena.

It was with the Saddle Dusters that Harrell first made a recording. The 78 rpm disc of "I Can't Find the Keyhole" b/w "Goofus" (London) features Harrell prominently on both the vocal A-side (with Dusty Ellison singing) and the instrumental B-side. Her playing is confident and exciting. As one might expect, you can hear the strong Hawaiian influence in her phrasing and vibrato.

After the Saddle Dusters completed their Red Barn residency, Harrell stayed on to play with several other acts that did stints at the club. Carl Cody and his Southerners were one of those groups, and Harrell wound up marrying the drummer from Cody's band, Roy Ball, in 1949. They were together until 1961, the longest relationship she would ever have.

Another group that Harrell worked with was Porky's Freeman's Trio, at a club called the Four Aces in downtown Los Angeles. Porky Freeman is another of those names that pop over and over again in the history of California country music and electric guitar. His 1943 recording of "Boogie Woogie on the Strings" is

Harrell (left) performing in the late '40s with Porky Freeman's Trio at the Four Aces Club in Los Angeles.

considered by many to be the first instrumental guitar boogie (predating Arthur Smith's "Guitar Boogie" by two years) and also the first electric guitar record to bridge the gap between country and blues, an evolutionary first step toward rock 'n' roll music. Merle Travis, upon reaching California in the mid-1940s, played with Porky Freeman's band for a time and made some of his first recordings with Freeman's Trio.

Freeman was a guitar tinkerer with ties to Les Paul and Leo Fender, the latter of whom Freeman held several patents with. The oft-discussed but rarely seen 4-pickup Fender Marauder was guitar based on Porky Freeman's pickup design. In the height of Freeman's career, Harrell was there, playing her steel guitar at his side.

Harrell also played barn dances with Eddie Cletro's band, a popular Western swing band in Los Angeles sponsored by Bert "Foreman" Phillips, a disc jockey and country music show promoter with huge influence in the area. Phillips promoted shows by Spade Cooley at the Venice Pier and made "millions," according to a *Variety* write-up from the era. Phillips is also credited with coming up with the term "Western swing" to describe Spade Cooley's big band sound.

Eddie Cletro was one of Leo Fender's original endorsers, and Cletro had a very early prototype-era Stratocaster given to him by Leo. He made a dozen excellent records, including the incredible Project Blue Book-era "Flyer Saucer Boogie."

Harrell also appeared on the two main Los Angeles-based country music television shows, *Cliffie Stone's Hometown Jamboree* (Stone called Harrell "the Hawaiian Cowgirl") *and The Town Hall Party* show. An interesting point to make concerning *Town Hall Party* is that another female steel guitarist, the great Marian Hall, was also a regular.

Throughout all these gigs, Harrell continued to make 78 rpm acetate disc demo recordings. Thankfully, several of these discs survive, so we can hear Harrell's playing. Most interesting of these demo acetates is a version of "Caravan" recorded at Les Paul's garage studio in Hollywood. The recording is an interesting mix of styles, with a jazzy pianist and acoustic bassist backing up Harrell and her steel guitar.

Beryl with Eddie Cletro's Round Up Boys
(Eddie is far left, Foreman Phillips far right)

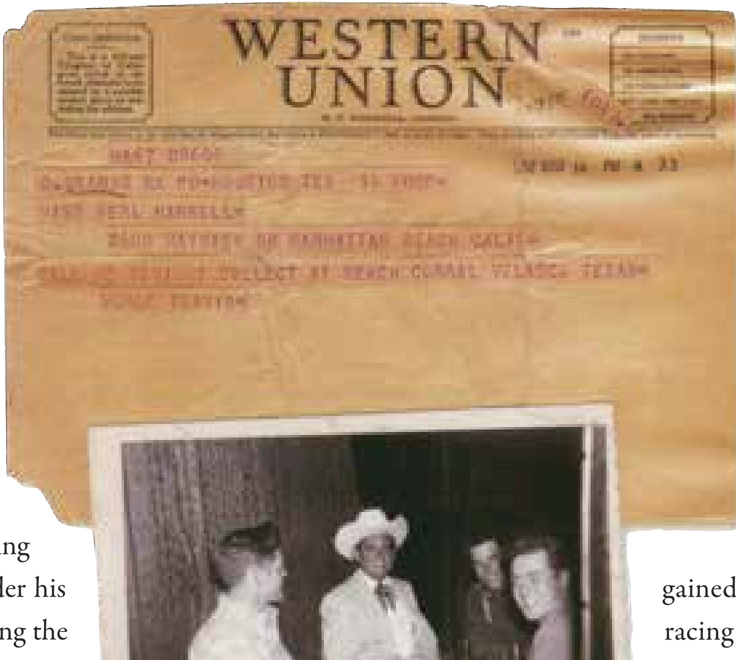
Les Paul lived in California for approximately 10 years, from the early 1940s until the early 1950s. During that time, his experiments with both the electric guitar and sound recording resulted in advancements that would change the world of music. Those ground-breaking experiments were conducted out of a small garage studio on Curson Avenue in Hollywood.

A single, fragile acetate disc with a label stating "Property of Les Paul" is all that exists to prove that Harrell brought her steel guitar into the same small room where Les Paul made his first multiple guitar recordings and the magical pop hits with Mary Ford. It is a guitar geek's dream to look at Harrell's acetate of "Caravan" and realize that the disc was cut on the recordings lathe that Les Paul so famously created using a Cadillac's flywheel.

And Harrell's playing on "Caravan" is confident and professional. The Hawaiian influence continues with her distinct vibrato technique and phrasing. She trades off with a very "uptown" – sounding piano player and acoustic bassist, perhaps from Paul's group.

Yet another legendary and highly influential guitarist crossed paths with Harrell around this same time. Merle Travis moved to Los Angeles in 1944, and by the early 1950s was a huge recording star with several hits under his belt (in addition to writing the mega-hit "Sixteen Tons" for Tennessee Ernie Ford). Like Les Paul, Travis was fascinated with the electric guitar.

Travis played steel, as well as the standard, guitar and wanted a Spanish electric instrument that held the same tone and sustain as his solidbody lap steel. He approached his motorcycle buddy and fellow steel guitar enthusiast Paul Bigsby about building a solidbody electric guitar with many of the same features found on a steel guitar, such as aluminum nut and bridge, and a neck-through construction. The result was the remarkable 1948 Bigsby electric solidbody guitar, which can honestly claim the title of the first modern electric solidbody guitar. Although earlier examples such as the 1936 Rickenbacker Bakelite Spanish guitar and the 1938 Slingerland Songster (and Les Paul's 1941 Epiphone "Log," for that matter were produced earlier, Bigsby's 1948 creation is the instrument that emerged fully formed, setting the stage for everything that came later. The Bigsby electric guitar still looks modern today.


WESTERN UNION

A 1952 Western Union Telegram from Merle Travis, another effort by the bandleader to get Harrell performing on the road with him.

Travis also worked with Bigsby to improve the Kauffmann Vibrola vibrato unit that he was using on his Gibson archtop. Eventually Bigsby realized the Kauffmann unit was inherently flawed, so he used aluminum casting experience he'd gained from his motorcycle racing mechanic days to create the Bigsby vibrato: a solid, reliable unit that is still very popular today, 60 years after its invention.

During this intense period of creative growth in Travis' career, he played with Harrell several times. Travis had an eye for talent, and he also had a talent for becoming romantically involved with the female members of his group. He tried several times to get Harrell to join his band.

A Western Union telegram survives from March 1952, urging her to call Travis collect at the Beach Club in Velasco, Texas. Each time Travis contacted her with an offer, Harrell countered that she would tour only if he would also take her husband, Roy Ball, along as the drummer. Travis declined.

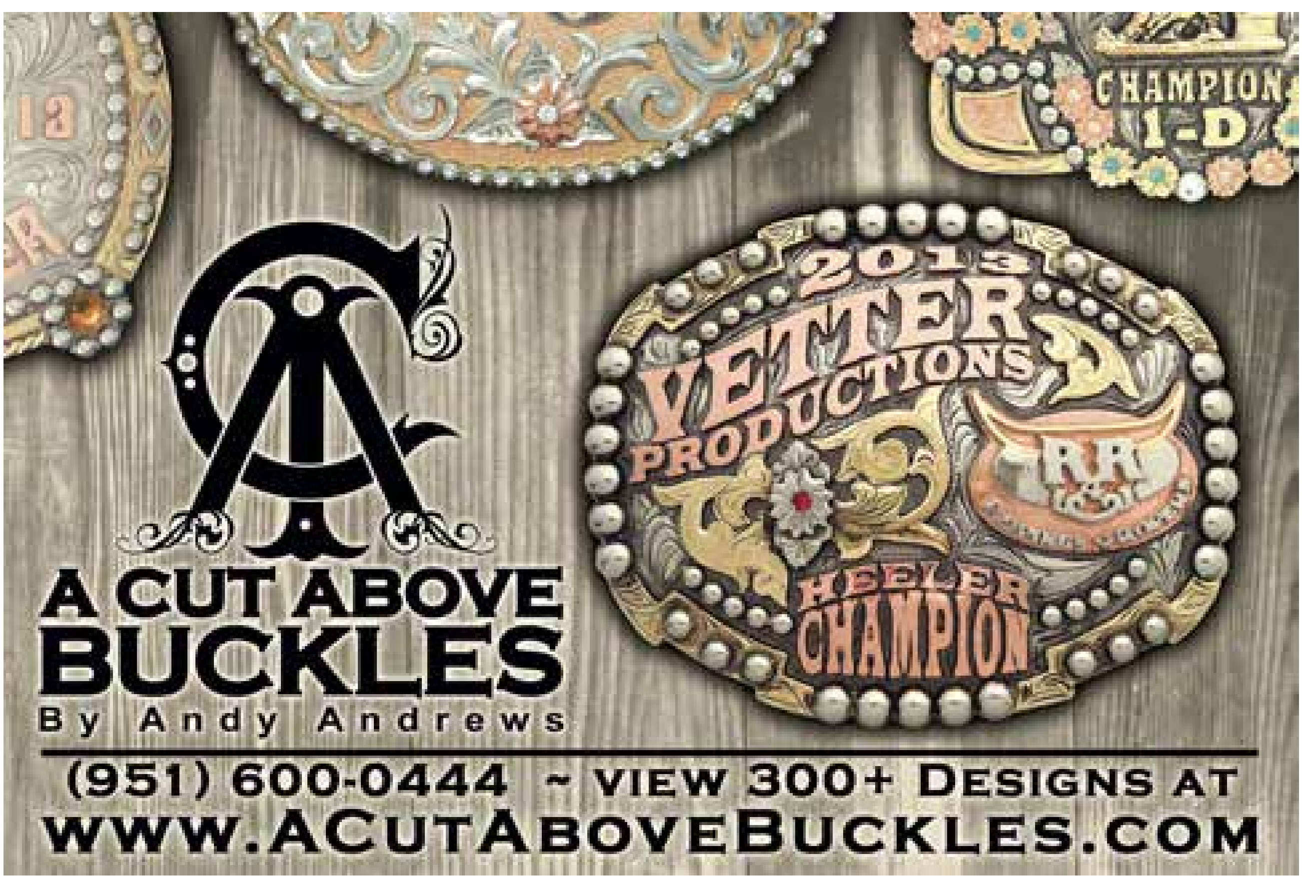
Perhaps through Merle Travis, Harrell also crossed

paths with Paul Bigsby. Even though Harrell was a Rickenbacker endorser (eventually graduating from a single-neck lap steel to a double-neck Rickenbacker steel around 1950), Bigsby convinced her to road test his new volume-tone pedal. Developed around the Epiphone Rocco pedal of the '30s, Bigsby's pedal had an up-and-down motion for volume and a side-by-side motion for tone. Unlike the Rocco pedal, which only had three clicks for tone, Bigsby's pedal had a variable tone pot, which allowed for a distinctive "doo-wah" effect. Photos of Harrell playing at Al Royer's Red Barn show her using the Bigsby volume-tone pedal.

When this author interviewed steel guitar hall of famer Speedy West, he also remembered using Bigsby's volume-tone pedal. Apparently, Bigsby was having difficulty with the potentiometers wearing out, so he invited the electronic salesman who supplied the pots to a show at *Cliffie Stone's Hometown Jamboree*. After seeing Speedy West using the pedal throughout the show, the salesman left in a huff, telling Bigsby, "That feller just put 30 years of wear on those pots in just one night!" Bigsby refined the design and found pots that would withstand the abuse; his pedals are still in use today.

Los Angeles in the 1940s and 1950s was a magical place where Harrell led a somewhat magical existence, rubbing shoulders with legendary innovators of the guitar and steel guitar. Eventually, where magic is concerned, commerce will always rear its ugly head, and such was the case with Harrell and her husband, Roy.

The William Morris Agency contacted the duo and offered them a one-year stint in Anchorage, Alaska. The



offer was $400 a week for her, as a bandleader, and $300 a week for her husband, as a sideman. The money was too good to turn down, so Harrell took the job.

It was an unhappy time for Harrell. Her son, Don, had to be left behind with his grandparents in Los Angeles, and Harrell was homesick for him and for California. To make things worse, after accepting the job in Alaska, Harrell received a dream offer she had to turn down: performing with Harry Owens and His Royal Hawaiians at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in Honolulu. Hilo Hattie, singer for the group, had seen Harrell play and wanted her for Owens' band. Unfortunately, the offer didn't include husband Roy, so Harrell went to the frozen Alaska Territory instead.

Las Vegas, rolling in the expendable income from Southern Californians in the post-war boom, became the live entertainment capital of the United States during the 1950s. Harrell and Roy were offered a job there in June 1954, with Polly Possum and her husband, "Sunny" Joe Wolverton.

If Wolverton's name sounds familiar, that's because of his early affiliation with Les Paul, when they worked as a duo in the 1930s. After Wolverton and Paul split up, Wolverton married Polly Jones, aka Polly Possum. The pair made recordings for Columbia Records, and by the mid-1950s, Sunny Joe and Polly were working at both the Golden Nugget in Las Vegas and the Riverside Hotel in Reno with his wife.

Harrell was reunited with her son when they relocated to Las Vegas. Upon driving their non-air conditioned car into Las Vegas, young Don remarked, "Mom, are we in hell?"

It might have been hell, but Harrell continued playing in Las Vegas, where work was plentiful. After leaving the Polly Possum show, she and Roy worked at the El Cortez Hotel lounge with a group called the Honey-B's, another female-led group. Clair Smith and Betty Jay Holland were the other women in the Honey-B's; Don Triolo remembers that Betty Jay was the most hard-partying woman he had ever seen, keeping up the men with her drinking and carousing.

Around this time, Harrell changed from her Rickenbacker steel to a Fender quad-neck Stringmaster. She bought the Fender setup, including Fender volume-tone pedal and tweed Fender amp, from Eddie Bush, another legendary Hawaiian-style

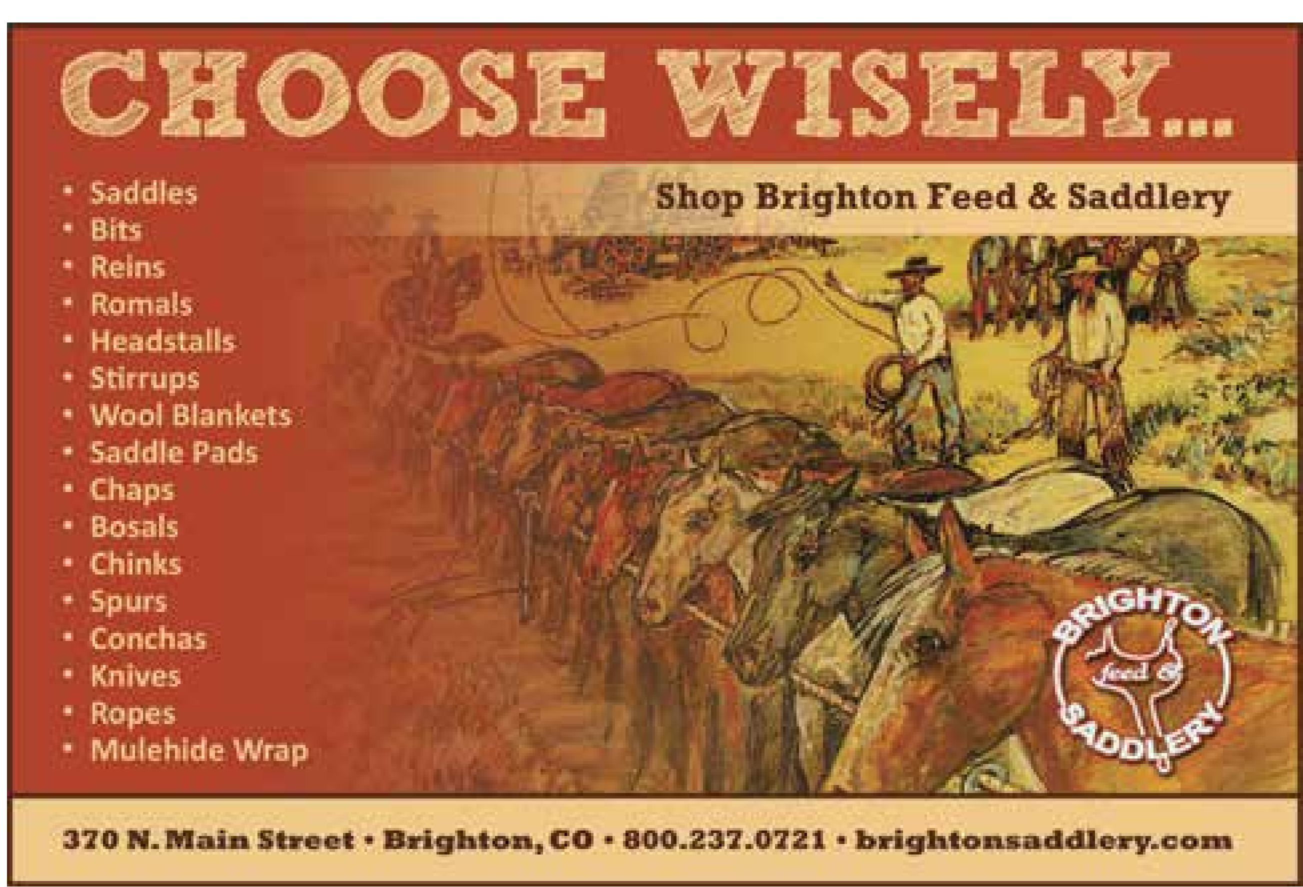
steel guitarist based in Los Angeles.

Harrell and Roy Ball divorced in 1961, an amicable parting by all accounts. Soon afterward, her mother came back into the picture and resumed her controlling ways. Harrell began to talk about being too old to be onstage performing every night and, right around 1962 or 1963 (the same time Don graduated from high school), she quit show business and sold her steel guitar.

Harrell stayed in Las Vegas, working as a PBX operator at the Desert Inn hotel. After quitting music, her life never seemed to give the happiness and contentment she desired, and she suffered from depression. Her first husband, Carl Triolo, came back into Harrell and her son's lives again, but abandoned them a second time a year later. When Carl left, things worsened.

Harrell's once-glamorous life had a tragic end. In 1977, when she knew her son was going to be out of town for the weekend, she wrote a long letter to him explaining why she didn't want to live anymore and mailed it to him on a Friday. When Don returned and got the letter in the mail the next week, his mother had already taken her own life. In the letter, Harrell told her son that she wanted him to know that the two things in life that had brought her the most happiness were music and her son.

Music may have brought Harrell happiness, but it also brought her torment. Sometimes a gift can be a blessing or a curse. In her case, being a mother and professional musician in the lost decades after Women's Suffrage but before Women's Lib was both a blessing and a curse.



Creating A Coherent Self

A Conversation with William Matthews

Artist, musician, graphic designer, clear thinker, wanderer and former SF hippie-type would all be apt ribbons of grand competency one could pin on William Matthews. He would be politely pleased, but would mostly allow the artist ribbon to linger the longest. In the western genre of painting and its broadly dispersed fan and collector base, few would not be aware of his sought after work and style. A style heavily influenced by his early life exposure to the work of artists such as John Singer Sargent, Andrew Wyeth and Winslow Homer, among others. His mother the portrait artist Joan Matthews encouraged this exposure, supported by his grandfather, also an artist and passionate world traveler. "I was always encouraged to get out and experience what was out there, so I did," Matthews says, "It's how I'm made."

Many, many stories and pictorials have appeared about Matthews and certainly about his work regarding the American West and other subjects he has painted – from still life work and studies, to grain silos, to fishing and images from his world travels – have been broadly depicted. So when Willy and I sat down to chat, the subject of his most recent trip back to Ireland seemed the perfect subject for us to cover – among other things, as you will see. Over the years, Matthews has travelled and lived in a variety places but he considers his time in Ireland like going home.

photo by Brad Bartholomew

William Matthews in the 1970s

R&R: When and why did you first travel to Ireland?

WM: In the late 70s, I lived in Ireland for almost 3 years as I had moved there to learn to play the Uilleann Pipes. I had been listening to Finbar Furey and Planxty for years and that led me to Ireland to learn more of this wonderfully mysterious instrument. After I arrived, it didn't take long to figure out – especially in 1977 – that the best music was in Dublin. I found everything went on at this great club, The Meeting Place. All the guys whose records I had been listening to for years were there every night! Eventually I got to know all of them, particularly

Kevin Burke, who was the great fiddle player with the Bothy Band. One day he asked me to help him unload the record collection he was bringing into the Mulligan Record House. I told him I was glad to help and as I picked up a stack of albums – I see the Dan Hicks and the Hot Licks album, *Where's the Money* and I told him, "Oh, I did that cover." And he said, "Really?" I nod and as we're picking up more records here's Dicky Betts' album, *Highway Call* with Vassar Clements on it, the great Florida fiddle player, and I point at it, "Did that as well." Again he says, "Really?" So this happened several times, and eventually he said, "You know I am doing an album, why don't you do the cover?" And I go, "Love to." And that was sorta the beginning of my getting into doing album covers in Ireland. (Matthews' first cover design was for Leo Kotke's 1970 album, *Greenhouse*. He was 19.)

R&R: How long had you been in Dublin?

WM: Not long really. And at that point I was just kind of making contact with the city and getting to know who the players were. I was going down to the Piper's Club – Na Piobari Uilleann, the Society of Uilleann Pipers, founded in 1968 – every Thursday night. I found out that they had space in the building that it was only being used one night a week, so I asked them if they would mind if I used the upstairs for a studio. They told me, "We would love that, we would love to have someone here." So for the next two and half years, the second and the third floors of that building, right on Essex Street across from what is now the Project Art Centre became my studio. It was just what I needed.

R&R: And this was 1978?

WM: 1977. And in fact it was the area now called Temple Bar – for anybody who knows Dublin. It's now a very hip and happening spot. At the time it was completely void of anything, just an auto parts shop and a fishing store as I recall. I used to walk down O'Connell Street to Bewley's for breakfast every morning from the studio – an eight-block walk, and now you couldn't walk down there without running into a thousand people, but at the time literally there was no one around. In the late 70s lots of buildings were empty in Dublin particularly in that area. But for me, it was perfect. I got to know all the pipers in Ireland, including the legendary Seamus Ennis.

The mystical Uilleann Pipes

R&R: This doesn't just sound like a trip to learn an instrument, you became part of the place and its culture, yes?

WM: Yes, I had been living in Europe for the previous

two and half years and I had just come from Spain where I lived for a year. I was living in England when Franco died in November of 1975, and in January of 1976 I moved to Spain. I took my motorcycle across the water with my painting portfolio and my open back, A.A. Farland 5-string banjo. I traveled round the country and watched it slowly wake up from Franco's rule.

R&R: How were you supporting yourself?
WM: I was busking, playing banjo and the street and painting. I did some paintings to trade for hotel bills, but I was mostly busking. In Spain, it worked, as nobody had ever heard five-string banjo. It gave me time to see the country and watch the transition. When I first got there, people were still plowing with animals. It was like the 19th century. Franco had really kept the country in a primitive state and not encouraged people

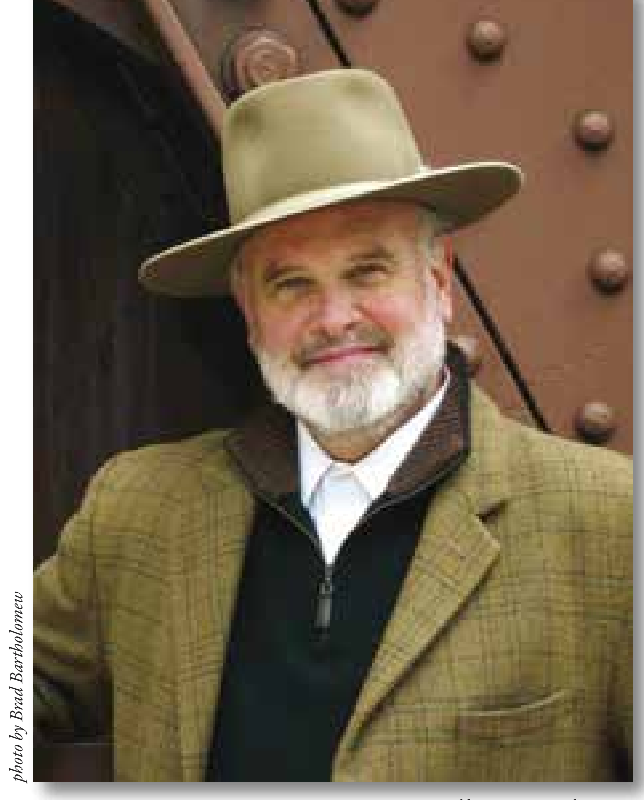


photo by Brad Bartholomew

Artist, musician, renaissance man – William Matthews

Matthew's view from the window of his rented cottage while in Ireland.

to join the 20th century. It was startling yet interesting to me as a painter.

R&R: Did you see an immediate change in the people's attitude or was it slow to evolve?
WM: I did, in a visual sense as I didn't speak Spanish and they didn't speak English. It was the middle of the winter and there were no tourists. To be fair, at the time, there was no one going there.

R&R: You weren't about to do it the easy way apparently.
WM: It's never been my nature to do things in a predictable way. But it's always been interesting!

The paintings shown are from works done during Matthews' recent Irish trip.

R&R: It seems perfect for you though. You seem to so easily move around geographically, immerse yourself and then have this imagery pour out. And no matter the subject, it seems you have a sense of place wherever you are at the moment.
WM: Yes, and I love translating what I see into art. I love the process. It's what feeds me, what pumps through my veins. For example, I just came back from rafting the Grand Canyon with my kids. It was great.

R&R: Really, did you have time to paint?
WM: I did. 22 paintings!

R&R: River rafting and watercolors must be an interesting logistics issue.
WM: Yes. (Laughing) I wasn't painting as I was rafting, but I was painting as soon as we stopped, every spare moment we had. It's astonishing to me that I got through the entire seven days of rafting and didn't have one catastrophe.

R&R: I don't see you wondering around with Ziplocks…
WM: Oh, I had all of that. Ziplocks and this cool expedition gear! It was all rubber and roll-able, as I had no idea what to expect. My intention was to preserve the paintings, no matter what. That's been my M.O. no matter where I go – even during those early European excursions.

R&R: What caused you to leave Ireland when you did
WM: I had lived in Ireland for really almost 3 years and had made some very close friends. But then, it was time. I hadn't been back to America in almost 5 years. Hadn't touched American soil, and hardly had a phone

conversation with anyone back here. I was estranged from my parents at the time, and was off living in a fairly separated way. Actually, I remember the day I decided to come back. I was out bicycling in County Kerry with my girlfriend at the time and we came around a corner and there was a huge herd of sheep and I heard in my ear as clear as a bell "Its time to go home now." That was it.

R&R: Really?
WM: This may sound a bit odd, but every now and then I hear voices in my head that have been just as clear as they can be.

R&R: Are they right?
WM: They seem to be right. I mean we all have intuitive qualities. Women are given a lot more credit for being intuitive. But men, I think, are as well. Maybe it's something artists in general pay more attention to. I know I find myself sensitive on many levels and I listen to those voices. That was one of the first times that I ever heard something as clearly as that.

R&R: Did you feel as though you were going to something, or was it just a chapter closing and time to turn the page.
WM: Yes. Exactly. A chapter was closing. I had no

idea what I was coming home to…
I had no plans.

R&R: Where did you go?
WM: I came back to Colorado where all my stuff was stored. Then back to San Francisco to see my family. It was very interesting, very much of a prodigal son returning home. My father and I had been estranged for years.

R&R: Not father and son? Not friends?
WM: No. I hadn't done what he expected, I had not gone to college, in fact, I had not even finished high school. He was appalled with all my decisions, even though they pretty much turned out to be good ones. I think ultimately in some way he was really proud and me. But he had never supported any of my decisions to go into the arts while they were happening.

R&R: Were they glad to see you when you came back?
WM: They were. I think they were relieved that I had survived…

R&R: Your father passed away in 1991?
WM: Yes. He was a big personality. He threw a big shadow. Which is probably why I had to leave when I did.

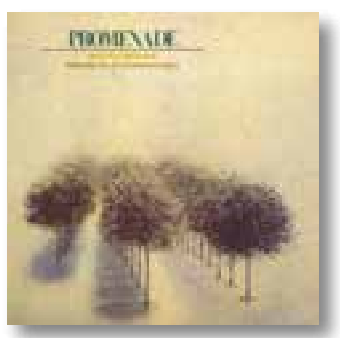
R&R: Where did you go first?
WM: I went to LA to do album covers. That was not far away enough. So I moved to Colorado and it turned out that THAT was not far enough. So I left the western hemisphere!

R&R: So what has this done for you as a father?
WM: My father never listened to what mattered to me. So what did that do for me as a father? Early on I would say to my kids on Saturday morning "Ok, what do you guys want to do? We are going to have an adventure today and you are going to decide what it is." Or I would ask them along the way "what do *you* think we should

do today?" So that they knew their opinion was always valuable and respected.

R&R: That was a conscious decision by you wasn't it?
WM: Completely. And I watched them become empowered. I watched it sink in for them. I watched them understand that they have power.

R&R: So back to Ireland. You were there for three years…
WM: During that time, I lived in Dublin, lived in a few different places, and eventually I took a house with fiddler Kevin Burke and guitarist Micheal O'Domhnaill. Kevin Burke lives in Portland today. Micheal O'Domhnaill – which is the Gaelic spelling – was a great Gaelic scholar, and he with Donal Lunny, started the Bothy Band. Micheal was one of the great Irish musical minds of all time, collected tons of songs from Donegal where his family was from. He grew up speaking Gaelic before he spoke English. He also lived in Portland. I had known the two of them in the Bothy Band. But they had, after the Bothy Band split up, gone off and done many albums that I did several covers for. They are all great albums to this day. (Willy created the cover for the duo's 1979 album, *Promenade*)



R&R: Ireland and her people are obviously special to you. Have you often gone back to visit?
WM: I go back fairly regularly. But I hadn't been back for a period of time, and it was my birthday and my wife Laura said, "What do you want to

do for your birthday?" I said, "I really want to go over and see my friends in Ireland, I really love the place." So she said, "Ok, here's a ticket, you are on your own."

R&R: Bless her.
WM: Exactly! The last thing in the world she needs to do is to go to Ireland and watch paint dry. So I flew into Dublin, rented a car and drove straight across the country through Castlebar and County Mayo and onto Achill Island. I found a little house online and it turned out that it was less expensive than a hotel room. So I had my own three-bedroom stone house and just moved in. I had the turf man show up about an hour after I got there, bringing me fuel to burn in my little fireplace. It was absolutely heaven! It had this incredible view of the ocean. It was an amazing time. Sheep grazing all around. And absolute quiet, nobody hassling me, the phone not ringing, nothing. I was able to just paint.

R&R: How long were you there this time?
WM: I was in that house for 5 days, solidly painting. And then I left, and went around to visit friends. Let's see, I visited with my friend, Matt Molloy from the Chieftains, and the Bothy Band – a great time. Saw Mick Hanly in Carlow. Then up to Dublin to see Donal Lunny and then Paddy Glackin, the great fiddle player, who is now retired. I saw a number of other guys who I hadn't seen in a long time, and it made me realize that I had deep roots in Ireland and that these were the guys I grew up with. We all lived together and traveled together for three years and barely made enough money to buy pints. Even after all this time, we have tight bonds with each other.

R&R: 40 years?
WM: Yes: Pretty close to 40 years! And I realize, those were essentially the active years of our lives, getting

WM: There is definitely a pastoral quality, but are you speaking in a broader sense, linking my paintings of Ireland with my paintings of the American West?

R&R: Yes, no matter the subject, you are able to get to the essence of what you are painting, and there is a light that comes out of it. You leave things out that are not important to the scene you are depicting.

WM: That's right, I am definitely interested in editing and simplifying. I received an email recently from a friend of mine, David Mulford, who used to be the American Ambassador to India. I did a show for him during his tenure in New Delhi, years ago when President Bush was to visit. It was a combination, basically a comparative show, between the buckeroos of the Great Basin and the rural farmers and herdsman in Rajasthan, India. The buckeroos rode horses and the Indians rode donkeys and camels, and where the buckeroos wore great silk neck rags, the herdsman wore colorful turbans. There is an elegance to the Rajasthanian herdsmen that is just as regal to me as the buckeroos of the Great Basin. So there is a lot of synchronicity between cultures. It's one of the

married, and having kids, maybe a divorce, maybe a death – all these things have happened. Many of our friends are gone, particularly in Ireland; people live harder there than they tend to live in other places, even though it appears to be such a pastoral place.

R&R: Do you think at some level that is reflected in your choice of subjects? The paintings you did there show that pastoral calmness. There is a simplification and calmness, and a consistency of the activity depicted.

things I find when I travel and hopefully a quality people see in my work. I love the diversity I find in the world, the different cultures. It all matters and, frankly, we all matter. I'm not somebody that has one over-arching focus in my work but I keep returning to that thread.

R&R: For all the traveling you have done, that thread is really the commonality of the human experience. And, not to mention, the fact that everywhere you go, there's a gorgeous sunset you can go out and walk into, or there's a pastoral field with stock that you can visually participate in. If music is a universal language, then paintings such as what you do, can also travel and help equate the human experience.

WM: Exactly. No matter where I go, I find, particularly with rural people, they are interested in their families' and their animals' well being – all getting a good meal and thriving, growing into the next generation. That's universal, whether its India, or Ireland, or Nevada. It's an instinctive way of living.

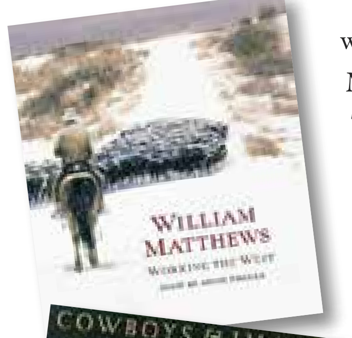
R&R: What's next for you?

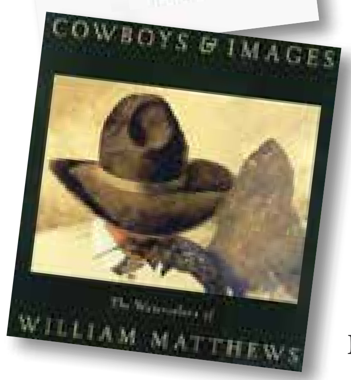
WM: I do what I do and I do what I can. I don't necessarily change. I like the idea that this time right now is a smooth patch of life's water and enjoying each adventure. I have the most amazing wife and we have so much fun together. We have great kids – whatever it is we do together turns out to be fun and just wonderful.

Talking Willy Matthews with Hans Teensma

In the rapidly changing world of graphic design there are names that stand out as influential masters. One of those few and far between types is Hans Teensma. Hans, like many of the folks who work on this publication, comes from way back in the PC era – meaning "pre-computer" – in a time of tissue layouts, roller waxers and rubilith. Teensma is a master typographer – one of a disappearing species who understands the innate elegance of type. Even if his name were not familiar, it would be hard to believe that readers of enthusiast magazines have not been touched by his work. He was an art director/

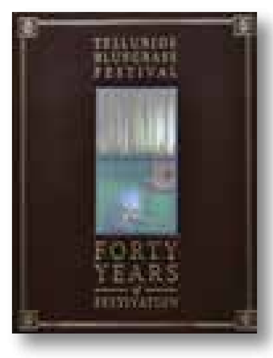
designer helping to create the look of *Outside* magazine and for the groundbreaking *Rocky Mountain Magazine* – a publication that greatly influenced the design of this journal. When he is not designing books – including both of William Matthews' books, *Cowboys & Images* and *Working The West,* he is the art director for the environ - mental journal, *Orion*.





"The Matthews/Teensma meeting came in 1981," he told me from his company Impress' offices in Massachusetts. "I guess it was around '81 when we met," he indicated, "or maybe just before that, but we had a common approach in design, especially for classical typography. We were both in Colorado and we ended up sharing an office together on Blake Street in Denver. It turned out to be a great idea as I had just been approached by the publishing house of Stewart, Tabori & Chang to do my first book, a 400 page look at the American Cowboy." (*Cowboy: The Enduring Myth of the Wild West* was written by Russell Martin, with Teensma's design and is considered a classic of the genre)

Teensma spent four years in Denver, loving every second of it. "I was sucking it all up. They called me the Dutch Cowboy as I emigrated from Holland to California at the age of nine. I had an affinity for everything cowboy, I just loved it. So with the book with Russell Martin – who at the time was writing for *Rocky Mountain Magazine* – we became fast friends. Willy was not involved in the cowboy book but he watched me put the whole thing together, with thumbnails covering the walls of our studio. Willy did, however, have the opportunity to meet many of the contributing photographers as they came through the office – John Running, Kurt Markus, Jay Dusard, and Bill Allard were just some who stopped by. For both of us, it was an amazing and fortuitous period. I watched him do the very first Bluegrass poster for the '83 Telluride Bluegrass Festival. I think it ran in '84. But the new book we just did on the Festival's history shows all 20 of his posters, it's just a delight." (The book, *Telluride Bluegrass Festival: Forty Years of Festivation*, is a glorious limited edition volume, published by Planet Bluegrass.)



"That project was wonderful," Teensma continued, "each page is a visual treat. Back then in that little second floor office, his painting was becoming amazing. You could see his fascination with the land, and the real people that worked on it. Willy sees the essence of what matters. He sees the beauty in things that are ordinary, a quality he shares with the Dutch masters. Being a Dutchman, I am a fan. Those paintings were the entertainment of the era. People would just sit and stare at the art and dream about what the artist had revealed to the viewer. One could get lost in it. Willy's work is like that, he gives us the truth and the beauty he sees."

A VISIT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN

Working Till It's Right

When I started giving clinics – over thirty years ago – I remember thinking how much I learned everyday, being with so many different people and their horses. From the beginning, I have to say, I enjoy giving folks and their horses a job that's difficult for them as I truly like watching them work at it until they figure it out. I've learned that if they don't get the job done, it's a bad idea to try to do it for them. Just like with horses, you have to let them make their own mistakes, and trust them to figure it out in their own time. It's a life lesson I learned early on as a youngster myself. It is a lesson that has helped me navigate my life to this day.

I remember I was in Helena, Montana a while back giving a speech for Child Services of the State of Montana. I was speaking to 400-500 social workers from all over the state of Montana, visiting with them about working with kids and taking care of kids that are at risk. I told them what I think is the right direction for kids to go – relating the rocky road I had growing up and how important it is for kids to have a job to do and to let them achieve their own success. I said, "I don't know why everybody is so afraid of hard work. And I don't know why people think that teaching a kid to work is abuse of some kind. As far as I'm concerned, not teaching a kid how to work and have some responsibilities is abuse." So many kids are so far behind when they're 18, 19 and 20 years old because they've never really worked a day in their lives.

Well, it's no different if you let a horse get some age on him and he's never had a purpose, never had a reason for being. It never fails, as he'll be the hardest one to work with later. I often tell people that if you have a horse that's been on welfare, and it's been on it for an extended period of time, and then you ask him to come off of welfare, he's going to resent you. He's going to resent being asked to go to work and have a purpose. Well, that's no different with human beings either.

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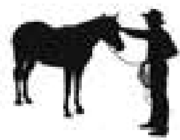


Creating a job out of another job.

My brother and I had lots of chores around the house when we were little, including milking a handful of cows every morning and night. We had a milking machine and that sounds like it would make the work easier, but it was a two-boy job carrying all that milk back to the house a tub at a time.

We had a little round Black Angus bull we used to breed a bunch of milk cows with. Sampson was his name and he liked to hang around us and got pretty friendly. What with all that milking I was around him a lot.

When my paint mare, Ladybird – the horse I did my rope tricks off of – became pregnant and I couldn't ride her, I looked around for something else. Long story short, I got Sampson broke to ride. I had a heck of a time keeping the saddle on him and Sampson kept rubbing the headstall off.

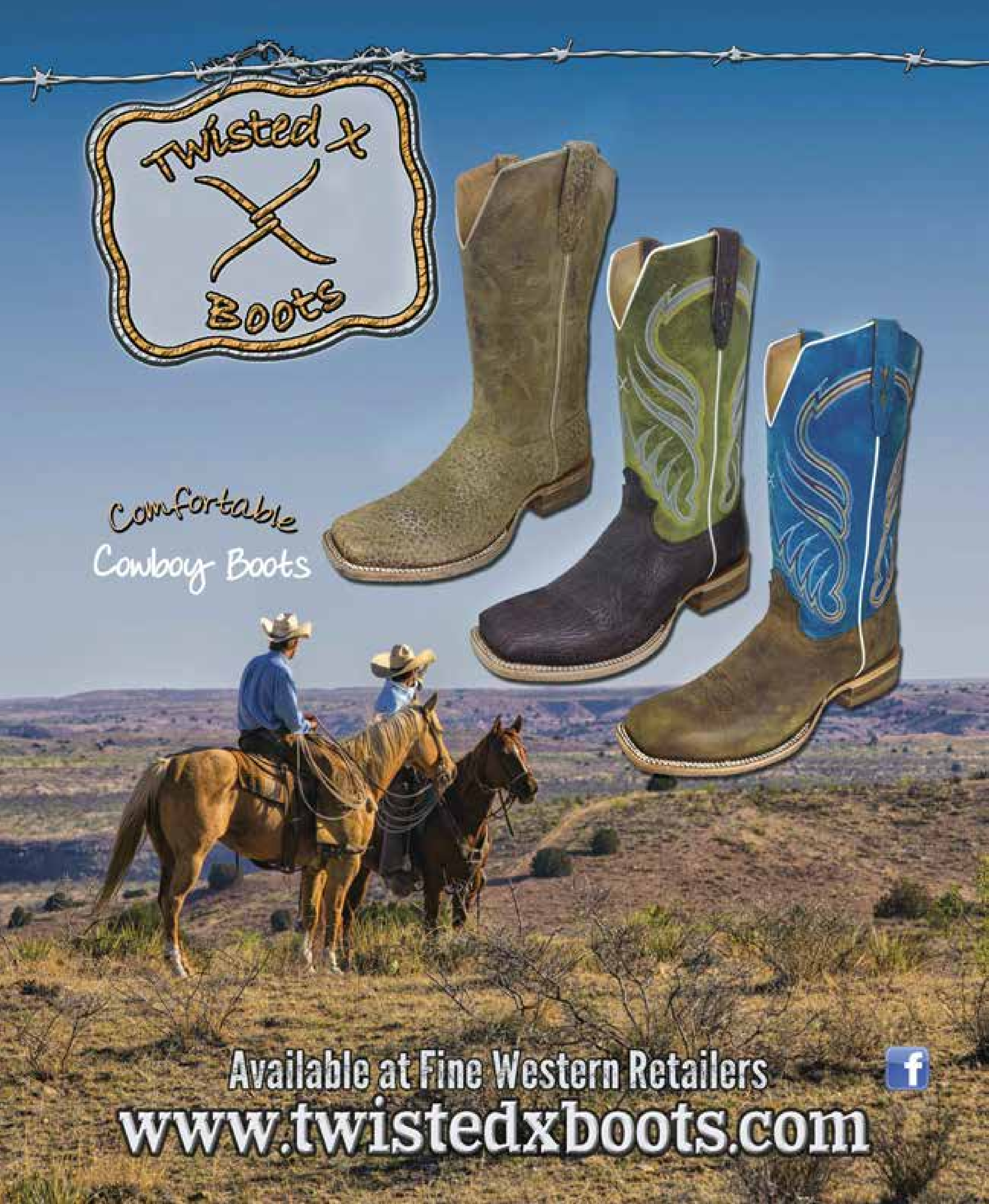
Still, everything worked out fine as it gave me a little job to do with *him*. I trained Sampson so he'd bow down to let me climb on and off, which became important as I was small in stature and Sampson kept growing! I'd take him up in the mountains, and even after Ladybird had her foal, I kept riding him.

Sampson and me in the Fall of 1969

photos courtesy Buck Brannaman

It was all going pretty well with Sampson and I kind of hate to tell you what happened to him. I'd been riding Sampson for nearly a year and a half when my dad butchered him. He didn't even warn me. It was as though he saw no need to talk with me about whether killing my pet was okay in my mind. It just happened. And what's more, he made my brother and me help.

Of course it affected me, but with my father – as I told those social workers in Helena, Montana so many years later – you knew better than to show you were upset. The whole deal was so wrong on so many levels; it still astounds me how he operated. Lots of things happen to little kids in their lives that shouldn't, but it does. Some things you just never forget. But for me, I found I realized the value of keeping at something till it was done right – like working with that little bull and giving him a job.



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THE HEN HOUSE

Melding

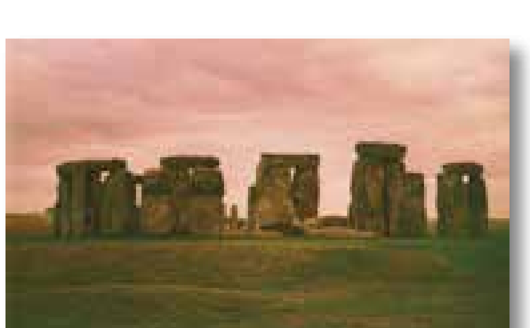
By Reata Brannaman, Nevada Watt, Ceily Rae Highberger and Hannah Ballantyne

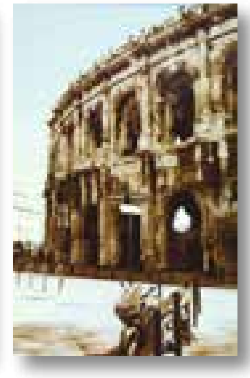
We live in an age of melding. Because the world's population is so connected by various social media, we find ourselves immersed in a melting pot of cultures, and this immersion can lead to several possible outcomes. Let us explain what we mean…

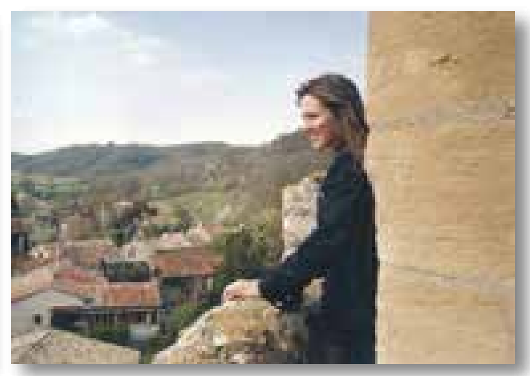
The first possible outcome is an overwhelming saturation of cultures leading to a loss of personal culture and tradition. Being in our twenties in the twenty-first century, we are constantly told to accept and tolerate new ideas. We do believe that this is a good mindset to have, but because the world is so connected we can often become too entranced with other cultures and neglect our own. Now please do not mistake our meaning, we are not saying that one must close themselves to the learning and acceptance of new cultures, but rather, we believe you must become confident in your own culture and your place inside in, so that passion can carry over to a newfound appreciation and interest in new cultures.

photos courtesy Nevada, Reata, Hannah and Ceily Rae

For instance when Nevada was working in Africa as an assistant manager at a hunting camp, she was surrounded with novel ideas and traditions which proved to be enlightening, but she kept her western lifestyle close to her heart and that gave her a strong foundation from which to explore her temporary home with an open mind. We gals have been raised by parents that are in tune with the world beyond the one they live in,



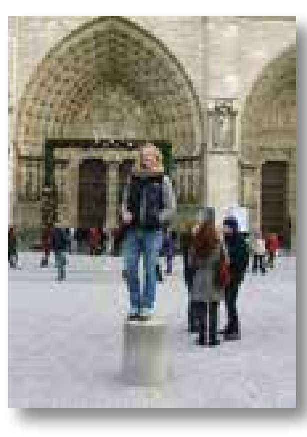




and they have passed on to us the desire for adventure and discovery. They have helped us push past social barriers in order to broaden our horizons but we do not forget they were also the ones who chose to raise us in a cowboy culture. And what appreciation we have for that choice.

Another outcome that can be the result of this melting pot we speak of, is the wearing of blinders. Because the world is so saturated by other cultures one may be tempted to don blinders, scared of how they may be challenged by the exposure to people who do things in a different way. Perhaps such a reaction is caused by self-preservation – it often seems easier to shut down when faced with the unfamiliar. However, this blatant choice of ignorance could lead to the demise of our own culture. Each individual must be strong enough to not only carry own their own traditions but also allow the world's cultures to impact their ideas and behaviors. You have probably heard *adapt or die* and in this specific case we do believe this is true. This does not mean every new idea and culture must be let in, but we can all learn and choose those most interesting and valuable. Just because something is different does not mean its wrong.

To sum this up – never stop exploring, stop challenging yourself or stop learning of new cultures but also never subdue or belittle your own personal culture on the quest to broaden your horizons. Rather, enjoy confidence in your heritage, which will bring the confidence to learn.



Outstanding.

All Standing, Shumway Ranch, Juntura, Oregon. Joan, Anna Rose, Gabriel, Claire, Luke and Martin (standing on the horn)
Photograph by Madeleine Graham Blake

www.ranchandreata.com

Cowboy Kids

New Mexico photographer Gene Peach reflects on his mission to tell the story of the cowboy culture's youngest generation.

BULLGALS

Teenage bull riders Stacey Taul, 17, and Bonnie Gore, 15, celebrate their cowgirl camaraderie. Both competed in barrel racing and roping events before riding bulls for the challenge and excitement, and as a way to meet boys.

TRUMAN
Navajo rodeo cowboy Truman Begay, 5, leaps from his running horse during a goat-tagging competition at an Indian Junior Rodeo Association event at Window Rock, Arizona.

My photos of cowboy kids were shot between 1997 and 2004, for my book project *Making a Hand: Growing Up Cowboy in New Mexico,* published by the Museum of New Mexico Press in 2005. The children I photographed are now grown, many are married, and some are parents of young cowboy kids already in the saddle. All remain involved in some way with the cowboy way of life. Some are ranchers, and several are professional rodeo athletes with world-class reputations.

Like many outsiders, I once thought the cowboy a worn-out relic of the past. We've heard about the dying cowboy for so long, I naturally assumed they must all be dead and gone. After all, the only "cowboys" I'd ever encountered were of the barstool variety. But when I began meeting New Mexico's working ranch families, it became clear the American cowboy is alive and well and here to stay.

I found nothing second-rate about the new generation of cowboy kids I photographed. Like their parents and grandparents before them, most were accomplished horsemen by the age of seven or eight, and already contributing members of the family workforce. I couldn't help noticing that their lives revolved around work – meaningful work – and that their skills defined

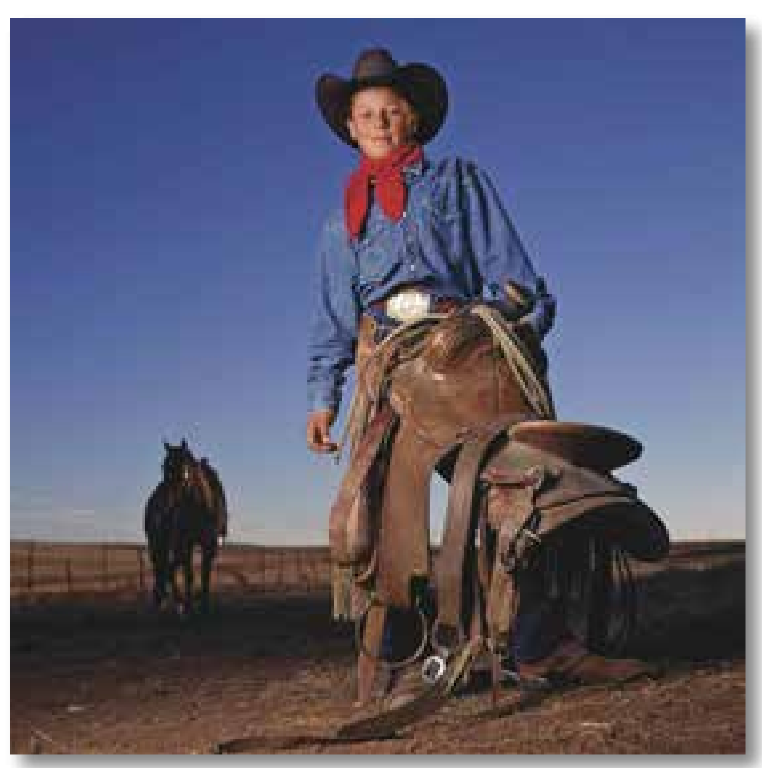
CODY BITSIE
Navajo cowboy Cody Bitsie, 13, trains his new horse, Pinto, at his home near Tohatchi, New Mexico. Cody began riding horses when he was four years old and quickly developed into an accomplished rodeo athlete, excelling in both timed and rough-stock events. On March 18, 2001, Cody was injured while competing in a high school rodeo in Farmington, New Mexico. He died on April 21, 2001, at the age of 15.

their identities. Making a hand was every kid's goal. Animals were partners, not pets, and everyday activities kept these kids outdoors and involved in a timeless, natural world. Unlike most young people I saw in cities and towns, cowboy kids seemed connected to something real. They demonstrated a confidence and courage, even a dignity, beyond their years.

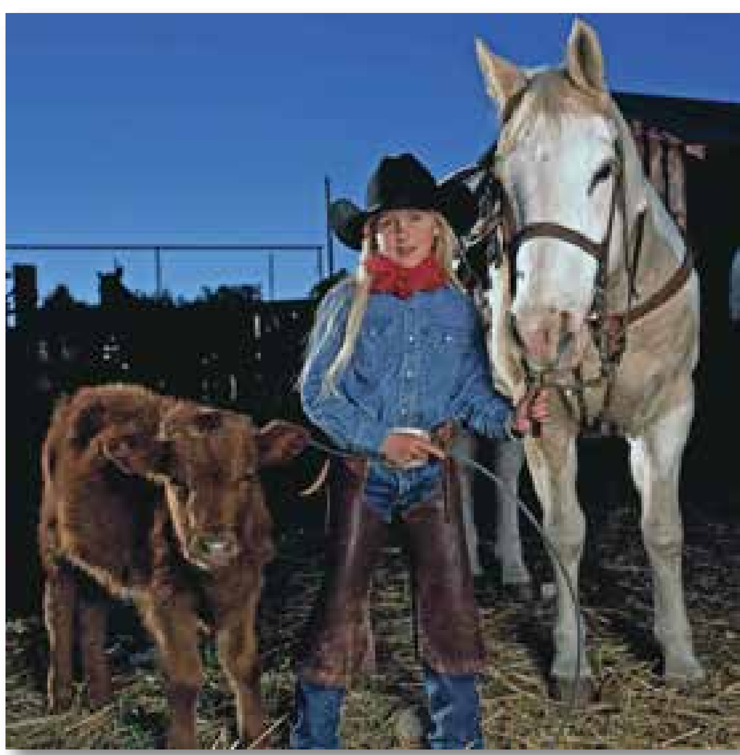
I was so impressed by these kids that I felt compelled to tell their stories, so I embarked on a long journey of exploring New Mexico's cowboy community. It was one of the great adventures of my life.

My journey began at country rodeos. Rodeo is the social network connecting the rural west; everyone seems to know everyone else. Once I met and began photographing families on their ranches, I got "passed around" to their cowboy friends in other parts of the state, and my project snowballed from there. Whenever I networked in areas where I had no connections, it always seemed the new folks I met recognized families from my earlier shoots. The cowboy community is like

HOWE
Bryce and Hadley Howe, 6 and 10, are fifth-generation working ranch cowboys. Their Lea County ranch is located a few miles west of the Texas border. Lea County is pancake flat, and its ranchland forested with oil wells and refineries.



COLEY
Torrance County, New Mexico, working cowboy Coley Barner, 13. Coley's father manages the 64,000-acre Lucy Ranch and the 25,600-acre 777 Ranch.



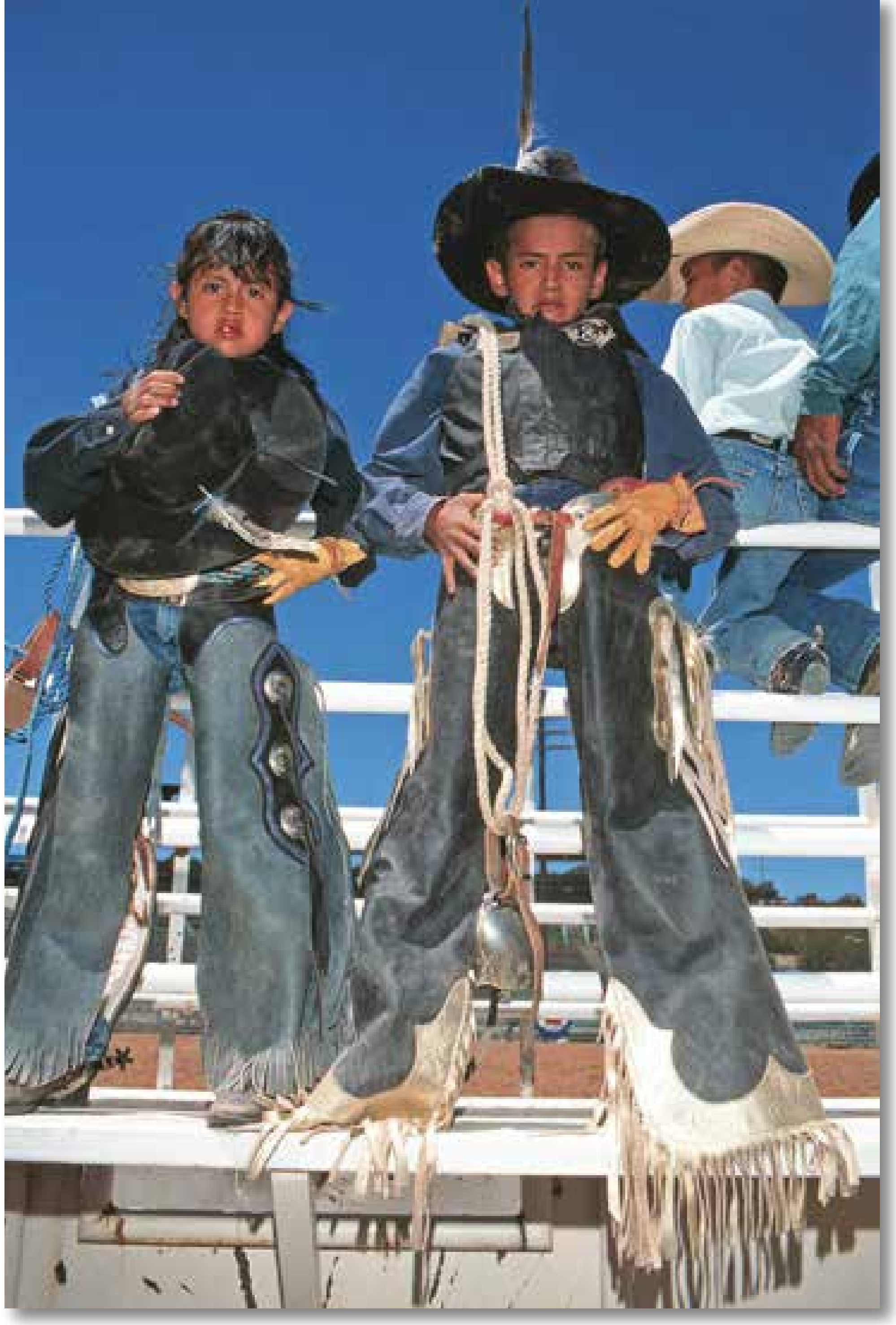
JORDAN
Working ranch and rodeo cowgirl Jordan Muncy, 8, poses with her pet calf, Bobo, and Paint horse, Joker. Jordan began riding horses and competing in rodeos when she was three years old. Her mother rode saddle broncs and her grandmother rode bulls.

TATE
Champion junior bull rider Tate Stratton, 12, on his family's Shadow Mountain Ranch near Stanley, New Mexico. Tate is a fourth-generation rough-stock rider whose family has been involved in rodeo since its earliest days. Because Tate is one-eighth Cherokee, he also competes on Indian rodeo circuits.

TAOS

Future PRCA world champion saddle bronc rider Taos Muncy, 11, exhibits skilled cowboy flair at his family's O X Bar Ranch in Torrance County, New Mexico. Taos is a fourth-generation working ranch cowboy. His grandparents ranched only 18 miles from the Trinity atomic test site. On the morning of the 1945 test, his grandparents reported seeing two sunrises.

PRAYER
Steer rider Dexter Huber, 10, observes the opening prayer at a 4H rodeo.

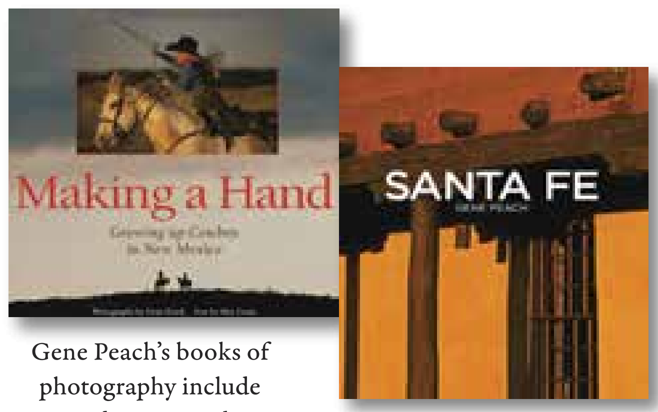


YAZZIE
Navajo rodeo cowboy Lambert Yazzie, 5, ropes like a pro at his home in the Twin Lakes Chapter of the Navajo Reservation. Lambert is a fifth-generation Indian rodeo cowboy.

SPUD
Champion steer rider Tyson “Spud” Jones, 11, is a third-generation Navajo rodeo cowboy. He began competing in rodeos at age three and riding steers when he was only five. More than 200 rodeos take place on the Navajo Nation every season, and countless arenas are located throughout the vast reservation.

one big extended family. And in culturally diverse New Mexico, that family includes Hispanics, Anglos and American Indians.

The more I got to know cowboys, the more I understood that theirs is still an authentic existence. I began seeing them not as embodiments of Hollywood mythology, but as amazing agricultural people with remarkable skills. I marveled at their horsemanship, knowledge of animals, and feel for the land. I became convinced that their everyday reality is greater than any myth.



Gene Peach’s books of photography include *Making a Hand: Growing up Cowboy in New Mexico* and *Santa Fe.* Both are available on Amazon.com.

My biggest hope in creating my book was to put a human face on the ranching community and to celebrate the continuity of an honorable and necessary lifestyle. We live at a time when the urban-rural divide has grown so wide that many Americans dislike agriculture and think it unnecessary. Some believe ranching is bad and want it to end. But I consider intelligent and innovative ranching to be our best hope for the West, and today’s cowboy kids will shape its future. I have faith that the future is in good hands.

Road Trip List: A Review

At issue #21, we take you back for a sort of Greatest Hits look at music we felt make up a great playlist – for your continuing sojurns to the rodeo, a roping, or drive to the office

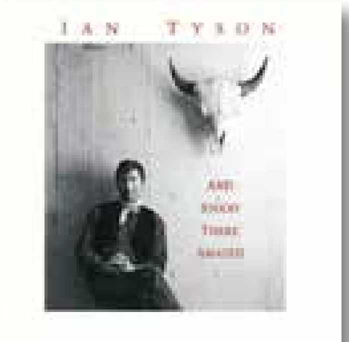
By Liza Cabrera

#1: "Paris, Texas," from the soundtrack *Paris, Texas* by Ry Cooder

Ry Cooder based this soundtrack and title song "Paris, Texas"on Blind Willie Johnson's "Dark Was the Night (Cold Was the Ground)", which he described as "The most soulful, transcendent piece in all American music." The soundtrack is deep and haunting featuring the must-hear slide guitar of Ry Cooder. We recommend you not leave home without it, or at least launch your Road Trip playlist with the title track, "Paris, Texas".

#2: "The Gift," from the album *Old Corals and Sage Brush* by Ian Tyson

Tyson can cover any western classic better than most but it's his writing along with his creative collaborations that create their own timeless niche. One would be hard-pressed when discussing the culture of western music amongst those in the real West, not to find at least 5 of his songs in any top-ten list of all time western songs. "The Gift," a celebration of the life and work of Montana's own Charles M. Russell eloquently reminds us of Russell's place in western hearts.

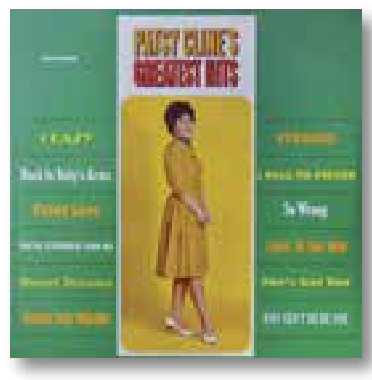


#3: "Jaquima to Freno," from the album *And Stood There Amazed* by Ian Tyson

"In the music world of the 1990s," Tyson has stated, "I was riding a post – *Cowboyography* wave, doing my best to take western music to the next level by mixing reggae and other forms with cowboy music. A classic example is the song "Jaquima to Freno," off my 1991 record, *And Stood There Amazed*. I really pushed the envelope with the song.

I based "Jaquima to Freno" on Bob Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man" dream fantasy concept. Essentially I had decided to do a cowboy version of Dylan's song, but I made it completely different musically. The lyrics of the song are pure fantasy. I knew the folklorists might not approve of the song, but the buckaroos loved it, which meant there was nothing the folklorists could do about it. To this day "Jaquima to Freno" is one of my most requested songs."

Tyson has been called the "Senior Statesman of Western Music" and "Canada's Frank Sinatra." All probably appropriate titles during some time of his life. But in the West, Tyson has meant so much more to so many. His songs and lyrics put words and music to the lives of so many in the ranching culture – people who simply wish to get saddled and ride out into the West, one more time.

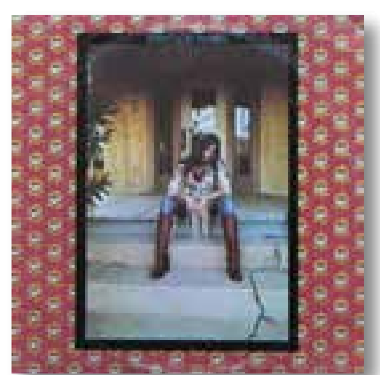


#4: "Crazy," from the *Greatest Hits* album by Patsy Cline

Considered a groundbreaking moment in her career, her rendition of Willie Nelson's "Crazy" is a story in itself. From the fact of her difficulty hitting its high notes due to broken ribs from a car accident to the fact that she didn't like the idea of "over-dubbing" her own voice. The long road to "Crazy" would take Cline to have hits of the song on three different charts in late 1961 and early 1962, reaching #9 on the US Hot 100 and #2 on both the Hot Country Songs and the Adult Contemporary lists.

#5: "Lotta Love," from *Nicolette* by Nicolette Larson

After backing-up on Neil Young's 70s *Comes A Time*, Nicolette Larson pounced with her self-titled freshman album. Born in Helena, Montana, her musical career took off after Emmylou Harris and Linda Ronstadt introduced her to Young. Larson's self-titled album was very well received and included such classics as her big hit, "Lotta Love," "Rhumba Girl" and the always politically correct, "Mexican Divorce." Larson died in 1997 of a cerebral edema.



#6: "Together Again," from *Elite Hotel* By Emmylou Harris

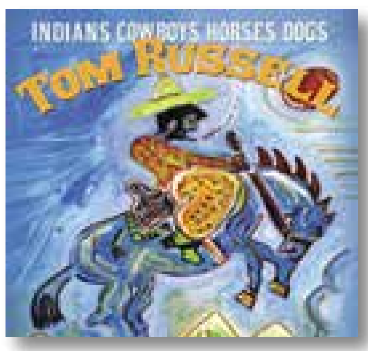
Emmylou Harris entered the spotlight during the singer-songwriter-seventies with *Pieces of The Sky*, a solid launch vehicle that she followed up with a strikingly similar sophomore effort in *Elite Hotel* that continued to blend traditional and contemporary elements. The album contained several songs penned by her pal, Gram Parsons including "Sin City" and "Wheels." But the big action came with her take on two country standards – Buck Owens', "Together Again" and Don Gibson's "Sweet Dreams" (made famous by Patsy Cline).

#7: "Piece of Mind," from *Comes a Time*, by Neil Young and Crazy Horse

Right after Young's release of the seminal, three-LP set, *Decade* and before the earth shattering *Rust Never Sleeps*, Neil Young quietly opened the gate on *Comes A Time* – a gentle record yet with some of his memorable songs. The LP was also the moment that Nicolette Larson moved from back-up singer to center stage. "Lotta Love" became a breakout hit for Larson and Young helped nurture her way-too-short career before her tragic death. From "Peace of Mind" to a fine rendition of Ian Tyson's timeless "Four Strong Winds;" this album rides the 'ol Victrola quite a bit.

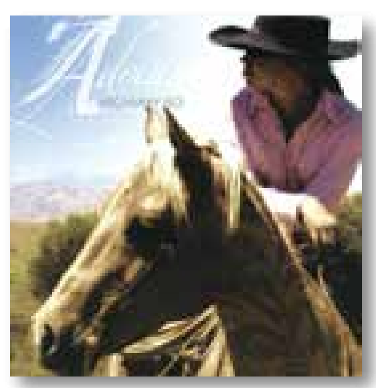
#8: "July, You're A Woman," from *California Bloodlines*, by John Stewart

In 1961, folk-singer and Civil War aficionado, John Stewart joined the legendary Kingston Trio with Bob Shane and Nick Reynolds, writing, performing and helping to steer the group through the tumultuous 1960s. In 1969, Stewart released *California Bloodlines*, a strong collection that helped define his work for the rest of his career. Stewart's writing always carried the day as many of his songs were covered by the likes of Nancy Griffith, Rosanne Cash, Mary Chapin Carpenter and Joan Baez.



#9: "Tonight We Ride," from *Indians Cowboys Horses Dogs* by Tom Russell

Russell's career, he self-describes, has been a careful climb, by intent. "My career seems to have gone in the opposite direction from a lot of people whose notoriety came over their first half dozen records," says Russell. "Mine didn't. My career built very slowly, and then I moved to El Paso in '97, further outside than anybody could imagine. By not plugging into the machine, the records I've made in the past 10 years have been my strongest and most outside records, especially the past two. It seems that the older I get, the more I've been able to keep on the outside."



#10 "Old Time Vaquero," from the album *Highway 80* by Adrian

Twenty-two-year old Adrian is a true anomaly in the music business. She started singing about the vaquero culture – a true niche – when she was just fourteen. Her first album, *Highway 80*, took the far west by storm with her sensitive, older-than-her-years, writing. With songs like "Old Time Vaquero," "Nighttime in Nevada" and the title track, "Highway 80," this horseback artist knows of what she writes. Adrian sings of the life she loves, the people who make up her world and of the places in the West that inspire her.

A Western Moment

Cow camp on Santa Rosa Island. Way, way out west.

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