

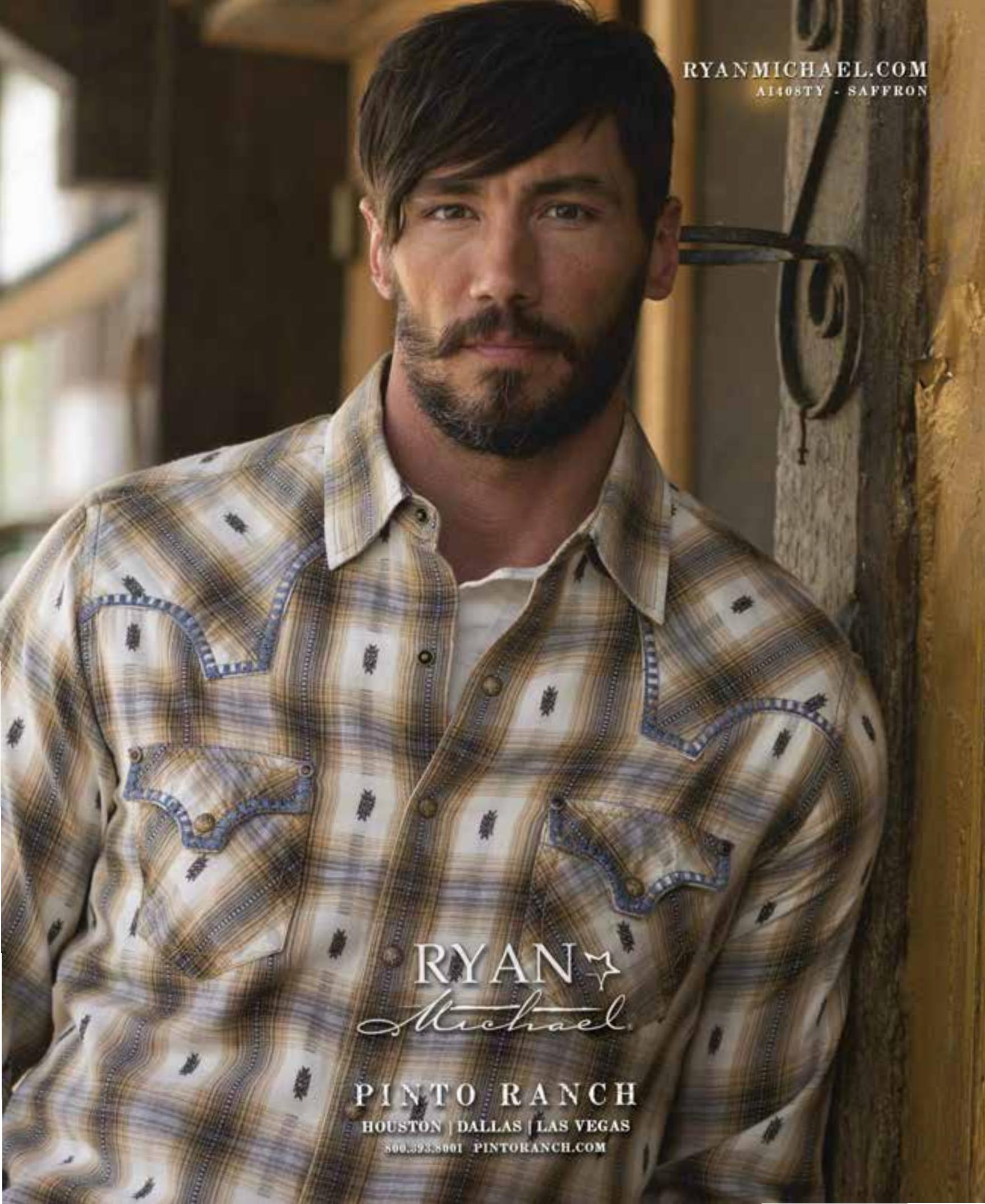
The Journal of the American West

Ranch & Reata

Volume 5.3 \$15.00



50 YEARS



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FRONT GATE



photo courtesy Jack Swanson

1

Daylight, 34 x 48, oil by Jack Swanson

For fifty years, The Cowboy Artists of America has helped spread the word about fine western art and artists – including the work of the late Jack Swanson (1927 – 2014).

Big skies and big prairie.
Photo by Audrey Hall.

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Cover image: CA artist Mehl Lawson's bronze, Roundup was created in 2006. It won the Express Ranches Great American Cowboy award for best art depicting the cowboy culture at the Prix de West Show held annually at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.



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EDITOR'S NOTE

21st Century Fox (Hunting)

By A.J. Mangum

It's an overcast summer day in Bath, England, and my wife and I have chanced upon a "country sporting" shop located along the high street. Ornately engraved shotguns – side-by-sides and over-and-unders priced well into five figures – line one wall. Handmade fly-fishing rods occupy another. Glass cases house colorful, artfully crafted fishing lures that seem far too beautiful to cast into a river. The store's sizable inventory of rambling-ready Wellingtons and designer tweeds creates an atmosphere of British rural sophistication, accented by the occasional work of sporting art hanging on a wall.

As my wife browses the tweeds, I stop to study a framed print depicting a fox hunt. Riders follow a pack of hounds through a bucolic setting – gray skies and rolling, green fields interrupted by low hedges and stone walls. It occurs to me that there may be no scene more evocative of the stereotype of English country life.

The store is empty; it's a rainy afternoon, midweek.

Having noticed me lingering in front of the print, the shopkeeper wanders over and strikes up a conversation about fox hunting. He has clients, he says, that are avid participants. I express confusion, recalling that the sport was supposed to have been banned in England.

(Our conversation takes place in 2005, a year after fierce public debate – pitting centuries of tradition against contemporary views on the treatment of animals – resulted in an English ban on fox hunting. Apart from some fine-print exceptions, the actual *hunting* of foxes on horseback remains illegal in England, as well as in Scotland and Wales. At this writing, Parliament is preparing for a contentious vote on a possible rollback of the English ban.)

For the briefest of moments, the shopkeeper adopts a facial expression that could suggest that what happens in the English countryside *stays* in the English countryside.

"It still goes on," he says. He leaves it at that.

At first, I take the shopkeeper's comment to suggest

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photo by Audrey Hall

Some mourn passing traditions, but what's not to like about a fox hunt oriented toward the *pursuit* rather than the kill?

6

that die-hard advocates for traditional fox hunting might simply be ignoring the ban, risking rather serious penalties. The current fine for violating the ban can reportedly be as much as £5,000 – nearly \$8,000 at the current exchange rate, and nearly \$9,000 in 2005. Later, in retrospect, I realize he likely meant only that fox hunters have had to adapt.

Since the 2004 legislation, forms of fox hunting have lived on in England, typically as “drag hunts” or “trail hunts,” in which riders chase hounds following a pre-laid scent trail – a cross-country path marked with traces of fox urine, or a mixture of ingredients approximating the animal’s scent.

Predictably, such a change to the nature of fox hunting has had a transformative effect on the sport, redefining it as a form of fast-paced trail riding whose customs – hounds, formal attire, a hierarchical social structure – differentiate it from a mere group canter across a pasture. With the prospect of a kill removed, old-school fox hunters lament what they perceive as a loss of heritage. They passionately argue that a longstanding piece of the rural English way of life has been erased, and that, in more practical terms, a means of varmint control has been eliminated.

Some proponents of the ban, however, counter that traditional fox hunting – culminating in a kill –



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would've likely died out in England, anyway, even without legislative intervention, due to increasing environmental constraints, encroaching development, and an emerging farming culture that's less oriented to time-honored customs. The centuries-old form of fox hunting, they suggest, had been facing inevitable revision well before public outcry led to a ban on its bloodier elements. (Only 30 percent of the English public opposed the 2004 legislation.) Ban proponents add that, when it comes to controlling troublesome fox populations, 21st century landowners have available other means than hosting equestrian events.

Interestingly, removing the potential for a kill has perhaps broadened fox hunting's appeal among English horsemen, many of whom might've previously

considered the sport a cruel pastime. According to a 2014 article in *The Guardian*, the contemporary English fox hunting scene now tends to be dominated more by suburban recreational riders – something closer to an *everyman* demographic – than by landowning aristocracy. For the youngest generation of this emerging group, the pursuit of a live fox is an abstract concept.

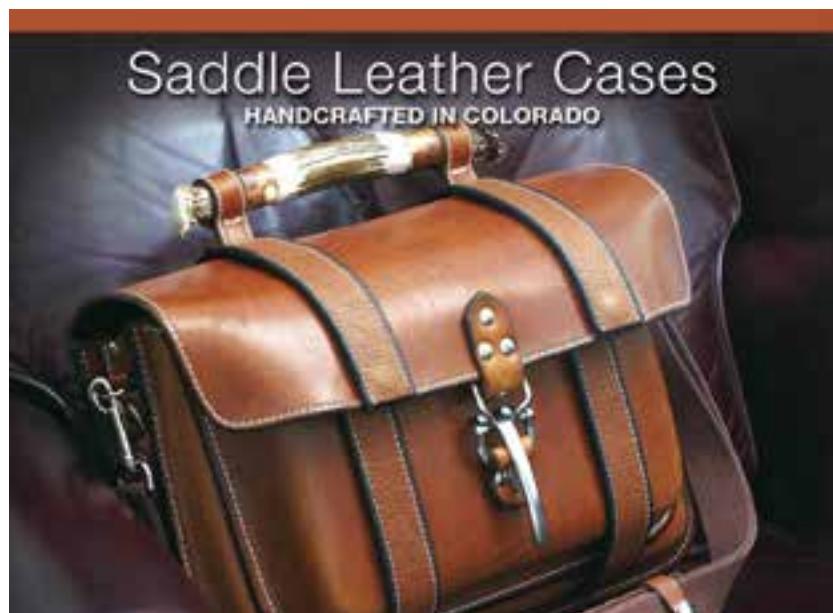
As a lifelong horseman, fox hunting has long intrigued me – not because of the prospect of killing a fox, an animal that might be more easily dispatched with a .22 rifle, should the need arise – but because of the sport's action and fast pace, its setting against a natural landscape, and the interaction among riders, athletic horses and working hounds. Even if contemporary fox hunters chase hounds following nothing more than a

strategically routed scent trail, those fundamental traits remain in place, untouched by legislation or changing social values. And, if a revamped, bloodless version of fox hunting can attract new participants – bringing new investment into an equestrian economy – and keep the discipline off the legislative radar and out of public-policy debates, it would seem England has gained more than it's lost.



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In this issue, Montana
photographer Audrey Hall
documents a fox hunt in
Big Sky Country.

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Brandin'
to the
Boardroom*



*Barkus
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Ranchy but Fancy

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OF NOTE



Interesting Things and Stories from Out West

THE COWBOY ARTISTS OF AMERICA HIT 50.

The Cowboy Artists of America (referred to as the CA) was founded in 1965 by four prominent western artists, Joe Beeler, Charlie Dye, John Hampton and George Phippen – and all have “headed on up the trail” ahead of us. Since

its inception, the exclusive organization of artists has always been dedicated to portraying the lifestyles of the cowboy, the Indian and the American West – as they were and as they endure. The CA was founded in 1965 and held its first art show in 1966 at the Cowboy Hall of fame in Oklahoma City.

The CA was an incredibly unique concept. The idea that a group of western artists would promote and celebrate the West as a collective and add to their numbers as they saw artists they felt fit the mix. For several years they showed each year at the Cowboy Hall of Fame and in 1973 were hosted by the Phoenix Art Museum until recently when the show returned to the Cowboy Hall of fame – since renamed the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. They share the show now with gear and superb cowboy crafts from the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association. It is the perfect mix of gear and art and makes for a lively event.

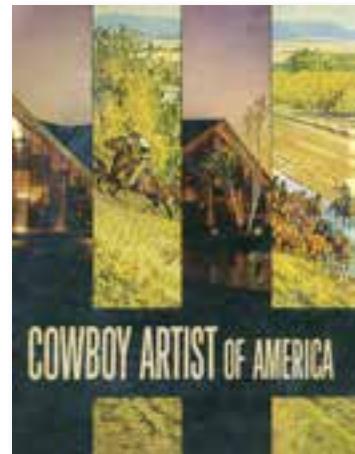
But the purpose is the same – to celebrate and thus help perpetuate the ways and lives of people in the West – both from an historic and a contemporary perspective. Which brings us to Byron Price’s superb book, *The Sons of Charlie Russell*, celebrating the CA at 50.



First CA catalog from 1966



Signed opening catalog page from hard bound catalog, 1973.



CA catalog, circa 1969



On To Better Pastures, 2003, oil by Tim Cox

If you grew up on American soil, whether you were a boy or a girl, and are of a “certain age,” you probably played cowboys and Indians – or some version of that – in your backyard. If you grew up in the 1940s and 1950s, you no doubt watched Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, and Gene Autry with undying devotion, which is exactly why so many feel a very real and vivid connection to western art.

The Cowboy Artists of America's twenty active members and nine emeritus members continue to feel the influence of Charlie Russell and Frederic Remington, as well as other early artists of the American West. The organization has weathered the oil boom and bust, the rise and fall of the stock market, and the tech bubble. Through it all, CA members have been championed by individual, corporate, and museum collectors who embrace their art and the stories it tells.

The CA is fifty years strong and looking forward to the next fifty years. *The Sons of Charlie Russell* commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Cowboy Artists of America. From the beginning, the CA set its course to perpetuate the history, romance, and importance of the American West.

The history of these artists as described in this book comes alive with essays, photographs and beautiful images of their work as it portrays the life of real Indians and cowboys. As usual Byron Price reaffirms his place in the literature of the West as the genre's finest living historian with this super volume. This is a fun and illuminating read on a very special group of talented westerners who came along at just the right time. In addition, the title of the book is illustrated as coming from within a poem written to the CA members by the equally talented writer and historian, Don Hedgepeth which starts off the book's adventure. The book is published through the new Cowboy Artists of America Joe Beeler Foundation out of Phoenix. See more at www.cowboyartistsofamerica.com.



The Sower, 2006, bronze by Herb Mignery



Byron Price's glorious story of the CA's first fifty years is available though the CA website.



An Air of Ability, 2010, conte crayon by Bruce Greene

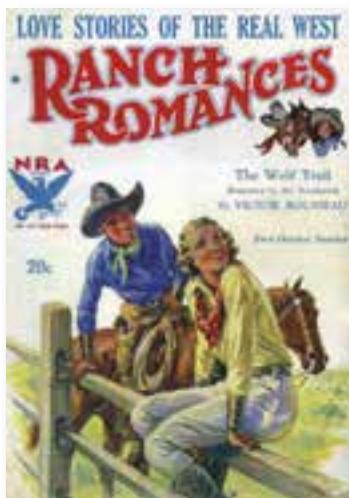


A Happy Cowboy, 1966, pen and ink by Joe Beeler



River Crow, 2000, gouache on board by Howard Terpning

GREAT MOMENTS IN ADVERTISING



There were things one could get away with print advertising of days gone by that today would, at a minimum, guarantee a devastating death by social media skewering. In 1933, for example, the pulper, *Ranch Romances* (See *R&R* #1.4) ran a couple of winners. One featured a TWA pilot, A.M. Wilkins, stating that smoking Camels “never ruffle or jangle my nerves.” And that it is “more fun to know” what’s in your cigarette when “Steady smokers turn to Camel.”

Another ad was a simple black and white with a spinner graphic with a woman asking, “Whom Shall I Marry?” A doctor? A Lawyer? A rich fellow? Or a Cowboy? Cowboy is the winner! All this predicted by a personal “reading” with Professor Marcus Mari – Free!

Note the NRA insignia on the cover. In 1933, president Roosevelt’s New Deal was in full swing – The National Recovery Administration was a part of the “deal.” The goal was to eliminate “cut-throat competition” by bringing industry, labor and government together to create codes of “fair practices” and set prices. The NRA was created by the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) and allowed industries to get together and write “codes of fair competition.” In 1935, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously declared that the NRA law was unconstitutional, ruling that it infringed the separation of powers under the United States Constitution. Probably more than you to need to know, but now you do.



NEW MUSIC

Corinne West
Starlight Highway
MAKE Records

Fourth generation Californian, Corinne West, who resides on the coast north of San Francisco, has been described as “the Siren of the Sierras” by the SF Bay Area’s *Times Herald*. Another reviewer from the *North Coast Journal* in Arcata, California, declared, “West’s voice invokes angels, if angels had a dangerous side.” Corinne’s powerful and eloquent voice, coupled with the way she forges a song, has earned her a unique





identity within the global acoustic roots scene. And if the region and the voice give way to thoughts of the late Kate Wolf – it's an added bonus as West seems to channel Wolf a bit on several selections including "Trouble No More" and "Monday's Song."

"*Starlight* is my first completely self-produced record," West says about the sessions. "I wanted to create a body of songs that moved my music forward in new directions, while paying tribute to the music I have done in the past. This influenced my decisions



regarding the instrumentation; piano, organ, acoustic rock angles, heavy harmonies, the deep-drive of drums, the laid back floating ballads... I wanted to play with many flavors, and I didn't hold back on using any spices while in the sonic kitchen."

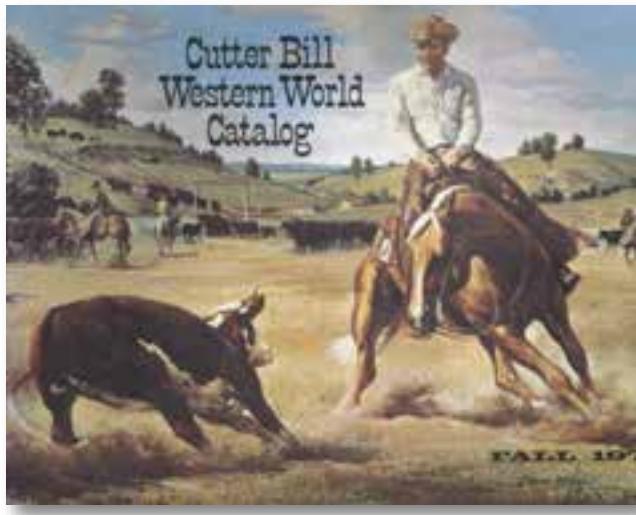
Joining her in creating these musical recipes are such celebrated players as Ricky Fataar – drums;

Edo Castro – 7 string fretless bass; Kelly Joe Phelps – guitar, vocals; John R. Burr – Hammond organ, Wurlitzer; Karl Sevareid – electric bass; Mike Marshall – mandolin, octave mandolin; Henry Salvia – Hammond organ, piano, Wurlitzer, accordion; Joe Kyle Jr. – acoustic bass, electric bass; Marla Fibish – mandolin; and Bruce Victor – guitar.

"This is an intimate record, and covers a lot of territory," adds West, summing up the new album. "I marvel at how deeply personal experiences so often translate into universal and mythic principals. It's as though there is an invisible blueprint somewhere, continuously showing up in stories and art. My aim with this recording is to communicate a personal emotive glimpse of what we all experience in our own way, on our own roads, as we climb, fly, fall, isolate, believe, reinvent, connect, dream... Though seemingly different, we are all somehow cut from the same cloth." Ms. West produced the album and you can find out more at www.corinnewest.com



Here is a video Corinne did for the song, "Dire Wolf," as part of the Grateful Dead 50th anniversary tribute.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4u1UqXiiqJw>



MORE CUTTER BILL

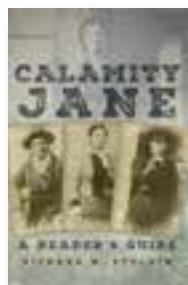
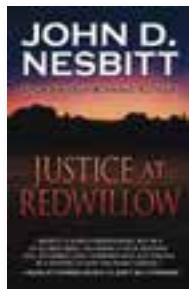
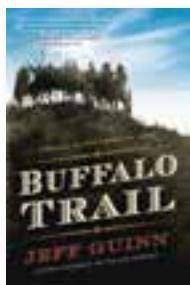
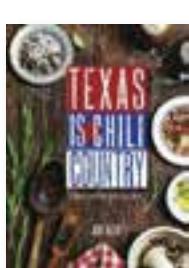
We promised you more Cutter Bill images so here we go. These came from a catalog in the Fall of 1971 – and from a story on Rex Cauble that appeared in issue 3.3. As Coco Chanel said, “Fashion fades, only style remains the same.”





NEW BOOKS FROM MEMBER AUTHORS OF THE WESTERN WRITERS OF AMERICA

Here's what's on this month's bookshelf.



For history buffs and chefs, Western Writers Hall of Fame inductee **Judy Alter** cooks up something special in *Texas Is Chili Country: A Brief History with Recipes* (Texas Tech University Press).

Jeff Guinn picks up where his best-selling *Glorious* left off in his homage to why we still love Western novels in *Buffalo Trail* (G.P. Putnam), the second part of a planned trilogy.

Spur-winning **John D. Nesbitt** continues his critically acclaimed blending of the mystery and traditional Western genres in *Justice at Redwillow* (Five Star Publishing).

Calamity Jane biographer **Richard W. Etulain** shows readers where to find the legendary Western gal in print, films and photographs in *Calamity Jane: A Reader's Guide* (University of Oklahoma Press).

In Red Cloud: Oglala Legend (South Dakota State Historical Society Press), **John D. McDermott** tells the life story the Lakota leader as part of the publisher's "South Dakota Biography Series."

For more, visit, www.westernwriters.org

EARLY CALIFORNIO SKILLS OF THE RANCHO – 2015

By Richard Foxx

Each year for the past three years, more than 100 cowboys and cowgirls, *vaqueros* and *vaqueras* have gathered in the Santa Barbara/Santa Ynez area to compete in a style of horsemanship and stockmanship that was all but written off as being a historical curiosity not many years ago. The gathering, called Early California Skills of the Rancho, "the Skills" for short, has continued to grow and thrive. This year more than 120 participants came together from as far away as North Dakota for the camaraderie and to match roping and cow handling abilities for more than \$60,000 in prizes.

The reason lies in the addictive appeal of the vaquero method of horsemanship and stockmanship, known also as Californio bridle horsemanship.

Centuries before Nelson Story and his men drove the first cattle herd north from Ft. Worth to Montana in 1866 (and became one the inspirations for Larry McMurtry's novel, *Lonesome Dove*), the Spanish were managing vast herds of



photo by Bev Pettit

In the heat of it – Peter Taylor, top left, Justin Fields, top right with ground crew from left: Jeff Derby, Boone Campbell and Chris Maxon.



photo by Bev Pettit

Dwight Hill, the event's Top Hand overall.

the semi-wild longhorns they had brought to the New World to feed the growing chain of missions that ran from Mexico north to the area they called Alta California on el Camino Real, the Royal Road.

This required skilled horsemen who could work the herds all day without ruining the horses or damaging the livestock. The Spanish, acutely aware of the effectiveness of the horse as a weapon of war and a way of controlling the indigenous people, at first prohibited the Native Americans from riding. When it became apparent that they needed more riders they lifted these restrictions. It was then that the culture of the vaquero was born,

a blend of the Spanish style of working horses with the Mexican-

Indian traditions, European methods, and even the culture of the North American Indians. This was an elegant style of riding and roping that used big loops, reatas dallied rather than tied fast, and where the horses learned to work off the balance of the rider controlled with the jaquima, or hackamore, and eventually with the freno, or spade bit.

But for the interest of a few dedicated horseman like Bruce Sandifer, Jeff Derby, Jeffrey Mundell, Boone Campbell, the late Jay Harney and others these traditions seemed to be in danger of becoming extinct, relegated to the old-time stories of Arnold Rojas and art of the likes of Ernie Morris and remembered only in the songs of people like Ian Tyson and Dave Stamey.

Sandifer had been reading about this method in books by Ed Connell and others since he had been a teenager and after cowboying from Canada to Texas he eventually gravitated to the Santa Barbara area, the epicenter of the Californio method, to learn as much as he could. The old-timers were reticent to share their knowledge but Sandifer and the others persisted, ultimately forming the Californio Bridlehorse Association with the help of Wally and Karen Ross.

A year later the Early California Skills of the Rancho (Skills) was started with the idea of making it an annual event to promote not only the Californio bridlehorse method, but also the idea of stockmanship and of working cattle that emphasized a sustainable style of ranching. Organized as a series of events that recreated real working rancho situations, the Skills has also always been committed to encouraging young riders in Stock Horse Competition and Breakaway Roping.

The event attracts a cross section of working cowboys and dedicated horse people. Paul Woods, a cowboy who characterizes himself as "a Northern range cowboy with a strong vaquero influence" spent three days driving 1700 miles one way with his horse, Nic, from North Dakota. He was drawn to the vaquero style years ago because "the horses ridden in that style looked like they were part of a team and were visibly conscious of it."

When the event was over, Woods climbed back in his rig and drove three days back. Since he makes cowboying ends meet by driving big rigs, this made the weekend a kind of busman's holiday, but it was definitely worth it for him. "There's a lot of pride in the vaquero method," he says, "and to do it right requires a lot of time and effort."

Disciples of the Californio method are not only cowboys but people from all backgrounds drawn to the beauty and the elegance of the method. Glynna Hoekstra, a passionate *vaquera* from the Valley Center area of Southern California makes



photo courtesy Gary Winkler

Billy Askew, back to camera and Jim Prewett on the ground.



time for riding and roping despite her commitments to her "real job." She's been doing it for 15 years and says: "There are no attitudes here, just kinship and a shared love of something bigger than yourself."

Talk about grit, during the 2nd Annual



photo courtesy Gary Winkler

Top left, Justin Fields with Jim Prewett.

Brannaman Pro/Am Vaquero Roping in Santa Ynez in 2014, Hoekstra fractured her thumb but refused to drop out and spent the next few months with a cast. She was back at it this year with her horse, KaChoo and acquitted herself creditably.

As in the past, Skills was organized as a series of events that recreated real working ranch situations. It has grown each year as judged by the growth in participants as well as the spectators who come to soak in the timeless values.

After three days of intense competition, coveted Top Hand Overall was awarded to Dwight Hill while Jim Groesbeck won Open Top Hand and Janine Roy captured Amateur Top Hand.

"The improvement each year has been unbelievable," Sandifer said, after it was all over, "and I think we're just getting started."

View all the results on the Californio Bridlehorse Association website at www.californiobridlehorse.com.

Richard Foxx is a lifelong horseman, writer, and author of SPIRIT RANCH. He is presently living in the California desert and can be reached at spiritranch@earthlink.net

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*"Everything keeps on a movin,
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Hey you don't find things that last anymore
like a double-woven Navajo."*

From "Navajo Rug" – Tom Russell and Ian Tyson



photo by Eryld Fydendahl



Chanel Pre-Fall 2014
Dallas, TX

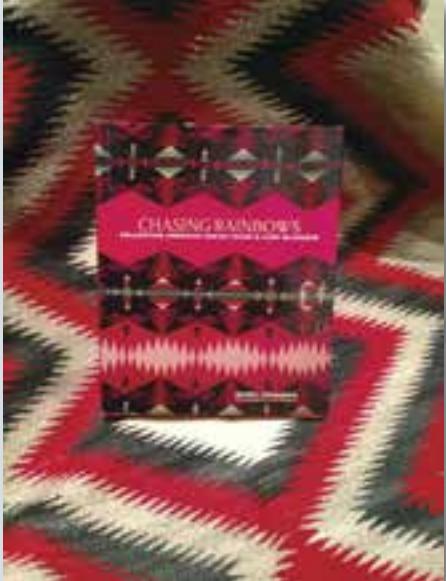
Katie was sure to take hers with her, as Ian sang about.... The ubiquitous Navajo rug. Used as a humble saddle blanket and clothing item for centuries, they are intrinsically Western. The terms Navajo and Indian blankets are often used interchangeably, though they are two very different things.

Both the Navajo rug and the Indian trade blanket rose in popularity at the end of the nineteenth century and the dawn of the twentieth, same time as the American cowboy. Both were products of white traders molding the lives of the Native Americans. Indian trade blankets were woven and created especially for the Native American market, in exchange for valuable fur pelts. Despite popular belief, the color and patterns of the blankets were exclusively designed by whites for different tribes. The Navajo people had been weavers for centuries, but the need for a heavier-weight rug was invented for a white market. Even the colors and patterns were suggested to appeal to a Caucasian audience.

The geometric patterns continue to appeal to designers for their textural artistry. They are a feast of color for the eyes. Their patterns are a plethora of inspiration for prints, fabrics, and embroideries. As trends ebb and flow, the resurgence of these patterns continues to be an important statement in the fashion and home furnishings world. Chanel featured them heavily in their pre-fall collection last year. Ralph Lauren has a steady flow every season, each in a different permutation. Growing up with them, a few folks enjoyed a real Navajo rug on the walls – but most were copies woven in Mexico. Their lively and beautiful patterns still enjoyed whether they were draped over furniture or used as a saddle blanket.

The traditions of the Navajo weavers are still strong. Heritage mills such as Pendleton are alive and well, continuing to make beautiful textiles to be enjoyed for generations. Like the Cowboy, it is an artistry that carries on and a story only America can tell. Follow Ashley on Pinterest at [Ashley_e_Riggs](#) and on Tumblr at [nynv-ashleyriggs.tumblr.com](#).

Some favorites...



"Chasing Rainbows" by Barry Friedman, published in 2002, is considered the source point regarding American Indian Trade and Camp Blanket collecting.



Original Pendleton Woolen Mills mailer
for 1929 Pendleton Round-Up.



Colors and patterns, Navajo rug.



Bag crafted from authentic
Navajo rug remnant pieces,
Ralph Lauren Collection



Hand knit sweater from Japanese brand, Kapital



Menswear jacket by Japanese brand Visvim



Etro Spring 2015 –
ready-to-wear features
a printed silk dress.



1937 catalog ad for
"genuine" Navajo rugs
for \$1.40 per pound

TOM RUSSELL ART

Readers of this magazine know the music and writing of this talented artist. He is also a painter – here are several recent works we covet.



The artist in repose.



El Santuario de Chimayo



Iron Man 7



The Ravens Pueblo

See more at artbeatgallerycolorado.com/tom_russell.php



TR, the artist, on an inspirational walk-about.

LEST WE FORGET

Finally. America's 37-year search for a great racehorse is over.



2015 Triple Crown winner, American Pharaoh greets his new world.



TEVIS CUP RIDE – 2015

Rider/Horse Teams from Around the World Compete at the 60th 100-Mile Tevis Cup, as the storied challenge over the California Sierra reaches a celebrated milestone.

Acknowledged as the “hardest endurance ride in the world,” the Tevis Cup Ride covers 100 miles of rugged, historic trail in the California Sierra, traversing steep canyons and raging river crossings. Each year some 200 horse and rider teams amass at the starting line near Truckee, California, prepared for an arduous journey to the finish line in Auburn, California. With the majority of finishers taking 24 hours, only about half of those starting the ride will successfully cover the entire distance.

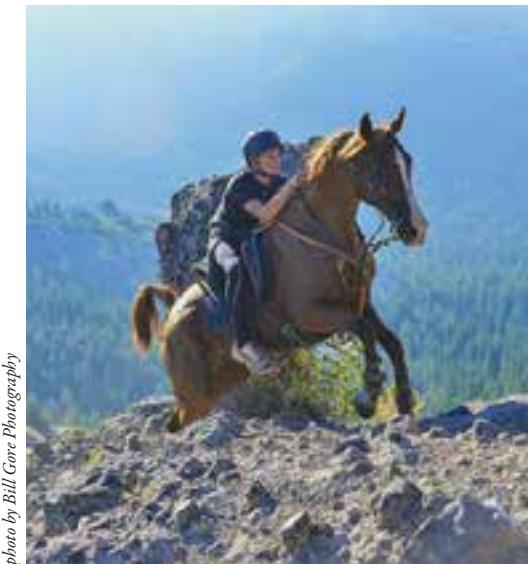


photo by Bill Gore Photography

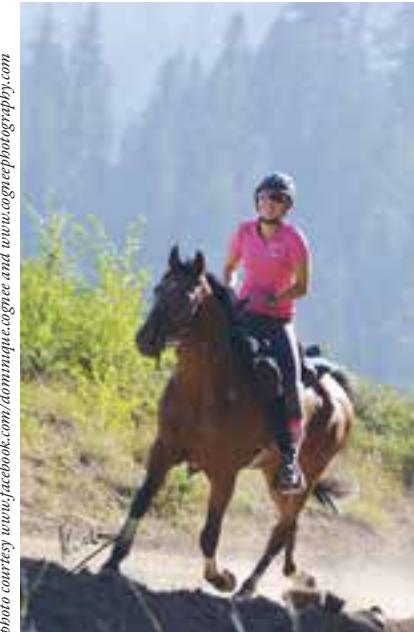
MCM Last Dance with junior rider (horse was older than rider) Barrak Blakeley up.

Sponsored by the Western States Trail Foundation, this year’s special anniversary Tevis ride will include riders from states as far away as Virginia, Maryland, Florida, Nebraska, New York and New Jersey.

They’ll line up at 5:15 AM next to riders from Chile, Guatemala, Israel, France, Australia, Britain, Germany, and Canada.

“While most riders are here to earn a well-deserved buckle, this year could be a very competitive ride,” notes Western States Trail Foundation president Tony Benedetti. “Our foundation is honored to stage the 60th anniversary of this famous event on a trail used by Native Americans, emigrants and gold miners.”

For more information, www.teviscup.org.



2014 Winner Heather Reynolds riding French Open.

photo courtesy www.facebook.com/dominique.cognet and www.cognephotography.com

THE “SHANE” CABIN AND MORE!

Something you probably didn’t know about the 1953 western film, *Shane*. The “Shane” cabin, as it was called was built on location in Jackson Hole and as of 2011, was still standing. The roof is long gone and the doors and windows sit wide open to the elements. The cabin was after a design/drawing by artist, Joe DeYong. The film’s characters were sought-after roles. Montgomery Clift was the first choice for playing the loner, Shane, who was played in the film by Alan Ladd. Van Heflin’s homesteader role was tailored for William Holden who was unavailable as was Katharine Hepburn. The role went to Jean Arthur. The film cost three million dollars and was the first “wide-screen” western.



TIME PASSES

It's been forty-five years since singer/songwriter Michael Nesmith wrote and released, "Joanne." The song was from the album *Magnetic South* – the first album released by Nesmith and The First National Band after he left The Monkees and their TV series in 1970. Nesmith wrote the song "Different Drum" in 1965 and was a huge hit when Linda Ronstadt and the Stone Poneys released it in 1967. Now you know, or at least remember.

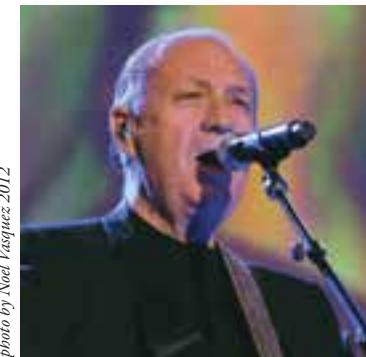


photo by Noel Vasquez 2012



"Joanne" performed by Michael Nesmith
<https://youtu.be/zyKHtUntrp4>



"Different Drum" performed by Linda Ronstadt
<https://youtu.be/2FLN4MUROXk>



travelled to Texas, rented a car and drove over 1700 miles, looking for the real deals – working cowboys. They found that despite satellite dishes and mobile phones, the songs, poems and the sounds of ranch life still exist, with a Zen-like intensity.

Beyond writing for *R&R*, Hal sings lead vocals and plays banjo and guitar in the group, 3hattrio. Widely known as a folklorist, songwriter and radio producer, his early musical life was dedicated to capturing the beauty and styling of nineteenth century folk music of the American West.

HAL CANNON, ON THE ROAD

R&R contributor Hal Cannon has been very busy celebrating and sharing the cowboy culture around the world. He has recently completed some radio pod casts for the Australian Broadcast Company's Radio Network on – what else – the American Cowboy.

To that end, ABC producer, Sherre Delys and folklorist Cannon



Listen to the podcast: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/soundproof/cowboy-zен/6551390>



STYLE BY DESIGN

Joncee Moulder Blake's Double Diamond Design offers her clients services helping them reach their branding and business goals through a creative and focused approach. Joncee's design are sophisticated and playful.

Here's what a couple of her clients say:

"We have worked with Double Diamond Design since our business was just an idea. Through Joncee's originality and resourcefulness, we were able to grow that idea into a viable business. She has the insight, innovative and professionalism that seems to be lacking in today's market; and without her partnership and support our business would not be where it is today."

- Trent Henckell & Jason Scoggins | ALPHA Industries, LLC



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- Debbi Rousey | Century 21 Real Estate Judge Fite Company

See more at www.thedoublediamondranch.com.



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Photo: iStockphoto.com

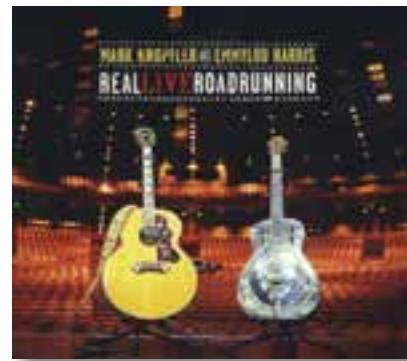
MUSIC FROM BEFORE THE GREAT RECESSION

Mark Knopfler and Emmylou Harris

Real Live Roadrunning

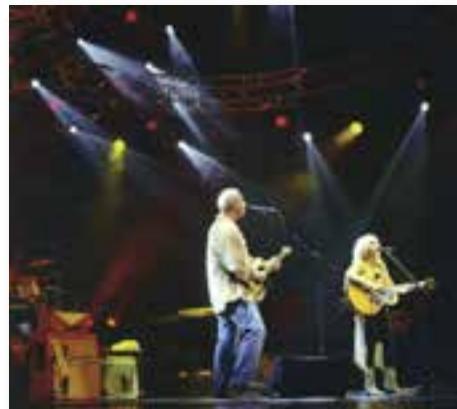
WB/Nonesuch

When I first heard Mark Knopfler's guitar playing, it was way back in 1979 on the first *Dire Straits* album. As the legend goes, some A&R person from the then stand-alone A&M Records hunted the band up in London and signed them on the spot. Smart person. Knopfler's guitar playing seems to just come from within, as if the guitar and he just evolved together. That with his gravely,



OF NOTE |

it-ain't-about-the-singing voice combined with the angelic presence of say, Emmylou Harris, would make for a big evening. It does. This 2006 album is a live version of the *All The Roadrunning* tour that also comes with a DVD of the performance and the two of them create sort of a celtic-cajun-folk-bluegrass moment that is not to be missed. This is sort of a new experience for Knopfler – partnering – while Harris has done this with almost every important country/folk player over the last three decades – always making the partner shine a little brighter. Knopfler comes off the best he has ever sound. This is a superb and mature album featuring two artists who don't have to prove anything.



subscriptions to *R&R!* He has a new book out by award-winning writer Deanna Dickinson McCall who has assembled a powerful collection of stories, titled *Rough Patches*, centered on women in the American West. Shaped by challenging circumstances as well as the equally demanding landscapes they inhabit, her characters exhibit a brand of strength instantly recognizable to readers fortunate enough to know true “women of the West.” Against long odds, McCall’s protagonists courageously stare down adversity in both the frontier era and modern-day ranch country. This is a fine read. See more at www.ajmangum.com.

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Photo: G.

OUR PROLIFIC A.J.

Our editor A.J. Mangum has a wonderful website where he sells a catalog of books and things including



CORRECTION

In the June/July 2015 issue (volume 5.2), photos on pages 102, 103 and 104 were incorrectly credited. All photos appearing in the feature “Back in the Saddle” were provided courtesy of photographer Lauren Anderson.

CORRECTION ON TWIN CREEK RANCH

In last issue’s Of Note, we incorrectly called the Rick Sawyer represented, Twin Creek Ranch – Twin Oaks by mistake. Our apologies.



WEST – A GRAND VIEW.

WEST is a lovely, creative look at the romance and design of the American West through the eyes of a Swedish writer and photographer.

Lars Strandberg has worked internationally as a photographer, his work appearing both in books, magazines, newspapers, exhibitions, and advertising.

Lars Åberg is a journalist and the author of a number of non-fiction books with Swedish or American themes, including two about Native Americans.

The book is wonderfully presented and bound as it captures the true spirit of America's western region – and its forces of nature. It embraces the fascinating notion that the republic should not be thought of as the center of the world but rather as the drifter that still tries to get away. A graphic look at America's most exciting and captivating region as viewed from afar. www.gibbs-smith.com



CRIB NOTE

El Alisal: The Charles Fletcher Lummis Ranch

By Alan Hess

If the West was in part invented by the East, Charles Fletcher Lummis was one of the first Easterners to give it a try.

The impulse to throw off the formalities of life in the East has always been part of the appeal of ranches. Kick back, keep things simple, track dirt inside. Live among noble natives and amidst surroundings conducive to the quiet, devotional life of the mission friars.

Although it was not a working ranch, El Alisal began the canonization of natural materials and simple qualities that were this Harvard graduate's vision of Western life. He built the house with his own hands, helped by the hands and strong backs of Anglo and Native American friends, between 1898 and 1912.



Lummis admired the outdoor life of the early ranchos and recreated it in the shaded veranda on the edge of the courtyard. The height of the low walls is perfect for seating.

one side; a low bench invites guests to sit and chat. A large willow overhangs the space, bordered by a guest house (where Lummis invited his previously unsuspected illegitimate daughter to live when she showed up as an adult). The tower held Lummis' private quarters, which were accessible by way of a ladder that had to be lowered from above.



Friends of Lummis, including Native Americans from New Mexico pueblos, raised the stone and concrete walls of El Alisal. Like Julia Morgan thirty years later at the Hearst ranch at Jolon, Lummis used California missions as inspiration for the style of his arroyo house.



Part of Lummis' collection of Pueblo Indian pottery was displayed on the mantel shelves above the fireplace. Consciously crude and handmade, the unfinished logs and hand-hammered copper (protecting the logs from fire) showed the way to a new aesthetic for the West.



Searching for a new way to design a Western home when Victorian was the popular style, Lummis combined both new and old elements. The thick concrete walls echoed the adobe walls of the early ranchos. Handmade doors – with inventive, protomodern geometric glass frames – imitated the do-it-yourself necessities of homes on the range. The flickering candlelight from niches on the wall (left) created a chapel-like intimacy for lively dinner parties with artists, authors, and the famous.

Lummis was never a cowboy, but he came by his knowledge of the West honestly. In 1885 he walked from Chillicothe, Ohio, where he ran a newspaper, to Los Angeles, where he accepted a job with the *Los Angeles Times*. On the way he stopped off in New Mexico, where he made friends; he returned there many times in his life. Once out west, he devoted the same effort to learning the Tiwa language as he had to learning Latin and Greek at Harvard.

El Alisal is Lummis' reinterpretation of the old adobe ranchos and missions he visited and admired. But it is also stamped with his bias, his romantic vision. As a historian he did his best to create a

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Every log for the ceiling was placed by hand; every cabinet, door, and window frame was designed, made, and set by hand. Lummis was a romantic fighting against the many changes overwhelming the old way of rancho life.

convincing story to explain and give purpose to life in the West; as the architect of his own home, he sought to give that story form. The Western myth would eventually stray far from Lummis' educated and passionate ideal. By 1898, the Wild West shows were already creating an invincible myth that would be further developed by Hollywood. But Lummis can take credit for beginning the transformation of the Western hacienda into an architectural icon.

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



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REBEL COAST WINERY

Not your parents' winery, Rebel Coast Winery is the brainchild of viticulturist, Chip Forsythe, his friend, former bartender and professional "mechanical" bull rider, Doug Burkett and Cal-Poly marketing grad, Kate Seilberlich.



Reckless Love, and a white blend – 2013 Sunday Funday. According to Doug, "Our wines come from vines rooted deep in societal rebellion, audacious love stories, and are watered



with the passion and lust of the entire Rebel Coast Crew. Pulling grapes from the finest viticultural areas in California, our winemaker Chip Forsythe, masterfully blends the wines to sexy perfection with the aid of his glorious mustache. This allows us to showcase the best varietals from each region blended to create flavors indicative of our lifestyle and home. Our wines will always pair well with wild nights, good friends and ignoring your parents' advice. The end result is always a uniquely crafted bottle of wine made by real people, for real people."



Don't believe him? Just give them a call as their cell numbers are on the corks. On top of that they have the best merch in the game – just check their store at www.rebelcoast.com.

"Wine for millennials, made by millennials." Fun bunch.



Together along with a sales force of friends who agree with the company's motto of "Life's Boring Without Wine" the winery currently offers a red blend – 2013





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BY HAND AND HEART

Hide to Holster

Tim Start and the art of gun leather.



By Rod Miller

High Desert Leather has no storefront. There's no sign. No bustling factory turning out a high volume of holsters. Just a lone, unassuming man at work in the unfinished basement of his Utah home.

And yet gun leather from High Desert Leather is known far and wide among the thousands of cowboy action shooting aficionados, and demand for the holsters Tim Start creates, handcrafted one at a time, far exceeds the supply. But the orders come in and Start consults with the buyer to work out details of

gun type, barrel length, carrying preferences, holster design, leather color, and the level of customization desired. Then, weeks or perhaps months later, a work of art leaves High Desert Leather and is strapped around the waist, hips, or shoulder of a satisfied customer.

Start carved his first leather at age 13 in a junior high shop class. His first holster – built when he was 18 – is still in his possession. Over time, what started as a



Leathersmith Tim Start, with dummy guns for several popular firearms on the wall behind.

school assignment became a pastime, then a hobby, a part-time business, and now a career.

photo by Rod Miller



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COLORADO SPRINGS, CO - JULY 8-11
CHEYENNE, WY - JULY 17
ELLENBURG, WA - SEPTEMBER 6
FORT MADISON, IA - SEPTEMBER 9

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The bulk of Start's business is making modern holsters for concealed-carry gun owners. Having spent 30 years as a law-enforcement officer, he knows handguns intimately and is well aware of the finer points of packing a pistol, whether concealed or in full view. "I metamorphosed into concealed-carry holsters from the western stuff," he says. "When I went to college, I took law enforcement classes and there were a lot of cops in those classes, so I made holsters for them. It snowballed a little bit."



"The Sackett" is Tim Start's signature holster, shown here in a left-handed display model (to discourage theft at gun shows).

The business grew – "snowballed" as Start says – by word of mouth and from display tables at gun shows, and eventually grew to the point that he retired from police work and now concentrates full time on making holsters.

While he enjoys making modern holsters, it is, after all, a job. Similar designs, standard leather, basic finishes, and the popularity of certain pistols make the work somewhat repetitive. But he looks at his holsters for cowboy shooters through the eyes of an artist. "There are only so many ways you can wrap a gun in leather," Start says. "But if you have that canvas, which is what I consider a western holster, you can do something artistic with it. Taking the raw material and turning it into a

photo by Rod Miller



photo courtesy Tim Start

Elephant hide insets add character and distinction to this double-gun rig.

work of functional art gives me great satisfaction."

Start's blank canvas is carefully selected, flawless cow hide. He uses vegetable-tanned hides – cured with natural, organic tannins from bark or other plants – rather than chemically tanned leather. "There are several different kinds of processes to tan leather," he explains. "Vegetable tanning uses natural extracts from trees. It



Shoulder holsters are also among Tim Start's creations.

takes several months to tan leather with it. Other leather, that's chrome-tanned leather. That is literally tanned in a couple of hours, in one day."

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Naturally tanned leather offers practical advantages, both for Start in manufacturing a holster and, down the road, for the gun owner. "Vegetable-tanned leather has the advantage in that it forms, stamps, holds its shape better," Start says. "And vegetable-tanned leather is not corrosive. They use chromium salts to tan chrome-tanned leather. If you use chromium leather on guns, you could get rust going." Start's holsters, inside and out, are made from vegetable-tanned leather, and he uses chrome-tanned leather, usually suede-like split-hide, only to line belts or in other places that do not come in direct contact with gunmetal.

Nor does Start use foreign materials to add rigidity or stability to his holsters. While some makers reinforce holsters with sheet metal or Kydex, a thermoplastic, to maintain shape and stiffness, High Desert holsters are hand shaped and formed to the specific make and model of a pistol, creating a custom, glove-like fit. "I think quality of raw materials plays a big part in leather goods," Start says. "Through experience and quality control and years of carrying a gun, I know what will work and what won't."

Among the many cowboy-action shooters Start has created holsters for is Dale Kimsey, whose Single Action Shooting Society alias is Jubal Sackett. "When I first contacted Tim at High Desert Leather, his first questions were about what gun I carried, what barrel length, what color leather I wanted, how many holsters, what kind of drop on the holster, where I would wear the belt, and where on the belt did I want the holster to ride," Kimsey says. "I was actually talking to the person that was going to make the rig."

Kimsey's first High Desert holsters were a matched set of a design called the "California Slim Jim," described by Start as a "classic-style holster built with heavy leather and hand-carved in the old California Style. The holster



photo by Rod Miller

Tim Start skives, or shaves down leather to facilitate working an edge.

is unlined and available as a cross-draw or strong-side draw." (Strong-side draw refers to the shooting hand; a strong-side draw for a right-handed shooter means the holster is carried on the right side of the waist or hip.)

Later, Start and Kimsey collaborated on a holster design that soon gained popularity with cowboy action shooters, and is worn by Single Action Shooting Society champions in local and national competitions. "He and I worked on developing his idea," Start says. "After a few months of work and prototypes, the Sackett Holster was born. It is a very competitive holster that folks have won many matches with."



The Sackett holster is fully lined, giving it stiffness and strength. A flared, or belled mouth allows for smooth and easy holstering, and a deep-cut recurve makes drawing the pistol faster. "Wings" at the top are curved to fit the waist or hip comfortably and serve to hold the holster in place on the hip.

Kimsey credits Start's skill for the success of his holsters among cowboy action shooters. "Tim is a 'leathersmith,' not just a leather worker," Kimsey says. "He is a craftsman who has spent many years learning his art."

Start enjoys working with customers with original ideas or unusual requests, and has incorporated many of their ideas into his designs. Requests for customization are as many and varied as the shooters who ask for them. "There's one I'm working on, where the guy wants me to deliver the rig looking like it's been worn for 20 years," he says. "I'm going to have to beat it up something fierce. That's fun."

The aging process involves tooling the leather, letting it dry, then wetting it again and, as Start calls it, "un-tooling" it by smudging and flattening stamped designs. Hammering, dragging, twisting, and tossing may be involved. Buckles and other silver are tarnished and discolored by soaking in Start's own recipe of chemicals.

Whether pristine or distressed, cowboy action shooters demand a certain level of authenticity in the gun leather they wear. Which, Start says, can be a

challenge as there are few detailed photographs or drawings, and even fewer surviving examples of 19th century holsters. So, the shooter's character identity and manufacturing techniques common to the appropriate era are the leathersmith's primary considerations. "Most cowboy shooters pick a persona," Start says. "If they're a cattle guy from the 1870s, their leather has to fall within, say, a 10-year spread. If they're a shopkeeper from the 1900s, then their leather would be much different, cleaner, a little fancier maybe, maybe not as bulky."

Achieving the desired personality might require more leather than just a holster, and Start provides those goods as well. Leather cuffs are the most popular accessory, but not the only one. Start will also provide chaps, saddlebags, knife scabbards and just about anything else a customer requests.

Start is eager to pass down the skills and techniques he has developed, and routinely teaches classes and tutors individuals. "I'm at the point in my life where I know I don't have a lot years to produce, and if somebody really wants to learn I'm happy to teach them," he says. "I start them out on a project that teaches them three or four skills – not proficiently, but it exposes them to it. Then if they want to go to the next level, they can take those skills and build."

It is altogether possible, then, that Tim Start's influence in cowboy action shooting circles will outlast even the gun leather he creates. And that's a long, long time.

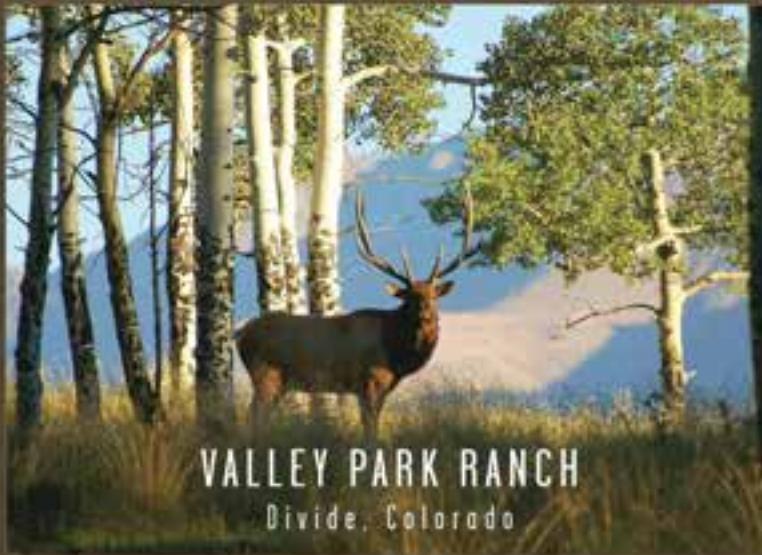


Rod Miller writes novels, history and poetry.

Visit him online at www.writerrodmill.com and www.writerrodmill.blogspot.com.



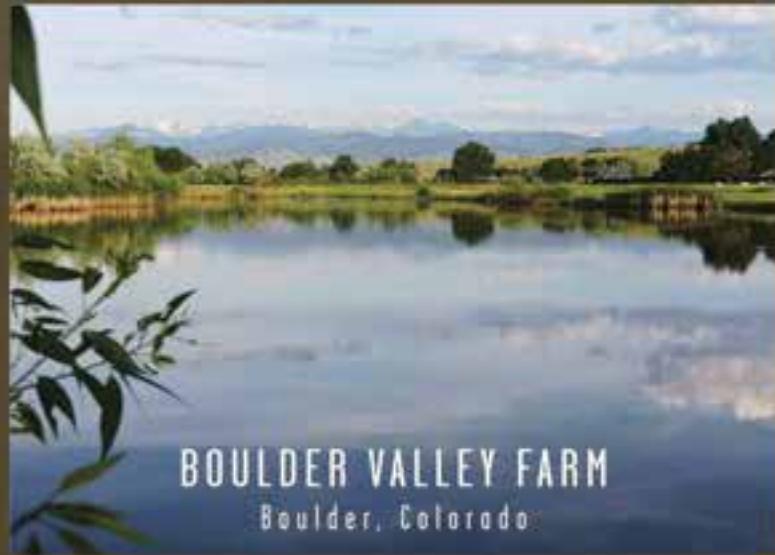
THE WEST IS OUR HERITAGE.



VALLY PARK RANCH

Divide, Colorado

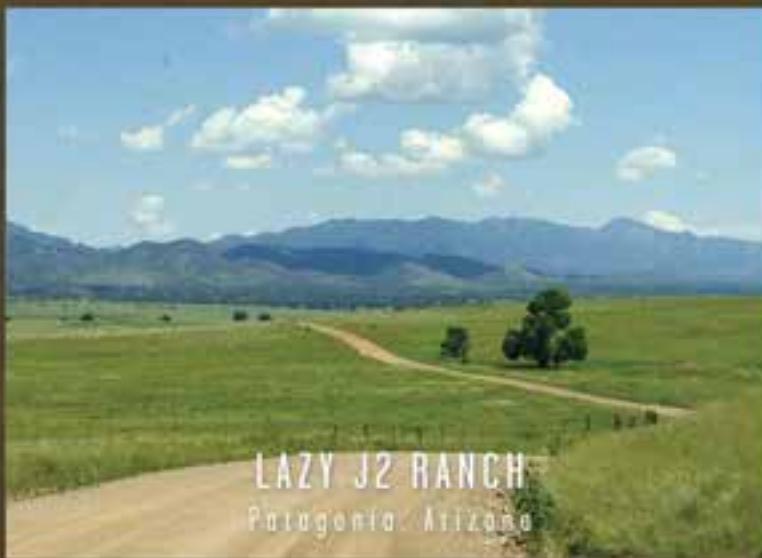
Just under 1,200 acres with grand views of the nearby Pikes Peak, this convenient yet private ranch retreat is within one hour of Colorado Springs. A restored ranch house and guest cabin provide comfortable living and the ranch's spectacular four-season scenery can be explored on horseback, foot or mountain bike. \$8,995,000. Ron Morris, 970.535.0881



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Boulder, Colorado

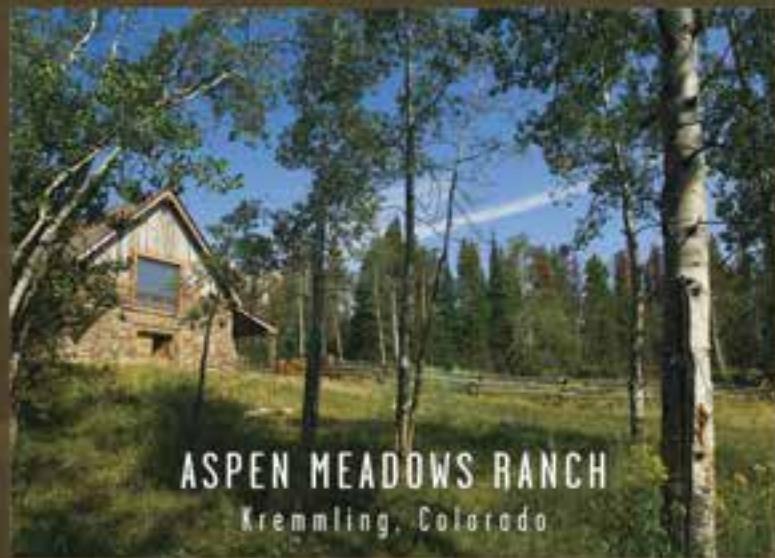
Northeast of Boulder and convenient to Denver, this 642-acre landmark farm features 1.5 miles of Boulder Creek and ponds with outstanding fishing. Operated as a small purebred cattle farm, it includes a beautiful owner's home, guest house, a large lot with development potential, tennis court, pool and five other homes. \$16,000,000. Ron Morris, 970.535.0881



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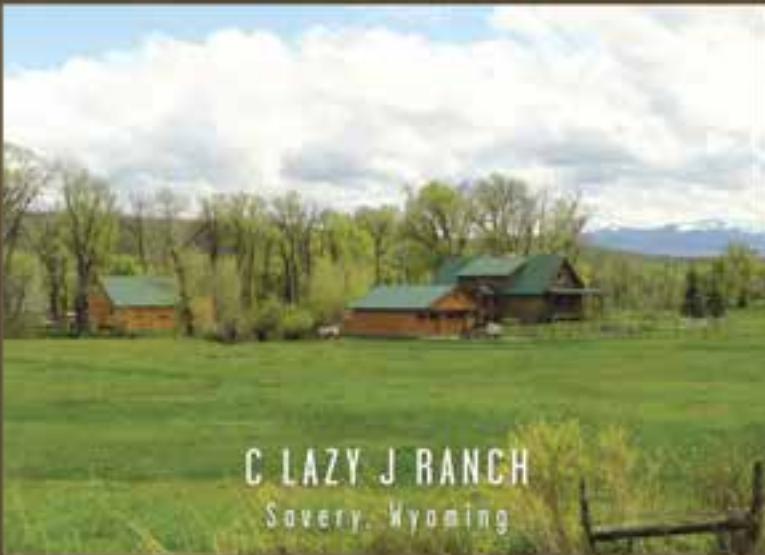


ASPEN MEADOWS RANCH

Kremmling, Colorado

Part of the 19,000-acre Grand River Ranch shared ranch community which offers an assortment of amenities including equestrian center, two fishing camps, sporting clays range and guest lodge, the 176-acre ranch with beveled log home and barn is in a private setting with a creek, two ponds and incredible views. \$7,000,000. Ron Morris, 970.535.0881

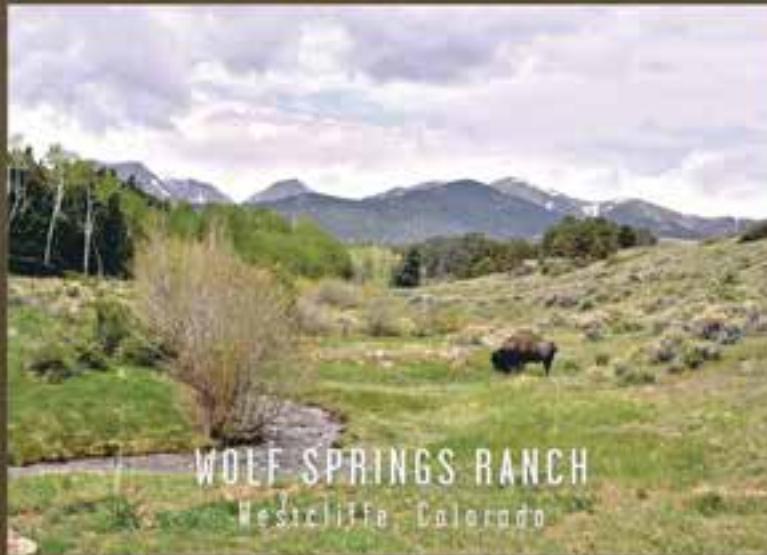
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C LAZY J RANCH

Savery, Wyoming

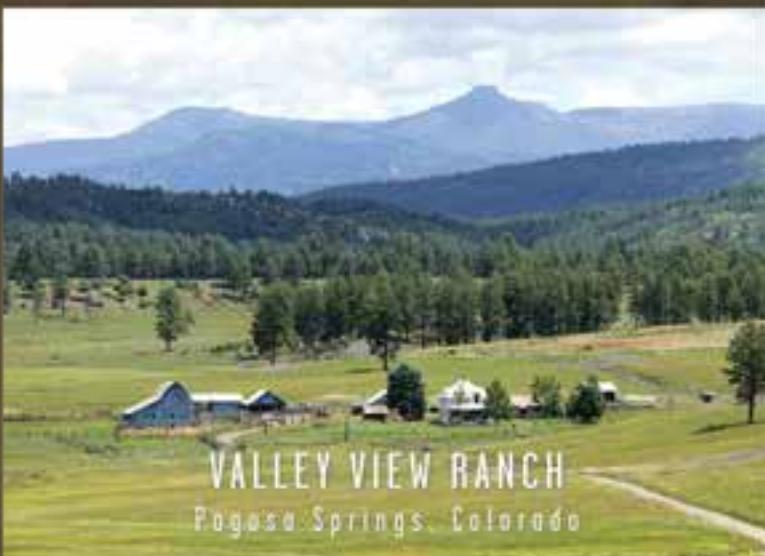
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Westcliffe, Colorado

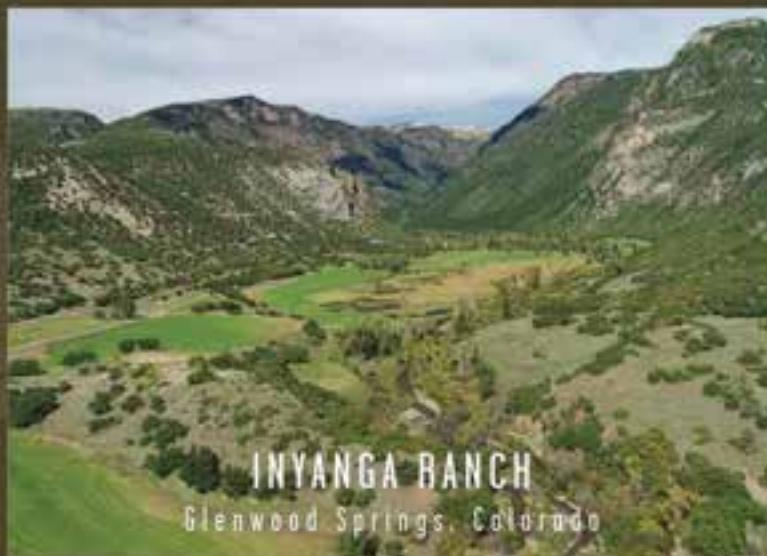
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BOOKS TO FIND

All About The West

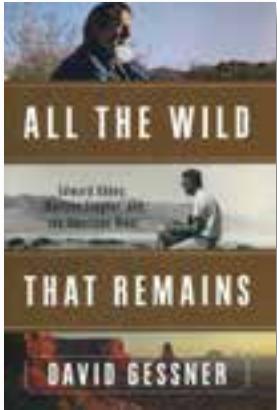
All The West That Remains

David Gessner

www.wwnorton.com

Recently Pope Francis' 2015 Encyclical was released. *Laudato Si – Praise Be To You* was described as a discussion on today's environmental issues. Its sub-head read – On Care of Our Common

Home dealt with the Pope's perspective regarding our collective stewardship of planet Earth. He was both lauded and criticized by both sides of the environmental spectrum and to say the least has become quite controversial for many. It arrived at a time near the release of David Gessner's book, *All The Wild That Remains*. The book discusses the differences – on many fronts – between two grand and controversial western environmental authors, Edward Abbey and Wallace Stegner and their views on stewardship of the West. The book of course discusses the two's polar opposite approaches and styles – Abbey, described as "boozy,



lustful and irascible" while Stegner is depicted as a "buttoned-down, disciplined and devoted family man." Sadly, both of these larger-than-life writers and thinkers are long gone. Abbey died in 1989 and Stegner in 1993. So it was interesting to see Gessner's take each of his subject's environmental perspectives with both having not lived to see the changes that have occurred to the world since their deaths – the Internet, massive population growth, 9/11 – so many changes. How would Edward Abbey approach our world today? What would Stegner have to say about the West today?

Gessner takes us deep in to each of these unique



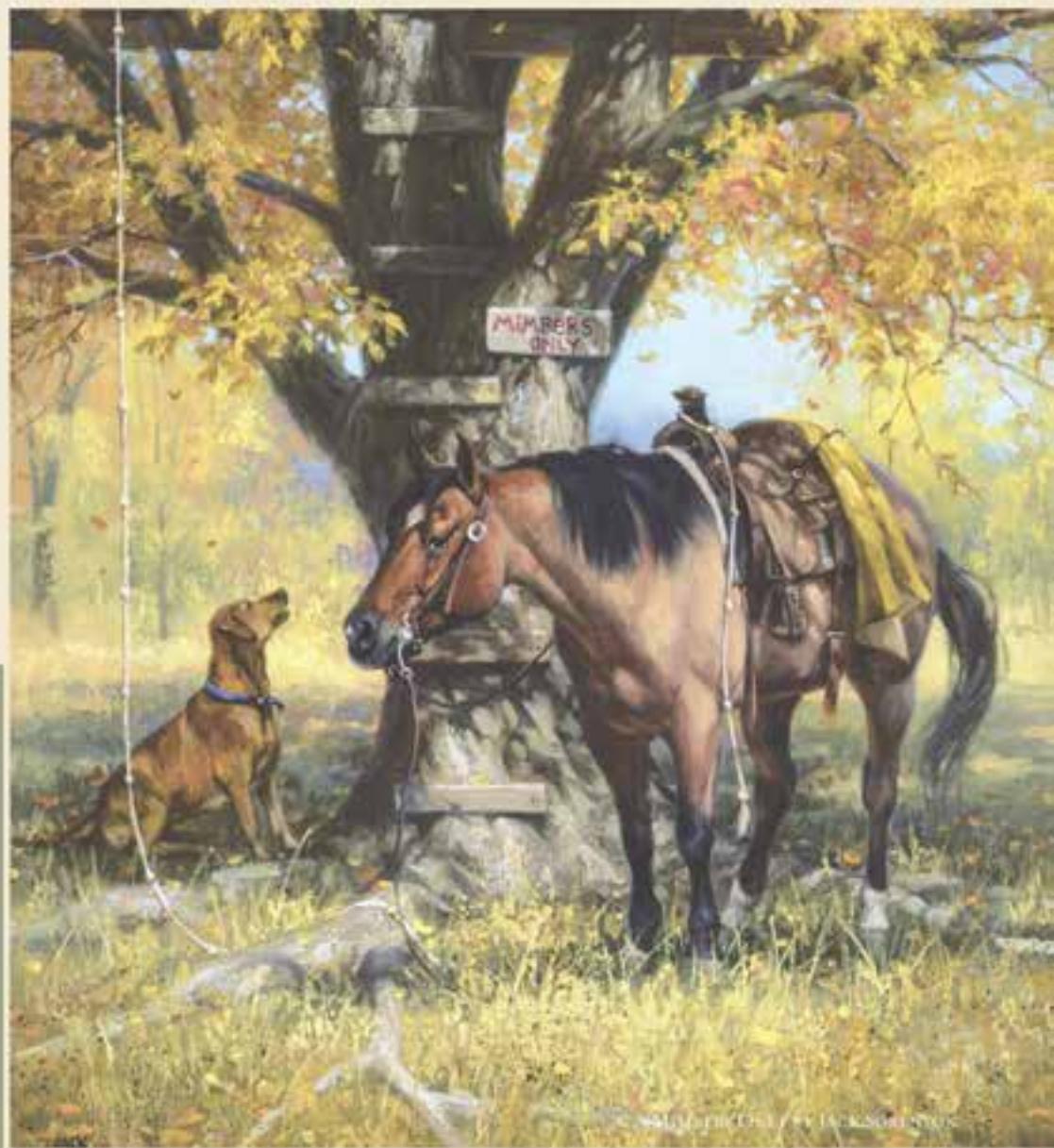
Edward Abbey

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characters. He feels that compared to Edward Abbey, Stegner's "excessive moderation" may have gotten him in trouble – especially regarding the battle over the Glenn Canyon Dam – where Abbey might have been more....assertive. No aggressive, is a better word. In-your-face-with-a-shovel is probably more like it. Abbey was 180 degrees from Stegner's creative writing professor's approach. Described as "poetic and high-minded," Abbey's associates said he was actually quiet and reserved in person, but not in his writing, where "he could sometimes be as subtle as a whoopee cushion."

Gessner provides a well-researched journey into these two epic individuals' efforts to bring the jeopardy of the West's longevity front and center. In their own way each was headed in the same direction although with different road maps. Stegner, celebratory of the little qualities of the West that held within them a true sense of place – his art was in his words - with Abbey being confrontational and blunt. According to Gessner, Abbey made being blunt a "high art." Gessner tells the story of a letter Abbey sent to the environmental poet

and writer Gary Snyder: "I like your work except for the Zen bullshit."

What would these two make of today's environmental dilemmas? How would they view *Laudato Si?* We will never know of course but *All The Wild That Remains* shows us how these two got



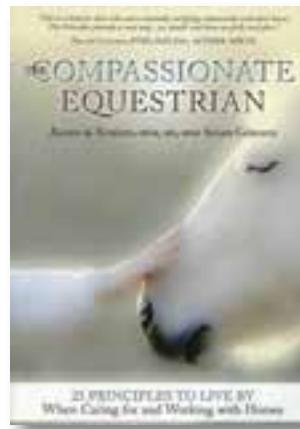
Wallace Stegner

us to a place of understanding. Now, along with Francis, the rest is up to us.

The Compassionate Equestrian

Allen M. Schoen, DVM and Susan Gordon
www.horseandriderbooks.com

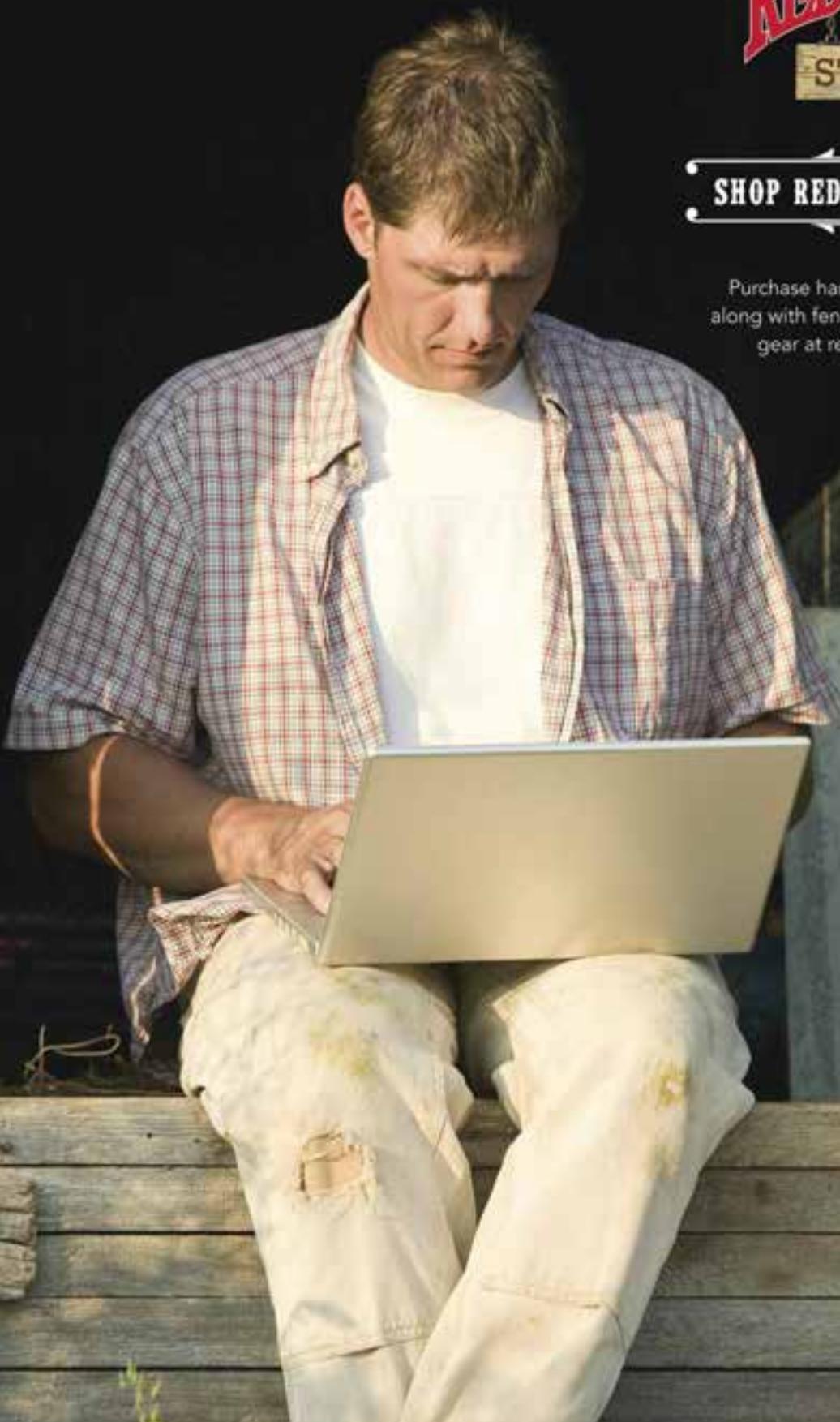
It's been said that horse people are a breed unto themselves. That being the case then "horseshow people" are sometimes perceived as from another planet. As my late father used to tell me repeatedly, "Passion is the wood putty of life." And passion is what truly drives folks to show their horses, and sometimes that passion can get the better of some of them and problems can arise. Dr. Schoen and Ms. Gordon have put together what can be considered a handbook in how to navigate a respectful life amongst horse people and horseshow types. In fact the book stops too soon at the exit gate as frankly the "25 Principles to Live By" illustrated in this entertaining volume can be equally effective at the office, the dry cleaner or at the dinner table. Mutual respect, understanding, empathy, and compassion – in effect, defining what it takes to be a functioning human is what this book shares. Filled with helpful tips and questions to ask yourself at the end of each chapter; "The Compassionate Equestrian" presents lifelong lessons for a competent life among horses and humans as well. There is even a quote from the 14th Dalai Lama. The book's sub-head reads: "25 Principles to Live By When





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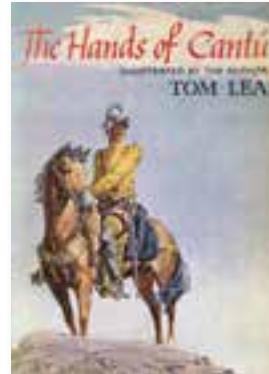
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Caring For and Working With Horses.” In reality, the book’s approach allows that last word horses to be interchangeable with any living thing.

The Hands of Cantu

Written and Illustrated by Tom Lea

Published by Little Brown in 1964. Out of print but copies available online.



We include this book as it is fascinating and it is mentioned in Tom Russell’s piece on Tom Lea later in this issue. The title refers to the gifted hands of “the best horseman ever seen in New Spain, Don Vito Cantu.” The book discusses the Spanish arrival and exploration of the New World – a time when explorers rode to the North, before we knew we had a “West.” As described, the characters in Lea’s stories reflects “a time when strange foxfire gleamed in the dark Spanish eyes, and the malady of gold infected in the minds of the conquistadors.” The



book is filled with thirty, gloriously detailed Chinese ink drawings by Lea. In describing the book’s writing, Lea told writer Adair Margo in *Tom Lea, An Oral History* (Texas Western Press, 1995), “I sup-

pose I had just pure fun writing it, the main character is a great horseman and breeder of horses, who established a hacienda in the state of Durango in the early days of the Spanish Viceroy Mendoza...I did the illustrations, which were a new departure for me. My previous illustrations had been pen and ink line drawings, and these used half tones. They were beautifully reproduced.” The illustrations are wonderful and the writing is an old time adventure. So find a copy as it’s a must have for those who love the early vaquero world and it’s history.

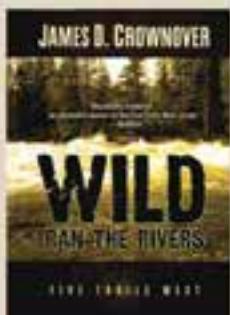


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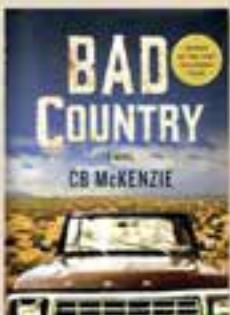


PATRICK DEAREN

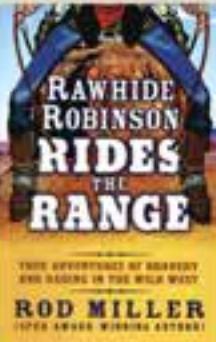
Traditional Novel
The Big Drift
by Patrick Dearen
(TCU Press)



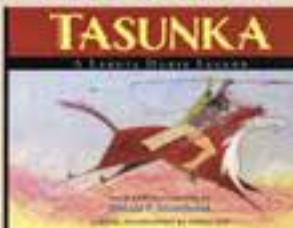
Historical Novel
Wild Ran the Rivers
by James D. Crownover
(Five Star Publishing)



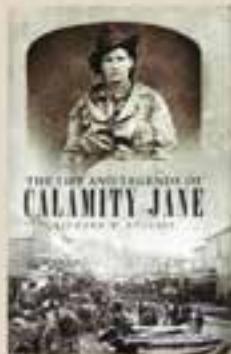
Contemporary Novel
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by CB McKenzie
(Minotaur / Thomas Dunne Books)



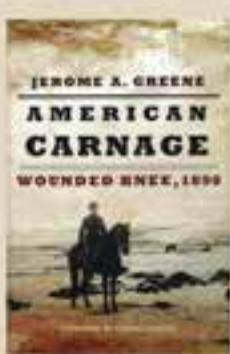
Juvenile Fiction
Rawhide Robinson Rides the Range: True Adventures of Bravery and Daring in the Wild West
by Rod Miller
(Five Star Publishing)



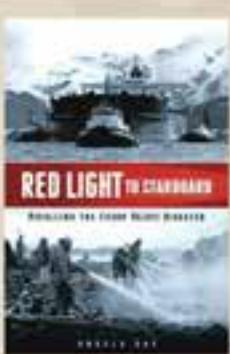
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Tasunka: A Lakota Horse Legend
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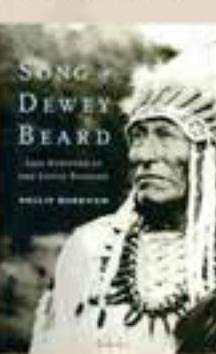
Short Nonfiction
"Calamity Jane: A Life and Legends"
by Richard W. Erland
(Montana The Magazine of Western History)



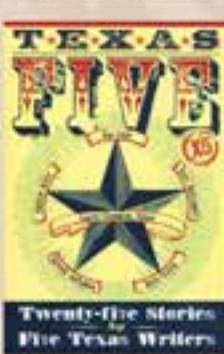
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American Carnage: Wounded Knee, 1890
by Jerome A. Greene
(University of Oklahoma Press)



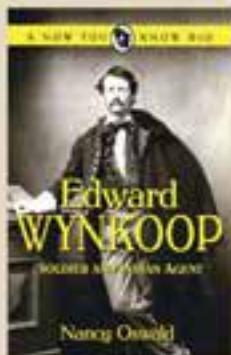
Contemporary Nonfiction
Red Light to Starboard: Recalling the Exxon Valdez Disaster
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(Washington State University Press)



Biography
Song of Dewey Beard: Last Survivor of the Little Bighorn
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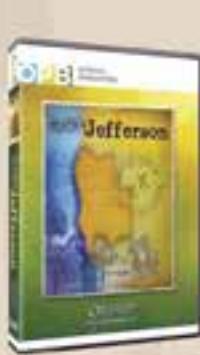
Short Fiction Story
"Fingers"
by Andrew Geyer
(Steven F. Austin University Press)



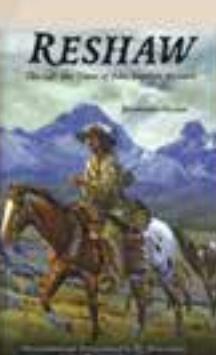
Juvenile Nonfiction
Edward Wynkoop: Soldier and Indian Agent
by Nancy Oswald
(Filice Press)



Drama Script
The Homesman
by Tommy Lee Jones, Kieran Fitzgerald, Wesley A. Oliver (Ithaca Films)



Documentary Script
State of Jefferson
by Kami Horton (Oregon Public Broadcasting)



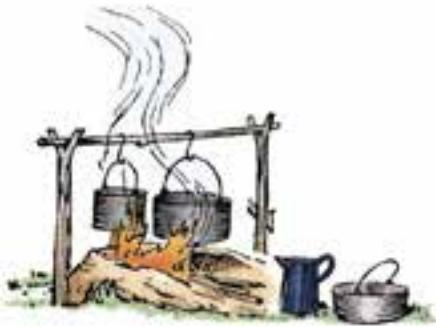
First Nonfiction Book
Resilience: The Life & Times of John Baptiste Richard
by Jefferson Glass
(High Plains Press)



Song
"Charlie and Evangeline" by Doug Figgs and Todd Carter (self-published)

First Novel
Wild Ran the Rivers
by James D. Crownover
(Five Star Publishing)

Poem
"A Little Longer Than the Moment" by Alan Birkelbach
(Cowboy Poetry Press)



THE COOK HOUSE

Mary Ross' Apricot Bars



By Kathy McCraine

When I visited with western artist and rancher Mary Ross Buchholz in June, she said, "I'm up to my elbows in apricots!" Apparently an abundance of apricot trees grow on the family ranch she and her husband, Bob, own and operate near Eldorado, Texas, just south of San Angelo. Luckily, Mary Ross loves to cook because the apricots keep her busy in early summer, canning the fruit, making jam, and whipping up delicious desserts for her hungry family, which includes sons Robert, 23; Dalton, 19; and Franklin, 17.

Mary Ross comes from pioneering ranch families on both sides. On her dad's side, the Ross family homesteaded in Sutton County around 1890. Her mother's family also ranned in neighboring Crockett County.

"My mom grew up in the kitchen and was an excellent cook," Mary Ross says. "She was a heck of a horsewoman and if she'd had her way, she'd have been out with the horses all the time, but she had to help her mother cook. She says she hardly ever remembers not having company for lunch, and she would have two mix masters going making cakes every single day."

Mary Ross's dad raised Angora goats, so she grew up helping in the shearing sheds and doing pen work, as well as helping her mom cook. This rugged west Texas landscape lends itself to diverse livestock production, and today the Buchholz's run about 200 head of cattle (down from 600 before the recent drought) and 1,400 to 2,500 meat goats.



photos courtesy Mary Ross

Texas artist and ranch cook
Mary Ross Buchholz.

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Mary Ross married Bob in 1991, and they moved to the ranch in 1995 after she graduated from Texas A&M University in 1994 with a degree in animal science.

"Bob always says I caught him with a frying pan because my cooking convinced him to marry me," she laughs. "He was a bachelor until age 37, so he was a good cook himself. An old man had once given him some advice about selecting a bride: 'Take her on a camping trip, and that will determine whether she'll make a suitable rancher's wife.'

"Instead, Bob did what he considered the next closest thing," she says. "That was to take me to help him gather and mark 1,000 head of kid goats all day in a dusty pen, which I did with a smile. We were engaged 37 days later and married four months from our first date."

Mary Ross never set out to be a successful artist, but she always loved to draw. When her three boys were born, she wanted to be a stay-at-home mom but needed something to occupy her time. That's when her mother, Frances, said, "Come on, we're going to take painting lessons."

The two traveled to Europe, toured museums, bought books and took workshops. At first, Mary Ross concentrated on portraits for local ranch families, but more and more she began to focus on ranch themes, and her career took off in the late 2000s. She also found that her true calling was drawing in graphite and charcoal. Today, her delicate, detailed renderings are sought after in top galleries and art shows across the country.

"I don't ride and help on the ranch as much now

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because of my art career, but if they need me, I'm always ready to help," she says. "I still cook for the crews when we have seasonal help, and I enjoy that. Cooking is an art form in itself."

When I talked to Mary Ross, the family was getting ready for a big barbecue and graduation party for Robert, who just graduated from Tarleton State University, and Dalton who just graduated from high school. Bob was barbecuing *cabrito* (young goat) and brisket for 100 guests. Mary Ross was making potato salad, coleslaw, beans, camp bread and apricot cobbler.

"It's a special time," Mary Ross says. "We don't slow down from ranch work very often to socialize, and we don't often butcher a goat because the prices are so high right now. This party is going to be a pretty big deal."

In addition to apricot cobbler, the following recipe for apricot bars is one of her family's favorites.

Apricot Bars

2 cups flour
½ cup brown sugar
½ cup sugar
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
3/4 cup butter
1 cup chopped pecans
½ cup coconut (reserve for topping)
1 pint apricot jam

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Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9x13 inch pyrex dish. Sift flour, salt and soda together. Mix in sugar and brown sugar, and cut in butter until crumbly. Add pecans. Press half the mixture into pan, bake 5-10 minutes and cool. Spread jam over crust. Add coconut to the rest of the crumb mixture and sprinkle over the jam. Bake for 30 minutes. Cool and cut into bars. Freezes well.



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

See Mary Ross Buchholz's artwork at www.maryrossbuchholz.com.

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An Artist from the West

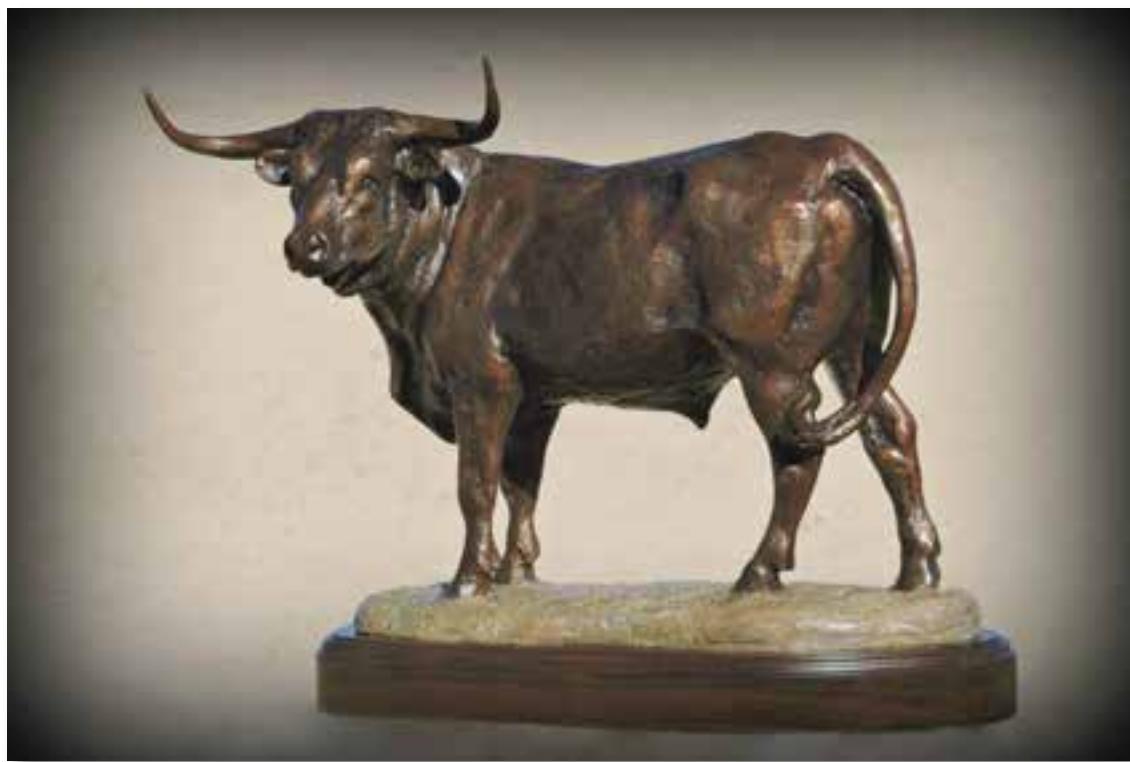
The art of Cynthia Rigden

Cynthia Rigden grew up surrounded by horses and cattle on a ranch that has belonged to her family since 1902. Her roots in Arizona and the West are deep, but she does not consider herself a “western” artist; rather, she is an artist who comes from the West. Rigden believes her long association with horses and cattle gives her an edge in portraying them. She now manages the family ranch, where she raises Longhorn and Longhorn-cross cattle.

Rigden studied art at Arizona State University, and attended a summer session in Florence, Italy, studying graphic arts and art history. She’s shown at the Prix de West for more than 20 years, and is a member of the American Academy of Equine Art.



Dust Devils



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Safe Place



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Mustang Mama

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War Horse



Frieze



Crowned Heads



Hidden Out



Mom's Shadow

63

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64

Lone Star



<https://youtu.be/3fkUt009vIs>
Cynthia Rigden is featured in this short video
for Arizona Highways TV.

Cynthia Rigden's work is represented by Trailside Galleries, in Scottsdale, Arizona, and Jackson, Wyoming; and by Claggett/Rey Gallery in Vail, Colorado.



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Going Holistic

A California ranch blends holistic management with vaquero tradition.

By Jesse Bussard

The assumption that “you can’t make a living in the cattle business” has never held much sway with Joe Morris. Growing up in San Francisco, he took every chance he could to visit his grandfather, J.J. Baumgartner, at T.O. Cattle Company, relishing the early morning breakfasts, water checks and cattle work.

“They say I was born with my boots on,” Joe says. “I found the ranch a wonderful place. It struck me pretty deeply as a kid, that that’s where I wanted to be.”

The T.O. Cattle Company’s roots trace back to 1881. Joe’s great-great grandfather, Richard O’Neill, then a butcher in the San Francisco financial district, formed a partnership with a friend, James Flood, to purchase Rancho Santa Margarita, now Camp Pendleton.

In 1927, Joe’s grandfather, J.J., moved the ranch business to San Juan Bautista, in San Benito County,

and founded TOCC. Today the ranch remains one of California’s oldest working ranches in the central coastal region.

Joe continued to spend time on the ranch throughout his childhood and adolescent years, but eventually his interests sent him elsewhere. A stint in Notre Dame, two years in Venezuela, and graduate studies at UC Berkeley filled the next several years of his life. All the while, the desire to ranch remained in the back of his mind. After college and against the advice of his grandfather, Joe went to work on several large ranches in Nevada, including the historic Spanish Ranch.

“I left Nevada after a couple years thinking you couldn’t make money in the cattle business and I sure couldn’t as a buckaroo,” Joe says. “I wanted to do something bigger with my life, but I wasn’t sure how

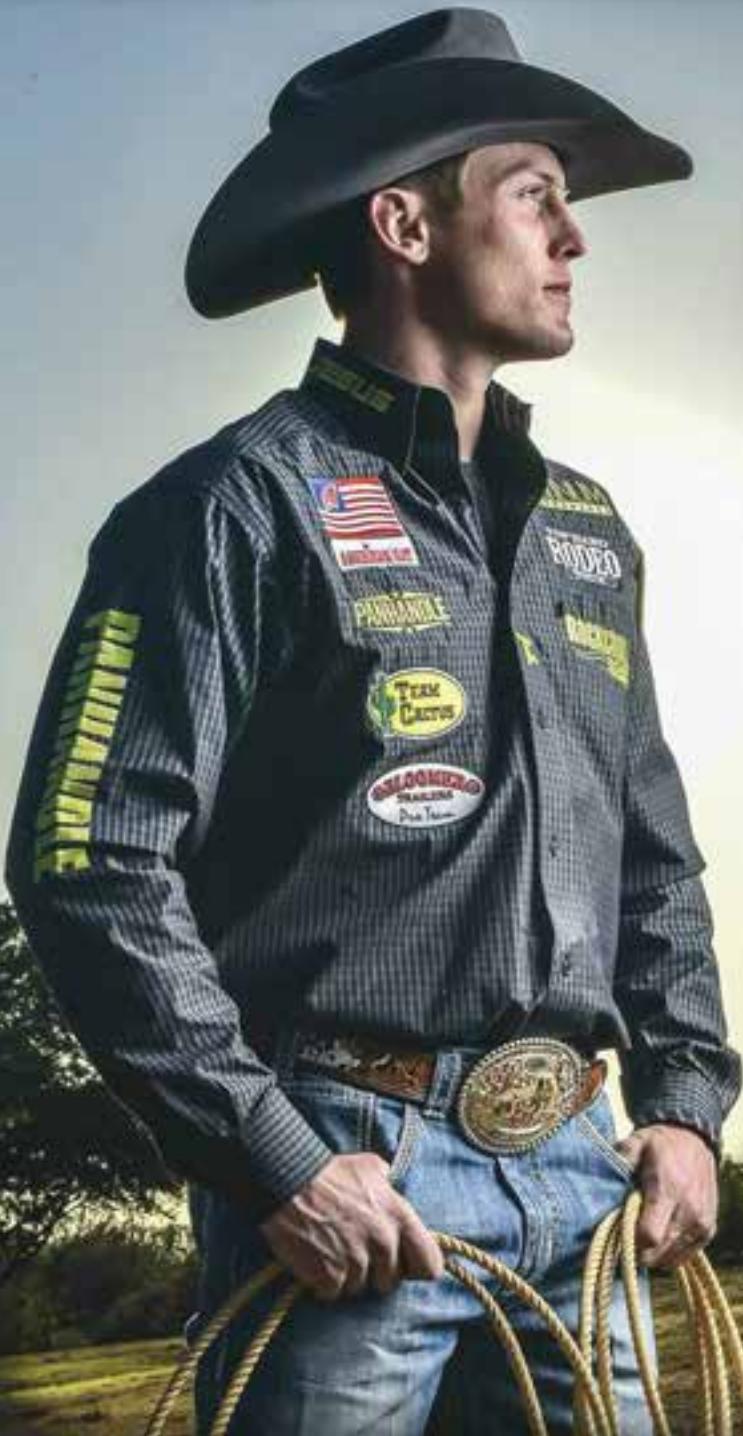


Photos by Kent Reeves

Joe Morris amid creeping wild rye on the historic TOCC outfit.

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Joe and Julie Morris.

68

ranching fit into that picture.”

Joe had two options: give up his dream of ranching because he didn’t have money to lose, or figure out a way to do it differently. He chose the latter and, in that moment, a paradigm shift occurred, pushing Joe to a new way of thinking.

“I had to do things differently,” he says. “And [circumstances] liberated me to explore what those differences might be.”

In his quest for answers, Joe came across authors – such as Wendell Berry and Allan Savory – who spoke about ranching in a larger, holistic context. The practical philosophies of these innovators, especially Savory’s teachings on holistic management, resonated with Joe.

“That was exactly how I conceived myself in ranching,” he says.

Holistic management, began as the “Savory grazing method,” also known as “holistic planned grazing,” in the 1960s and was the result of Savory’s days working as a wildlife biologist in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. He concluded the desertification, loss of wildlife species, and human impoverishment seen in the region were the result of the decrease in herds of wild grazers and the behavioral changes seen in remaining animals. Savory’s remedy involved substituting livestock onto the land to mimic nature’s grazer-grass relationship and rekindle the ecosystem. In the 1980s, Savory began teaching HM in the United States, and the approach to

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managing resources was quickly adopted by many progressive ranchers.

At that time, says Joe, “the most shining examples of ranching were from people doing holistic management. They were the profitable ones. They had lands whose ecology was ascending. It was getting more interesting, with more biodiversity, and more productive.”

The newfound decision-making framework of holistic management gave Joe the thing he had been seeking – a way to do something meaningful with his life while making a living for himself and his family.

In 1991, Joe and his wife, Julie, took over management of TOCC from Joe’s grandfather, J.J., and decided they would give ranching another try. They would attempt to do what everyone had told Joe was impossible: *make a living in the cattle business*.

Joe and Julie started ranching with only 200 acres and a couple dozen cows. They began exploring ideas involved with holistic management and how best to implement these concepts on their operation.

Over time, and with a little creativity, the operation expanded and Joe was able to develop relationships with neighboring ranches. He now leases approximately 4,700 acres from six different entities, in addition to using the original 200 acres where TOCC headquarters lies. These ranches consist of a mixture of public and privately owned lands.

By 1993, Joe had transitioned to managing the entire ranch holistically. Today, he manages his cattle to mimic historic disturbance regimes (the patterns that shape an ecosystem) of native grazing wildlife. This is accomplished by combining herds, moving animals rapidly to coincide with plant growth rates, herding animals with dogs, using temporary fencing, and incorporating livestock behavioral changes to mimic wild grazers in the presence of predators.

These management changes have allowed TOCC

to work toward restoring and improving natural plant and animal communities and ecosystems, as well as native grasslands. Thanks to improved grazing management, Joe has increased the length of his forage-growing season, while boosting native grasses, oaks and vegetation along streams and riparian areas. Wetlands have expanded. And improved water and nutrient cycles have enhanced water quality while allowing manure to break down more rapidly.

“Ecologically,” he says, “our land is getting better and better every year.”

The most impressive change seen on Joe’s ranch, though, might be the carbon he is building in the soil. Soil carbon, also referred to as organic matter, is a key component in soil greatly affecting its physical, chemical and biological properties, and contributing to the health of its surrounding ecosystem. By increasing soil carbon, water and nutrient retention is improved, soil structure is healthier, erosion is reduced, and quality of groundwater and surface water is improved.

Four years ago, Joe joined forces with the non-profit Soil Carbon Coalition, and became part of their Soil Carbon Challenge, an international competition to see how fast land managers can turn atmospheric carbon into soil organic matter. This 10-year monitoring program allows landowners to set up permanent plots, take field samples and conduct elemental analyses of soil carbon, beginning with a baseline reading, followed by resampling at years three, six and 10. Results from TOCC’s second reading since the baseline monitoring showed convincing results that Joe’s management strategies are working.

“We found there was a seven percent increase in soil carbon in the top 10 centimeters of soil,” Joe says. “There was an 11 percent increase at 10 to 25 centimeters, and a five percent increase below that, at 25 to 40 centimeters.”

Even more impressive: the results were achieved



in drought conditions, at a time when the ranch had a higher stocking rate (more animals) than neighboring operations. The results on Joe's ranch, so far, illustrate how land management that is both ecologically and holistically focused can improve land health. (You can actually follow Joe's progress via the Soil Carbon Coalition's map of soil carbon change: www.soilcarboncoalition.org/changemap.htm.)

Through all these changes, Joe's family has been integral. Shortly after taking over management of the ranch, Joe and his wife decided to start producing grass-fed beef products from the cattle they raised. They market under the Morris Grassfed label, and sell beef to over 800 families in the central coastal region of California.

Julie, Joe's wife, handles media and marketing for the ranch. Their children, Sarah, 20, and Jack, 18, help gather cattle, deliver beef to customers, and assist their

parents with ranch work.

When asked how holistic management has benefited his family, Joe says it provides them with a more complete understanding of the world around them – cycles, energy flow, carbon, water, biodiversity.

"It helps them understand how to manage any kind of resource," he says. "Holistic management goes way beyond ranching. It gives them a basis for making decisions, a way to think about what we are doing, why we are doing it, how we can monitor what we do and make decisions that benefit all of us."

The holistic approach extends to relationships with customers, helping Joe articulate what occurs daily on the ranch. The Morrises tell the ranch's story in newsletters and through field days, during which customers see firsthand how grass-fed beef is raised. In the process, customers gain insight into ranching and an appreciation



Cynthia Rigden

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for the processes involved.

"It has helped our customers gain a deeper understanding of what we do," Joe says. "They realize grass-fed beef is not only about a delicious hamburger or steak, but embedded in that steak or hamburger is a whole suite of values important to their lives, such as water and the carbon cycle."

One would think that, with his advocacy of holistic-management practices, Joe has dismissed the ranching traditions with which he grew up. Reality tells a different story. In Joe's mind, ranching culture goes hand in hand with land stewardship.

"I think maintaining ranch traditions is important," he says. "The way ranchers live from their work on the land, how they fit into the landscape, the interaction between that relationship and people, land and animals – it's a beautiful culture. Ranching fills an interesting and beautiful cultural and economic niche, as well as an ecological niche essential to human life."

TOCC is still a ranch steeped in the *Californios* tradition, and Joe continues to practice, in harmony with his holistic philosophies, many of the stockmanship techniques he learned from his grandfather. Joe practices low-stress cattle handling and horsemanship. He continues to use horses to move and gather cattle, and ropes when necessary. However, he does all of this in conjunction with a holistic grazing plan. This means gathering cattle more often, moving them with intention, and being mindful of



Joe explains holistic management during one of the ranch's field days.

what the cattle will do for the land and why they need to be in a particular pasture at a particular point in time.

"It's melding holistic grazing, stockmanship, economics driven by my need to make a living," Joe says, "and historical traditions [passed down] from the *vaquero*, that I learned from my grandfather."

All this, Joe notes, increases productivity and biodiversity, and creates beauty and a sense of accomplishment. So why aren't more ranchers open to these ways of thinking? Joe believes it is due to a lack of interest in doing things differently, and a fear of unknown risks.

"People have given up hope that there is a possibility of making a living from ranching," he says. "It's been said so many times, it's actually believed. So now ranchers just defend what they do because it's a lifestyle."



<https://youtu.be/yFS21dLo1-k>
Learn more about Morris Grassfed in this brief video.

Jesse Bussard is a writer living in Montana.

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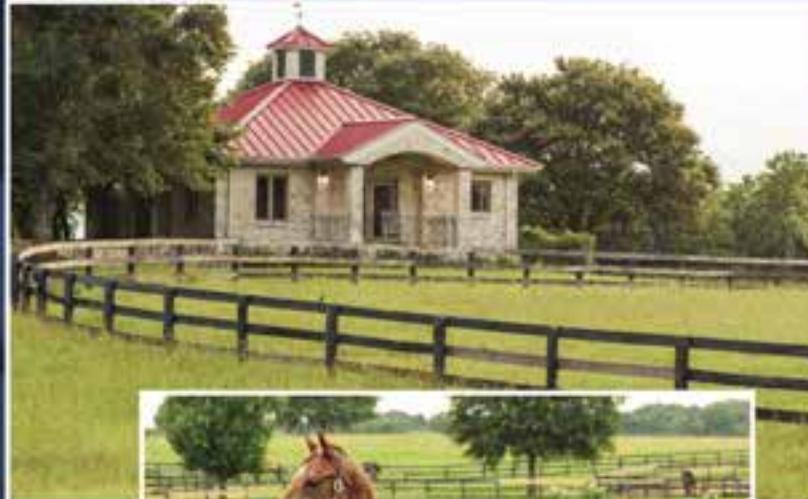


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The (Old) Double Diamond

The ranch and the song that keeps its memory alive.

By Jayme Fearly

With finality, the auction gavel fell. Cowboys, neighbors, and onlookers stood silently, stunned. The Double Diamond Ranch, one of Wyoming's legendary cattle outfits, had been relegated to history.

The crowd murmured about the identity of the mysterious buyer, the so-called Triple J Group, for whom an attorney had bid in proxy. After the auction the lawyer set his briefcase containing a \$169,000 down payment check, signed by the buyers, onto the roof of his car. He got in and drove away, forgetting the briefcase, which slid off into the ditch alongside the East Fork Road.

The cowboys of the Double Diamond had no choice but to move on. With downturned mouths and slumped shoulders, they threw their saddles into pickups and drove off. Everyone else left, too, including songwriter Gary McMahan, who happened to be visiting friends near Dubois, and a reporter from the Dubois newspaper. While driving, the reporter glimpsed something lying in the ditch.

On the way home to Colorado, McMahan began writing "Old Double Diamond" from the perspective of a cowboy the ranch had forged into a man. Having cowboyed with several outfits whose ownership had changed, he felt a personal loss, although he had no connection to the Double Diamond. He arrived home before finishing the song, and put it in a drawer.

In 1864, James Kerr (J.K.) Moore headed west with a wagon train bound for Montana. He had no idea he would establish one of the West's iconic ranches that more than a hundred years later would be immortalized in song. Migrating to Fort Bridger, Wyoming, he established a store at Camp Brown, now Fort Washakie. Outlaw Butch Cassidy, who co-owned a small place up Horse Creek, north of Dubois, purchased supplies and cigars from Moore.

The Oregon Trail passed through nearby South Pass. Moore and his partners built a large-scale cattle operation on a patchwork of land along the upper Wind River Valley. The homestead, up the East Fork River, east of Dubois, proved up on July 9, 1898.

From 1911 to 1927, Double Diamond changed ownership four times, finally becoming part of the monstrous American Cattle Company that ran cattle in South Dakota (the Circle Y brand), Colorado (the Y brand), Arizona (the J brand), Montana and Wyoming.

During the next 26 years, the next owner, Edward J. Bermingham, an investment banker and prominent Republican who exchanged lengthy letters with Dwight Eisenhower, grew the ranch from 5,000 to 30,000 acres. By 1953, it had upscale buildings and residences. Work crews and cowboys contributed to the ranch's reputation. Hank Hudspeth of Lander helped his father in



construction during the summers of 1941 through 1943. Hudspeth tells the story about a cowboy teasing the cook. He smacked her buttocks with a large stock whip, and she chased him into the bedbug-ridden bunkhouse and stuffed a gunnysack in the stovepipe. When he staggered out, she picked up a wooden bench, hit him in the face, and kicked him in his manhood. “He didn’t mess with her anymore,” Hudspeth said.

But work crews didn’t always joke. Friction existed between the cowboy crew and the farming crew, which felt treated like lower-class citizens. Then there was the trail food. Once, while fighting wildfires near the cow camp on the West Fork River, “all we had to eat was slimy [canned] sliced peaches,” Hudspeth said. Hot, tired and hungry, he and his coworkers emerged from the forest to see a U.S. Forest Service truck and sprinted to it. “But the truck was loaded with cases of sliced peaches,” Hudspeth said.

The Double Diamond became the largest operator in Wyoming’s Upper Wind River Valley and maintained the reputation of a well-run outfit. “They ran that son of a bitch to make money,” said Ronnie Alexander. As the ranch’s farrier in 1952, he earned \$70 a month. “They worked the piss outta you, but it was a goddamned good ranch.”

Bermingham’s death in 1958 resulted in another sale.

In the early 1970s, the Double Diamond ran 2,500 brood cows consisting of Hereford, Hereford crosses, and Shorthorn crosses. Cow boss George Meeks



Photo courtesy John Finley

The Double Diamond, circa 1940.

remembers the East Fork Valley well: “Up there, the grass was short but punchy. It didn’t rain much and burned up fast, but it had a lot of protein.”

Many cowboys passed through, some capable and others worthless. Meeks fired a night calver for lying about his job. Having found a dead calf hanging from a heifer, Meeks questioned the cowboy, who claimed he had entered the pastures to check the stock. Meeks had caught the lie by placing twigs on the unopened gates. Desperate for help, he hired two green teenagers, one of them Charlie Needham, who would later qualify for the NFR in bull riding.

Then came the infamous May 3, 1974. In warmer-than-usual weather, ranch hands and family members gathered for spring branding. At one end of the corral, cowboys wrestled large calves. At the opposite end, women and children worked near the butane tank, fueling the branding fire. The tank, which did not have a pressure release valve, had been warming in the sun.

The tank’s explosion spewed a massive liquid



Musician Gary McMahan wrote "Old Double Diamond." By the time he began performing it, the song had become a hit.

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fireball. Margie Cargill, a ranch cook married to a Double Diamond hand, was aflame. She said, "I thought the whole world was on fire." Seeing that the hills were not burning, she climbed the wooden fence, ran through the sagebrush, and rolled in the sand and rocks. She had second- and third-degree burns over 80 percent of her body. Her young daughter was also badly burned. The explosion killed Ivan Jean Getty, 35, and maimed nine persons. The Double Diamond's end was near.

The auction occurred on August 27, 1975. Before bidding began, lawyers representing unnamed clients had questioned the auctioneer. One attorney had asked

about mineral rights, pending lawsuits, liens, and Indian reservation conflicts. Bidding had barely begun when Attorney G.L. (Gerry) Spence asked for a recess to phone the county courthouse. Afterward, Spence withdrew his bid.

Why had he withdrawn? To what information was he privy? Had he discovered a problem? Bidding continued but climbed only \$28 an acre above the opening bid and stopped at \$78 an acre. The last 10,568 acres of the Double Diamond had sold to the Triple J Group for \$824,304. But who was the buyer?

Driving along the East Fork River after the auction,



the Dubois reporter pulled to the side of the road and plucked the briefcase from the ditch. Inside was a check signed by two of the “J’s,” husband and wife Gerry (“Jerry”) and Imagine (“Imajean”) Spence. The reporter drove to town and called Mr. Spence. She would return the briefcase in exchange for his spilling the entire story.

A year later, songwriter Gary McMahan pulled “Old Double Diamond” from the drawer, finished the song, and added it to his repertoire of cowboy songs with which he was trying to eek out a living. The melody’s poignant mix of thankfulness and loss is haunting, and the lyrics evoke a longing for the freedom and adventure of the West. In McMahan’s words, the song is “an ode to the West that we’re losing. Everyone loves the West. It is perceived that the whole lifestyle is dying out. The ‘Old Double Diamond’ puts that into pictures.”

McMahan couldn’t earn enough income writing

and singing cowboy songs, so for 10 years he returned to guiding and outfitting. For several million dollars, Spence sold most of the ranchland to Wyoming Game and Fish, which grew into the 35,014-acre Spence & Moriarity Wildlife Management Area. He renamed the remaining 220-acre headquarters parcel Thunderhead Ranch and turned it into the Gerry Spence Trial Lawyers College. Attorneys traveled from all over the world to study there.

During McMahan’s decade in the mountains, the Starlite Ramblers recorded “Old Double Diamond,” as did rodeo competitor Chris Ledoux, who sold his records out of his pickup. But McMahan didn’t know. In 1985, McMahan took a break from work to attend a new event in Elko, Nevada, featuring cowboy poets and musicians – the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering. When he performed the “Old Double Diamond” at an

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open-microphone session, he was astonished to hear the audience singing along. While he had been cowboying, the song had become a hit.

Eventually, more than 300 artists recorded the song. Ian Tyson's cut, on his album "Old Corrals and Sagebrush," became what many music fans consider the quintessential version. Ingrained in western culture, today the song is equally popular with cowboys and office types from coast to coast. Some persons go so far as to declare that "Old Double Diamond" has become *the* song about the cowboy West.

Now, 40 years later, Spence has retired and put the Thunderhead Ranch on the market. The price? \$3,000,000. The real estate listing says the ranch was "the headquarters of Wyoming's Famous Double Diamond Ranch. Famous poet and songwriter Gary McMahan wrote the song 'The Ol' Double Diamond,'

which Chris Ledoux sang."

Under new ownership, the ranch will again take new form. But the iconic years of a legendary working ranch have been frozen in time through music. The Double Diamond is long gone, but the Old Double Diamond lives on in song.

*Now she's sellin' out. I'm movin' on
But I'm leavin' with more than I came
'Cause I've got this saddle and it ain't for sale
And I've got this song to sing
I'll find a new range to ride, new knots to tie
In a country where cowboys are king
I turned my tail to the wind and the old
Double Diamond
And disappeared into the sage.*



Jayme Fearly is a writer living in Wyoming.

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THE WESTERN HORSE

British Tradition Under the Big Sky

A Montana fox hunt draws equestrians from across the country.



Text and Photography by Audrey Hall

There's a reason Montana's called "Big Sky Country," and the historic Mantle Ranch, outside of Three Forks, fully embodies the state slogan. Landscapes gently fold out toward distant horizons lined with snowcapped peaks, historic cabins lay in hidden gullies, horses graze in pristine prairie fields. It is the epitome of Montana's grandeur and old west history, and certainly not the place you would expect to find a nationally recognized traditional fox hunt in all its glory, with bright red



Treeing Walkers are known for their docile temperaments.

coats, lively hounds and tall Thoroughbreds.

Kai and Renee Mantle are passionate about horses, and the longstanding relationships that group riding fosters. This passion inspired them to create a Montana-based hunt club whose members and at-large friends gather every Wednesday and Sunday from mid-September to mid-April. The rides culminate in an annual "East Meets West" joint invitational hunt, held outside Three Forks and co-sponsored by Reno, Nevada's Red



Treeing Walker Coonhounds in action.

80

Rock Hounds, who first introduced the Mantles to the sport.

Fox hunting's culture has evolved over the years from its roots dating to 15th century England. In the United States, the trend of hound-led hunts is strictly centered on the chase, the ride and recreation, rather than the trophy. Even the tradition of riding strictly English with the proper kit (clothing) has been relaxed to make way for new customs and rituals, including hound-led rides on the western frontier.

The shift in culture is dynamic – riders abide by most traditions, but in the West many clubs offer events that accommodate western-style riding and that are regarded as social events focused around the camaraderie of equestrians and the love of riding and

working with animals in the field.

Hounds are gentle, and are typically bred to chase coyote and hare and be socially non-aggressive. The Mantles' pack of Walker Hounds, or Treeing Walker Coonhounds, are a breed known for a docile temperament and for being intelligent, loving, affectionate and trainable, with strong tracking instincts. They have superb endurance in the field and make wonderful family pets, as mellow lovers of comfort.

After 15 years of annual tradition, riders come from as far away as Virginia, New Jersey, Texas and California to partake in the growing event. They travel to Three Forks for the vast open spaces, dramatic skies and cowboy culture. For many, Montana provides new terrain, weather, game and scenting.

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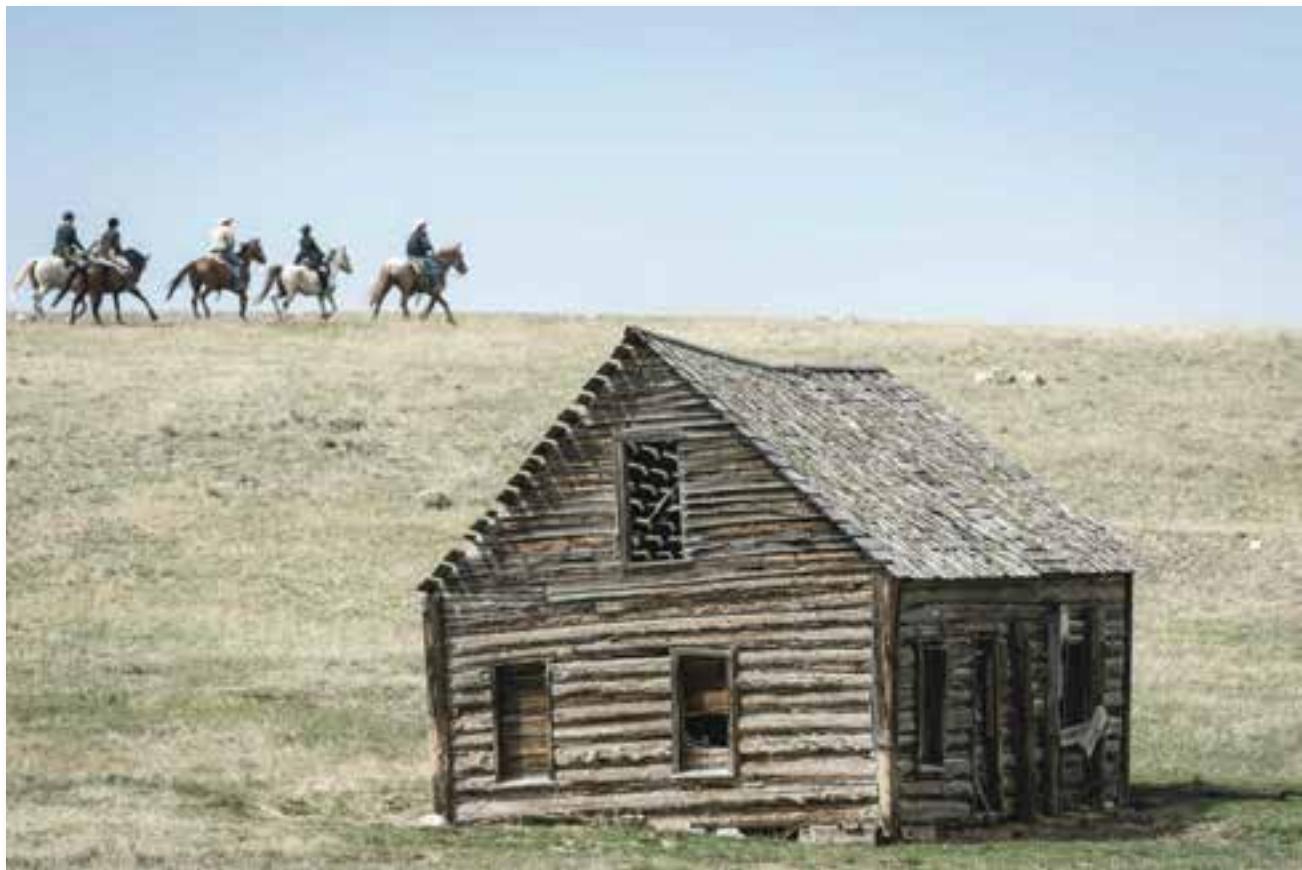
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Frontier history meets British tradition.

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For fox hunters from Eastern environs, the Mantle Ranch offers a new setting.



Riders gather against the backdrop of Montana mountains and prairies.



Some traditions hold in any fox-hunting environment.



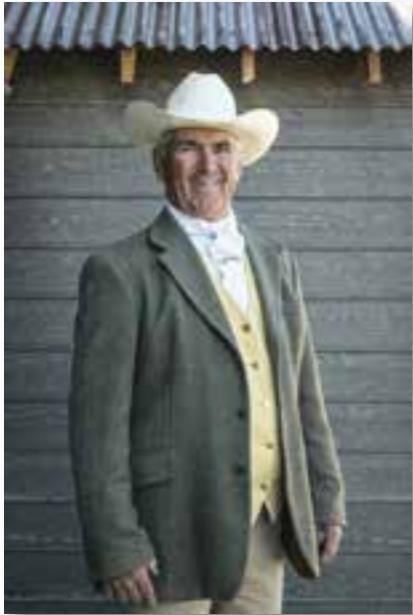
Horsemanship genres collide on the Montana prairie.

84

Photo ©



Hunts in the West are typically centered on the chase, rather than the trophy.



Fox hunting in a western landscape
dictates a blending of traditions,
including those applying to attire.



A mid-hunt cooldown.

Audrey Hall is a photographer living in Montana. Learn more about her work at www.audreyhall.com.





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The Three Legged Stool

By Pete Healey, APF

The relationship between the veterinarian, farrier and owner is critical to the outcome of any corrective shoeing prescription and is akin to the structure of a three legged stool. The three legged stool is very strong and sound but lose the integrity of one of the legs and the whole thing goes down.

In the course of my career I have seen countless situations where a horse could have been helped but one to all three of the support legs had failed. Some of these have been head-shaking sad simply because of lack of or incorrect knowledge of one or more of the three individuals involved. Egos can play a big role in what does or does not happen.

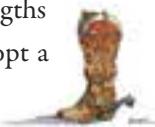
Farriers can have a direct or indirect influence. Many times I have done a complex shoeing job on an out of town horse only to have it torn apart by the home town farrier because he didn't understand the mechanical formula. I must admit that I have been guilty of this myself; it's hard on the self esteem to have someone come in behind you to fix a horse. Shoeing horses can be very humbling, which creates a great opportunity to learn. Years of experience using the industry standard might not be enough.

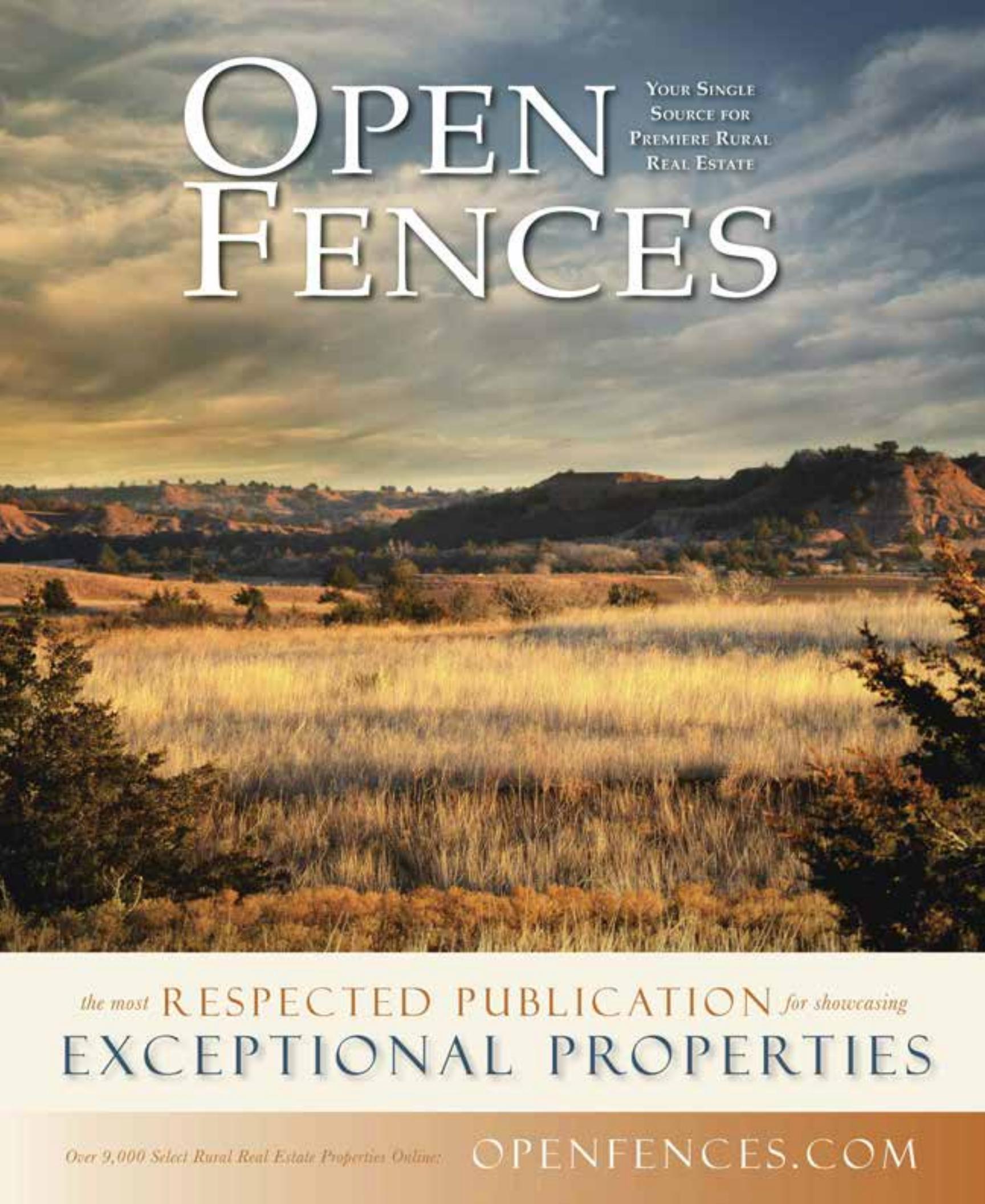
The veterinarian has a lot of control of the shoeing program because they are usually running the show in a lameness rehab. This can be good or a real bummer. A progressive veterinarian that knows biomechanics of the foot and can work with and trust the knowledge of a competent farrier can be invaluable. On the other hand a veterinarian armed with only a huge ego and low biomechanical knowledge of the foot is worthless.

Owners are often influenced by their group of professionals which for some reason may include a trainer's opinion. Somewhere it got grandfathered – in that if you called yourself a 'Trainer' you were an expert on the equine foot. The internet can also be another unreliable source of information that can mislead a well-intended owner looking for a simple answer to a complex problem.

Getting everyone on board to get something done can be very frustrating. I have seen a veterinarian recognize a problem but couldn't get the cooperation of the farrier and the owner to get it fixed. I have seen owners with lame horses that couldn't get the veterinarian or farrier to recognize a problem with the feet and I have seen farriers shut down because the vet and owner were oblivious.

There is a solution to the three legged stool and that is a fourth leg. The forth leg is the horse. The horse is mute but he has the answers. The directions to what he needs are right there on his feet and lower leg and they are in lengths and angles. There are more answers in a radiograph. At some point the industry is going to have to adopt a measurable standard so that we all see the same thing, why not now? www.balancedbreakover.com.





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Lunch with Tom Lea

By Tom Russell

Author's Note:

I began this essay a few years back when I was still a believer in the semi-colon and the future of El Paso. I've lost faith in both. But the memory of my lunch with Tom Lea loiters in the back of my memory whilst I aim my eyes away from El Paso/Juarez and head towards higher ground and a desert retreat outside of Santa Fe. Old Tom Lea would have approved of the move – he'd applaud the light, the sunsets, and the ever-changing spirit of the New Mexico landscape. He was that kind of painter.

A step backwards, now, to that lunch with the Maestro.

I am an avowed painter of the Almighty's own outward handy work, whether it be a rock on a hillside, a weed in a gully, a muscle in the leg of a horse...a mountain range a distant forty miles: each has different measure, each its own worthiness... I offer my work without need for 'statement' in words tacked along side to explain what it is I paint, and why it is that I paint it. A picture, such as it may be, has to speak for itself when you look at it.

Tom Lea

The Southwest: It's Where I Live

In an adobe *nicho* in my taurine bar there's a faded carnival size poster of a bullfight in Juarez featuring *Manolete*, the revered Spanish bullfighter. He was killed by a bull named *Islero* in Linares, Spain, 1947. The year prior to his death Manolete appeared in Juarez, Mexico, and the cub bullfight reporter for the *El Paso Times-Herald* was a young painter and illustrator named Tom Lea. When I moved back West to El Paso in 1997

I was curious about Tom Lea. I'd seen his murals in public buildings and read his book, *The Brave Bulls*. It had fired my interest in *La Fiesta Brava*, alongside Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*, and Collins and La Pierre's wonderful book on *El Cordobes: Or I'll Dress You in Mourning*.

I'd lived in Spain for one month in 1969, and was able to follow the wild, unpredictable *El Cordobes* and



Tom Lea in his studio, photographed by Jay Dusard, November 1985.

his rock and roll approach to bullfighting. The wine was cheap then, and the memories float back to the surface these days on the second glass of Rioja as I'm chopping chicken and chorizo to concoct a *paella*. I sip the Rioja and think of *El Cordobes*, Hemingway, and Tom Lea's *Brave Bulls*. I never grew up. I'm still living in the 1950s, sitting in the front row on the shady side of the Tijuana bullring, dreaming that Marilyn Monroe is sitting

behind me next to Orson Welles. Everyone, including Marilyn, is smoking a cigar and we're all half whacked on good brandy. I'm still there. A paperback copy of Tom Lea's *The Brave Bulls*, in my back pocket.

Back to 1997. Was Tom Lea still alive? I asked around and dug through the bio material. Tom Lea grew up in El Paso, spent time in Paris and Chicago, and



Illustration by Tom Lea, Tom Russell Collection

learned to draw and paint. Later he taught himself to write prose. By his late 20s he was a master illustrator hired by *Life Magazine*. As a correspondent he landed on the beach with the marines at Peleliu and began illustrating the horror – seeing carnage that as he said, *would change a man's attitude towards a lot of things in a moment, and he would then spend fifty years trying to forget.* Eventually Tom would land back in his beloved Southwest and devote his time to painting, researching his two-book history of the King Ranch, and writing popular western-based novels.

Tom Lea was a man who deeply understood Southwestern history and the spiritual lay of the land. He spent his life trying to capture key imagery: the magic of light upon rock, the miraculous West Texas

skies, the desolate adobe villages south of the border, the nobility of horsemen, beef cattle, and fighting bulls.

Beyond the historical paintings, the murals and desert landscapes, his most beautiful and affecting work is the painting of his second wife Sarah, titled: *Sarah in the Summer Time*. If there is a more passionate visual statement of one man's love for a woman I have never seen it. The painting stood on the altar at Tom's funeral. But I'm jumping ahead.

As much as I appreciated Tom's paintings, I was interested in his affinity for bulls and the history of *La Fiesta Brava* – the bullfight. Picasso once remarked that the deep mysteries of the bullfight art are inaccessible to the Western mind, but Tom Lea understood. In this age of knee-jerk political correctness one has to be guarded when one mentions *bullfighting*. Many knowledgeable people tend to keep their mouths shut, for fear the guardians of correctness will attack their moral repute. But the history of the *Fiesta Brava*, along with Tom Lea's research into Mexican fighting cattle, are key to a deeper understanding of the Spanish West.

Fighting cattle came over from Spain on the same ships that brought the beef cattle and the horse. Brave cattle are still raised in parts of the Southwest and California, and dozens of bloodless bullfights take place in Texas and across California's San Joaquin Valley. Bloodless or bloody, the bullfight is linked to religious feast days in Spain, Portugal, Mexico, and parts of South America. The *Brave Festival* survives.

Deep within the rituals of the Mexican *charreada* and the Spanish bullfight, lie the skills and Moorish horse-savvy, which form the tools of the modern cowboy. I had the desire to talk bulls with those who still *would* talk about it, and with all this running around in my head, I had hopes to meet the great painter and taurine author Tom Lea.

Ranch & Reata



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image courtesy, The Tom Lea Institute, El Paso, Texas, www.tomlea.com



And There He Was, 1970, oil on canvas, private collection

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I The Color of Bulls

The aspect of each bull as determined by the color of its coat, or the placing of the spots, is called 'pintas'. The name of each 'pinta' is of interest because it defines certain characteristics, though it has nothing to do with the aggressiveness of the bull.

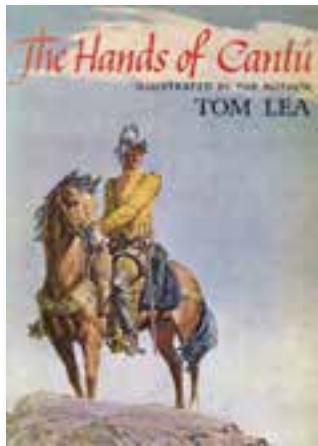
El Toreo,

(A guide to the bullfight sold in bullrings in 1950.)

In the old days, when the great matadors Manolete, Arruza, and Ordonez appeared in border bullrings, there was a pamphlet sold for one dollar which explicated the history of bullfight. Tom Lea wrote several of these pamphlets. There was also a fuller book for sale at the bullrings titled *El Torero*, which revealed more of the profound mysteries of the ancient blood ritual – every pass with the cape and *muleta*, all the tools of the trade, and so on. The little book also concentrated the bull – heritage, color, horn size, and scale of aggressiveness. I still peruse the book and enjoy one particular illustrated page: *The Color of Bulls*. The illustrations were worth the cover price.



The Color of Bulls is an illustrated poem with dozens of terms such as: *Ensabanado*, a white, clean color. *Perlino*, white with greyish tint. *Azabache*, an intense and shiny jet-black. *Mulato*, an opaque dirty black. And on through the *Cardenos*, *Colorados*, *Zainos*, and into the



Spanish names for the spots and stripes which might mark a particular bull – down to *Capuchino*, or *monk's hood*, a bull with head and neck of a different color.

I was mesmerized by the ring of the words. Late at night, in the 50s, they

broadcasted border bullfights on the radio and the knowledgeable announcers would utilize these terms to describe the bull which had just emerged, on a dead run, from *the gates of fear* – the *toril* door which led into the ring from the bull corrals. Sidney Franklin, the bullfighter from Brooklyn, was one of those commentators – but that's a whole other story.

I had a yen to talk about all of this with Tom Lea.

A few months after I arrived in El Paso I learned that Tom was still alive, approaching 90 years of age and living with wife Sarah on the eastern edge of his beloved Franklin Mountains. He was almost blind, but spent time in his small studio every day, signing prints and books which people sent up to the mountain. I gathered this information from Adair Margo, who owned the Margo Gallery in downtown El Paso, which handled much of Tom Lea's artwork. Adair continues to be the keeper of the Lea flame.

At the Margo Gallery I looked through drawers of

Tom Lea drawings. There was remarkable illustrative work going back to the 1920s: Deco-era nudes, Spanish conquistadores, horses, cattle, fighting bulls, and battle scenes from World War Two. I purchased an original Lea drawing of a bullfighter, which was used as an illustration for the book *Knight in the Sun*, by Marshal Hail.

The book was the story of Harper Lee, the first U.S. Citizen to win professional status as a *matador*, and presumably one of the first and most accomplished Americans to wear the suit of lights. His best years were 1909-1911. The drawing depicts Harper Lee executing a *natural*, a dangerous and elegant pass which brings the bull nearer the left side of the matador, closer to the man's heart. Lea's drawing of anything *taurine* manifested his knowledge and reverence for the bullfighter's art.

I took the drawing home, framed it, and hung it in



Sketch by Tom Lea, Tom Russell Collection

my personal *taurine* bar overlooking the Franklin Mountains. Every night at sundown I raised a glass to Tom, who I knew was over there, on the other side of that mountain range. He once said that he lived on the eastern side of the mountains to be nearer the sunrise and *the promise of things to come*. That quote was used by a former president and, for many years, Tom Lea's paintings hung in The White House in D.C.

I purchased several Tom Lea prints and Adair Margo was kind enough to take them up the mountain for the *maestro* to sign. I had given up the notion of meeting him, or even asking to meet him, but there were biographic resources at the Margo Gallery, and I leafed through it all. I kept discovering new facets of his history and influence on Western culture.

Tom's 1950s novel *The Wonderful Country*, had

been adapted to a film starring Robert Mitchum, and *The Brave Bulls* was made into a popular movie with Mel Ferrer. Within this impressive array of illustrations, prints, paintings, books, and films, Tom Lea left his mark on our culture.

But that rugged Western border terrain which Tom Lea loved was vanishing into clouds of bulldozer dust. In 1997 the land surrounding my El Paso hacienda was irrigated desert. Corn, cotton, alfalfa. The river was full all year and the irrigation ditches ran at the high water mark during the watering season. The cotton gin was one hundred yards away, ginning cotton twenty-four hours a day for a four-month season. After the cotton was harvested, the full cotton wagons were lined up in rows across from our *hacienda*, waiting their turn at the gin.

Raw cotton balls blew across our front pasture. A mock snowstorm. When we irrigated off the Rio Grande our front acres were covered with water birds: sundry ducks, black and white cattle egrets, and herons. At night the irrigated fields were the terrain of the red fox, the raccoon, coyote, skunk, jackrabbit and great white owl. The Franklin Mountains, three miles away, were home to rattlesnake, deer, and mountain lion. One of the last mountain lions, coming down in search of water, was shot to death inside a carwash in downtown El Paso – three years ago. Lonely are the brave.

I sat on the front porch and

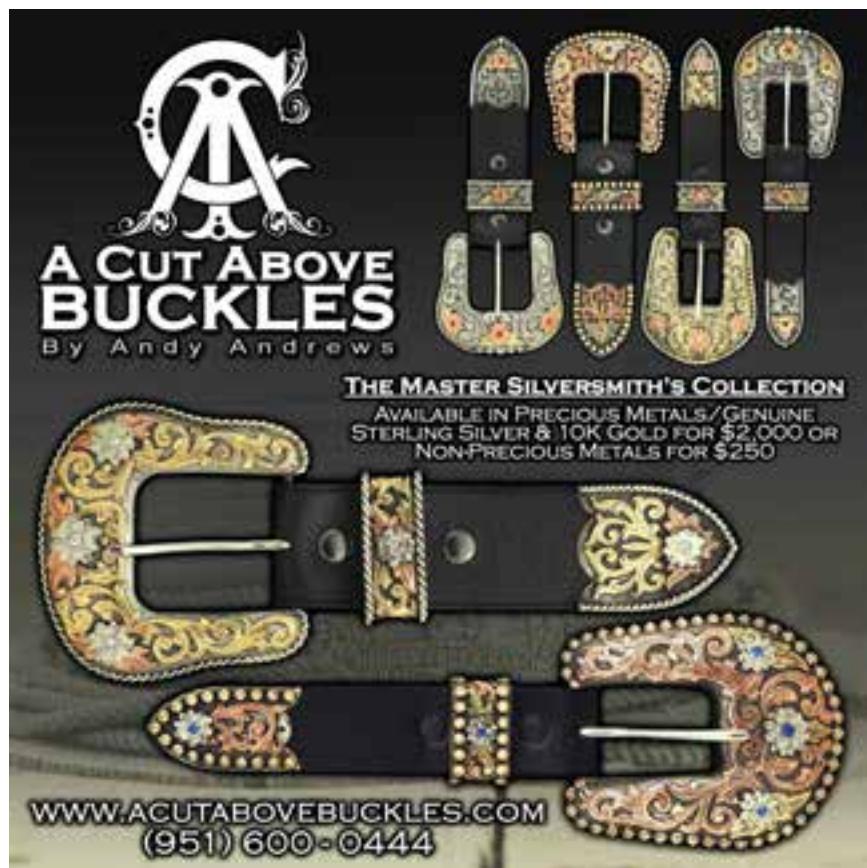




Image courtesy, The Tom Lea Institute, El Paso, Texas. www.tomlea.com

The Lead Steer, 1941, was part of a set of limited edition prints issued by the University of Texas Press in 1953, The edition carried an introduction by J. Frank Dobie. Blanton Museum, University of Texas at Austin. C.R. Smith Collection

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read Paul Horgan's *The Great River* – a history of the Rio Grande. Tom Lea called the Rio Grande: *la Madre Acequia* – the mother water ditch. *Acequia* is a word which dates back through the Spanish, to the Moors. The laws of irrigation are still governed by the *alcalde* of each ditch network, and I was the *alcalde* of our local ditch. You needed to know when the water was available and how long you could run it. I irrigated my pecan trees. I felt content. I was a long way from New York and Los Angeles, Austin, and Nashville, and all of the great networking centers of the Universe. I was writing songs

and essays, and I took up painting, and I felt healthy and alone in my own one-man colony. Tom Lea was pushing 90 years on the other side of the mountain, but we shared the same isolate-artist goals.

In that respect I identified with Lea's words spoken at the opening of a Paul Horgan exhibition:

As a painter active today, I am generally unknown... anywhere outside limited areas of The Southwest...I live remote from groups, from associations, from schools, from colonies, even from any colleague – totally apart from the

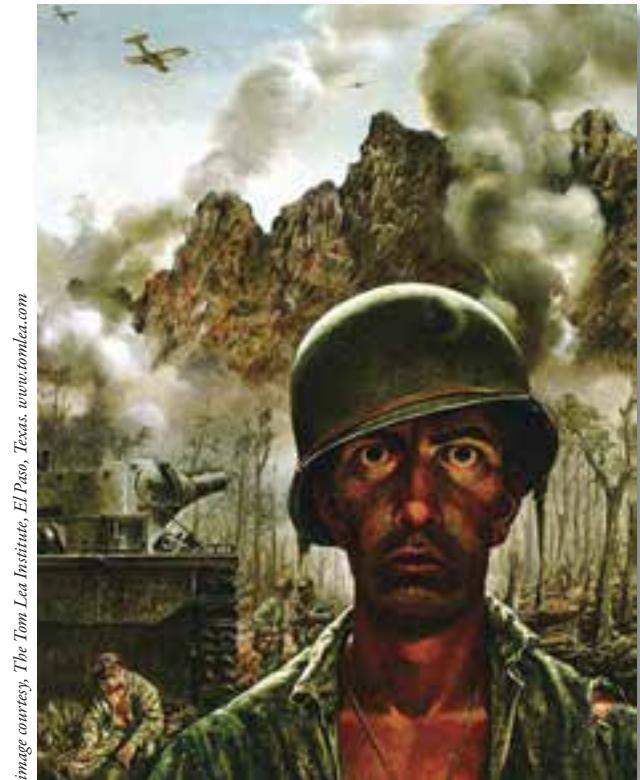


image courtesy, The Tom Lea Institute, El Paso, Texas www.tomleainc.com

Lea's *2,000 Yard Stare* is arguably his most famous painting. Painted in 1944, it depicts a portrait of a marine, at the Battle of Peleliu, who has had all, or more than, he can take. It is held by U.S. Army Center of Military History, Fort Belvoir Virginia.

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latest Movement, any recent trend, any current fashion, any market stir in what is termed The Art World, here or abroad. I feel good, working as a painter all by myself. I feel clean, too – no contact with, no sympathy for, the arcane pseudo-aesthetical acrobatics of the doodlers and diddlers today vandalizing the majestic art of painting.

Amen, Tom. *Doodlers* and *diddlers* have lowered the bar.

I finally summoned the nerve to contact Tom Lea and attempt to talk writing, painting, and bulls. It was time. The border had gone to hell – *both sides*. The

drug war was coming. Bullets from Juarez were flying across the river, hitting old ladies in the leg in downtown El Paso.

The City and the El Paso Country Club purchased a great deal of the Rio Grande water rights from old farm families, the cotton gin closed down, and ten or twelve gringo and Mexican developers bought off the city planning commission. The term *smart growth* was the carny huckster's *come-on* bait to lure politicians and buyers into the nova-wasteland of cheap houses, long term mortgages, and strip malls filled with dollar stores and low-end burger joints. The suburban backyards were junked-up with broken plastic swing sets, one-legged pit bulls, and brown grass – *amber waves of grain* 'neath rotted out trampolines.

Tom Lea would not have approved. This was no country for painters.

II Peppermint Ice Cream, Mother-in-Law-Tongues, and Pancho Villa

I never had a better time. We looked at brush country of the brushiest kind. We found Longhorns – I think we saw most of the surviving examples of the unimproved old Texan breed. There were not many. At night we made camp alongside cow tracks on grassy ground. Sometimes we were guests at a ranch house. We went horseback with our hosts into far pastures, into thorny jungles of lacy-leaved mesquite.

Tom Lea (Riding with J. Frank Dobie in search of Longhorns.)

It was the fall of the year 2000 when Tom Lea came down off the mountain and arranged to have lunch with friends and cronies at the El Paso Country Club. The occasion was a celebration for the opening of a Tom Lea Wing at The El Paso Museum of Art. His art agent,



image courtesy, The Tom Lea Institute, El Paso, TX www.tomlea.com



Stampede, 1940. 5'5" x 16' mural from the U.S. Post Office in Odessa, Texas.

Adair Margo, knew I would love to meet the great artist, and I was seated at the main table, right next to Tom. His close friends must have wondered who the hell I was. We waited for Tom and drank ice tea and made small talk.

He entered the room on the arm of his wife Sarah – Sarah of the painting *Sarah in the Summer Time*. Tom was now almost fully blind and he took shuffle steps and peered straight ahead. He greeted everyone with strong hand and cloudy eyes that rolled around and then came back into focus and drilled you. I remember him as short man, compact like an old fullback who could still run through walls. He spoke in deep Western baritone as he sat down next to me and ordered a bowl of peppermint ice cream.

He and his cronies of the round table began to talk art, cactus, cattle, and food. The table was peopled by a wonderful array of old buzzards Tom had known forever. I felt honored and kept my mouth shut. I was one of the younger buzzards.

Tom spoke to the waiters in soft, border-Spanish, and the room was charged with a Tom Lea dignity, which went well with the starched white tablecloths and

strong coffee and view of the Rio Grande Valley below us. I wanted to dissolve back into my chair and sit there forever listening to this Western master and his friends talk up the last frontier with humor and style. The stuff we don't get in books. Anecdotes and fragments of *the real gen.* No editing.

The old men were talking about the new Tom Lea Wing at art museum. Willie Ray and Matt, collectors of Tom's work, began to discuss Tom's murals and then this flowed into a discussion on the flora and fauna of the desert, and the cultivation of cactus. They spoke of saguaros and mother-in-law-tongues, and sandy soil and Southern exposure, and then back into the wonder of Tom Lea's mural painting.

Tom finished a second bowl of peppermint ice cream, wiped his mouth on the linen napkin, thanked the waiter again, and then launched into a brief discourse on the proper recipe for the paste for putting a canvas mural on a wall. A man needed spar varnish and gum spirits and a few other things. Tom was proud he could summon up the recipe because he stated, *my mind is gone*, when in fact his mind was in very fine stead, and he retained a great amount of detail about the past.



Image courtesy, The Tom Lea Institute, El Paso, Texas, www.tomlea.com

A mi buen amigo Salvador, 1947.

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Tom was asked about the movie made from his book, *The Brave Bulls*, and he affirmed that he had no love for Hollywood. He didn't care for the film. I thought of William Faulkner and F. Scott Fitzgerald, whose spirits were slaughtered by Hollywood cocktail parties, and Hemingway who once remarked that the best way to deal with Hollywood and scriptwriting was to drive to the California state line, out in the Mojave desert, toss your script or book over the line, then drive like hell in the opposite direction.

The men bantered back and forth. Some drank ice

tea or whiskey on the rocks. Tom Lea stuck to ice water. There was a lag in the conversation and he suddenly put his hand on my elbow and turned those cloudy eyes on me, tightened his grip on my arm, and asked, "So, young man, what have you been working on?" He was kind – trying to include me in the chat, and I mumbled something about writing songs for a new record about the border and I thanked him for asking. I was honored that he'd addressed me. The old man exuded pure dignity.

Pancho Villa's name came up – maybe Matt or Willie Ray mentioned it – and Tom Lea scowled,



declaring, "That sorry sum' of a bitch should not have a statue over on this side of the border. My father chased him back across the river and said 'git back where you belong, you saddle-colored son of a bitch.'" (Much laughter).

"I'll tell you something my father told me," said Willie Ray. "Never drink whiskey in a hotel bar. You can go around the corner and get it much cheaper."

There was a pause while we all considered the wisdom in that.

"Well," said one of the other old men. "My father said to never buy shrimp off of a truck with Oklahoma plates." (More hoots and hollers. Raised drinks.)

Tom Lea was still thinking of Pancho Villa and the Mexican Revolution. He told us that people on the El Paso side would put chairs and even beds up on the rooves of their houses in order to watch the Revolution across the river in Juarez.

"One crazy guy," said Tom, "had a cot up on the roof and a spy glass, and whenever there were gunshots and cannon fire, this guy would wake up and look over at the war through his spy glass."

Tom Lea's father was the sheriff of El Paso during the Mexican Revolution and he had no use for General Villa, who often crossed over into El Paso to chase women and eat ice cream. Pancho wore-out his welcome in El Paso, and Sheriff Lea escorted him back over the bridge. Villa then put a price on the sheriff's head and threatened the Lea family. Young Tom Lea, at age six,

had to walk to school with a bodyguard.

Two hours passed quickly. I could tell Tom was getting tired, but I wanted to ask him about his pilgrimage in search of the true history of Spanish cattle, or at least talk a little about bullfighting. I mentioned the great *Manolete* and Lea's eyes glistened and he sat up in his chair and peered over toward the far wall, as if he were throwing an image of the bullfighter onto a screen.

Manolete was a legend by the time he hit Juarez in 1946. He was nearing the end of his career and being challenged by younger bullfighters like *Dominguin*. *Manolete* often remarked that the crowd demanded more and more from him, and he couldn't possibly give more. They wanted his blood, finally, and that's

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O Pass of the North, Now the Old Giants Are Gone We Little Men Live Where Heroes Once Walked the Inviolate Earth, 1938.

11' x 54' mural from the U.S. Courthouse, El Paso, Texas

what they were given. When he went in over the horns of the bull *Islero*, bull and man killed each other in the same moment.

“Manolete was two really two people,” said Tom. “He was affable and a joy to be with outside of the ring. When he entered the ring it was like a priest going about the ritual. Very erect. Very serious. Marvelous to watch. It was as if he and the bull were praying to each other. And then he was killed by a bull, and I guess that was praying too.”

At that moment Tom appeared re-energized and he was going to tell the story his bullfight research and his historic trek into Mexico in the 1940s, but Sarah came over and mentioned they should leave soon, and the afternoon tailed off into a discussion of the Rio Grande River. I told Tom I was reading from Paul Horgan’s history of the river: *The Brave River*. Tom said that Sarah read to him every night from Horgan’s *A Distant Trumpet*, before they went to sleep. True love.

“Ah, the great river,” Tom said. “The *madre acequia* – the mother water ditch.”

And that was it. The Great River. The last toast. Manolete and Pancho Villa laid to rest. Empty ice cream dishes and the rattling of ice cubes. Dead soldiers. Nap time. The chairs moved away from the table and Tom made his good-byes.

Sarah Lea and Adair Margo led Tom Lea away as the sun was moving westward, fading over the river valley. The next morning I irrigated my few acres from that bold and muddy water ditch and thought of lunch with Tom Lea, and I wondered if the story of the Mexican fighting cattle and Tom’s adventure might be lost to history now. But the art, the murals, and the books remained, as the American century was ending and the last of light was fading from Tom Lea’s eyes.

III Tom Lea & Fighting Cattle in the New World

*I went alone. I spoke no English because there just
wasn't
anybody to speak to. I lived in the midst of
bullfighters,
match-race horse jockey's, rooster handlers,
professional
gamblers – and bull breeders.*

Tom Lea

A few years after that lunch I learned more about the time *Life* magazine had once commissioned Tom Lea to do a study of the first beef cattle in the New World. Tom wanted to research the matter deeply, but there was little historical information. Lea found



reference to a conquistador named Don Gregorio de Villalobos unloading Spanish cattle near Vera Cruz in 1521. Tom tried to imagine the scene:

Two distinct types of Spanish cattle were consistently mentioned by the chroniclers of early Spanish colonization in the New World, 'ganado mayor,' meaning plain cattle of the utility type common to the mother peninsula of Spain, and 'ganado prieto,' meaning black cattle with the highly regarded blood of the fierce fighting bulls.

Life was only interested in an illustrated history of beef cattle in the New World, not fighting stock. Tom knew he could draw and paint the plain beef cattle, but the fighting herd, the *ganado prieto*, fascinated him, and he wanted to research them further.

Tom Lea's exploratory journey into Mexico in the 1940s tells us much of how the written history of the Spanish West has been concocted and pasteurized along edited lines. Where were the histories of brave cattle which are bred on a hundred ranches in Mexico, Texas, and California? Tom was drawn into the more fascinating, and unexplored story of fighting cattle in the New World.

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I came across the Rio Grande with my plans for the paintings of beef cattle fairly forgotten. My mind was churning with what I thought would be a far more spectacular material for a story in Life, a full account for the first time in the English language, with paintings and drawings, of the many fascinating operations horseback and afoot on a Mexican ranch dedicated to the breeding and raising of Toros Bravos...

Tom eventually submitted a well-researched

7,200 word essay for *Life* accompanied by sixteen paintings and drawings setting forth the arrival of brave cattle in the Americas. *Life* magazine did not respond. As Tom stated: "The ensuing silence from *Life* was deafening."

Life magazine insisted Lea return to the study and illustration of beef cattle in America – *the placid cattle which hooked nobody*. He complied at first and sketched range stock and ranches, railroad and shipping corrals in West Texas, stockyards and feedlots in the Midwest. He spent two days working on the killing floor at Swift & Company butchers: "sketching every step of the process of converting beef on the hoof to beef in the cooler ready for smiling Mrs. America at the supermarket."

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Life never published the paintings and they were eventually donated to the Dallas Museum of Fine Art. I was fortunate enough to run across Tom's unpublished essay on the history of brave cattle, in a bullfight fan publication in Los Angeles. The essay is a lost gem of Western history.

IV Twilight on the Wonderful Country

*Sometimes I'm asked what in the world I could
find so
special about the dried-up, bare, empty country
I obviously
prefer to live and work in. First I say I was born in
it, and then
I say, furthermore I love it for the intensity of
its sunlight,
the clarity of its sky, the hugeness of its space,
it's revealed
structure of naked earth's primal form without
adornment...*

Tom Lea

Tom Lea died a year after that afternoon lunch of peppermint ice cream. I attended the service on a side street church in El Paso. The downtown area was filled with cars and the church was packed with old friends and journalists. Adair Margo was there with President Bush's wife Laura. Tom's wonderful picture *Sarah in the Summertime* stood on an easel on the altar to remind us of Tom's gift, and the memory of young love played out in the breeze flowing through the painted folds of that diaphanous summer dress worn by the young Sarah.

Willie Boy and Mat were there as well as the old buzzard who was warned: *never buy shrimp off a truck with Oklahoma plates*. Tom Lea's passing struck my soul

– as if a giant rocky peak of the Franklin Mountains had suddenly shifted, cracked, and dropped into the Rio Grande river.

He was one of our last *old school* Western artists – a man who sang up the land in his painting and writing, and yet knew enough to let the finished work speak for itself. He loved that barren Rio Grande country, as did I, but that lunch was the beginning of the end of my affection for the border. Now Tom Lea was gone and so was that raw, untamed spirit which permeated El Paso/Juarez. *The hugeness of its space*, Tom Lea had spoken of was now swallowed up, and the *revealed structure of naked earth's primal form without adornment* was now adorned and defiled.

I've recently packed up my library, boxed-up the



Illustration from "The Hand's of Cantu."



image courtesy, The Tom Lea Institute,
El Paso, Texas. www.tomleainstitute.com



Lonely Town, 1937. Collection of James D. Lea.

signed Tom Lea books, prints, and drawings – sold off my bullfight collection, and put the El Paso hacienda on the market. Headed off for higher ground. Splendid isolation is harder and harder to come by. We found a place on the high desert outside Santa Fe, guarded by Red Tail Hawks, coyotes, cotton tail rabbits, bull snakes, and ‘nary a human or pit bull in site. One of Tom Lea’s original drawings hangs on a wall facing the east, towards the sunrise and *the promise of things to come*.



Tom Russell's double CD *Ballad of the West, The Rose of Roscrae*, is now available from fronterarecords.com

A brief film of his Elko performance may be viewed on: www.roseofroscreae.com

His art, books, and tour dates: www.tomrussell.com

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Songs from the Heart

Martha Scanlan rewrites the rules of cowboy music.

By Hal Cannon

Martha Scanlan has a rare condition. Her singing voice seems to be anatomically connected to her heart. There is a vulnerability to her songs which is singular in the world of western music. Martha's new album has just been released, and if you don't know Martha's music, it's time to remedy that.

The Shape of Things Gone Missing, the Shape of Things to Come is a collection of nine cuts mostly inspired by ranch life. When she's not touring, Martha works as a ranch hand on a 120-year-old family ranch in the Tongue River Valley of southeastern Montana. Her lyrics are full of original observations and images that make for fine poetry. The musicianship is also topnotch. Jon Neufeld, Martha's touring

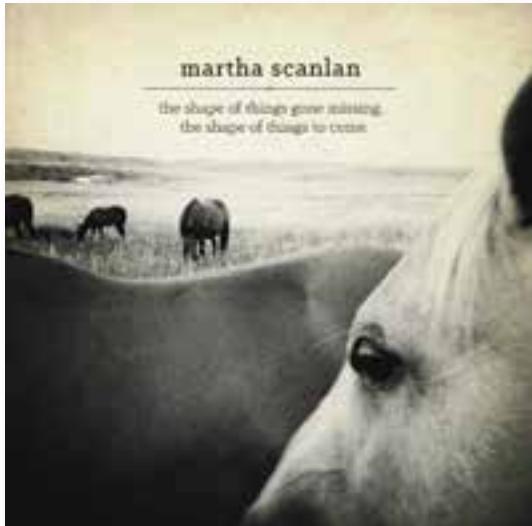
partner and the lead guitarist for Portland-based Black Prairie, produced the album, bringing a fine musical vocabulary and a roster of musicians from both Black Prairie and fellow Portlanders the Decemberists.

Martha tends to categorize her music as roots-based Americana but, to my ear, it builds new definitions for

western music. In a sea of sameness in the cowboy music field, Martha's songs are a breath of fresh air. After she was twice a featured performer at Elko, I asked her how she saw her work in the context of music typically identified as "cowboy." She told me the deeper imagery of her songs seemed to connect both with cowboy audiences – often reliant on ranch backdrops in the stories they hear – and with urban audiences, who related to the sense of belonging present in her music.

Growing up in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, Martha's compass has always pointed West. As a youngster, she was obsessed with horses, cowboys and Indians, read Zane Grey, and spent summers in Montana with her family, in a cabin on the east fork of the Bitterroot.

In her late teens, Martha got restless and started hitchhiking around Montana, leaving behind what she calls a "trail of bad poetry," and ending up in Missoula, taking classes at the University of Montana. After taking up guitar, in her early twenties, she soon found herself in a group. An invitation to a ranch wedding introduced her to southeastern



Martha Scanlan's *The Shape of Things Gone Missing, the Shape of Things to Come* offers a redefined approach to western music.

Montana. She fell in love with the region, and with a family that had been ranching there for generations.

Later, Martha moved to east Tennessee to be closer to mountain music. There, she and her partner got together with some old-time musicians to form the Reeltime Travelers. The group developed a strong following, even earning a place on the soundtrack for the film *Cold Mountain*.

In Tennessee, Martha observed, traditional music was integrated into the fabric of everyday life, and seemed to have a connection to the landscape. She says her music, though, became "full of longing." As her band broke up, Martha began missing Montana and dreamed of working on a ranch.

The patriarch of the southeastern Montana ranch

that had so captured Martha's imagination agreed to give her use of a small cabin on the outfit. She was expected to work, but she was also assured the ranch would respect her artistic life, giving her the freedom to tour. For five years, though, Martha toured little, instead concentrating on learning ranch work, something she still sees as endlessly complex.

Martha's first solo album, *The West was Burning*, came out in 2007. Released on the Sugar Hill label, it was produced by old-time-music luminary Dirk Powell. Levon Helm, famed member of The Band, added his drumming to the album. His daughter, Amy, continues to be one of Martha's best friends and singing mates.

The next recording project, directly related to eastern Montana, was called *Tongue River Stories*. The Tongue

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River Valley has been coping with, and standing up to, the extractive industry for the past 40 years. Martha wanted her music to engage listeners in the valley's agricultural landscape, and trigger an interest in caring for the land itself. To create literal connections between the music and its geography, songs for the album were recorded in the places in which they were written.

Martha's latest album began coming into being in October 2014. I asked about a couple of my favorite songs. The title track, "The Shape of Things Gone Missing, the Shape of Things to Come," is full of images from the ranch that become metaphors for larger ideas, such as the continuity of life and its ongoing rhythms. Over and over, her songs use simple imagery to build complex metaphysical ideas. The first blooming flowers of early spring become symbols for precious memories. The song builds as it asks us to feel the deliberate power of life:

And oh my brother, oh can you feel it
can you feel it down inside
underneath the snow and the spent brown
green grass rising, rising like a slow tide
rising like a slow tide

Another of my favorites is "The Only Thing." It's a classic country heartbreak song, Martha's mentor on the ranch was a champion steer roper in his day, and regales Martha with endless rodeo stories. In this song of rodeo romance, the fire of love is replaced by another, less wholesome fire:

Used to be there was fire in a glance
that could outshine the rodeo lights
fire like a red hot
buckinghorse twister
burning up the Fourth of July

Fire like
the one inside
when you'd turn into the night and kiss me
the only thing
that burns me now
is the whiskey

Three years ago, Martha returned from a memorial for Levon Helm, who had lost a battle with cancer. Preoccupied with memories of her friend and mentor, Martha became distracted while riding a horse, and was bucked off. Hitting the ground, she says, was a wake-up call, an admonition not to take other mentors for granted, and to find and follow a "groove" – in both music and life. From that realization, she started thinking of the current, the flow, of her ranch work, and its connection with her music. She envisioned creating music that people could dance to in their living rooms, that had that *groove*, and that captured the essence of ranching, of the land.

In my view, she's succeeded wonderfully.



<https://youtu.be/sx9VB0jIOm0>
Martha Scanlan performs "The Meadow," part of her Tongue River Stories project.

Hal Cannon is a musician, folklorist and journalist living in Utah.



A VISIT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN

Being Herd Bound

One thing I do at my clinics, when folks seem comfortable trotting their horses is to ask the riders to lope their horses around the arena in both directions. This exercise helps everyone find out exactly what's going wrong with their horses by moving at a faster pace. Whatever problems there are, are amplified enough for them to see clearly. Most folks work slowly through the walk and the trot, and get them accurate, and when they begin to speed up, the problems pop up right in front of you.

This is also a great way to see if the riders are getting their horses to lope out on the proper lead. Proper lead refers to a horse's natural way of moving. For example, when a horse is on his left lead, his front-left and back-left legs reach farthest forward in the stride. A horse that takes the right lead has both right legs reaching farthest forward. Some horses, when out of balance or moving



Photo by Una Photo805.com

uncomfortably, will even crossfire, which means they could be in the left lead in front and the right lead behind, which makes for an incredibly rough ride; you'll feel like the fillings are going to come out of your teeth. And sometimes they will be in the wrong lead completely; in other words, using a right lead while going to the left. That's called a counter-canter.

Many times I see riders having a hard time getting their horses on the proper leads, and sometimes a horse can seem somewhat distracted – or being motivated by just being with other horses. This is known as being herd bound.

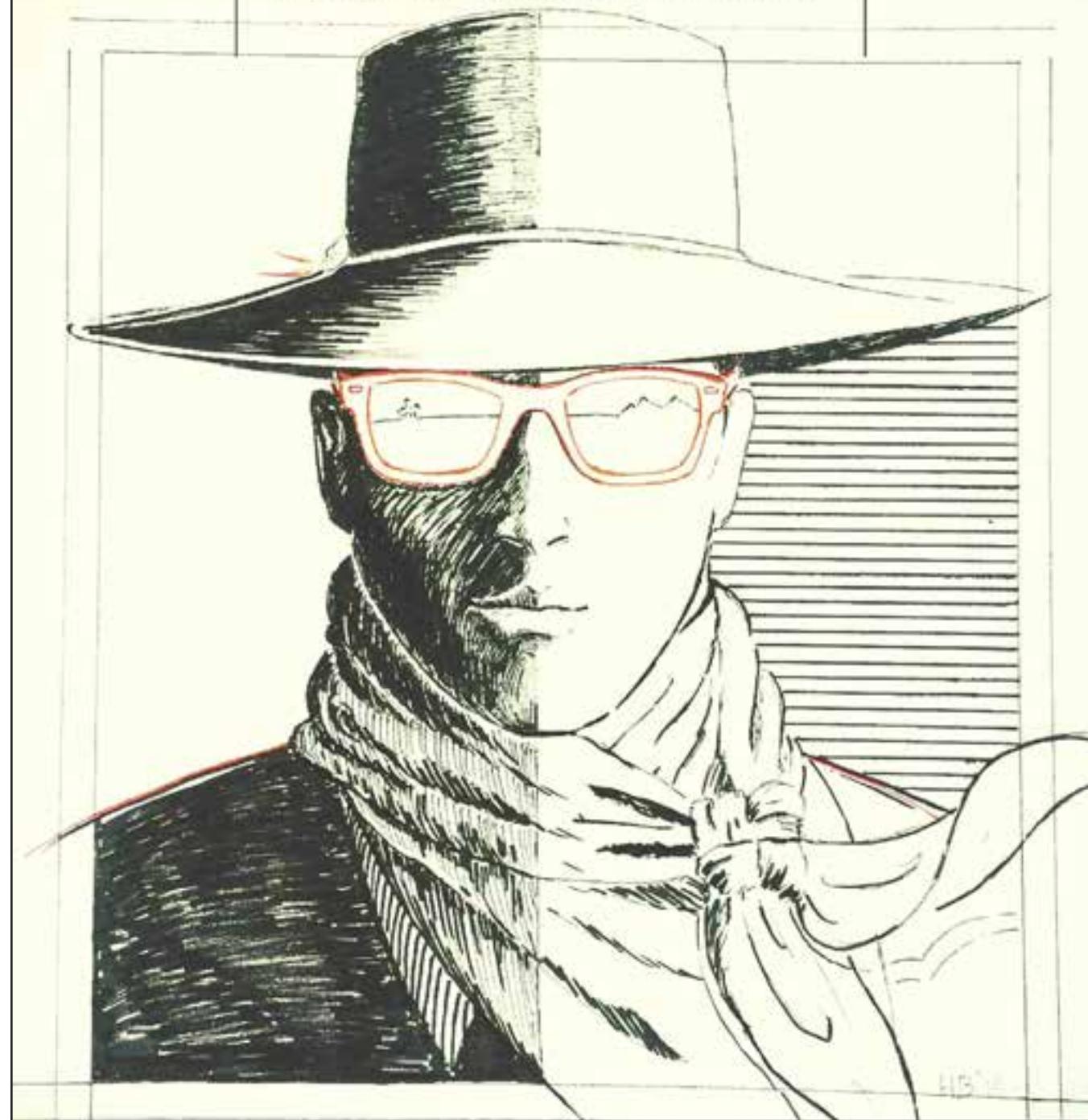
At most of my clinics, I ask if there are any herd-bound horses in the bunch, and one or two people might pick up their hands, but all of them should probably raise their hands. Horses aren't solitary creatures by nature. Most horses generally like being around other horses, so it's not hard to see that most

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horses have at least a few herd bound tendencies, no matter what. It's just that some horses are less herd bound than others, and some riders are less aware of it than others. You often get the combination of a rider who doesn't recognize that the horse's herding instinct is what's preventing him from concentrating on the lesson. The rider thinks the horse has a problem with that particular lesson, and the underlying issue never gets properly addressed. Of course, we all know that a small problem can often affect a lot of other things, and if we don't do anything about that small problem, it turns into a big problem. And because it's always easier to fix a small problem than a big one, I pay attention to

whatever herd-bound tendencies my students' horses have and try to catch them early.

At one particular clinic, I had everybody get in the middle of the arena with this one rider and her troubled horse to the outside. That's when she realized how determined this horse was to be near the herd. When this happens, the big issue is not that your horse isn't going to the exact place you'd like him to go, it's the fact that the horse is shutting you out and has other things on his mind rather than being with you. The horse puts the human's wishes second after his own, and with that comes a multitude of problems. More in the next issue.



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THE HEN HOUSE

A Lifelong Bond



By Hannah Ballantyne, Reata Brannaman and Nevada Watt

We were once told that your parents raised you to be the very best person you can be and the time after college when you are on the brink of your new life is the best time to come back and show them the person you have become.

We don't think we make as much of an effort to be with our family whether physically or emotionally. It can take a while to realize that our lives may not be the same as they were in the homes we grew up in but that does not mean we have

photo by Steve Johnson



Hannah Ballantyne in discussion with her father Jesse.

photo courtesy the Brannaman Family and Western Horseman



Reata Brannaman and her parents Buck and Mary Brannaman as her father received the "Horsemanship of the Year" Award from *Western Horseman* magazine.

to feel weird going back – it means we should and all the more. Let your parents continue to impart wisdom, let them be your parents, because as far as we can tell, that's a lifetime job. For a while it felt strange going home, because it's easy to revert back to who you were in high school, but really if you slow your own motives down and be present with your family and let them know you again for who you've become, it will be amazing how much

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photo courtesy Nevada Watt



The Watts – Pine, Nevada, Jeremiah and Colleen – all together.

you'll enjoy it. Let them ask questions about your life – I know you have a whole new group of friends and like a different color than when you were 15, but let them discover the newer version of you. You may think they don't "get" you anymore, but really they know the



Buck and a young Reata Brannaman.

deepest version of you, trust us, they do. When we finally embrace that we're not done learning from our parents nor will we ever be, time at home has a purpose.

What if you're not fresh out of college? What if you already have a family established or a life so distant from your old home that it feels like a different world...well sorry but so what? Why can't you make time for those who gave so much of theirs? And believe it or not they still spend a lot of time worrying about you and wondering if you are blessed and healthy. I love when a friend becomes family because of the bond you have created with that person. Become family, become so close it feels natural, you can trust each other deeply, be honest with one another



and you never stop loving them. Family.

Some dear friends have embraced the importance of family and created a ranching legacy for five generations. As many of you know family ranches are one of the most difficult and rewarding ways of living. It takes immense patience, strength, and perseverance to not only grow the ranch but the family bonds shared between those that make it tick. One of the family members has reminded us how important it is to go back, to continue learning, to be there. He has realized how blessed he is to have a family that loves him and a home that has a future. He appreciates it now more than ever because he understands his place in it, his purpose. Life is not always easy or comfortable for them but focusing on family and assuring their heirs have a place to come home to is imperative to the success of the ranch.

Not everyone is blessed with having their family, extended or otherwise, live in close proximity. They may



photo courtesy Nevada Watt

A Watt family portrait.



courtesy Carrie Ballantyne

Hannah Ballantyne as painted by her artist mother Carrie.

live in a far off state or even another country, which makes staying in close communication difficult. Its easy to get lazy and focus too much on our own immediate

lives and forget about the people who care about us but may not be present every day. Take the time to plan that trip to see them, or make a phone call just for the heck of it. It means more than you think.

We know that no family is perfect because we're human and we all struggle with things. Why not be that family member who will not let the possible strife stop their desire to be closer, to be more in tune with one another. Wherever you are, you can find family, create bonds, but we would beg you not to forget nor neglect your actual family. They love you. You are part of something; give back as they have so freely given.

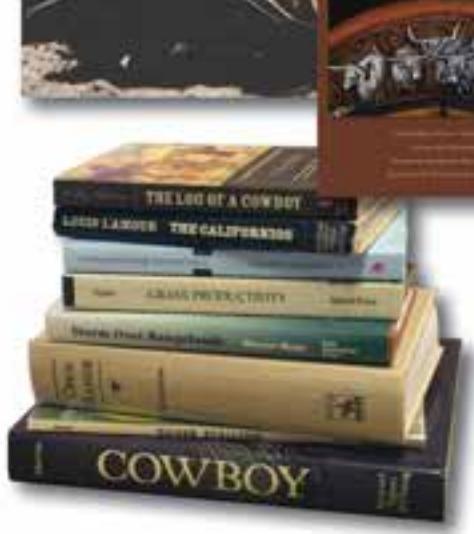
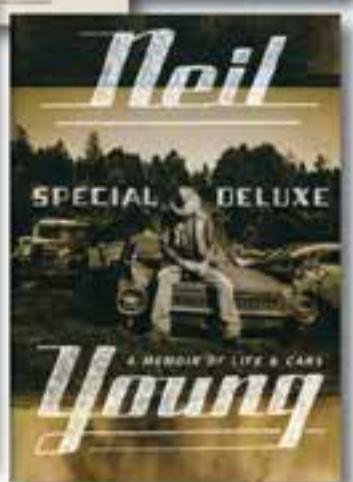
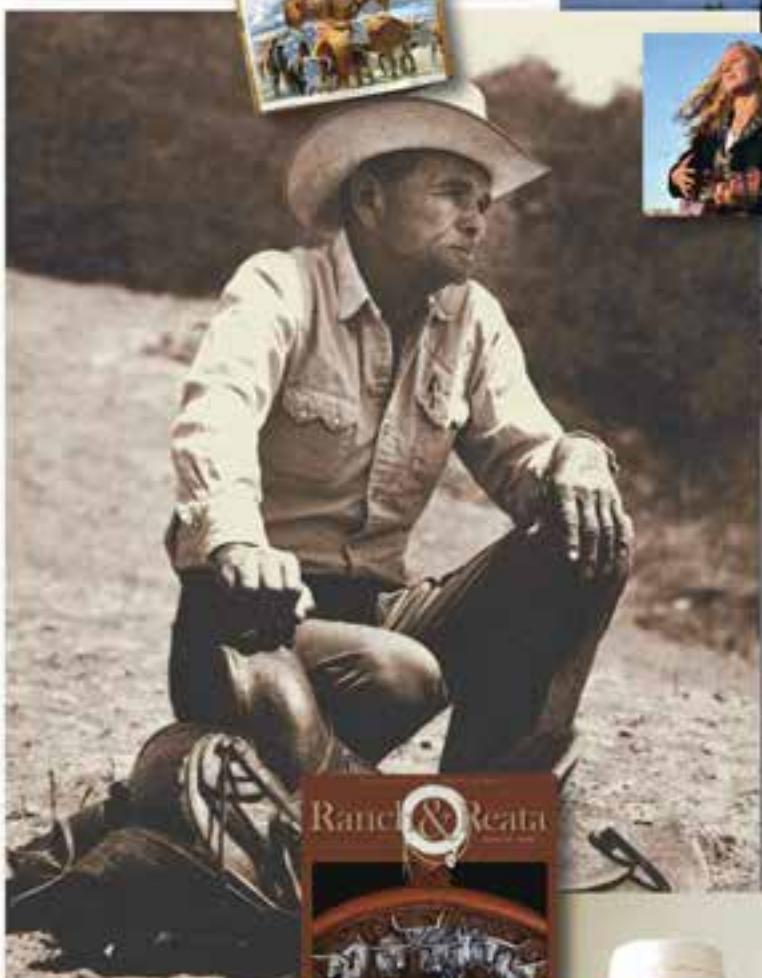
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True Essence

Preserving ranch legacies through photography.

Text and Photography by Rick Raef

I received an e-mail earlier this week from a woman who works in the office of a large cattle producer. She was searching for a photo of a young cowboy who worked for the company that summer in southern Oregon and she thought I might have an image of him. She told me this young man, who was just 19, had died the night before in a tragic auto accident. It turns out that I had not one, but 14 photos, the last images ever taken of him.

Later, I got a call from someone offering to pay for images to be used at this young man's memorial service. Of course, I sent all 14 photos, free of charge. I told the caller, a friend of the young man's family, that after having spent a beautiful October day in the Sprague River Valley and having met this impressive young man, there was no need to have a discussion about money.

The caller thanked me and said the family had had no idea the photographs existed. They were overwhelmed with emotion upon unexpectedly seeing their young cowboy one last time through the eyes of someone they did not know. "You've captured the true essence of who he was," she said. "We will treasure these pictures forever."

When I began to get serious about photographing working ranches, my purpose was not to seek fame and fortune in the competitive art and publication worlds. My ambition was to offer ranch families a means of preserving their legacies. Little did I realize the degree to which such images would impact those who live the ranch life.

My interest in photography got its start when I joined the Peace Corps in 1978. I was assigned to a large farm operation in southern Malaysia, where I was in charge of heavy-equipment mechanical support for a 10,000-hectare jungle-clearing operation. I shot slide film as a hobby, using a mechanical Canon AE-1 to chronicle my Peace Corps adventure. Upon returning home, I realized what a treasure my slides were. I shared the images at periodic talks I gave to community groups about my experiences, but otherwise my slides seldom saw the light of day, and lived most of their life in a shoebox.

A few years ago, with retirement on the horizon, I set out to take advantage of the substantial technological changes in photography. In 2010, I began to photograph local agriculture, the predominant industry in my area. An opportunity came up to join Dave Stoecklein on a weekend ranch-photo workshop in northern California and it was during that weekend it became clear where my photography could take me.

In 2012, I was invited by a longtime buddy to photograph a nearby branding. Loaded up with a new DSLR camera and assorted other gear, I captured some images that turned out fairly well. I shared the images with the cowboys and



Sunrise Over Parker Road Windmill, Warnerville, California (with smoke from the Yosemite Rim Fire, 2013).

realized that, for all the hard work they do, few, if any, had any photographic record of their way of life. I was struck by how important my photos were to them.

My goals as a photographer are to support the ranching legacy and capture the western way of life and those who live it. It's my way of repaying ranching families for the values and responsibilities I learned at a young age. It would be a shame for the memories of those great ranches and families, like my Peace Corps slides, to simply end up in a shoebox, forgotten. www.workingranchphotography.com.



Geldings Fighting Over Mares, Warnerville, California.



Cowgirl Lilly Crago, Willow Creek Ranch, Kaycee, Wyoming.



Setting the Trap, Council Butte Ranch, Sprague River, Oregon.



Campfire at the Hole-in-the-Wall, Willow Creek Ranch, Kaycee, Wyoming.

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Star, Z Bar T Ranch, Dillon, Montana.



Mona Welborn, Z Bar T Ranch, Dillon, Montana.



Cattle Drive at Willow Creek Ranch, Kaycee, Wyoming.



Sunrise Over the Cardoza Ranch, Snelling, California.



Ty Duarte, Beatty, Oregon.



Hear Me Sing

Mary Kaye fills the western air with music.

By Rod Miller

There are singers and songwriters who toil and struggle for years to get noticed. Then there's Mary Kaye.

Less than 10 years after getting talked into stepping onto the stage and crooning a cowboy tune, Mary Kaye has earned the kind of recognition that could make any western entertainer envious:

Western Music Association Crescendo Award Winner and Female Vocalist of the Year in 2010; 2011 Female Performer of the Year from the Academy of Western Artists; WMA Song of the Year, 2012; 2013 WMA Female Performer of the Year and Songwriter of the Year; 2013 Spur Award for Best Western Song from Western Writers of America.... And that's just the highlights.

Quite a list of accomplishments for a woman who once asked her husband, "Who'd want to hear *me* sing?" when he encouraged her to go after music in a serious way. That husband, Utah cowboy Brad Knaphus, continues to inspire his wife and has taken on the responsibilities of manager and promoter. "When people ask me what my husband does," the singer says,

"I tell them he sells Mary Kaye."

Music had long been a part of Mary's life, if only in an amateur way, strictly for the love of it. "I started plunking ditties on the piano at age five, and so my parents paid for many years of piano lessons, followed by violin," she says. "I was part of a nationally recognized show choir in high school, studied music in college for a short while, and played Maria in a community theater production of *West Side Story*."

But marriage and motherhood took priority. Children came. And they came. Then more came – 10, in all, and every one of them on purpose, as family is important to this family. After some moving around for school

and work, the Knaphus crowd settled in the town of Manti in central Utah's Sanpete Valley where, despite the population influx they caused, cattle and sheep still outnumber humans by more than three to one.

"We live on an old pioneer homestead with a big, beautiful old barn out back and plenty of elbow room for a gaggle of children, animals, gardens, and a happy life," Mary says. "Three of our sons have worked for a



Award-winning singer-songwriter Mary Kaye.



photo by Rod Miller

Daughters Sophia (left) and Millie (center) with mother Mary perform as the Kaye Sisters.

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local horse operation and two have done cowboy work on local ranches. Our oldest daughter is a past rodeo sweetheart and runs a small horse operation in the Nashville area. Our four youngest daughters are fledgling western performers. And one son is an up-and-coming western artist.”

It was while bun number 10 was in the oven that music took on a new importance. “I bought my first guitar when I was pregnant,” Mary says. “At the time, I was singing on the weekends at the local RV park with one of my friends. We did a mix of karaoke songs and we would force ourselves to play a few songs on our

guitars. When the economy dipped, my husband’s work in construction took a nosedive and the money from my little weekend gigs became money for food.”

A homemade album caught the ear of Mike Kirkwood, who, with his wife, JoLynne, produce and promote western entertainment events in several communities around the West, including, for a time, Moab, Utah, where Mike first put Mary on stage. “Getting a call from Mike to sing at my first cowboy gathering is what I consider my first big break,” Mary says. “He brought me in and handed me a paycheck when I could hardly strum a guitar.”



photo by Anita Crane/www.photosbynets.com

Mary with her husband and manager, Brad Knaphus.

"What made me want to invite her was that God-given set of pipes," Kirkwood says. "She lets that voice roll. I heard her, and I thought, *wow!*" Mary knew little of cowboy and western music at the time, but Mike gave her a handful of albums and encouraged her to learn some of the songs. "We told her to come to Moab and we'd get somebody to play guitar for her." She did, they did, and the audience liked it – a lot. Kirkwood kept pushing. "I helped her get a couple of gigs – at cowboy gatherings in Sierra Vista, Arizona, and Kamloops, British Columbia – and exposed her to as many people as we could."

That exposure included accompanying JoLynne, an accomplished poet, to the Academy of Western Artists awards presentation, where she received the award for 2009 female poet of the year. "That was good exposure," Mike says. "Mary's good at networking with people. It was a matter of steering her in the right direction." She is still near the top of the list when Kirkwood assembles entertainers for an event. "We base our selection of talent on people who have something special, and Mary Kaye does."

Since those early days, it's worth noting, Mary has

become an accomplished guitarist. "I spend several hours a week rehearsing," she says. "I took a few lessons from a wonderful man in our little town who had learned to play in Mexico. His thumb-pick style has become my signature sound."

And, rather than confining herself to covering songs by other songwriters, she has taken up the pen herself. "I will admit," Mary says, "that even I get annoyed with some singer-songwriters who get so wrapped up in their own material that they forget the world of beautifully written music around them." So, traditional western songs and songs written by others continue to inhabit her stage shows and albums. But, she adds, "The one



Photo by Rod Miller

Mary devotes several hours a week to improving her guitar playing.



photo by Rod Miller

Adaline and her milk can-percussion instrument show that rehearsal is sometimes fun.

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thing I'll never tire of is the songwriting. As much as I love singing songs written by others, it's the songs that I write that make what I do challenging and worthwhile."

Like her Spur Award-winning song, "Any Name Will Do," about Utah outlaw Butch Cassidy, the history of the West inspires many of Mary's songs. "I'm one of those folks with a stack of history books on my bedside table at all times. When I first started writing western music, I had seen little of the

world besides my little town and had spent years of my life in and out of maternity clothes. History was my first source of inspiration for songwriting." More and more, as she mingles with cowboys and ranchers and other contemporary westerners, the influence of their lives finds its way into her music.

A further evolution in her career is the introduction of her daughters, particularly 17-year-old Sophia and 14-year-old Milly (Emilia), to the stage. "It was a dream of mine to tote the kids along on tour and see the West through their eyes, so I decided to teach them to sing together," Mary says. "Our first big gig was the Genoa Cowboy Festival last year. As we were singing, this amazing feeling came over us, like God himself was right there on stage with us. I still don't know exactly what that moment means for the future, but the memory of it gets us through many nights of rehearsals when we're in our pajamas and have unhealthy amounts of estrogen in the air."

The Kaye Sisters, as they bill themselves, are appearing on more and more stages, and younger daughters Adaline and Cece (Cecelia) are also working themselves into the act, singing harmony and adding



photo by Rod Miller

Mary Kaye engages the audience with original compositions and traditional western music.



photo by Rod Miller

Sophia, Millie, Mary, Cece and Adaline on stage
at the Cache Valley Cowboy Rendezvous.

homemade percussion with milk cans and the like. All the girls also play stringed instruments.

Family dynamics continue to challenge the Knaphus family as they juggle travel and work and school and other activities. "I have a recurring nightmare that my children will all get together years from now and publish a book called, *How Mom Became a Singer and Ruined Our Lives*," Mary says. "The greatest challenge of what I do is the travel. I was once told, 'You must be present to win.' This is true for career and for family. Not a day goes by that I don't cowgirl up and give my best to both. Brad and the children will always be involved in my music because they are one of the reasons why I do this."

Mary sees her husband's involvement as a steady, as well as inspiring, presence. "Brad has worked as hard on learning the music business as I have in rehearsing

for performances," she says. "The only person who could possibly believe in me more is my mother." And while there are occasional conflicts in holding marriage, family and career together, they find a way to work them out.

"They say that in a relationship if both people always agree, one of them is not needed. Brad and I often agree to disagree, but find that somewhere in the middle is the perfect balance," Mary says. "We've learned to trust each other and our instincts, and that it's more pleasant to use our mouths for kissing instead of arguing."

Their flock of 10 children testifies to the truth of that.



<https://youtu.be/4aUvACMbDFM>
Mary Kaye performs "Cowboy Waltzin'
Across Her Mind."

Rod Miller writes nonfiction, fiction and poetry about the American West. His most recent book is *The Lost Frontier: Momentous Moments in the Old West You May Have Missed*.

Visit him online at writerRodMiller.com and writerRodMiller.blogspot.com.

Road Trip List

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

Biscuits, Platinum and Doney Gal

Kacey Musgraves

Pageant Material

Mercury Nashville

Way back in issue 3.6, we noted about the special talent of one Kacey Musgraves, “New country artist Kacey Musgraves stole the 56th Annual Grammy™ Awards show with her LED lit cowboy boots. The twitter-sphere lit up during the singer/songwriter’s performance of “Follow Your Arrow” from her freshman album, *Same Trailer, Different Park* during the awards show.”

Part of her downhome charm



is her natural throwback, Patsy Cline-ish approach to her music. (It doesn’t hurt to have Paul Franklin playing

pedal steel either.) So it was with great anticipation – the arrival of her sophomore album, an event that for many artists can be daunting. *Pageant Material* does not disappoint. From the start it’s apparent we are in the presence of a natural talent who is refreshing in her realness yet very much in control of who she is.

One of our favorites is her “personal update” in “Dime Store Cowgirl” as she lets us know of all the people and places she has seen since last we heard from her:

*Slept in a room with the ghost of Gram Parsons
Drank some wine I can't afford
Went to San Antonio to the Riverwalk and rodeo
Seen the white cliffs of Dover from the shore*

Ms. Musgraves comes off very natural – analog – in





her singing. She's a new deal – sort of the anti-Nashville type who can truly follow her "own arrow." She makes that pretty clear in her big radio play hit "Biscuits" from the album:

*Just hoe your own row and raise your own babies
Smoke your own smoke and grow your own daisies
Mend your own fences and own your own crazy
Mind your own biscuits and life will be gravy*

Musgraves seems happy where she is right now and right now, this CD is playing in getting big play the truck.

Miranda Lambert

Platinum

RCA Nashville

M i r a n d a
Lambert seems to
be everywhere –
everywhere there is
an awards show –
because she wins all the time. This album released about
a year ago went on to be her fifth consecutive No. 1



debut on the Top Country Albums Chart, making her the first artist in history to start her career with five No. 1 albums. *Platinum* won the Album of the Year at the Country Music Association Awards in 2014 and Grammy Award for Best Country Album on February 8, 2015. But while those accolades are amazing, it's not why we put the album on the list. Lambert is a "girls girl" who has made it to the top her way. As *Rolling Stone* critic Will Hermes described, "...the album gives evidence to Lambert's climb to the top ranks of country music's echelon by singing top-shelf songs in the voice of a woman getting real." She is at her best when her wiseacre humor comes through and she is evolving into an effective and wry country artist – male or female – that understands how to get where she wants on her



terms. Both Lambert and Musgraves are heading in similar directions – steering their own ships on the rough seas of the corporate music business – their way.

Platinum features sixteen songs, eight of which are co-written by Lambert – including her hit “Automatic,” a lament back to the days where everything wasn’t “automatic – pocket watches and payphones:

*Quarter in a payphone
Drying laundry on the line
Watching Sun Tea in the window
Pocket watch for tellin’ time
Seems like only yesterday I’d get a blank cassette
Record the country countdown ‘cause I couldn’t buy it yet*

This is a fun album with songs that fit the artist’s persona. She is not trying to be anything she isn’t as what she is, is plenty.

Ian Tyson
Carnero Vaquero
Stony Plain

Octogenarian
Ian Tyson’s album *Carnero Vaquero* is one of his most personal. Celebratory – it reveals he truly does have his voice back after an accident back in 2007 that nearly stole his ability to sing. The album features new music as well as his takes on songs he recorded in the past. The album starts with a haunting rendition of the traditional “Doney Gal” which he first recorded back in the 1960s



during the Ian and Sylvia days as well as a new performance of his classic “Will James” originally recorded on the 1984 self-titled Columbia release *Ian Tyson*. The album also features “Wolves No Longer



Sing,” co-written with Tom Russell. (See Russell’s take on the song in issue 5.2)

The album was recorded in the little stone house Tyson uses for writing on his ranch near Calgary giving it a very personal sound. Personal really is a good word for this effort as the album is even dedicated to a personal moment – “Dedicated to the bighorn ram with the biggest curl in the world, who died after being struck by a vehicle near Longview, Alberta, in March 2015.”

Tyson’s music is, for many, the soundtrack of their western lives. The last song on the album is a wistful “Cottonwood Canyon,” – a song of a place where time has stood still – “no cell phone towers.” A place where the west still lives for those early morning, long trots to the works. We are blessed to have Tyson happily still in the saddle. A glorious album.



A Western Moment



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It's been sixty-years since James Dean sat in that car and was part of the Marfa, Texas shot, epic film, *Giant*, directed by George Stevens and featuring Rock Hudson as rancher Bick Benedict and Elizabeth Taylor as his refined love interest Leslie Lynnton with Dean playing spoiler as Jett Rink. The late 1950s and early 60s would see a huge transition in westerns, with the culture of the 60s changing them forever.



TWO WRAPS AND A HOOEY

The Western, *au curant*

Every so often we read in the civilian press that the western – as a film genre is, taking a quote from John Wayne’s character Davy Crockett in the 1960 version of *The Alamo* – “deader than a beaver hat.” Well, here it is 2015 and I say *au contraire*. There are many westerns in the hopper – most are a little different in flavor than say, 1960’s *The Alamo* – but still. Here are a few that have already been released or are about to be released or are in the works.

First let’s look at television – Fox has a reboot of *Urban Cowboy* in the works with original producer, Robert Evans. The new version will be a pilot for a series, described by the studio as a “modern reimagining of the classic feature.” The original “tells the story of Sissy (Debra Winger) and Bud (John Travolta), a pair of star-crossed young lovers who pursue their dreams and passions through the grime of oil refineries, the sweat of line-dancing honky-tonks and the glamor of modern Texas. It’s about family legacies, starting over,



finding true love and the American dream.” (See images from the original in *R&R* #4.2.)

Now it’s not going to be a surprise that most of the big studios are not in the business today of making westerns – the genre last had its big close up in the 1990s with *Dances With Wolves* and *The Unforgiven* – both won Best Picture Oscars. But still, westerns are being made.

The Homesman (2014) featured Tommy Lee Jones, in both acting and directing rolls along with Hilary Swank. It was a hard picture to find as it had a limited release. The story dealt with



Hilary Swank’s volunteering to return a group of mentally ill women back east after they suffered from the “bleakness and depths of loneliness” while trying to make a life out west. Jones plays a drunken ranch





hand that Swank convinces to come along with her after she saves him from a hanging. The film was adapted from a book by Glendon Swarthout who also wrote *The Shootist*.

The Salvation is a Danish production that plays on VOD but was slated for theatrical release. It's a fairly classic tale of a former soldier in the American west, out for revenge and find the people that killed his family during the war. The hook is he is a Danish soldier played by Mads Mikkelsen.

Slow West was released earlier this year and was shepherded through produc-

tion by its star and producer, Michael Fassbender. It's the story of a 16-year-old Scottish boy (Kodi Smit-McPhee) who partners up with a bounty hunter (Fassbender) in Colorado's 1870, trying to reach his betrothed after she and her father ran from the law in Scotland. Filmed in New Zealand, it's a lovingly paced film.



Bone Tomahawk is a new Kurt Russell western with supernatural overtones about a sheriff trying to rescue captives from a group of cannibals – yeah, cannibals. Currently scheduled for release later this year.

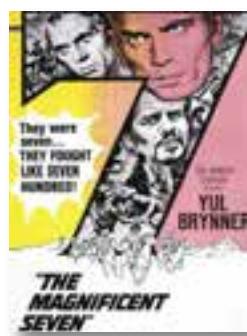
The Revenant is currently filming in Canada –



Christmas 2015 release. Leonardo Di Caprio is a mountain man who after being mauled by a grizzly bear and left for dead – travels two-hundred miles back to civilization to settle the score with the ones that abandoned him in the wild.

Adapted from the novel by Michael Punke.

The Hateful Eight. This one could be the biggy of the year. It's Quentin Tarantino's eighth film and stars Kurt Russell, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Bruce Dern, Samuel L. Jackson and Tim Roth among others. It's a tale of eight individuals trapped by a blizzard and the bad weather conditions makes them crankier than they already are – especially bounty hunter Russell and his captive (Leigh) who he is bringing back to civilization to be hung for a brutal murder. Sort of *Bus Stop* meets *Pulp Fiction* – with horses.



Looking ahead just over the horizon we are seeing in the works a remake of *The Magnificent Seven* with Denzel Washington taking the role of Chris (Yul Brynner). Ethan Hawke is in the cast as well. The western is not dead – as opposed to the late film critic Pauline Kael's famous comment stating that in 1974. It's just different. BR

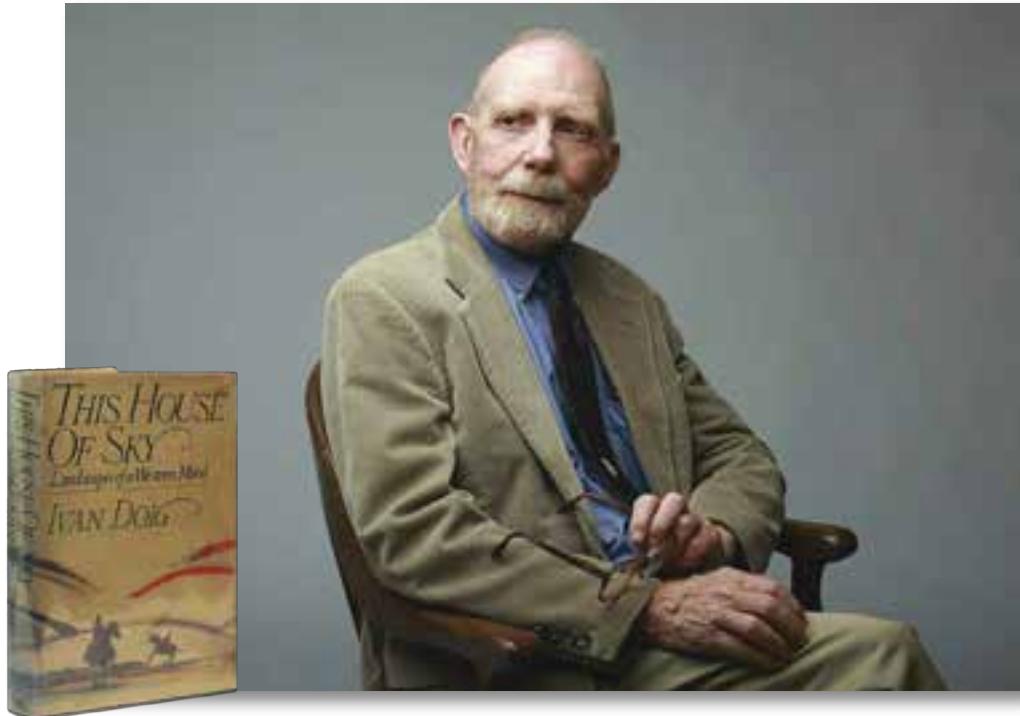




FARE THEE WELL

Ivan Doig

1939 - 2015



"The spaces between stars are where the work of the universe is done."

—Ivan Doig

This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind

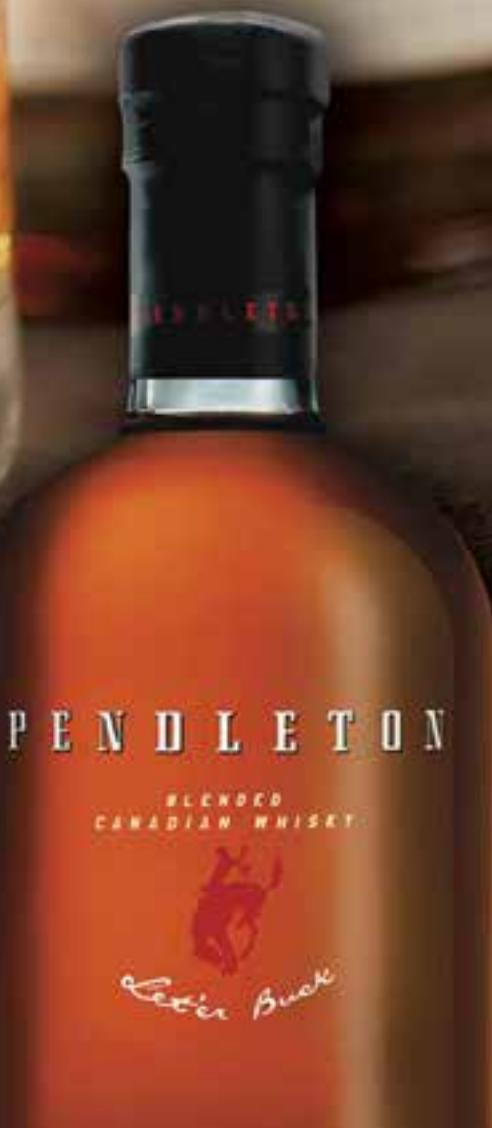
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