

The Journal of the American West

Ranch & Reata

Volume 2.2 \$14.95



Patsy Cline's Enduring Legacy

Pick-Up Men – Miles City Bucking Horse Style

Storms, A Story by Ralph Beer

Remembering Al Tietjen, Bit Maker

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FRONT GATE

Driving On



photo by Lori Faith Merritt

Mailmen have nothing on the cowboy when it comes to getting work done in any weather. During cattle work at a recent Buck Brannaman clinic in Marana, Arizona, riders continued like it was any other working day, enduring rain, sleet and hail with no complaints. It was when the riders could barely see their horses' ears that they decided to call it a day and drove the cattle back into their pens. Of course, as soon as horses and tack were taken care of and riders dried off somewhat, the sun came back to grace their laughter and cowboy camaraderie as they shared stories of ranching and horses until the sun set.

Photo by Lori Faith Merritt

Mary Kaye Knaphus is the 2010 winner of the Western Music Association's Female Vocalist of the Year and the 2011 Academy of Western Artist's Female Vocalist of the year. For her CD, *No Wilder Place*, I photographed her in Skull Valley, Utah, in challenging, freezing weather and yet somehow we created images that show a beautiful warmth and fire of spirit. Mary Kaye is one of the finest singer/songwriters I know, she has 10 children, a wonderful husband, and a deep faith that resonates in everything she does. My life is blessed by this friend who has become a true sister to me.

Mary Kaye's dress designed by Celeste Sotola of Montana Dreamwear

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COVER photo of Will Wolverton by Mary Williams Hyde.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Artifacts

By A.J. Mangum

Horse owners, I suspect, tend to be more sentimental than their horseless peers. They at least have an additional category of their lives, their identities, from which sentimentality can spring. Emotions can get tied up, memories buried, in random objects. It can be a burden if you're a pack rat, as you'll amass an overwhelming collection of odds and ends with which you just can't part. Such sentimentality can also trigger no small amount of joy, forcing even those of us who are minimalists to hold dearly to artifacts from our pasts.

Sorting through our horse trailer's tack compartment, I came across a bridle I haven't used in 20 or more years. Where the reins disappeared to, I don't know, but I still have the headstall and the bit, a production half-breed, circa mid-1970s, designed by Al Tietjen (see this issue's "Classics"). The bit isn't all that valuable, monetarily. Many were made, I'm sure, and plenty must still survive.

I acquired the bit when I was around eight years old. I traded a mare and foal for an Appaloosa gelding



and the seller through in the bit. I guess he didn't fall into the category of overly sentimental.

The gelding was one of the most formidable show horses on the Northwest Appaloosa circuit, excelling in cow horse classes with his former owner, and in patterned classes with me. He doubled as a ranch horse, my mount for moving cattle among pastures, or gathering our small herd for branding. In the arena, on the ranch or on trails in the Mount Hood National Forest, the eastern boundary of which bordered our ranch, the horse carried the Tietjen bit on every ride. In

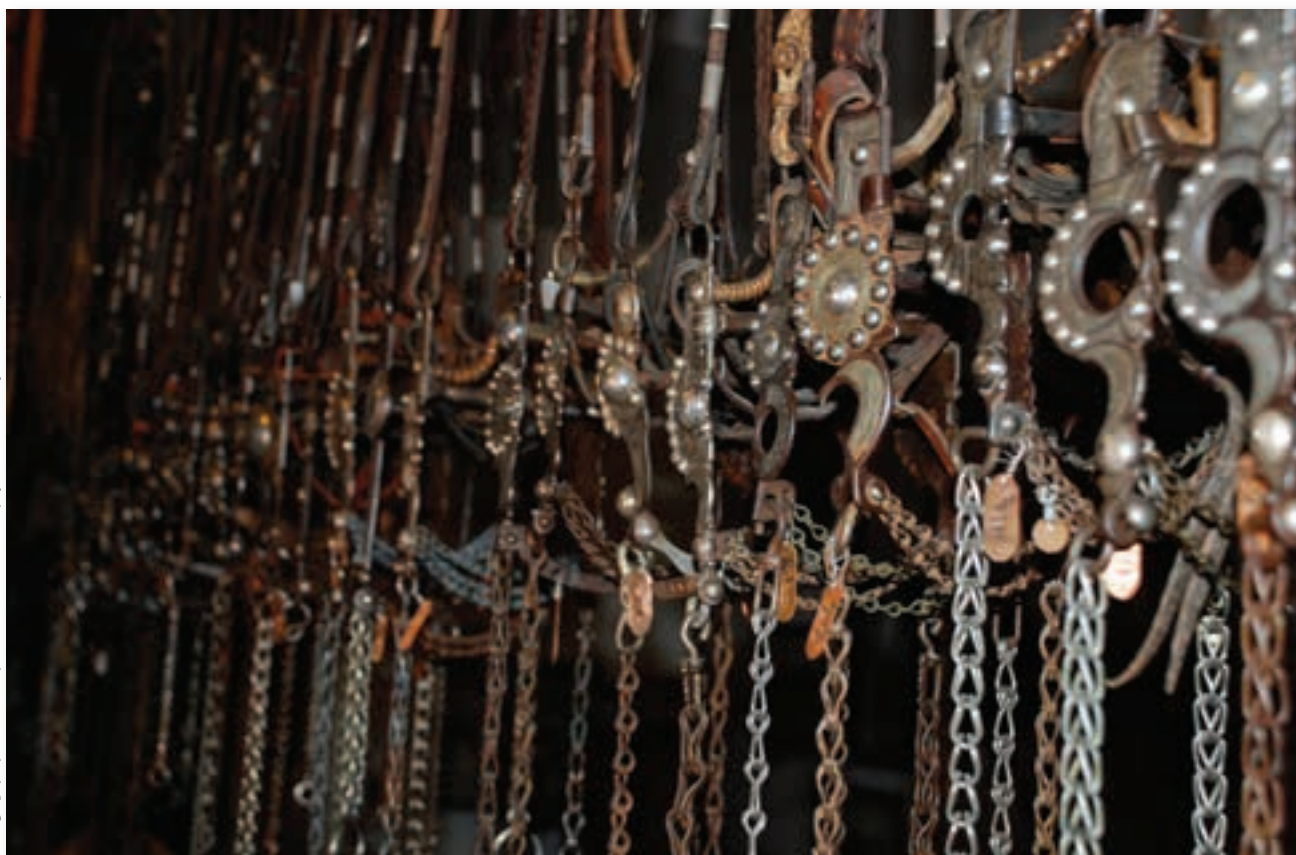


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THE CHOICE OF COWBOYS SINCE 1927



photography by William Reynolds, collection courtesy of The Museum of the Cowboy, Santa Ynez, CA



the mental theater in which my childhood memories play, it's a common prop.

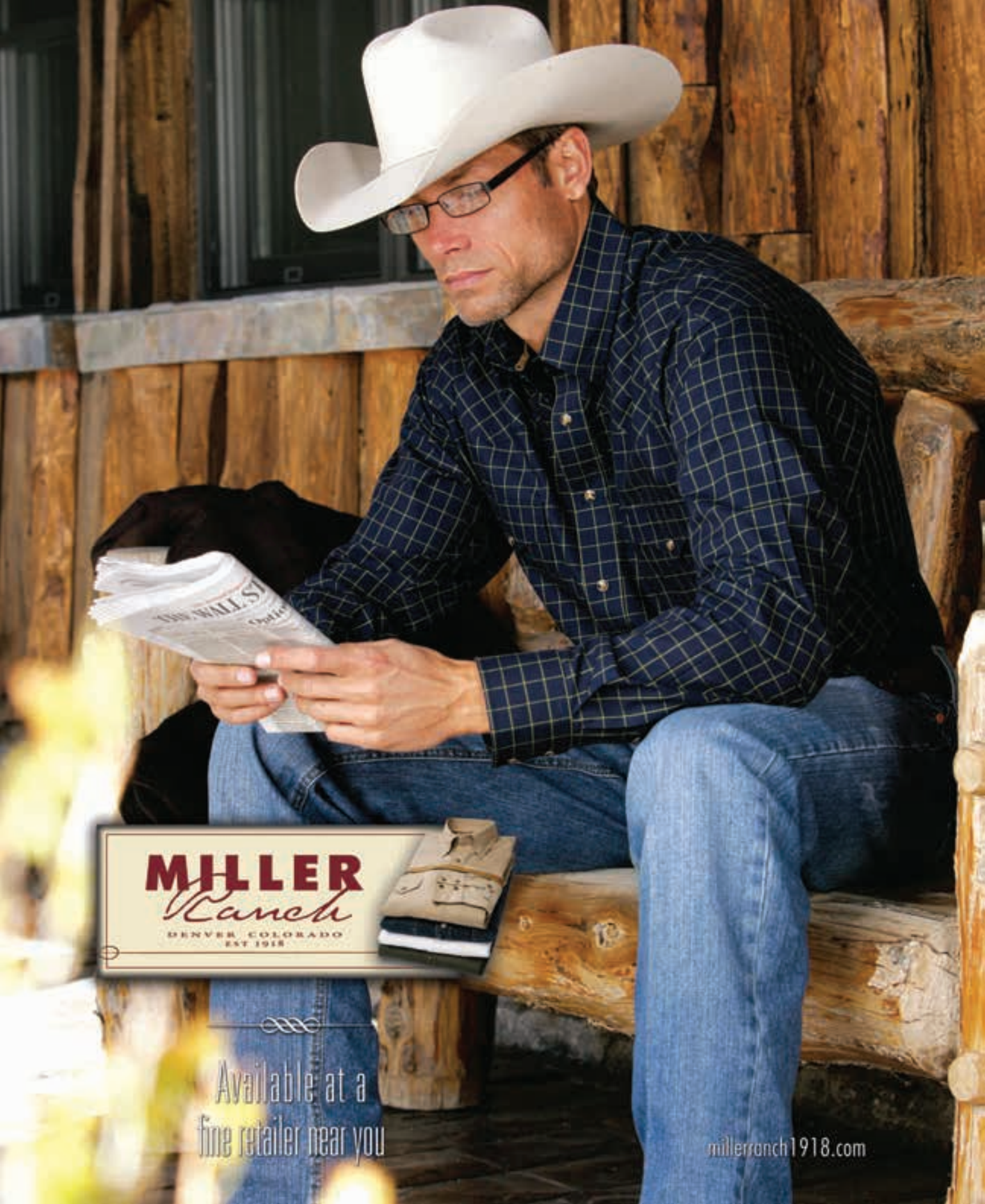
I'll likely never use the bit again. With our current horses, we tend to default to simple snaffle bits. And, somehow, co-opting the Tietjen for use by another horse doesn't seem right. Still, it hangs in the trailer's tack compartment, catching my attention now and again and bringing back memories of a great horse, long since gone.

As I'm writing the first draft of this column, it's a little under 24 hours since a rushed, after-hours trip to a local veterinary clinic where we had to euthanize a young mare, a formidable barrel horse who had just come into her prime, running consistent 1D times along Colorado's Front Range. Five days ago, she was the picture of equine health. By last night, she had

become a shell of her former self, her systems shutting down one by one as an illness that had afflicted her in secret, avoiding detection, finally made itself known. As her suffering was put to an end, I worked to remind myself of how lucky we'd been to have the horse for as long as we did.

In these situations, the protocols of an experienced equine vet can be interesting. The proceedings complete, the doctor removed the mare's halter, coiled the lead rope and handed it to me. Minutes later, I returned it to its hook in the trailer's tack compartment, momentarily noticing various items of tack that'll always be associated with the young mare's better days.

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CLASSICS

Tietjen Bits

Bits made by the influential Reno craftsman still set a standard for form and function.

Following bit and spur maker Al Tietjen's death in 2009, this magazine's editor, A.J. Mangum, wrote, "An exceptionally talented designer and maker of working cowboy gear, Tietjen was also a pioneer in his profession. His standards for functionality and aesthetics elevated the crafts of bit and spur making, dramatically raising the bar for aspiring artisans."

Born in Nevada ranch country in 1928, Tietjen was part of a generation of craftsmen who learned their trades from "old masters," those whose expertise was forged in the 19th century and shaped by the influences of Old World tradesmen who brought their talents to the American frontier.

In the 1940s, Tietjen founded Miller & Tietjen, a San Francisco-based bit and spur business, with his cousin, Elmer Miller. The Bay Area was still cowboy country, and San Francisco was home to several western artisans



Working in an era in which aesthetics mattered little to craftsmen producing bits for working cowboys, Tietjen broke new ground, giving equal emphasis to form and function.



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who applied an Old World mindset – emphasizing quality, form and function – to the production of handmade horse gear and saddle silver. One such craftsman, bit maker Filo Gutierrez, became a major influence on Tietjen, providing the younger maker with insight that was already becoming a rare commodity as the West became more mechanized.

After serving in the Korean War, Tietjen settled in Reno and resumed his career as a bit and spur maker. Counter to the mindset of the time, which dictated that the aesthetics of bits and spurs mattered little, as long as they were functional, Tietjen placed equal emphasis on both form and function. Tietjen bits became known for flawless architecture as well as elaborate engraving and intricate inlays. Their maker’s ideals helped usher in a new ethos among western craftsmen, one that dictated a piece should be useful in accomplishing a day’s work *and* be pleasing to the eye; working with only one half of that equation could not result in anything approaching fine craftsmanship. Tietjen’s guiding philosophies remain sources of inspiration for western artisans today.

Wary of being exploited, especially after a rash of Korean-made counterfeits of his work flooded the market in the 1980s, Tietjen carefully guarded his



The late Al Tietjen’s bits remain known for their functionality and design.

techniques. When he recognized an aspiring craftsman whose motives were pure, however, he tended to open his shop doors and share his expertise freely. Some of today’s leading craftsmen count him as a generous mentor.





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OF NOTE

New and Interesting Things from Out West.

JACK SWANSON AUTOBIOGRAPHY RELEASED



The long awaited autobiography of CAA artist Jack Swanson has been released in a very limited edition of 1500 copies. Swanson is considered the premier artist of the California vaquero and the horse and cow culture of the Pacific Slope region of the West. The book is lavishly illustrated with Swanson's artwork – over 100 paintings, drawings and bronzes along with stories and personal photographs. His is a captivating story of a western original, a man who would rather be horseback than anything else. www.jnswanson.com

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STEEL STRIKE

Philip Smith established Steel Strike Leather Products, Inc. in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Since 1989, his vision was to create a line of furnishings that glorifies the American West.

A masterful blend of cowboy and Indian, European and lodge, which he refers to as “Cattle Baron,” furnishings dedicated to preserving a proud yet elegant way of life as this glorious “Longhorn Bench” with conveniently elegant gun rack under the seat. As Philip says of his products, “We are proud of what we produce at Steel Strike and intrigued by what we will come up with next. My father always told me not to forget to enjoy the ride.” Next issue we have an extended conversation with Philip Smith regarding the inspiration of his creations. www.steelstrike.com



ATWOOD BUCKLE



This sterling silver buckle from the one-hundred-plus year old Comstock Heritage silversmiths uses their trademark “Posse” shape to surround their classic Longhorn die-struck figure. The background pieces are a brow band and a flat 1 1/4” point and scalloped edge concho, the corners adorned with horseshoes. The dies and tools for all four overlays, as well as the buckle, first appeared in a 1939 flyer for the San Francisco World Exposition. www.comstockheritage.com

THE ART OF TIM COX

One of our artist pals, Tim Cox, has a couple of wonderful pieces in this year's Prix de West show and sale at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum (www.nationalcowboymuseum.org/events/pdw/). See more of Tim's work at www.timcox.com and experience the West through his eyes.



Gathering the Weaning Trap
20" x 30", oil



Straight From the Well
24" x 30", oil

WESTERN WISHES: DENNIS DOMINGO'S HEAVY RING SNAFFLE BIT

"My work is the melding of my influences grounded in the Californio Tradition. There are many different riding styles that use my bits and spurs but ingrained in the piece is the spirit of the long and great tradition I carry on. Having the good fortune of forging bits and spurs under the master craftsman Chuck Irwin gave me this opportunity. This has been an honor and a privilege to work with someone who understands horses, the working cowboy and the craftsmanship of good equipment."
www.oldcowdogs.com



ANDY ANDREWS



There is nothing Andy Andrews likes more than to step on one of his horses, except coming up with new ideas. Over the years, Andrews – whose company, A Cut Above Buckles, builds quality trophy buckles for rodeo events as well as numerous horse shows around the country. A former PRCA bull rider, Andrews knows the territory as he has been around the rodeo and horse business his entire career. From the custom leather business, to writing books on braiding to running western retail, Andy Andrews has lived a western life. “We are a family run business, and we understand loyalty and commitment. We work just as hard as the champions that win our creations. See more of Andy’s work at www.acutabovebuckles.com



BOOKS ON THE WEST

Joe Beeler
Life of a Cowboy Artist

Robert Lougheed
Follow the Sun
Both by Don Hedgpeth

The folks at the Claggett Rey Gallery in Vail, Colorado have always done things “first cabin.” Bill Rey and Ray Duncan have produced two exceptional books through their Diamond Tail Press imprint – both written by the legendary Western gentleman, Don Hedgpeth. Both books have won the coveted Wrangler Award from the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.

Joe Beeler, The Life of A Cowboy was a true work of love for author Hedgpeth who was a friend of Joe’s for over 40 years. The book tells the story of Joe’s heritage, his early determination to make art both livelihood and lifework, and his fabled invention – with Charlie Dye, John Hampton, George Phippen and Bob McCloud – of the Cowboy Artists of America at a tavern in Sedona, Arizona, in 1964. One hundred and twenty-five amply sized and richly reproduced photographs of Joe’s sculpture, painting and drawings tell the story of his development as an internationally respected and enthusiastically collected artist.



The second book, *Robert Lougheed: Follow The Sun* is about a quiet, forceful man, dedicated to painting. Robert Lougheed was, as Don Hedgpeth puts it, “not just a western artist, and to label him as such is to diminish the true magnitude of his talent and accomplishments. It is more

appropriate to say that he was a fine artist who in his full creative maturity lived and painted in the west.” Lougheed was a member of the Cowboy Artists of America and a founder of the National Academy of Western Art. He was still painting prodigiously at the home he shared with his wife Cordelia in Santa Fe, New Mexico, when his life was cut short in 1982 at the age of 72. www.claggettreys.com



BRIGHTON SADDLERY ANNUAL SADDLE SALE

One of summer's biggest events in the Rocky Mountain region is Brighton Saddlery's 35th Annual Saddle Sale and Custom Maker's Show. It's a gear hunters dream. There are literally hundreds of new and used saddles to choose from. If you are looking for Wades, slick forks or punchy swell forks the Brighton Sale is where all the "plenty fork-ed" types hang. Beyond the buckaroo gear, you'll find saddles fit for working cowhorses, ranch cutters, reiners, ropers, barrel racers, and trail riders – kids saddles too. July 20-21st. www.Brightonsaddlery.com The Rockies cowboy social event of the year!



IAN TYSON RELEASES *RAVEN SINGER*

Legendary Canadian singer/songwriter Ian Tyson returns at the age of 78, with a new album of 10 remarkable songs – *Raven Singer*. This is his 14th album with long-time record label, Edmonton-based Stony Plain Records. *Raven Singer* is a collection of new songs, all but one written over the last three years, that offer yet another clear-eyed example of the singer's world view, rooted in his life in the West but informed by his travels. From the part-travelogue "Under African Skies" to "Blueberry Susan," that offers a tribute to many of the musicians that touched Tyson, this collection of songs is Tyson rediscovering himself and his "new voice."

In 2012, Tyson is closing in on nearly six decades of performing. Almost sixty-years of making recordings of the songs he writes in the 100-year-old stone building a mile down the gravel road from his ranch house. Six decades of singing stories that tell the real truth about horses and men, love sustained and relationships broken, heroes and heroines and the land and the weather and the prairie sky. The album's Dali-esque cover is by Calgary teacher Paul Rasporich; it depicts a raven's skull. The title of the CD followed a sweat lodge ceremony at the Nakoda First Nation, near Banff Alberta, when Tyson's name – Ka-ree-a-hiatha (Raven that Sings) – was chosen.

The album may be purchased from Vickie Mullen at www.hitchingpostsupply.com



AMERICAN PAINT HORSE ASSOCIATION TURNS 50



The American Paint Horse Association (APHA) officially turned 50 years old this year, commemorating a breed association that has registered more than one million horses. APHA began as the brainchild of horsewoman Rebecca Tyler Lockhart of Gainesville, Texas, in the early 1960s. An avid admirer of beautifully colored horses of sound Western stock horse conformation, Tyler spoke up against the prevailing establishment and advocated the start-up of a Paint, stock-type horse registry. Overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds and almost unanimous disagreement from breeders, she began her quest for a breed registry at informal get-togethers in the kitchen of her home.

To celebrate the anniversary, APHA created a Hall of Fame at its international headquarters in Fort Worth, and an inaugural class of 25 members and 25 horses will be inducted into this Hall of Fame at the Association's annual convention in October. www.apha.com



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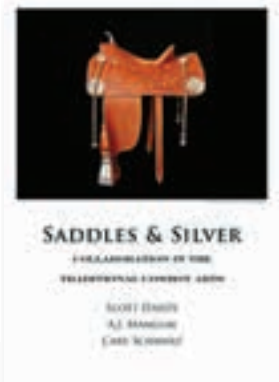
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FACEBOOK | VAQUERO HERITAGE DAYS 2012

SHAMELESS PROMOTION OF OUR STAFF

Our editor A.J. Mangum and contributing writer Mark Bedor have new books out. First and foremost, BUY THEM.

You can read about them in the Publisher's piece on page 128. These are two charming and talented westerners and your coffee table or night stand will be all the classier having these books prominently displayed in either location.



REMEMBERING BERT

Tammy's Cowdogs

On of our loyal friends – for both this magazine and Range Radio – is Tammy of Tammy's Cowdogs. Whether you are looking for a great working dog or just love to see great dogs work, Tammy's site should be your next destination. The photos are tributes to one of Tammy's favorite dogs, Bert, who is now on up the trail ahead. Tammy told us a little about her dog. "In August 2002, I purchased my first Hangin' Tree Cowdog. He was just a pup, but ready to work. I named him Bert and for the next four years, he and I completed all the ranch work ourselves. When we started our journey together, neither knew that a mere 14 months later, he would literally save my life. How do you ever repay a cowdog for such an enormous gesture? In the time after that, I came to realize the only thanks he wanted was the chance to work with me, beside me, day-in and day-out. Bert was larger than life. He was smart. He was athletic. He was loyal. I miss him everyday."

Tammy's site is more than just about working dogs. It's about cattle and training great dogs and the Goldammer Ranch. More importantly, it celebrates hard work, devotion and a life well lived.

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NATHALIE

Santa Fe, New Mexico

In 1983, a young French woman came to America's Southwest. She had a passion for the ways of the cowboy and Native American. Nathalie Kent had spent twelve years as an editor at *French Vogue*, after a young lifetime of following her childhood fascination with Cochise and Black Eagle. We caught up with Nathalie at her gallery in Santa Fe.

R&R: What caught your attention as a young person living in France to be so inspired by Native American culture?

Nathalie: I was first introduced to the culture through television shows I would see after school. Shows like *Rin-Tin-Tin*. I later became aware of these clubs in Europe that celebrated the American Indian. They would build these huge and very authentic



beading work – and I spent time studying and becoming very adept at specific tribal patterns and colors. It was something that was natural for me and I took it with me in spirit to my work at *Vogue*.

R&R: Was this a popular style in Europe?

Nathalie: For me it was something timeless, not a trend as so many things in fashion are. The craftsmanship involved was a huge part of the attraction for me and it is part of why I love the Southwest and all its culture. There is a timeless quality to the crafts of the area and I found



myself here to celebrate that for the rest of my life!

encampments on the weekends – teepees, camps, entire villages where people would dress, dance, sing songs and play the tribal drums. Many of these were outside of Paris and in the Black Forest of Germany. The people who did all this became known as “Indian-ists” and they would recreate entire cultures including the arts on the weekends!

R&R: What areas did you participate in?

Nathalie: I was fascinated by the



R&R: It sounds like you're on a mission?

Nathalie: (Laughs) I am. I am here to save your roots! It is *why* I am here. To make sure we in America never forget where we came from.

R&R: Has this become part of the basis for your gallery/store – and your life?

Nathalie: In large part. As for my business, I want to represent the best of what the culture of our area is all about – sort of the Hermes of The West! And frankly, it’s my love of the West that has created my life here. I first came, via Texas, on a photo assignment, traveled around and decided to stay. Santa Fe has been my home since 1988. Fifteen years ago, riding my horse through Canyon de Chelly on the Navajo Reservation, I was lucky enough to meet Jim Arndt – a cowboy who was also a very talented photographer and who shared the same passion for the West as I did – and we still do. I started my business in 1995 and never looked back.

R&R: Tell us about your customers.
Nathalie: Having been here for a while, my customers have become



help them “love what they love.” They learn to go with their gut, enjoy what they want to include in their life.

R&R: You are a permission-giver

fit their lives. My best customers get a “Pick & Choose” box from me. I find things in my travels that fit certain customers and I let them decide. It’s great fun.

R&R: It sounds that you have found your home, in many ways.

Nathalie: Yes, truly, and it’s growing! Besides the fashion store, I expanded into home furnishings, art and antiques, next door. I mix the things I find in my travels with lots of new furnishings from here with antiques and art I bring back from France and all over the world. There’s also a gallery presentation of paintings and photography – much from artists I represent. All this and I am continuing to enlarge my website. All my inspiration is here. For me Santa Fe is the heart of the West – the people, the land and the geography – they give me wings.

Nathalie may be reached at www.nathaliesantafe.com



more than customers as I learn about them – they become friends. They trust my judgement as I

for them to love your design?
Nathalie: I suppose but more importantly I help find things that

Photographs courtesy Nathalie Kent. At far left, Nathalie growing up Indian, Top center, Nathalie and Jessica on 1977 *ELLE* cover, Bottom center at left by Tony Kent. Left page, right and this page by Jim Arndt.



BY HAND AND HEART

The Accidental Hatmakers

The father-son duo behind Rocky Mountain Hat Company pursue a straightforward business plan based on quality work and quality of life.



By Melissa Mylchreest

The cowboy hat. Few images are as iconic, as enduring, as this symbol of the American West.

All the world over, the hat with the wide brim and the tall crown evoke thoughts of independence and hard work, stoicism and vigor. We envision wide skies and dust, backcountry trails and campfires, we harken back to an earlier time when a man could earn a living riding a horse all day, and sleeping under the stars each night.

And if you want to talk about hatmakers, you can't do better than to talk about John Morris Sr. and John Morris Jr., owners of the Rocky

Mountain Hat Company, founded in Bozeman Montana, in 1990.



John Morris Jr. and John Morris Sr. founded their company in 1990.

They'll be the first to tell you that they're not the only custom hat-makers out there, not by a long shot. Most custom hat-making operations are boutique outfits, producing only a small number of hats each year.

"We don't do any advertising," says Morris Sr. "We usually don't even do interviews. It's all word-of-mouth. Even with that we have a seven- to eight-month backlog of orders."

Having famous repeat-customers doesn't hurt, and

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Rocky Mountain Hat Company is based in Bozeman, Montana.

Rocky Mountain Hat has them in spades. “I’ve known Buck Brannaman since he was 24 years old,” says Morris Sr., “and over the years we’ve probably made close to 20 hats for him. In fact, I’ve got five of his hats right here in front of me, hats that he sent in to renovate and clean up.” He rattles off a few other big names, mentioning along the way that Robert Redford wore Morris hats in the movie *The Horse Whisperer*. “We had to make a dozen, because for each hat Redford wore, they needed another for his stunt double, another for his photo double, and another for his riding double.”

These are top-of-the-line hats, both stylish and utilitarian, and they appeal to a diverse audience. Morris Sr. acknowledges that “if we only built hats for working cowboys who ride a horse every day for a living, we’d

have been out of work a long time ago. That’s a reality.” They make hats for high-end customers from all over the world, for travelers who come to stay at Montana guest ranches, or for folks who stop by their booth at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada, and decide to place an order. “We go to Elko,” Morris Sr. says, “and almost all the orders we take are shipped to poetry aficionados from California.” But the Morris duo isn’t all glitz and glamor, and they make sure to mention it.

“Yes, we work with high-end customers, but also with cowboys, guides, fishermen, outfitters. Lots of horse owners who do a lot of packing and trail riding. Also dude ranch owners and wranglers,” says Morris Jr.. “Working ranchers are our favorite clients. They wear their hats

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hard, and when they bring them in for renovation, you can tell those hats haven't been sitting in the closet."

So how does one become a hat-maker? In the case



John Sr. puts some finishing touches on a hat.

of John Morris Sr., it was a circuitous – and entirely unintentional – path.

"In a former life," he says, "I was a theoretical physicist." Later he found himself in Colorado, working as a headhunter, and then got involved in the oil and gas industry. Yet throughout these changes and upheavals, one thing remained constant: "I've made things with my hands all my life."

He had also been bow-hunting since he was young, so when he was in the market for a new recurve bow and couldn't find one to his liking, he designed and built one of his own. Soon he had made bows for his son and friends, and, sure enough, the inevitable happened. "Pretty soon," he says, "someone I didn't know came to me and asked if I'd build them a bow." And so his bow-making business began by accident. "It wasn't planned," he says, "and we didn't advertise, but we ended up having

a year-and-a-half backlog on orders."

Fate wasn't finished with him though, and his own resourcefulness and desire for quality craftsmanship would

soon lead him down a new path. "I was at a county fair, and there was a guy making hats, and I was looking for a new hat for myself," Morris Sr. says. "I watched what he was doing and I saw the hats he made and I thought, 'you know, he's not really that good a craftsman.'"

Confident he could do a better job, Morris Sr. got in touch with a hat-maker who was kind enough to sell him a few hat bodies, felt that has been formed to the rough shape of a hat, but not yet finished.

"I made some rudimentary equipment, and made myself a hat," he says. "And I'm sitting here in the shop now, 20-some years later, looking at the first hat I ever made, up there on the wall."

Today, Rocky Mountain Hat's shop has about 140 display hats that serve to help customers figure out what styles and colors work best for them. Morris Sr. contends that, with some clients, the process is made easier. "If someone has a cool mustache, they can put on any hat and it looks good." Luckily for those that lack a mustache, Morris Jr. has a knack for sizing up a person's face and style, and often helps customers find the right hat.

Morris Jr. first joined his father in business during the bow-making years, shortly after finishing college. He had worked as a roughneck all through school, and liked the lifestyle it entailed: 10 days on, 10 days off, leaving time for travel and recreation. Today he's still an avid

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traveler, skier and kayaker.

Morris Sr. has a theory on why they've both found themselves in the business: "Neither one of us is fit to work for anybody else, so we're doing this by default." He's careful to point out, though, that it's not a family business per se, and won't be passed down to Morris Jr.'s son. Why not? "He's got too many brains to be a hat-maker," Morris Sr. says.

A custom hat is built to the exact dimensions of a customer's head. The Morrises transfer those measurements to a wooden block, built in their on-site woodshop and then used as a form to finish the hat in its final stages. Morris Sr. handcrafted some of the machinery in the business's shop, but he and his son also rely upon time-tested antique hat-making equipment. Morris Sr. explains that when they traveled to gun shows or poetry gatherings during the early years of their business, they made sure to avail themselves of a local resource: the phone book.

"We'd go to the yellow pages and look up dry cleaners, and see if we could find an old one that had been in business since 1910 or something," he says. "Dry cleaners used to clean hats. And when they did, they'd have to rebuild them. So they had the general hat-making equipment, and a lot of them had this old stuff sitting in the back in a corner somewhere."

An inventory of the Morrises' extensive collection of hatmaking equipment might prompt some to wonder why they're not expanding their operation. The answer



Working by hand, the Morrises' company produces only a few hundred hats a year. The pace suits the father-son team, and their customers, just fine.

is simple: they don't want to, instead preferring to take their time with each hat, produce a quality product, and leave time for skiing and bird hunting. Luckily, the business is blessed with patient customers happy to wait for one of just a few hundred hats that a two-man shop can produce in a year. The Morrises don't plan on changing their approach, even if such changes could boost profits.

"You'll find that with most craftsmen, they're not in it for the money," Morris Sr. says. "They're doing it for the love of working with their hands. People take pride in wearing our hats, and we take pride in making them."



Melissa Mylchreest is a Montana-based writer. Learn more about the Morrises' work at www.rockymountainhatcompany.com.

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BOOKS TO FIND

Charlie Russell The Cowboy Years

By Jane Lambert

The West effects people and author Jane Lambert is a great example. This fifth-generation, California rancher picked up and moved to Montana largely due to the infection of reading Will James books and gazing into the art of one Charles M. Russell. Her family homesteaded in Lake County, California in the 1850s and she grew up ranching with a passion for horses. So it isn't a great surprise that when she decided to quit her job as an Agriculture/Home Economics teacher and moved with her daughter, Lisa, to Stevensville, Montana in the early 1980s that she would pursue it all with a similar passion.

Her idea for another book on her “visual inspiration,” Charles M. Russell was prompted by a visit to the Russell Museum in Great Falls, Montana – a place of cowboy pilgrimage – sort of a Russell “mecca” for his fans. It was there that Lambert found little and even conflicting information regarding Russell’s horses. Horses that he rode from the time he left Missouri at age sixteen to the point where he started painting full time – a period that lasted over eleven years. As a lifelong horsewoman, Lambert figured it could be a great idea for a book and started a painstaking, ten-year research covering Russell’s cowboy life from 1882 to 1893.

What she created is a truly accessible and engaging read that covers Russell’s early horseback years – with CMR himself the center of the book, along with his many friends and “pards” he rode with. It was during this time that Russell literally absorbed every detail he could that made him feel, taste and remember the wonder that was the American West of the 1880s and would become the basis for his timeless art works to come.

Many books have been written about Montana’s “favorite son,” but Lambert’s take is a fresh look at one of the icons of classic western art. Even the Russell authority, Brian Dippey, was pleased with this new entry into the written history of Charlie Russell as he stated, “This very readable book combines the history and lore of Charlie Russell’s legendary years on the range before he attained international fame as Montana’s peerless Cowboy artist. It’s a story always worth hearing and Jane Lambert does a good job telling it.”





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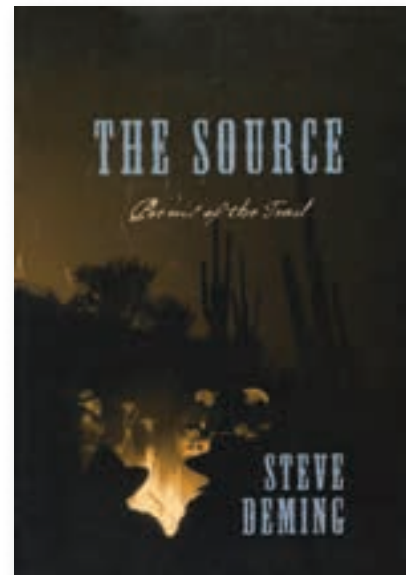
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THE COOK HOUSE

Bopper's Biscuits



By Kathy McCraine

Keith “Bopper” Cannon is a cowboy cook, but don’t accuse him of being a gourmet. “I try to cook authentic wagon food,” he says, “no foo foo or frilly stuff, just the kind of food you would have found on a chuck wagon in the 1880s.”

Bopper, 55, manages the V Bar V Ranch near Camp Verde, Arizona, where he has worked for 16 years. Cooking in chuck wagon cook-offs and catering special events is his sideline and hobby, but he also manages to incorporate his culinary skills into his ranch duties.

The V Bar V is owned by the University of Arizona, and it’s a working ranch of about 70,000 acres, but it’s also the university’s agricultural experiment station. When they work the 550-head cow herd, they recruit high school and college kids to help out, giving them valuable hands-on

experience in ranch work. For branding and shipping in the spring and fall, everybody heads into the mountains at Clint Wells, where Bopper cooks for the crew.



Bopper Cannon

Bopper, who got his nickname from “the Big Bopper” of 1950s rock and roll fame, learned to cook at an early age. A fifth generation rancher and cowboy, he grew up on his folks’ ranch near Clifton in the southeastern corner of the state. By the time he was 13, his dad was sending him out to batch on remote cow camps.

“Folks used to laugh and wonder how I learned to cook pies and stuff,” he says. “Well, Mom wasn’t there to cook for me, so if I wanted to eat, I had to figure out how to cook it.”

After he was grown, he neighbored Stella Hughes, noted cattle woman, cookbook author and wagon cook down on Eagle



Creek. Stella gave him a lot of cooking tips and also piqued his interest in chuck wagon cook-offs, which she helped start.

About five years ago, he borrowed a chuck wagon to enter a contest at the Arizona National Livestock Show, and from then on, he was hooked. When he came home, he bought an 1880s wagon and began outfitting it with antique paraphernalia, including an impressive collection of old black skillets and Dutch ovens.

Now he enters two to three contests a year, though his job keeps him tied to the ranch more than he'd like. The whole family pitches in to help – his wife Robin, mother Daisy Mae Cannon, sister Sissy Fischler and son Keith.

Bopper finds that his cobbler and biscuits garner him the most awards. He credits former Clifton, Arizona, rancher and state legislator Freddie Fritz with his biscuit recipe. When Bopper was running a ranch at Mule Creek, he was camped with a guy that had learned to make biscuits from Fritz. While Bopper prepared the meat, the cowboy would make the biscuits.

“We had a big wooden bowl where he'd dump 20 pounds of flour and make biscuits out of it until we ran out of flour; then he'd dump in another 20 pounds,” he says. “Then I got to noticing he wasn't washing his hands before he cooked, so after about week of that, I said, ‘Let me make those biscuits.’ It's a recipe you can make right out of a flour sack, and I usually don't measure anything.”

For Bopper the chuck wagon cook-offs aren't

necessarily about winning, but about visiting with people about the cattle industry and showing how much his heritage means to him. He recalls cooking a peach cobbler at the Scottsdale Festival of the West and visiting with an elderly man who stopped by to sample his cobbler. With a quiver in his voice and a tear in his eye, the man told him, “That's just like my grandma used to make.”

“That means more to me than any award in competition,” Bopper says.



Bopper's Biscuits

- 2 cups flour
- Pinch of salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ cup sugar
- ¾ cup milk
- ¾ cup shortening or lard, melted but not boiling hot

Mix all dry ingredients in a large bowl. Stir in milk and melted shortening. Add more flour or milk as needed to make a good firm

dough. Roll out ½ inch thick and cut out. Heat a little shortening in a Dutch oven, and rub the tops and bottoms of the biscuits with the oil. To cook in a conventional oven, preheat to 400 degrees and bake 10-12 minutes. To cook over coals, preheat a Dutch oven over about 1 inch of coals. Cover with lid and place 1½ to 2 inches of hot coals on top. Cook about 10-12 minutes, checking frequently because how fast they cook depends a lot of the type of wood and how hot the fire is. Makes 20 biscuits.



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



THE WESTERN WEB

A look at all things cowboy on the information superhighway.

The Internet is home to some surprising treasures. Thanks to expired copyrights, as well as public-domain content and the notion of “creative commons” licensing, many great works of literature can be found for free on the World Wide Web.

One example: At www.manybooks.net (an online catalog featuring hundreds of free books), fans of western fiction can download close to 30 works by Zane Grey, including his classic *Riders of the Purple Sage*.

Grey (1872-1939) began his working life as a dentist who dabbled in writing. Inspired by Owen Wister’s *The Virginian*, as well as a lecture given in New York by hunting guide Buffalo Jones, Grey steered his efforts toward adventure stories set in the American West. *Riders...*, his 1912 novel, would become Grey’s most successful work, and remains one of the most revered western novels ever written.

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Oscar Wilde
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Three Men in a Boat
(To Say Nothing of the Dog)
Jerome K. Jerome
Based on a holiday boat trip made by the author and his two real-life friends George and Harris. This humorous travelogue includes local history of



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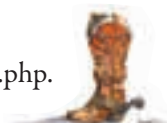
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Working Class

In most parts of the country, a horse is the working cowboy's best friend, but there are some in the cattle business who argue the dog is just as necessary as the equine.

By Paul A. Cañada

Every ranch hand knows a potentially dangerous situation can rear up any time. It's the nature of working with large animals. A smart hand relies on experience, a good horse and the knowledge his partner has his back when things go woefully wrong.

A couple of years ago, a ranch owner and his help were reminded of how quickly things can get out of hand. The three were sorting and preparing about 240 first-calf Herefords for shipment abroad. During the process of pulling a calf from its angry mother, mayhem struck.

The cow slammed the ranch owner against a steel pen. Try as he might, the man couldn't get clear of

the cow. When she stepped and broke his ankle, the situation promised to get worse. Cowboy Rick Kuhn rushed to get between the cow and his boss.



For stock-dog enthusiasts, the value of a trusted canine on a ranch can't be overstated. When gathering and sorting, they often pull the weight of a cowboy on the payroll.

Now "full of vinegar," she pulled off the injured man and started after Kuhn. He took off running across the pen. When the cow caught up with him, she picked him up and tossed him in the air. With the Hereford firmly camped over him, all Kuhn could do was whistle.

Hearing the call for help, Holley, a 4-year-old Queensland Heeler, raced to the corral. At a full run, she threw herself against the cow and knocked the animal clear of Kuhn. The break gave Kuhn a chance to crawl under the gate and to safety. Rick ordered

BOOTS JUST
GOT BETTER



Holley out of the corral and gave her a well-earned hug.

“Holley’s been kicked, rolled and tossed but, for the most part, her quickness keeps her out of harm’s way,” said Kuhn. “The dingo blood in her makes her fearless. I couldn’t find a more capable and reliable hand to work alongside.”

When folks think of a ranch hand moving, penning and sorting cattle, they typically imagine a dusty and weathered cowboy. But, on many ranches, cattle dogs fill an important niche, working alongside cowboys. Many stockmen consider their trusted 4-legged companions to be as valuable as the mounts they ride and rope from. Like most cattle dogs used today, the Queensland Heeler is a cross between numerous breeds, including Australia’s wild dingo. Bred to move hesitant cattle over the rugged terrain of the Outback, the

Queensland is ideal for working Texas’ dangerous backcountry where rogue cattle often hold up.

Cross-breeding of stock dogs is fairly common with owners of cattle dogs. The various breeds are chosen for their instincts and traits. Heelers are popular for their intelligence and ability to nip in order to move cattle forward. Catahoula Leopard Dogs are selected for their tracking and baying-up abilities. The Black Mouth Cur is a desirable cross because it’s a tough and hardy breed that requires little upkeep.

Desirable traits include short-hair coats, solid builds, athletic ability, high energy and intelligence. A good cattle dog must demonstrate a willingness to grip both the bovine’s head and heels when necessary.

“I’ve bred Blue Heelers with American Pit Bull Terriers to use as cowdogs in the brush country,” said

40


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photos by Paul Canada

Queensland Heelers, like Holley, were originally bred to move reluctant cattle in Australia's Outback.

Kuhn. "And I recently bred a Blue Lacy male and a Leopard Catahoula Hound female together. They were my catch dogs in the rougher country and I used Holley to move and sort the cattle out."

True to her breeding, when told to so, Holley will go into the heaviest brush to locate and gather up maverick cows. However, what makes Holley real special is her ability to drive and pen cattle. She has an uncanny ability to read and react to cattle as well as communicate her objectives.

"I'm not sure if I trained her or she trained me," said Kuhn. "She was working at about 5 months old. When she was a young pup, she rode on the horse with me. All

I really had to do was teach her 'wait' and 'down.'"

Holley was given to Kuhn by a friend who felt he needed a companion. As planned, she has proven to be as loyal and capable a friend as she is a partner in the pen. In fact, Kuhn has often referred to his diminutive, bobtailed heeler as his wife.

Together the two manage the JAL West Ranch's Corriente cow-calf operation. This relatively small, but hearty Spanish breed is known for its athleticism. The breed can leap a standard barbed-wire fence and squeeze into the thickest brush.

"The mama Corrientes with calves can be dangerous and aren't afraid to confront a threat. They



Rick Kuhn, of the JAL West Ranch, and Holley.

will turn when Holly is pushing them,” said Kuhn. “Holley’s ability to flatten out and listen, backing off when I tell her to, keeps her out of harm’s way. More importantly, Holley helps me stay safe. When I have to rope a calf, Holley keeps the mother cow off of me.”

Missouri’s Tammy Goldammer places a great amount of value on a dog’s ability to listen and obey when working cattle. Because she works a 600-cow operation by herself,

Goldammer relies heavily on her team of cattle dogs to work cows and calves without incident. Her team works all facets of the operation – gathering, moving, sorting, penning and loading.

When forced to retire her prized cattle dog, a Blue Heeler named Claire, Goldammer had the good fortune of being introduced to Charlie Trayer and the Hanging Tree cowdog line. After watching a team of Trayer’s dogs working a set of yearlings, she purchased a weaned pup, Bert, from the breeder/trainer in 2002. The pup grew up and became a big part of Goldammer’s operation and the cornerstone of her breeding program.

The rancher would later write about Bert, “In every cattle-working situation, he knew what to do without instruction...He simply had

the ability to size up any situation

and apply the right pressure and make everything work.”

Bert had what Goldammer considers the two most important qualities required of a cowdog: patience and the desire to listen, each necessary when sorting and moving cattle through gates. She counts on her team of dogs to stay in behind and hold the cattle, while she runs cattle through two to five gates.

A patient dog will simply move its presence or body,



left or right, to move cattle up a fence line or alley. Goldammer doesn't want a dog biting or shoving cattle over the top of her. Doing so typically results in a wreck and often doubles the time required to do a sorting job.

"All of the dogs in my program need to be able to heel and head, and must be natural listeners," said Goldammer. "Hard-headed dogs aren't anything I want, and I haven't met a customer yet who wants a hardheaded dog."

Just as not all cattle dogs share the same qualities and traits, not all jobs in which the dogs are used are the same. Because of this, Goldammer puts her pups through a repetitive and methodical training program designed to produce versatile workers. The best way to demonstrate the pups' versatility is to have potential buyers and interested people attend a production sale and watch individual dogs work stock.

"People and their operations differ and so what they want in a dog differs," said Goldammer. "If they can watch a dog work, it better helps them decide if the dog will fit in how they run their operation."

Clarence Strait runs his own cow-calf operation in Cuero, Texas. Like his father, he has lived on ranches and worked with cattle his entire life. While he uses dogs to work his own cattle, Strait also uses cattle dogs while doing day work at other ranches.

When Strait first started using dogs, he primarily worked with Border Collies and Blue Heelers. Today, like many of his dog-using peers, he breeds and uses Catahoula Leopard and Black Mouth Cur crosses. The breed is hardy and tracks and bays well.

"I've been working cattle with dogs since I was 19," said Strait. "I started using them because of the rugged terrain around here. If you go into that brush on horseback, more times than not, cattle will duck and dodge behind you, and fight you. A good dog will go in there and bring the cattle out to you, reducing the chance of cowboys and horses being harmed."

The combination of heavy brush and maverick cattle can be equally hard on dogs. One of Strait's favorite's, a Leopard Catahoula-Black Mouth Cur cross named Cale-Lee, was permanently retired from serious cattle work after suffering a debilitating injury in the brush. Strait and a partner were trying to locate a prized Brahman bull that had worked its way into the heaviest cover on its pasture.

Cale-Lee tracked and found the bull, and began baying. While the cowboys worked their way to the hound, the bull took advantage of an opening. Attempting to head the angry animal, Cale-Lee instinctively tried to grab it. The bull rolled the hound and broke its hip.

According to Strait, the need for bay-up dogs in his part of Texas is beginning to wane as ranching continues to evolve. For the most part, the big ranches have been cut up into smaller, more manageable pastures now. Much of the heavy brush that made bay-up dogs necessary has been cleared. Still, Strait believes a good cattle dog can be a valuable asset to smaller operations.

"With dogs, you don't need as many hands to work the smaller pastures," said Strait. "Two men with dogs can competently work 100 to 300 head. They allow you to cut back on labor and that's important when you're trying to keep costs down."

Efficiency is the key to a healthy margin on smaller ranches. Because every penny per pound counts, many ranchers don't allow dogs to work their cattle, fearing the canines might injure stock. A cattle dog instinctively nips or grips the hind legs of a cow in order to move or drive it forward. A dog might also grab the nose of a cow in order to stop and turn it from its course.

"If you don't own them, you don't necessarily have the same regard for the livestock," explained Goldammer. "When you own the cattle, you know what the true salvage value of your cattle is. A cow that goes to town with its ears ripped off and nose ripped up, will go from



being an 80-cent weight cow to a 10-cent weight cow the moment she walks through the gate.”

A cow’s stressed disposition can be as damaging as physical wounds. A dog chasing and chewing on cattle can make cattle more difficult to handle.

Injured and stressed cattle, though, aren’t a problem when working dogs have been carefully bred and trained to work cattle properly. A good dog actively listens for his controller’s commands and reacts without hesitation. When told to back off, it does.

JAL West Ranch owner Jay Meadows has no reservations about Holley working his cows and calves. First, he’s raising cattle for roping sport and so minor bite injuries aren’t as big a financial issue. More importantly, he’s ridden alongside Holley and Rick and knows firsthand how they work.

“Holley has never left a mark on a single cow or calf,” said Meadows. “She nips and moves, but doesn’t grab and hold on. She’s smart and has plenty of savvy. Holley is a valued and trusted hand on my ranch.”

As the use of cowdogs dwindles on some ranches, it rises in importance on others. Holley, Bert and Cale-Lee are the result of many generations of quality breeding aimed at producing pups with the natural instincts, intelligence and athleticism needed to work cattle efficiently. Their owner/handlers will tell you the dogs are better than an extra hand and as important as a good horse.

When asked about the value of his dogs to his daily operations, Strait said, “You know they hung men for stealing another’s horse. I might consider hanging a man for stealing my best cowdog.”



Paul Cañada is a writer based in Texas.

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THE WESTERN HORSE

Miles City Pick-Up Men

Theirs is one of the most unique jobs in rodeo. To perform it, they rely upon horses with an extra bit of grit.



By Tom Moates

46

Clang! The chute swings open. The bronc bolts into the arena surrounded by packed grandstands and breaks into a hard buck. In a second, the cowboy loses his grip, goes over the hind end, gets catapulted, and seems to hang there airborne. The bronc charges forward at a wild gallop before the cowboy has time to land face first in the dust. The horse hardly gets two strides before being surrounded by three riders in matching blue shirts galloping along with him. One leans over and deftly snatches the bronc rein. The horse is efficiently ushered out of the arena. The pick up men reposition. The next chute opens.

The scene certainly looks like a rodeo, and it is one of sorts, but this is not your typical bucking-horse event.

“It’s a lot more work than a rodeo where you have a bunch of old horses that’s been bucked,” Kyle Shaw

says. Since 1997, Kyle and his son, Jay, have been pick-up men at an unusual bucking horse event held each year: the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale in Miles City, Montana.

The unique event, held the third weekend in May, is in its 62nd year. Horses consigned to the sale are showcased in action during the bucking-horse event. Many rodeo stock contractors are on hand looking to add fresh horses to their bucking strings, and the livestock in this event come from all kinds of backgrounds.

“The old horses that’s been in the bucking string for awhile (in typical rodeos),” Kyle continues, “they know that their job is done when you show up, and they pretty much know you’re going to help them out to get the guy off. At the bucking horse sale, some of the hardest horses



to pick up are old saddle horses, 'cause they're not afraid of you. You can't hardly push them. They'll cut behind you, turn around and go the other way, and they're a lot harder to get close to."

Both of the Shaws are Montana ranchers. Kyle, who is 53, lives 30 miles south of Miles City and has his own place. Jay, 31, manages a ranch nearby with 4,000 head of mother cows owned by former astronaut Frank Borman, commander of the 1968 Apollo 8 mission, and one of the first three men to circle the moon.

Two pick-up men are usually used in rodeo events, but the large number of inexperienced bucking horses coming through the chutes at Miles City makes an additional pick-up man necessary. It takes three, each with his own string of seasoned and capable horses, to manage the mayhem. For many years, the third member of the team has been another Montana rancher, Lynn Ashley, whose Ashley Quarter Horses is the source of many of the Shaws' arena mounts.

"It can be overwhelming," Jay says of the pick-up work at Miles City. "You have a lot of horses that you see through the course of a day, and you don't know any of them. So you have to really be on your toes to read what's going on. It takes a lot more horses. I'll end up hauling seven or eight horses into that deal to stay mounted good enough, so I've always got something fresh enough to get the job done, compared to a rodeo where you might haul four or five horses."

It isn't difficult to get on the topic of what makes a great pick-up horse with either of the Shaws. Both ride primarily Quarter Horses.

"They've got to have a lot of heart and not be

scared," Kyle says. "They've got to be willing to take a lot more punishment as far as being kicked and banged around. It's a hundred miles an hour, then you change



photos by Allen Russell

Lynn Ashley and Kyle Shaw pick up saddle-bronc rider Luke Wilson at the Miles City Bucking Horse Sale.

directions and go the other way, so they have to be athletes and have quite a little speed and agility."

Jay adds that a sound mind is a critical asset for a first-class pick-up horse, especially true when working Miles City, since the bucking stock there, when compared to that of rodeos, is uncommonly inexperienced to the environment, and all over the place in the arena.

"In my string of horses," Jay says, "they all have plenty of speed, but you can get by with a slow horse if you can keep his mind settled down. They've got to be broke to ride. And if their minds can't handle it, pretty soon they just won't stand it. They'll run, then you can't get next to your bucking horse. You can't get next to your cowboy to save him."

Jay is partial to the Zan Parr Bar blood line. Three of his current string are from this line.



“They kinda crave picking up,” Jay says, “but at the same time, each one’s mind is like a rock. You can take him out there, drop the reins over the saddle horn, and watch a bucking horse and he doesn’t do anything till I tell him.”



Kyle Shaw pursues a riderless bronc.

For the Shaws, not every ranch horse makes a pick-up horse, but every pick-up horse has to be a working ranch horse.

“I’ve never had a horse that had a single job,” Kyle explains. “They have to work cows, sort cows and pick up. It’s really a trial and error thing. You get one, and then you get to playing out in the pasture, loping along and pushing each other around, bumping each other, and if they don’t like it, they’re not going to work as pick-up horses.”

The Bucking Horse Sale clearly puts pick-up horses to the test. These days, the number of bucking horses

accepted in the event is limited, but, that wasn’t always the case.

“Dad and I once picked up 500 in three days,” Jay says. “It was nuts, and we were sore, our horses were sore. Then after that they started putting a cap on it. Now they’ve got the match bronc ride on Sunday, and they bring in all the top guys and the NFR horses. That day is pretty easy. In the course of the weekend this last year, we picked up 150-some horses.”

Kyle has decided to retire from picking up the bucking horse sale. 2010, he says, was his final year. As far as jobs go, there surely are less dangerous and physically demanding ways to earn money.

“It’s one of the few jobs in rodeo that you can go take your horse and get a paycheck every time you go, as opposed to competing,” Kyle says. “A guy wouldn’t do it if it wasn’t fun, I don’t think. The paycheck isn’t what brings you back. You get to know a lot of people so it’s like a weekend out with the guys, and you get away from your other concerns.”

“If you’re doing it for the money, you’re doing it for the wrong reason anyway,” Jay says. “It’s not a get-rich deal, by any means. If you don’t crave a little adrenalin, and if you’re not willing to take a little bump and bruise here and there and keep on going, it’s really not the job for you. If you don’t have a little bit of grit, you probably better not do it.”



Tom Moates’ latest book is *Further Along the Trail: A Continuing Journey into Honest Horsemanship*.

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NATIONAL FFA ORGANIZATION

Just as a sonnet by Shakespeare, a painting by Picasso or a song by Sinatra never goes out of date, neither do the principles on which the National FFA Organization were founded. Those principles remain as relevant today as they were in 1928 when the organization was founded.

The Future Farmers of America was established 84 years ago to give young men in rural communities an opportunity to “develop confidence in their own ability and pride in the fact that they are farm boys.” Among the purposes set out for the organization were achievement in agriculture, nurturing a love of country life, thrift, cooperation, recreation and scholarship.

Today, FFA looks a bit different than it did in those early years. Yet the organization still stands on its original principles and envisions a future in which all agricultural education students will discover their passion in life and build on that insight to chart the course for their educational, career and personal future.

Here at the National FFA Organization, we love to brag about the more than 540,000 members that make up the 7,480+ FFA chapters across the country, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Last August, in our member magazine *FFA New Horizons*, we caught up with one such member, Kathy Hollmann.

She's One Sharp Shooter

New Mexico FFA member is a world champion
in cowboy mounted shooting.

Story by Jessica Mozo

Kathy Hollmann is not your typical high school athlete. Instead of balls and nets, her sport involves horses and handguns.

The 18-year-old FFA member from Hagerman, New Mexico, began competing in the equine sport of cowboy mounted shooting at age 10, and in 2010 she snagged the world champion title at the Single Action Shooting Society's world championship in Edgewood, New Mexico. She is the third woman to ever win a mounted-shooting OVERALL world title.

"I started shooting at age 2, riding horses at age 3, and shooting real bullets in competition at age 7," says Kathy, who graduated from Hagerman High School in May and is attending Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell this fall. "I love horses and shooting, so when I tried mounted shooting at the age of 10, I was hooked."

Kathy excelled at the sport under the watchful eye of her father Jim Hollmann, a seasoned mounted shooter and longtime law enforcement officer.

"We have two sons 10 and 11 years older than Kathy, and whatever we boys were doing, Kathy wanted to do it too," Jim recalls. "I've been in law enforcement 33 years and in firearms training most of that time, so I figured if anybody could teach a 2-year-old to shoot safely, it would be me. The first time Kathy went to shoot in an action match, she was 7, and people were amazed at her trigger control – she didn't miss a target."



photos provided by the Hollmann Family

During competition, Kathy must ride a particular pattern, determined at random the day of the event, with 10 balloons she must shoot along the route. The pattern can usually be run in 15 to 35 seconds, and while speed is important, shooting accuracy is how contests are won. Competitors use .45 caliber Long Colt cartridges, which are loaded with black powder, like that used in the 1800s. According to the Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association, this load can break a balloon up to 15 feet away.



Since then, Kathy has been traveling with her dad and mom, Chaleeporn (a native of Thailand), to 20 matches each year in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona. She competes at Single Action Shooting Society events as well as those organized by the Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association, which was formed in the early 1990s and has 95 affiliated clubs across the country.

“SASS and CMSA mounted shooting are both going strong, and cowboy mounted shooting is the fastest-growing equine sport in the nation, perhaps the world,” Jim says. “Depending on what skill level you compete at, it is an extremely fast and exciting family sport. Both organizations have multiple scholarships for shooting



Kathy has been competing since she was 7 years old.



members each year.”

When competing, participants are required to dress in traditional or old-time western clothing, including long-sleeved western shirts, five-pocket blue jeans covered by chinks or chaps, western boots, and cowboy hats. They can use any horse or mule, but the animal must be comfortable with shooting, turning and running fast.

Kathy competes on a 10-year-old quarter horse named Roy.

“I’ve had Roy for six years, and I trained him myself,” she says. “It can take two to four years for a horse to be ready for shooting. You have to let them run the courses and then dry-fire to let them hear the click of the gun.”

Cowboy mounted shooting is a fast-action timed event. Riders use two .45-caliber single-action revolvers, each loaded with five rounds of specially prepared blank ammunition. As the timer ticks, a participant rides a predetermined pattern with the goal of shooting 10 balloons in a certain order. Riders are scored on time and accuracy, with penalties for missed balloons, dropped guns, incorrect run of the course, and falling off their horse.

“We’re split up in different classes,” Kathy explains. “The kids under 12 are in the wrangler class, and they run the same course as the adults and get timed for it, but they shoot toy guns.”

Teens and adults compete in six classes each of the men’s, women’s and seniors’ divisions. The prize for the best overall score transcends both age and gender – it’s not uncommon for moms and dads to compete against each other and their kids.

Safety in horse training and gun handling is a top priority, and many CMSA clubs sponsor clinics for new shooters to learn the





basics of safe riding and shooting.

“It’s a great family sport,” Kathy says. “It’s pretty well-known worldwide, but I’m the only one from my school of 400 kids who does it.”

Before winning the SASS World Overall World Champion title in 2010 at age 16, Kathy won the SASS Ladies World Champion title in 2008 at age 14 and she



won that title for the third time in 2011. The two other women who won overall world titles were both in their 30s at the time, making Kathy the only female teen to ever be named Overall World Champion.

“We meet the nicest people in this sport,” Kathy says. “I love it because it puts the two things I love most together – riding and shooting.”



Cowboy Action Shooting champion Kathy Hollmann trained Roy, her horse, herself. She says it’s especially important for the horse to become familiar with the sound of the gun.

Kathy is majoring in business and plans to become a high school welding and agriculture instructor. Eventually, she hopes to have a career as a full-time horse trainer.

To learn more about Kathy’s sport, visit her website at www.morningdoverides.com.



Update

Since the article was published, Kathy won the New Mexico State Champion Overall and the Arizona State Mounted Rifle State Champion for 2011. At the CMSA 2011 World Championship, Kathy tore her ACL from the femur between stages but still completed the competition, finishing the match in eighth place out of 379 competitors. After recuperating from surgery, she will start competing again in June 2012.

Kathy is proud to be sponsored by Taylor’s & Company Firearms, CrazyHorseWest.com, Twisted X Boots and Ranch Royalty Clothing Company.





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The Frontier Project

Saddles & Silver Debuts

The independent multimedia venture launches its first book project, detailing the stories behind some of the contemporary West's finest handmade saddles.



By A.J. Mangum

An independent publishing and multimedia venture chronicling North America's cowboy culture, The Frontier Project Inc. debuts its first book this month. Presented as a dustjacketed, hardback collector's edition, *Saddles & Silver*, by Scott Hardy, A.J. Mangum and Cary Schwarz, examines the notion of collaboration in the traditional cowboy art of saddlemaking, telling the stories behind more than a dozen saddles that have resulted from the creative partnership between Idaho saddlemaker Schwarz and Alberta silversmith Hardy (featured elsewhere in this issue).

When a saddlemaker and silversmith work together, it's typically in the context of an order being placed. The saddlemaker requires a specific number of conchos, perhaps a horn cap and other hardware, and provides the silversmith with the necessary measurements and a general idea of design parameters. There's little expectation that the silversmith's creative direction will influence the saddlemaker's process. As for the idea of the two sharing in the decisions that will define and guide the saddle's overall evolution, from concept to finished product, in most cases, the notion is unthinkable. Chalk it up to issues of ownership and control, or to one brand or another of fear.

Schwarz and Hardy followed a different path. Since their first collaboration in 1999, the two have forged a creative partnership built



SADDLES & SILVER

COLLABORATION IN THE
TRADITIONAL COWBOY ARTS

SCOTT HARDY
A.J. MANGUM
CARY SCHWARZ

Saddles & Silver, by Scott Hardy, A.J. Mangum and Cary Schwarz, details the development of more than a dozen saddles that have resulted from collaborations between Schwarz and Hardy. The book is the first to be published by The Frontier Project Inc.



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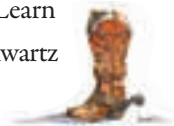
This 2010 collaboration between Cary Schwarz and Scott Hardy presented a unique challenge – creating a saddle that possessed elegance and exuded creativity while making use of a simple, straightforward design concept – in this case, a maple-leaf motif.

upon an unfiltered brand of honesty and a rare form of trust that encourages the sharing of unconventional ideas, the taking of risks, and the questioning of established rules. Their unique approach has pushed saddlemaking and silversmithing to new levels, inspiring riders, collectors and fellow craftsmen, and offering an incontestable lesson in the limitless potential that exists within a partnership based on collaboration.

From *Saddles & Silver*: “A collaborative partnership cannot take root unless its participants are open to the idea of a shared creative experience. A would-be collaborator must possess a genuine willingness to share ideas and energy; invite the ideas and opinions of a partner, offering both respect and enthusiasm in return; and adapt his working style to accommodate that of his partner, all in the belief that a collaborative experience can offer an unmatched opportunity to grow and improve.”

It was with the above mindset that Schwarz and Hardy began a unique creative journey that’s resulted in some of the finest western saddles ever made. *Saddles & Silver* reveals the story behind each of the pair’s collaborative efforts, and offers a rare glimpse inside the creative processes of two of the world’s most gifted craftsmen.

Saddles & Silver is available worldwide via online booksellers and brick-and-mortar bookstores. Learn more, read an excerpt, and view interviews with Schwartz and Hardy at www.frontierprojectinc.com.



Also Available

Saddlemaking: The Ground Seat

Despite its fundamental role in a saddle’s architecture, the ground seat is perhaps the most misunderstood element in a saddle’s construction. Many riders aren’t even aware of its existence. In this 60-minute DVD, Idaho saddlemaker Cary Schwarz leads viewers through the process of building and installing a ground seat in a custom saddle, sharing seldom-seen techniques and offering personal insight on this critical step in saddlemaking. The DVD is available at Amazon.com. Click [here](#) to order.



A.J. Mangum is the editor of *Ranch & Reata*.

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Something in the Water

Utah's Wright family has made the small town of Milford, Utah, the unlikely world's capital for producing saddle-bronc riders.

By Rod Miller

Milford isn't the sort of town you're likely to stumble onto by accident. Straddling Highway 257, a backcountry road through western Utah's Escalante Desert, it's home to 1,400-and-some hearty folks who live at least 30 miles off any beaten path.

North of town, hundreds of wind turbine blades slice the sky, generating electricity. To the south, hundreds of thousands of pigs wait their turn to be sliced into bacon.

Along with today's megawatts and market hogs, raising cattle has been integral to Milford's history since the town's beginnings in 1873.

But what they're raising there nowadays is saddle-bronc riders.

Not just any saddle-bronc riders, mind you, but some of the best in the business today – and others sure to dominate the sport for years to come.

And they all have the same last name – Wright.

Not since the Etbauer clan stormed out of Oklahoma in the 1980s has a single family produced so many high-kicking hack-rein mechanics. And, already, all indica-

tions are that the Wrights will eclipse a good share of the Etbauer accomplishments.

A peek at 2011 is instructive. Going into the PRCA Wilderness Circuit Finals, two-time world champion Cody Wright led the way atop the saddle-bronc standings. Younger brother Jesse ranked

second, his twin brother Jake was fourth, with brother Alex right behind him at fifth, and Spencer, the baby of the bunch (for now), sat 10th.

Spencer and Jesse tied for first in the opening go-round, Alex won sixth-place money. Jake won round two with Cody second and Jesse in a three-way tie for third. Cody won the third go, Jake placed second, Jesse tied for fourth, and Spencer took sixth-place money.

The average found Cody at the top of the heap,



photo courtesy Sharee Wright

A roundup of saddle bronc-riding Wright brothers. (l to r): Cody, Calvin, Alex, Jesse, Jake and Spencer

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followed by Jesse at second and Jake third. Which means that Wrights and only Wrights – in the form of Cody and Jesse – represented the Wilderness Circuit in saddle-bronc riding at the National Circuit Finals in Oklahoma in March.

The Wrights were well represented in overall PRCA saddle-bronc standings as well. Cody went into the National Finals Rodeo ranked second, with Jesse in the number five slot. After a disappointing Finals for Cody, and Jesse’s stellar performance in his second NFR (he won the average, won four go-rounds, placed second in two, and was third once and fifth once, failing to win money in only two go-rounds), they almost swapped positions – Jesse ended the season second in the world, Cody finished up fourth.

But that’s not all – Jake finished the year in 16th position, missing the NFR by less than ninety bucks, and Alex ended the season at number 27. Don’t be surprised to see Spencer joining his brothers in the standings in years to come.

Meanwhile, brother Calvin, also a bronc-twisting talent to be reckoned with, has been saddled with injuries so has pretty much hung up his spurs to help run the family cattle ranch.



No stranger to the rodeo arena, father Bill Wright mans a gate at the 2011 National Finals.



Cody Wright, aboard Pinball Girl in Pocatello, Idaho.

Among the six of them, they hold more titles and championships in the high school and college rodeo ranks than we can count – and not just in saddle-bronc riding. When they put their minds to it, the Wright boys can ride bulls, bareback broncs, even roping and bulldogging horses with the best of them. Baby brother Stuart is just starting to polish his spur shanks on horsehide and it’s hard to believe he won’t make a success of it if he so chooses.

One might think there’s something in the water that trickles from the faucets in Milford that makes saddle-bronc riders flourish. But that’s an iffy proposition, given the fact that water isn’t all that plentiful out there.

A better bet would be to give Evelyn and Bill the credit. They’re the parents that gave birth to this rodeo dynasty, and that ain’t the half of it. It takes two hands and three toes to count all the kids in the Wright family: Selinda, Cody, Laurelee, Calvin, Michaela, Monica, Alex, Jake, Jesse, Spencer, Kathryn, Rebecca, and Stuart. Add in all the wives and husbands and 19 grandchildren (or more, depending on when you’re reading this) and you’re talking a big family.

But it takes more than a big family to produce rodeo cowboys.



Father Bill – rancher and concrete contractor – rode saddle broncs and bulls in his youth, inspiring the boys and, starting with Cody, giving them a solid grounding in the fundamentals of the sport. Horses have always been close to his heart and the boys – and girls – were offered ample opportunities to grow up horseback, riding beside Dad. Historically, the Wright family originated in England and the ancient family crest features a rearing horse. There might just be a clue there, an inherited preference, perhaps, for unruly broncs.

The mental toughness it takes to succeed on the rodeo road is, most likely, a gift from their mother. Evelyn Wright’s life demonstrates the same kind of aspiration and perseverance it takes to win the world.

She was born and lived her early years in California, then moved to southern Utah, where she met her would-be husband. Marriage found the Wrights raising hay, grain, cattle and kids atop Smith Mesa, above Hurricane, Utah, where Bill worked construction on the side. When Hurricane – no metropolis by any measure – outgrew their idea of the small-town life they wanted for their kids, they pulled up stakes and settled in Milford, where they’ve been since 1993.

Raising 13 kids takes money, so Evelyn sat behind the wheel of a school bus to contribute to the family coffers. But she soon realized she wanted better. So, in the middle of running a household, taking care of the children and driving the bus, she decided to go to college.

Evelyn enrolled at Utah State University in 1999 and took

courses via satellite. After following that route as far as it could take her, she registered at Southern Utah University in 2001 and graduated with a degree in elementary education in 2006. The day she finished student teaching at Milford Elementary School, Evelyn was offered a job teaching fourth grade there. She’s been at it ever since.

“It has been an extreme challenge for a woman of my age and with so many children to seek and obtain a degree in elementary education,” she says in obvious understatement. “I never would have made it without the support of my good husband, my family, friends and the many prayers answered.”

Raising a rodeo family in the midst of it all hasn’t always been easy. But Evelyn’s only complaint, and it’s a

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Injuries restrict brother Calvin to the cheering section at the 2011 NFR, here with wife Stefany.



Mom's pride in her bronc riders is evident in the "Wall of Fame" display at home.

mild one, is that all the hours in the practice arena and days on the road meant the boys weren't helping out at home as much as she might have liked on occasion.

All in all, however, she has enjoyed watching them excel. "With so many kids involved, someone is always winning," she says. But, for mom, winning comes second. "The fact that they all get along so well and work together in a spirit of love and kindness makes me more glad than the way they ride, and I am very proud of the way they ride. But people often tell me what perfect gentlemen they are, and that makes me very happy, too."

Their success in the arena, she believes, can be summed up in one word: work.

"They were all taught to work, and their work ethic is unreal. They are all animals for work and love it, no matter what the task," she says. "They are all working on their riding and never content. The goal is perfection. They are always striving to improve and do

better as bronc riders."

Evelyn, unlike most, sees saddle-bronc riding as a team sport. "They feed off one another. Where one is weak the other is strong and they help each other. That's what makes them a great team." And it has been that way from the beginning. "Cody loved his little brothers and he and Calvin took them everywhere with them. The four little boys were like a litter of pups. They were always a pack."

Whenever possible, the Wright brothers still travel as a pack, going down the road together in a pickup truck. Mostly, mom says, they get along. "They love being together. They speak their mind a little bit, but that is the good part. They still love each other and work it out."

While the boys were all raised the same, Evelyn says each has a distinct personality and unique qualities. Cody, she says, is quiet, always listening and learning, and – surprisingly, given his two world championships and



In the grandstands at 2011 Wilderness Circuit Finals: Spencer, sister Rebecca, Evelyn and Alex.



nine NFR appearances – the least competitive. “As for Alex, dedication has to be his strongest attribute. Jake is always happy and positive, while Jesse is serious and very intense and outspoken. Jesse and Jake are twins, but their personalities are total opposites. Spencer is young and always listens to his big brothers. He is gentle in nature, but quick-witted and quite a character once you get to know him.”

You would expect a mother to be concerned about the dangers inherent in rodeo. Evelyn doesn’t dwell on the risks. “I try not to think about that. I pray for



The rodeoing Wrights are a source of hometown pride. Signs greet visitors at both ends of Milford’s Main Street.

their safety and protection on the road and in the arena. I except the Lord to answer my prayer and he does.”

Still, you have to believe Mrs. Wright spends a moment from time to time staring out her classroom window at Milford Elementary School into the wide expanse of the Escalante Desert, hoping her boys are safe. And, wondering when their pickup truck will bring them down Highway 257 for a stop at the home place, if only for a drink of water.



Rod Miller is a writer based in Utah. His latest book is *Things a Cowboy Sees*, a collection of poetry. Learn more at www.writerrodmilller.com.

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Evolution of an Artist

Peter Robbins' journey from fashion photographer to cowboy illustrator has always been a work in progress.

By Paul A. Cañada

Fort Worth's Peter Robbins is a unique Western artist. His photography and colorful oil pastels of working cowboys and stock have earned him a national reputation. His work testifies to an intimate knowledge of the American cowboy.

Robbins' evolution as a photographer and an artist began near Paul's Valley, Oklahoma, where he spent his youth on the family farm started by his great grandfather, O.W. Patchell. The family grew alfalfa, soybeans, corn and wheat in the rich soils. Robbins' father, Galen, practiced medicine and managed a modest cow-calf operation. While the Robbins family did have horses, most of the cattle work was done afoot.



photo by Paul Cañada

Photographer and artist Peter Robbins

“My grandfather encouraged us to set our sights on college and away from the farm,” said Robbins. “He felt there was no future for us there. Still, like everybody else growing up in those days, I was raised on a healthy serving of TV Westerns and so I was fascinated with cowboys.”

Robbins' appreciation for cattlemen and cowboys was superseded only by his love for working behind a camera. While in junior high, he developed a passion for photography. After graduating from the University of Oklahoma, he apprenticed for an Oklahoma City photographer.

When his high school sweetheart (later his wife), Kim Coleman, moved to Dallas to pursue a modeling career, Robbins followed. In Dallas, he apprenticed as a commercial photographer. Despite his relative success, his true desire was to be a photojournalist. Robbins longed for adventure abroad.

Married, the couple moved to Milan, where Kim continued modeling and Robbins worked as a stringer for the *Dallas Times Herald*. While his photo work paid the bills, he was mostly capturing images of street scenes and the fashion world.

“Little by little, I was becoming a fashion photographer, but I refused to tell anyone,” said Robbins. “In my mind, I was still a photojournalist.”

After some time passed, Robbins accepted opportunities to take assignments in South and Central America.



Robbins produces his photography, the basis for his artwork, on ranches, where he also puts his cowboying skills to the test.

Before retiring to practice medicine in Oklahoma, Robbins' father had served in the Central Intelligence Agency. The elder Robbins knew his son was taking a great risk in Central America and warned him not to go.

Robbins accepted an invite to join a college friend who was working as an AP/UPI writer in war-torn Guatemala. It's estimated nearly 200,000 people were killed and another 50,000

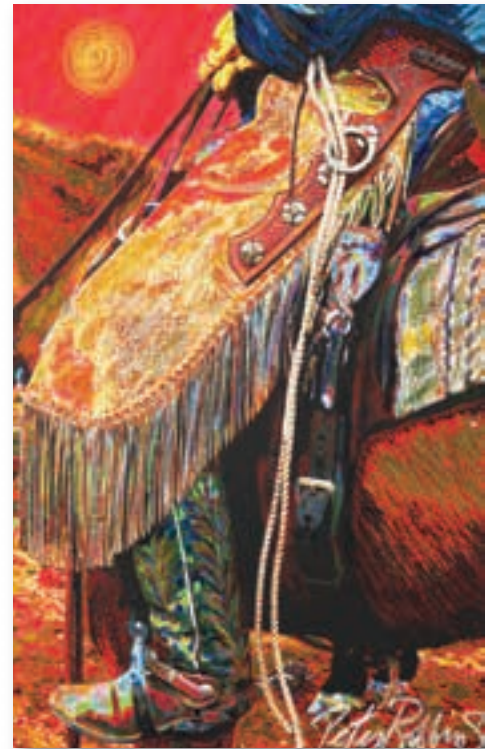
disappeared without a trace during Guatemala's civil war. As many as 100,000 Guatemalans fled into neighboring countries, living in long-term refugee camps.

The camps located just inside Mexico were often occupied by rebels and became targets of Guatemalan military raids. Robbins and his partner searched the jungle along the border for camps. They hoped to report how the Guatemalan military was crossing the Usumacinta River at night to raid refugee camps. Eventually, they found what they were looking for.

"We wanted to prove the attacks were actually taking place," said Robbins. "It was the first time I had been in a situation where there were guns, blood and suffering all in one place. At that point, I realized I wasn't cut out to be a photojournalist because my natural instinct was to help the people. I couldn't stand around like paparazzi and not care about the suffering."

Robbins' career as a photojournalist ended in that jungle camp. After his enlightening moment in Mexico's jungle, Robbins returned to Texas for good and settled back into commercial photography.

"My wife and father were happy when I finally returned home and gave up the idea of being a foreign photojournalist," said Robbins. "I returned back to fashion and advertising work for companies like Neiman Marcus."



Chinks, by Peter Robbins



Tied to Tradition, by Peter Robbins



Rem Holding Herd, by Peter Robbins



Givin' the Powders, by Peter Robbins

Sometime after Robbins' return, he started ministering to others at the Dallas church he and Kim attended. He often led men from church on extreme outdoor adventures. The trips were designed to remove them from their familiar environment and away from their comfort zones. Typically, a trip would include mountaineering or rock climbing.

When the movie *City Slickers* came out, a number of the men suggested the next trip include a cattle drive. Robbins discovered that the historic Four Sixes Ranch offered vacation opportunities.

"I went out to the ranch and met ranch manager Tom Moorhouse," recalls Robbins. "He wasn't happy about having city folk getting in the way when he was going to be busy working cattle."

Moorhouse asked Robbins, "Can you ride a horse and work?"

Robbins answered yes on both counts. The ranch manager explained how they were a man short and invited Robbins back the following week to work and take pictures. Of course, Moorhouse knew the camera jock didn't know a thing about cattle or about cowboying in rugged West Texas, but he liked having his picture taken.

At the end of that first day, Tom came up to Robbins and said, "Peter, you aren't much of a cowboy, but you have a lot of fire in your belly. Stick around and we'll make a cowhand out of you."

Robbins rediscovered his love for the West and cowboys, and was determined to tell their story with photography.



He went from ranch to ranch, working alongside the full-time hands. Capturing images of working cowboys wasn't enough for Robbins. He admired the work of Charles Russell and Irwin Smith, and so like them wanted to blend in with the cowboys as best he could.

"I knew, in order to accurately document the cowboy lifestyle that had grabbed me so intimately, taking my heart and soul, I was going to have to be a part of it," said Robbins. "I was very teachable and so as time passed, I began to learn the trade. I was beginning to actually blend in. That was my goal because I didn't want to be a voyeur, outside looking in."

While Robbins' photography had arrived where he wanted to be – on the ranch – his art was still evolving. One day, while explaining post-modernism art to his boys, he grabbed a handful of oil pastels and one of his black-and-white photos. Painting over his image he explained, "This is what post-modernism is; you take something and deconstruct it."

The photographer liked what he had done. Re-creating colored pieces from his images was relaxing and meditative, and he quickly took to it. After completing a half-dozen altered images, he showed them around and found that people really liked them. One thing led to another and now he's known for both his photography and art creations.

Robbins readily admits how he can barely draw stick figures. He doesn't consider himself a painter. He's a photographer, but he's very good at capturing what he sees in his mind's eye and the rendering of his photography to a new creation is an extension of what he sees.

"To me, art is anything you're passionate about," said Robbins. "When you're willing to take great personal and financial risks to do it, you become an artist. Maybe it will work, maybe it won't. But, you do what you do because you know you can't not do it."



Runnin' Wild, by Peter Robbins



Waitin' to Flank, by Peter Robbins

Paul Cañada is a writer based in Texas. Learn more about Peter Robbins at www.peterrobbinsart.com.

Rhymes of a Recluse

By Tom Russell

*In old California, I could have lived
And maybe I did, who knows?
With the center-fire saddle
And wild Spanish cattle
Those horseback times I'd a chose...*

Dickie Gibford

Joaquin Murrieta

Cowboys up and down California's Cuyama valley talk about the night Dickie Gibford re-enacted Paul Revere's midnight ride. It had a little to do with a long night of drinking at the Buckhorn Saloon, then Dickie mounting his horse at two in the morning, riding up and down the streets and across lawns, knocking over plaster dwarves and ceramic deer, shouting: *The British Are Coming! The British Are Coming!*

Those were the old days when Dickie Gibford would *go on a spree*, then sober up and disappear for months, following the songlines on his own vision quests. There were times when he'd pack two horses and ride from California to Nevada. Other times he just take off walking in a straight line across the mountains, from Cuyama to Santa Barbara, carrying little but a bag of carrots and dried fruit. We suppose he talked plenty with the *Great Spirit*, or conversed with the creatures of the night. Dickie isn't saying – and those old drinking and walkabout days are long past him. At least the *drinking* part. He stares back on all of it with a sober eye and sly grin. He saw *some things* out there. Things recognizable only to mystic seers and buckaroo metaphysicians.

Dickie Gibford is a rawhide philosopher, line rider, brush popper, and cowboy poet. He's a *seer* who meditates in an ancient Chumash Indian cave, as he communes with the native spirits. He returned from his wilderness tours with pages of epic rhyme that were drenched in Western and California history and always laced with a heap of Dickie's arcane and labyrinthine introspection. A typical Dick Gibford poem spirals through history, then suddenly takes a mystical turn and



Tom Russell



Dickie Gibford photos courtesy Eric Temple

Dickie Gibford

arrives at a personal and spiritual summing up. His thoughts sidewind into wonderful philosophical gullies, and every deviation makes perfect sense to Dickie Gibford.

The way Gibford writes about California landscape reminds me of Bruce Chatwin’s fine book, *The Songlines* – a tome about Australian aboriginals who walk across their homeland, singing up the spirit of their ancestors in every dry creek bed, ant mound, and ancient rock formation. *Wanderabos* calling forth the songs that are buried in the territory. Gibford’s self dialogue with history, nature, horses, Native American spirits, wildlife and the cowboy *querencia*, is deep cowboy poetry.

The old Buckhorn Motel and Bar in Cuyama is closed down now. There’s a grocery store and a *Burger Barn* and a few dozen houses, peopled by folks who might work the oil rigs or just plain wish to live at a dust blown crossroads in the middle of nowhere. There’s something about this valley, which runs between the San Joaquin and the Pacific Coast, which still echoes with that old *Californio* spirit. When the full moon shines down on the onion fields it’s easy to forget that Los Angeles is just a few hundred miles away. Dickie Gibford is seen in town every few months, buying supplies or washing his saddle blankets at the laundry, or grabbing breakfast at The Burger Barn. A *spectre*.

Then he’s gone. Back into the hills.

I mean no disrespect to Mr. Gibford for calling him “Dickie” instead of Dick. *Dickie* was what we knew him as when he worked for my brother and sister-in-law, Claudia, on the *Chimeneas* and *Check R* ranches twenty years back. That’s where I first heard of his mystic wandering ways and his poetry. I want to head back into the hills now and catch up with him.

I Gibford’s World: The Setting

*There’s a race of me that don’t fit in –
A race that can’t sit still
So they break the hearts of kith and kin
And they roam the world at will...*

Robert W. Service

The Men That Don’t Fit In

*From Arabia – Spain
From Mexico – California they came
A horseback culture unequalled on this earth
Trigger-reined and trained for battle
And then for herding cattle...*

Dick Gibford

Joaquin Murrieta

The hills surrounding the Cuyama valley are deep in old vaquero country. Trails lead past five hundred year old oak trees, dark red Manzanita, and varieties of sage and *chimesa*. This is the night hunting ground of the black bear, mountain lion, wild pig, coyote, and bobcat. There are flocks of wild turkeys in the back country, and elk and antelope have been re-introduced across Highway 66, on the old Chimeneas.

Look up and you might see hawks, buzzards and occasional eagle, or even a California condor. Look down and you might trip over a Chumash mortar bowl

in a dry creek bed, or unearth a Mexican spur that ole Joaquin Murrieta dropped when he was herding stolen horses away, *a la* one of Gibford's poem. We'll deal with Joaquin in a moment. This is a country which maintains a deep and enduring link with the Spanish past. There are still wild grasses here brought into the valley hundreds of years ago in the wool of Basque sheep.

Dickie Gibford, in fact, lives like a Basque sheepherder, in a small beat-up trailer crowded with woodstove, bedroll, soup cans, oil paints, sketchbooks and dozens of dog-eared paperbacks of history and verse. Outside there's a pole corral holding three colts that Gibford is patiently starting up, the old way: *Tie up a back leg. Sack em out. Saddle 'em. Take off up the trail for six hours. Check on the cows. Watch for bear and lion track. Chat with The Great Spirit. Make sure the territory is secure. Cow camp work.*

In the old days they called this job: *line rider* – a man who patrols a prescribed boundary to look after the interests of his employer. The venerable J. Frank Dobie describes the task of the line rider as such:

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*The fence rider looks primarily for breaks in the fence.
The line rider looks for everything. Including the
condition
of the watering places and the grazing lands. He
pushes strays
of his brand back on the range and drives off those who
do not belong...holes have to be chopped in frozen
water
places, and weak stock have to be tended...it's a
lonely job.*

Loneliness, or *aloneness*, suits Dickie Gibford. Splendid isolation. A man needs time to think and conjure up a verse or two. In addition to the line riding, Dickie practices the ancient art of rawhide braiding.



Today, when we venture upon Dickie's camp, he's in the middle of two rawhide works-in-progress. A *reata* is curled around a post, almost finished, and a braided rein is stretched between two corral poles.

Gibford hears us coming and shuffles around the corner of his little trailer with a black Labrador puppy trailing behind him. He says *bello*, then looks up to the mountain and considers how he might formulate a few more spoken words. He's a grizzled human sort, resembling one of Marshal Dillon's *Gunsmoke* sidekicks – the one they called *Festus*. Dickie is a *coot* in the making. A *wise* coot. His face is a mask of weather-beaten flesh. His grin is shadowed beneath a cowboy that looks like something a man might have watered a mule out of in the Mojave.



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Gibford begins speaking again in a measured drawl, as if he's dusting off his language skills. You don't encounter many human beings out here, and if so, they might be a poacher or Mexican cartel gungel growing illegal marijuana on top a mountain in the wilderness. Human contact takes some considering. We chat and make up for the lost years.

With a little encouraging, and another cup of coffee, Gibford begins to spin out his story. He starts *en media res*, employing the epic convention of jumping into the middle of things, and then working backwards and forwards through the current situation while throwing in odd biographical details. *En media res* is a literary device which can be traced back to *The Odyssey*. Dickie knows all the epic-poetic tricks of the trade. He's probably even memorized *The Odyssey*. I'll let him speak for himself.

II *Thin Soup in Winter, Cow Hides and Cowboy Leanin's*

The true religion is out here in the mountains. Same as the Indians thought. They believed in the Great Spirit. And I think most of us cowboys out in the wild country kind of get along with that same line of thinking.

Dickie Gibford

"I leave my winter camp in November," he says, "and come down here to this canyon where it's a lot lower. We have the cattle all in this canyon and they range for fifteen or twenty miles, all through these foothills. In May we'll take the cattle back up to the high country. Just take 'em up the trail. We don't have to do none of that haulin' in trucks and that makes it less stressful on the cattle.

"Around here in camp I'll just train a few young colts, break 'em to saddle and get 'em going with cattle.

I'm ridin' trails, doing the trail work and always watching for sign of mountain lion and bear. I see bears up here quite a bit. It's just nice to know what's goin' on. It's nice to be back here, 'cause I'm kind of a hermit anyway. I might be inspired to write a few poems, do a lot of rawhide braiding in the wintertime. Working the hides and braiding hackamores and reins and quirts to sell. That buys my groceries, 'cause it's kind of thin soup in the winter time around here, as far as wages go.

"A choice hide for a rawhide *reata* would be an old cow that was skinny, and she was dying of old age. You see these little rough things sticking out? That means it's a good hide. That's the flesh. There was no fat on this animal, that's why it's so strong. Takes me about six or seven days to braid a *reata*. It's a lot of doggone work.

"The craft of braiding started with the Moors in Arabia. They were mathematicians and they were pretty sharp cookies. These buttons, like on this quilt here, they're just little tiny strands, so the people that did the braiding had to be pretty good mathematicians to invent those little braided buttons, cause they have to be mathematically correct.

"It's an old art. Lord knows how many thousand of years ago braiding started. Probably the first braiding was done by cave men who took a bunch of vines and twisted 'em together or something. Braiding's different than hitching horsehair, of course. Hitching is just a series of half-hitches done right on top of one another. It's very repetitious. I think it would be kind of boring after awhile. I don't like to strain my eyes that much, because horsehair would be kind of meticulous to work with.

"I just read the life of Tom Horn, and he wrote it while he was waiting to be hung, and he did some horsehair hitching in that jail."

We pause for a moment and then jaw back and forth about horsehair hitching being practiced for over one hundred years in western prisons. Montana State



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Prison has had a horsehair hitching program for almost a century. A man holed up in prison likes to keep in touch with the horse trade and the feel of horsehair. Dickie mentions my song “The Sky Above and the Mud Below,” and I tell him it was inspired by a pair of horsehair bridle stocks I saw in a Cochrane, Alberta museum which were marked: *braided by Mexican horse thieves, Montana State Prison, 1910.*

We finish up with the rawhide and horsehair discussion and I ask Dickie how he commences his day. I’m curious about the routine, and the poetry in the details.

“Well in the morning,” he says, “I get up about five o’clock and it’s dark and I make my strong coffee and listen to the short wave radio awhile after I build my fire. I feed the pup then go out and feed the horses. I may walk up and visit the Chumash cave up there in the high rock, and cowboy-meditate for a while. Back for breakfast, and then I saddle up around six thirty and make a ride up through the country here. Work on trails or maybe push some cows.

“If too many cows are in one area, I’ll push ’em out a different trail. I keep an eye on the water troughs and make sure everything’s workin’. There’s not many fences to check out here, it’s pretty much open country that way. Sometimes I’ll be back by noon, and sometimes, if I go all day, I’ll pack a lunch and tie it on my saddle. A sandwich or something. In the summertime days are longer and a person can spend a lot of time riding around.

“I’ll switch off and ride one colt one day and the other one the next day. I have two younger colts that I’m training, and two older horses that are plenty broke. It works good to have four horses. If I pack out, I take two horses and leave two. That way the other horses have each other while I’m gone. Horses are gregarious, by nature, and they go nuts if they’re left by themselves. I’d be afraid they’d get cut up in the wire.

“How’d I get into this life? Well, my dad was a

cowboy. He grew up on a small farm in Southern California. But a neighbor down the road was an honest-to-goodness cowboy. He still wore a six shooter and he was a *bronc stomper*, and he doubled for Tom Mix in the early movies. My dad bought a horse and saddle from a sheepherder for \$25, and he rode down to this guy’s stable and he mucked out stalls. This guy’s name was Ed Wright, and by the time my dad was fourteen or fifteen years old, he was climbing onto the backs of broncos and riding young horses.

“Now this Ed was pretty wild and western. They didn’t do a lot of gentling back then. They just got the saddle on and away they went. So there was a lot of action. You should have had your camera around when my dad was a kid. This world has gotten a lot tamer since then. I like to be a little on the wild side, myself.

“I started poetry in the sixth grade. The assignment in class was *The Gettysburg Address* by Abraham Lincoln. Teacher said: *If you kids can memorize some lines you can recite ’em to the class.* I took it home and memorized the whole *Gettysburg Address*. Recited it word for word the next day. She was pretty impressed. That’s when I knew I had the knack for memorization, and I got into Robert Service and all, and then cowboy poetry, cause I had cowboy leanin’s. I guess the cowboy poetry movement started in 1985. It was all in the cards. I helped organize that first Elko deal. So Abraham Lincoln got me started through his *Gettysburg Address*.”

III At the Painted Gate

*By the painted gate
Where the ancient ones left art...
He sits beside his hobbled horse
And meditates
In the silence that was first...*

Dickie Gibford



Five years ago Dickie sent me a rough version of his poem: “By the Painted Gate”. There were penciled corrections and coffee stains washing through some of the lines. On the back of the last sheet Dickie wrote: *Tom, this is the poem that got started from a dream I had last winter. I woke up at 2 a.m. and lit the lantern and finished it. Some time where you’re in Cuyama I’ll show you the cave and the Indian paintings.*

Now Dickie asks us if we’d like to accompany him on his ritual walk to the painted cave. He says there’s cave art there dating back to the early Chumash Indians. He states that Chumash holy men and women might have performed sacred ceremonies inside the cave. He’s felt their *presence* up there. It’s Dickie’s *church*.

“Yeah, I would consider it an old, old church,” he says. “Inside there I have what I call my cowboy meditation. I sit there quietly and connect to nature and the land and *The Great Spirit*. There’s something beyond the ordinary going on inside that cave. Meditation in there is sorta like a preparation for death. According to the mystics, death is like taking off an old coat and stepping into the Spirit world. I like that idea.”

We follow Dickie about a half mile up a canyon trail until we reach a curve in the path which arches off to the right. A big old hawk is twining around up on top of the rock rim, far above the cave entrance. Dickie squints up at the raptor and wonders if it’s an old medicine man reincarnated as a hawk, then he tells us that one time he felt a shadow fly over him so gigantic he thought it might be an airplane. It was a rare California condor. Now he points up to a sandstone and rock cliff.

“It’s up there,” he states. “*The cave*. You got to sort of crawl up on your hands and knees, so I wouldn’t blame you if you want to wait down here. Myself I climb up most mornings and commune with the spirits.”

Dickie leads us up the steep slope of disintegrating rock and sand. In five minutes we level off and reach the



small cave carved out of the rock. It’s about five feet deep and four foot high. Just big enough for Gibford to squat inside like a medicine man. He stares down at us and rubs his chin. We catch our breaths and clap the rock dust off of our hands, trying not to slide down the mountain. I’m thinking it’s a long time ’til happy hour.

Dickie points with his index finger to a faded red figure on the inside wall. If you squint your eye you might imagine it to be a horse and rider. Or maybe it’s just an old stain of rain water or berry juice that seeped through the rock. Go with your gut and heart on this one. We’ll side with Dickie and believe it’s a rare Chumash pictograph. *A sign*.

“They found an Indian head dress in this cave in the 1920s,” says Dickie. “With eagle feathers on it. I just sort of sit here and listen and sometimes the spirits tell me things in my subconscious mind. They started writing a poem for me. I woke up at two in the morning one morning with lines of a poem and I’m thinking – yeah these guys are working with me on this.

“I’ll recite a couple of stanzas of “By the Painted Gate”. The Painted Gate is a gateway to other higher worlds. I sit here and my ordinary thought patterns just vanish and I just tune into the land. It’s a good place to live and a good place to die here – gone like the sand that erodes from this cave.”

Dickie begins his recitation:

*By the Painted gate
Where the Ancient Ones left art
By caverns in the rocks
Where the ocean tides slapped and shaped
The stone
A million years ago
Beyond time, beyond all sound
In the silence of the universe*

The poem goes on through a prayer for rain, and then the poem's narrator mounts up and rides off on his line rider job: *turning back to the duty, to the trail he takes, back to the Cowboy...the Equine Steed...* The poem rolls on and carries the cowboy poet down to a water tank: *horse and dog drink from the trough, where windmill rod has pumped and coughed.* Cowboy, horse, and dog finally trot into the sunset where darkness will soon fall. The Ancient Ones have heard Dickie's prayer.

We let the poem drift off into the silence of the charred hills. The land has recently been scorched by wildfires and Dickie looks out and seems to envision the tops of pine trees that are no longer there.

"It's a shame," he says, "to see the big pines get burned. It swept through here and burned 70,000 acres in three or four days. Changed a lot, but it's not ugly to me because I still have the same feeling for the land. I love this land here, no matter how many fires come though. You can't erase the bond a man will get with the land or a place that he feels is his home. I may have been an Indian here in a past life, who knows? But I've always been connected real strong with this mountainous area right here, because it's wild, and I'm the kind of guy that likes wild country to cowboy in..."

We slide down and walk slowly back to camp as Dickie begins to tell us of the early days in the Cuyama

Valley. He states this is the country the *bandito* Murrieta rode through. In fact Dickie's latest poem is about the Mexican outlaw. We arrive back at camp and Dickie offers to recite the poem for us, *horseback*, so we get the full effect. He wanders off to saddle a colt. The black puppy trots behind Gibford, and I hum a song I try to remember, about Joaquin Murrieta. *And his head.*

IV Bring me the Head of Joaquin Joaquin Murrieta

*Come saddle up boys cause the governor said,
He'll pay three thousand dollars for Murrieta's head...
He's the devil's bloody bastard, wicked and no good,
But all the Mexican's swear that he's Robin Hood*

Murrieta's Head, Dave Alvin

You might dig up two dozen different fragmented versions of Joaquin Murrieta's history. Throw in another dozen dime novel plots, film treatments, songs, ballads, and *corridos*, and you still wouldn't have your finger on the pulse of whom this legendary California bandito *was*, or where he came from, or why he went to the bad. I suppose that's why they call him a *legend*.

Take your pick: He was from Chile, or Mexico. He was a miner or a *monte* dealer during the gold rush days in California. He was a victim of racism. His wife was raped and murdered. His brother was lynched. *Anglos* stole his mining rights and shot his horse. After they took his horse, the *gringos* horse-whipped Joaquin for good measure. Hell, it's no wonder he had a *bad attitude*. *Whoever he was*. I'll stick with Dickie Gibford's version on this one. But Dickie's still trying to throw a loop on his horse.

I've heard an old story that Joaquin's head ended up in a specimen jar, and travelled the Wild West circuit, before disappearing, or exploding, in the great San Francisco fire. Lately I've been listening to *Murrieta's Head*, on the Dave Alvin record: *Eleven/Eleven*. Dave



Stamey and other western writers have also written good songs about Murrieta, but what's with this head situation? I would suppose it's an old carnival tradition – the displaying of outlaw body parts: *Pancho Villas head, Three Finger Jack's missing finger, Elmer McCarty's arm.*

While Dickie's trying to catch that horse I'll tell you a colorful little California side story about Elmer McCarty's arm. When I grew up near Los Angeles we used to visit the Long Beach Pike and ride the Cyclone Racers, the twin roller coaster that plunged towards the Pacific Ocean. One of the old sideshow buildings was being used in a movie in 1976. Inside a funhouse ride called *Laugh in the Dark* the film crew pulled down a cowboy dummy that was hanging on the wall. They thought it was wax. One of the dummy's arms fell off. It was a mummified *human arm.* The arm was identified as belonging to one Elmer McCarty, an Oklahoma train robber *who refused to be taken alive.*

In 1911 McCarty was mummified and carted around the old west in a travelling exhibit. Spectators were invited to: *put a nickel in the mouth of the dead gunfighter.* Elmer ended up on the wall at Long Beach Pike. *Until his arm fell off.* The even found a nickel in his mouth. I'm just sharing this with you because we're waiting for the Murrieta poem and Dickie Gibford.

But wait, Dickie is mounted on a sorrel colt. His hat is thrown back and his spurs are a jingling, and as he approaches he begins to recite his Joaquin Murrieta epic.

V The Murrieta Poem

*Where Joaquin Murrieta swung his reata
And galloped stolen horses away
Where bones of the grizzly
Beneath giant oak trees
Have long since dissolved into clay...*

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Dickie tries out a verse or two, and then stumbles on a word. It's a long poem. *Take two*. In order to loosen him up, I ask what he knew about Murrieta. I'd like to get his take on the background material.

"I don't know," he says, "what kind of horsemanship Joaquin had, but he must have been pretty good. He stayed ahead of the Sherriff for a long time. You can't think of early Gold Rush days in California without thinking of him. His hay days were in the 1850s. A posse caught up with him and surrounded him at daylight, surprised his camp. Joaquin made a run but they shot him out of his saddle.

"He came from Sonora, Mexico. By some reports he turned outlaw because his young wife had been brutalized and murdered by miners. And so he went out on a rampage, became an outlaw and hated whites, and you know that seems like a pretty justifiable reason to turn outlaw.

"So this poem starts out about Joaquin, and then goes into California and the evolution of the California horseman from Arabia to Spain. And I talk about the spiritual side. When you're touched by that it's a gift, you know. To me the true religion is out here in the mountains. Same as the Indian thought. They believed in The Great Spirit. And I think most of us cowboys in the wild country kind of get along with that same line of thinkin."

Dickie pulls on the reins and stares for a moment into the charred mountains. Summoning the proper focus, he begins again:

*Here the mustang's sure tread, and the songs of the
dead
told of a past that was free
It comes from the soul, where the oaken hills roll
from the Sierra on down to the sea.*

Dickie is flying now, lost in the poetry. It's a century ago and he's chasing Spanish cattle and throwing his rawhide reata at that spiritual essence of what he refers to as *the gift* – the knack of seeing into the mystic core of *things western*.

Deep into the poem Murrieta gallops off as Dickie ponders *real knowledge* and *timeless lands* and *the genius which uncocks the mystery of our peers*. Finally Dickie is centered on the mind of man. Gibford reckons that man's mind suffices as compared to *computered devices*. He doesn't stop there. Now Dickie's wishing, in verse, that *one might go beyond ordinary time...to a higher state of mind...across space and time...where we are no longer a pawn in the game of life's abrasions*.

He's nearing the end. We're trying to hold on, and follow his thought line. He arrives at the conclusion and for a wild moment the poem and Dickie become one. He's Joaquin Murieta, and he's the mystic poet Dickie Gibford. It all makes sense and the poem trails away and melts back into the landscape which inspired it.

*The mystic comes in nature
You can't hold it and it can't be caught
It can't be sold or bought
It's a gift to our being
It's a special way of seeing
And it remains elusive and free,
Like Joaquin Murrieta
Where he swung his reata
And galloped stolen horses away.*

Silence. Someone say, *amen*. There's a whistle of wind through the sage and chimesa. The whine of a puppy. The *caw caw* of a raven. The pawing of a colt in the far corral. More silence. Dickie Gibford reckons he's said more than enough. He dismounts and walks off to his trailer. He comes back and hands me the poem,



handwritten on three pieces of thick drawing paper. Here, he says, *I don't have another copy, so sometime when your secretary has time, maybe I can get a typed copy?*

We laugh at that, make our goodbyes, and walk down the path that leads to our truck and the road back to Cuyama. I'll never forget seeing him up there in that cave – St. Augustine in a beat-up cowboy hat, reciting the ending to his “Painted Gate”, with the Chumash pictograph next to his right ear. Dickie Gibford will be a hawk or a condor in his next life, circling above our camps forever, illusive and free, with a lyrical *gift* and special way of seeing deep down into the mystic in western nature.

*Then mounting in the fading light
Dog and horse and cowboy go
Trotting – trotting
In The Glow
Of winter afternoon
Daylight's spare
And not too long
Darkness will be back
And soon.*

“The Painted Gate”
Dickie Gibford



Tom Russell's collection of cowboy songs: *Cowboy'd All to Hell*, along with his art book and full CD catalogue, are available from www.tomrussell.com and www.villagerecords.com His art is available from www.rainbowman.com

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A VISIT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN

Many people have asked me over the years about my friend, Ray Hunt. It is difficult to put into words just how much this man helped me along the journey of life with horses.

He is with me always and I turn to him and remember the things he told me often when I am working with especially troubled horses. I guess one of the greatest gifts he gave me was the understanding of a poem he recited often at his clinics. It is a favorite of mine to this day. For many years, the origin of these words were unknown until recently when it was discovered to have been written by a fellow named Dale Wimbrow and first published in 1934. The poem is titled, it's correct title, "The Guy in the Glass". For many years it read, "The Man in the Glass", but here it is for you to enjoy, remember and pass on. It gives a great lesson: Live consciously, live your life your way, pursue your mission. And always be able to look yourself in the eye.



The Guy in the Glass

By Dale Wimbrow (1895-1954)

When you get what you want in your struggle for pelf,
And the world makes you King for a day,
Then go to the mirror and look at yourself,
And see what that guy has to say.

For it isn't your Father or Mother or Wife,
Whose judgement you must pass,
The feller whose verdict counts most in your life,
Is the guy staring back from the glass.

He's the feller to please, never mind all the rest,
For he's with you clear up to the end,
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test,
If the guy in the glass is your friend.

You may be like Jack Horner and "chisel" a plum,
And think you're a wonderful guy,
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum,
If you can't look him straight in the eye.

You can fool the whole world down the pathway of years,
And get pats on the back as you pass,
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears,
If you've cheated the guy in the glass



Horses and life, it's all the same to me.

- Buck Brannaman



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Westerners

The West is filled with interesting people and few people can capture their spirit as well as photographer Mary Williams Hyde. Mary's West is a place of skill and competency, where grace under pressure is more than just style.



Billie Flick

Billie Flick is a lifelong cowgirl who follows the old buckaroo traditions. She and her husband, famed cowboy poet Leon Flick, are dayworkers in the Plush and Adel, Oregon desert country. Work they do together as a team, or separately, can be anything from attending to calving cows in the freezing cold of winter and early spring, to branding calves in the spring and fall seasons, to trailing cows out to the vast grazing allotments and moving them to new grazing areas as necessary. She and Leon are also sought after for starting colts and making them into good all-around ranch horses. This photo was taken of Billie as she gathered cattle off a huge grazing area for a Taylor Ranch branding last spring.



**Dave Ward and
Casey Robertson**

The driver called out numbers of cattle he could fit in the partitioned sections inside his big stock truck to 5-Dot Ranch crew members Dave Ward and Casey Robertson. They quietly and efficiently loaded the heifers for transport to their summer grazing range high in the mountains and desert country around Susanville, California. 5-Dot Ranch, with headquarters at Standish and also at Willow Creek, is one of the biggest ranches in California. It is known for its high quality natural beef products and the buckaroos have to learn special low stress techniques for handling cattle for this special market.

Dusty Wolverton

I first photographed Dusty in the mid-nineties when he worked as a buckaroo for the 1,200,000 acre ZX Ranch in Oregon. This photo was taken last spring when he was still working for the 5-Dot Ranch. Dusty is now the manager of the Oregon Canyon Ranch near McDermitt, Nevada, part of the vast Treetop Ranches based in Oregon near Burns. He is a master rawhide braider and makes most of the gear he uses. Typical of so many of these guys, he has worked for most of the big ranches in Nevada, eastern Oregon, and northeast California's Great Basin buckaroo country.





Jason “Polka Dot” Ott

Jason is known for his polka dot wild rags. He’s got a lot of them, all shapes and sizes of dots! Typical of buckaroos who keep the old traditions, he is proud of his heritage, gear and horsemanship. He works on the Rattlesnake Creek Ranch near Burns, Oregon under ranch manager, Glen Shelley, who is also a strict traditionalist, as is Jason’s father, Terry Ott, and Jason’s wife, Kari Ott.

JC Sykes

JC Sykes now works as a buckaroo on a ranch near Susanville, California, but he is another one that I first photographed at the ZX Ranch in Oregon. In fact, actually, the very first time I photographed him he was blowing out of a chute riding one of Glen Shelley’s wild ranch broncs at Paisley, Oregon, near the ZX headquarters. He rides, ropes, and handles cattle with the easy confidence of someone who has been doing the work most of his life.





Maleia Titus

Maleia and her husband Greg work for the 500,000 acre Squaw Valley Ranch headquartered near Midas, Nevada. They are out in the middle of nowhere but have the richest life you could ever want if you love this lifestyle.

I took this photo in early spring of this year at a branding in an old brush corral near their home, one of several homes on the ranch which stretches from near Battle Mountain, Nevada to near Tuscarora, Nevada. They are part of a crew that cares for thousands of cattle owned by Dick and Mary Bradbury and their daughter and son-in-law Ricarda and Jess Braatz, whose home country was originally near Plush, Oregon.

Merlin Rupp

Merlin Rupp was forced to retire from the buckaroo life he loves several years ago when he was badly injured in a horse wreck that affected his balance. A couple of years ago, I was thrilled that he got back on a horse for a branding at Mat Carter's place somewhere out in the desert near Seneca, Oregon. He is a living legend and, once on the beautifully trained spade bit horse he rides, he transformed into a young man again before my very eyes. roping and holding rodear with the authority of the cowboss he was most of his life. Merlin is also known for the beautiful mecates



he makes with his wife Faithe's help at his home in Burns, Oregon. At every major Californio/Vaquero heritage event you are likely to see Merlin walking around with his arms loaded with mecates, cinches, and handmade rawhide reatas he has made for sale.



Tia Jade Openshaw

Tia and her husband of less than a year, Ty Openshaw, also work for the Squaw Valley Ranch in Nevada. When I first met Tia she was wearing dark rimmed glasses and I didn't notice what a stunning natural beauty she is until this day at a branding where she took her glasses off. The overcast light that day was perfect for this unposed shot of her working the ground crew.

Randi Johnson

Randi Johnson lives on a cattle ranch near Adin, California with her parents Warren and Sherri Johnson, and two brothers, Warren Clayton and William. At 16, she is the same natural beauty that graced the cover of The Cowboy Way Magazine two years ago. Her life is full of activities from helping her mother can fruits and vegetables, to quilting, to being home schooled, to promoting beef as a skilled public speaker, to raising fair animals big and small, to helping with the cattle and horses on the ranch, and to being princess and queen of now numerous events.



Front Cover Photo: Will Wolverton

Will is the young son of Dusty and Courtney. The day I took this photo he sat on a pile of manure next to the 5-Dot corral fence for nearly a half hour waiting for his dad to show up to sort cattle for shipping. In this photo he is watching his dad work with such devotion and love for the lifestyle that it really touched my heart to see it. He will be following in his father's footsteps for sure. Will and his family now live on the Oregon Canyon Ranch near McDermitt, Nevada.



See more of Mary's photos at buckarocountry.com



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WESTERN READS

Storms

As an antidote to the onset of a hot summer in the West, a winter-themed excerpt from the classic contemporary essay collection, *In These Hills*.



By Ralph Beer

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An hour before dark the west wind died, the pines along the ridges above the barns stilled, and from horizon to horizon the curdled sky seemed to pause. The loose sheet of tin on the cow barn quieted, and I stopped to unbutton my canvas coat. I was running late after spending the afternoon helping a neighbor thaw frozen water pipes, and I'd grown overheated, hurrying to feed our cows before the next storm blew in. I took off my Scotch cap and listened to the hush that had come over the land.

Along the creek, the frozen atmosphere seemed to jell. The last rays of a low sun filtered through clouds, touching fields and woods with somber light – a brooding sky, an unsettled calm before a Montana winter storm. And it was coming, the second blizzard

in ten days was roaring down on us from Canada. On the radio, stockman's warnings: In Great Falls, only a hundred miles to the north, wind-chill temperatures had fallen to sixty degrees below zero.

The first gusts hit the hay barn, and the sky above me began to move, the lowest clouds accelerating into long grey lines. Old snow rose from drifts, eddying off across the ridges in rising vortices of smoke. And in the wind overhead I was astonished to hear voices, the urgent calls of Canada geese. They came out of the advancing clouds in broken Vees and rocketed past right above the barns, flying as if they were flying for their lives. Singles, struggling to keep up, emerged from the scudding clouds with long honks to their fellows, and at their cries I felt an old excitement rising in me, the



spark of storms in other years, storms I'd endured, and others, too, about which I'd only been told.

It was dark and howling by the time I finished breaking bales in the shelter shed, where white-backed cattle shouldered into the feed bunks. My mustache had frozen into handlebars of ice, and my hands, even in good gloves, had gone numb as roots. At the house, the thermometer read thirty degrees below.

My wife, Margaret, and I shared a bourbon and watched snow snap past through the porch lights while I thawed out beside the parlor stove. We were both roused by the exhilaration of big weather on a bad night, yet we knew that by morning our mile-long lane to the county road would be under two feet of wind-slabbed drifts. Until the front passed and we plowed ourselves out, we would be on our own. Coupled with the animation we felt, there was also an unspoken edge of caution: This was no time to take a fall, no time to make a mistake with cattle in the dark. But thanks to a neighbor's venturesome bull, several of our cows were due to give birth. Because the intense cold would quickly freeze a wet calf to death, Margaret and I would take turns checking the pregnant cows in the log barn during the night.

When I opened the door and stepped into the barn

at midnight, I saw that one calf was already on its way. The cow stood among several others, her tail hitched to

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one side, an inch of plum-colored membrane protruding. Margaret had named the cow Amy. This would be her second calf.

I moved among the cattle and talked to them and told them what good cows they were. Old friends, they listened and chewed their cud and stepped aside as I maneuvered Amy among them and into a pen where she could be alone. Always, even with gentle animals like ours, there is a risk when you work them in close quarters. Some cows don't kick; some do, and a twelve-hundred-pound Hereford can easily break your leg. One thoughtless move can send you to a hospital, if, that is, on nights like this, you can get to one.

I forked some hay to the other animals and offered Amy a scoop of oats. Outside, the hay barn groaned in

the wind. There was nothing to do but wait, so I climbed into the horse manger and covered my legs with hay for warmth. I tucked my hands under my arms and looked up at the cross-timbered roof braces overhead, dusty logs blackened above the lantern hooks by generations of lamp smoke. For fifty winters the lanterns hung there, illuminating the morning and evening milking of thirty cows, and lighting, too, the harnessing and unharnessing of the Belgian and Percheron Norman teams. For in other times, this building was the absolute center of a family and a farm, the place where men and women, children and adults worked together to produce a living from livestock. It has sheltered thousands of animals, housed joy and despair, suffering and compassion, birth and death. After eighty years, it



remains, as it has always been, a good safe place.

The barn was built during the winter of 1909-10 by Robert Beer, my great-grandfather, with the help of his young son, Howard. How the two of them, man and boy, managed such a job of work alone I don't know. But somehow they not only did it, they did it right, first felling old-growth firs in the surrounding bluffs with two-man crosscut saws and limbing them out with long-handled, double-bitted Kelly axes kept sharp as cutlery. They snaked the logs down through the rocks with teams and peeled them with drawknife and adze. Then, on an unmortared fieldstone foundation, they stacked the walls: tier on tier, tons and tons of green logs, joined at the corners with interlocking dovetail notches, corners intricate and exact and tight.

Freestanding log gables were spiked into place, and the truest logs rolled up to become ridgepoles and purlins. Inch boards were nailed to the purlins and topped with split shakes. Homemade doors, secondhand windows, and pole-and-mortar chinking finished the job.

How handsome and hopeful it must have been when completed, and inside, a new and vaulted space, fragrant with pitch and sawdust and lumber fresh from the mill. It was the first building on the place, erected while the family of four wintered in a wall tent. And it was to be Robert Beer's great accomplishment, the endeavor which best survives of all he did well. How strange and wonderful it seems today, to begin a home not by building a house, but by building a barn to house your stock. It was what he left us that lasted, and nearly every day, as I work within its walls, this barn reminds me of my deep respect for a man I never knew.

Amy switched her tail and lay down with a heavy

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sigh. The fluid-filled birth sack, out several inches and swollen, undulated with each breath. The other cows nodded, enduring the cold, their eyes closed as they chewed, lost in heavy, slow-moving dreams.

Amy stood and lay down several times in the next few minutes. On her feet, she backed and cut the air with her tail. With each contraction, her tail stopped and went rigid. I couldn't see the calf's feet, so I leaned back against the log wall and closed my eyes. It had been a long day, I was tired to the bone, and my fatigue



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reminded me again of my great-grandfather. Like so many of the people who had tried to homestead this country, his story was not one of unbridled progress and success. What happened to him happened to many, and his example has helped illuminate for me those who ventured from distant homes to begin again in the West. We tend to idealize them now, if we think of them at all, choosing to remember those generations as pioneers, bold and strong, independent and resolute. Many were, of course; the land was harsh and the life unspeakably hard. But the man who built our barn was a man who relied on family and neighbors as well as on himself, a man whose courage and resolve in this fearsome new place finally failed him.

Several times my grandfather told me that his father was a man of extraordinary energy, a worker who worked himself to death. He went, I was told, from

dawn to dark, clearing ground and fencing, plowing and planting, cutting cordwood and harvesting, breaking teams and building. During the winter he would often stay out all night burning brush. He went out at that killing pace until he came, I suspect, to see that no amount of work could save him, that no labor would make this place his. He began to talk of leaving, if not to return to England, then at least to go where he might find good soil and rain. In 1916 he took to wandering off on foot, confusing these windburned hills with the greener slopes of his native Devon. He died at forty-two, melancholy and homesick in a foreign land.

It came to me then, that if anything has set my family apart from our friends in town, it has been our desire to continue the best of what he began; our need has always been the need to make this place home.

Amy tried to stand again and settled back with a groan. I shook myself, stood, and saw that her water had broken. Two soft yellow hooves had appeared, arched toward life.

Amy rolled onto her side. I knelt beside her, slipped a loop of OB chain around each of the calf's front legs, and gently pulled. A wet nose appeared. Keeping the chain snug with my left hand, I eased my right hand down inside, found the rounded skull under my palm, and pressed down. Amy pushed mightily; I pulled; the head emerged.

I cleaned the calf's nose with my bandana. When I scooped the mucus from its mouth, the calf tried to nurse my fingers. Braced on one knee, I pulled the chain with both hands. The calf slid out to its shoulders, to its hips. We rested. The calf opened one eye, and a sweet sense of hope rose in me, the simple and intense joy of birth. I pulled the calf the rest of the way out and moved her up to Amy's nose. Amy smelled the steaming calf and lunged unsteadily to her feet. As she licked the calf, the newborn heifer lifted her head and began to shake.

I wrapped the calf in canvas, lifted her to my chest,



and huffed back up to the house. Margaret handed me a cup of coffee and rubbed the shaking calf with old towels beside the basement stove until she was dry, then got her to nurse a bottle of warm colostrum milk. By the time the milk was gone, the calf was up, standing on wobble-kneed legs and trying to bunt.

Margaret bundled up and joined me for the trip back to the barn. I put the calf beside her mother and leaned against a plank divider to rest. Amy licked the calf as it staggered about looking for more warm milk, and Margaret laughed her good honest laugh. Margaret is the first woman to live on this place in my lifetime, and her efforts here have made all the difference. Outside, wind drove snow against the ice-glazed windows with such force it sounded like sand, but, up and dry, this calf stood a chance.

Now that we have electricity and all sorts of conveniences, a night like this one was likely as close as we could come to some feeling of the homestead frontier. Yet I recalled old men when I was a boy as they remembered the legendary storms of their day with a mysterious grim glee. "Oh," they said, "it was tough!" And, of course, it had been, in ways now hard to

imagine or understand. But I also got the feeling that they stopped just short of admitting that they'd had the times of their lives fighting those winters when they and the land were young. And I understood, as we watched the new calf nurse in that good place Robert Beer built, that Margaret and I share those old-timers' sense of event in our struggles to do our best while weather does its worst. Tonight the wind blows for us as it blew for them, and sometimes in the wind there are voices. Geese still hurtle south before big storms, and we look up and listen in wonder and yearn toward them.



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"A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children." Proverbs 13:22

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YOUR HORSE'S FEET, A SERIES

By Pete Healey, APF

Recently I did a radiograph consultation for a lady that had some questions about one foot on two different Thoroughbred race horses that she owns. The first horse is being shod by one of the best farriers in the industry at the track and the second horse is being shod by a country farrier at the farm.

The veterinarian that did the radiograph on the first horse did a mediocre job and a worse job on the evaluation. He thought the foot was fine and the farrier agreed. This foot was far from fine; long toe, low heel, upright pastern and lacked depth of foot. The mechanics of the shoeing was doing nothing to help this foot.

The veterinarian on the second horse did a good job on the radiograph and the farrier was doing a great job in shoeing a not so easy foot. This was a low-grade club foot and the mechanics of the shoe was done correctly to adjust to the pull of the Deep Flexor Tendon and reduce leverage of the ground reaction force at the tip of the coffin bone.

So this brings up several questions: Why is the best farrier doing the worst job? Why is one Veterinarian taking better X-rays than the other? Why would the veterinarian and the farrier from the first horse think it was fine? And who am I to say what is correct or not?

To answer the last question first, I have developed an evaluation and shoeing system that is based on ten years of clinical and research experience. This numerical system is patented and coincides with the anatomical structure of the foot. Our industry does not have a set standard for shoeing or evaluating feet. Most systems use the external hoof as a reference not considering the bone or soft tissue inside of it. Certification guidelines of the American Farriers Association don't do much to

help this as most of the emphasis is on making and applying hand made shoes. I have seen some beautiful handmade shoes that did nothing for the proper function of the foot.

The Thoroughbred industry is probably the guiltiest for just nailing a shoe on the hoof wall wherever it is. The paradigms of this industry defy common sense and anatomical soundness. This is why the farrier on the first horse is considered the best and did the worst job. To be fair, I see this on a daily basis in every industry. These feet slowly start getting out of whack with every subsequent shoeing as the farriers are not able to evaluate the internal structures and adjust to the situation. The farrier on the second horse was paying attention and had the knowledge to adjust the foot to its biomechanical needs.

The veterinarians are in the same boat as the farriers. In the last ten years I have worked with many interns, new doctors fresh out of vet school. They know anatomy but many lack the bio-mechanical knowledge for evaluating feet. That is something they must acquire with experience as they go along, some get really good at it.

Recently I conducted three, one-day clinics on how to evaluate a foot on a real horse and on the radiograph and how to adjust the foot for balance. The attendees were a combination of horse owners, farriers and veterinarians; they all seemed very excited about what they learned. They liked the fact that it was all numbers, based on anatomy, no guess work, not my ideas – just facts. They all asked the same thing, "Why is this not at the universities and the shoeing schools." Good question. www.balancedbreakover.com



The Art of Connection

The Photography of Lori Faith Merritt

Lori Faith Merritt specializes in equine and cultural images that transcend the ordinary through what she calls the art of connection. Her focus on western culture includes musicians and poets, horsemen and horsewomen, cowboys and ranchers. Her life has centered around horses since 1971 and her experiences allow her to communicate with horses and horse people alike, providing an environment of integration vs. isolation.

Lori Faith's images have been published internationally and are enjoyed by private collectors throughout the world. She provides art reference images to painters and other artists internationally and has served as official photographer for such events as the Western Music Association's Festival and Awards, National Day of the Cowboy, Festival of the West, and many others.

In 2009, she was accepted as the guest photographer for the Gathering of Nations. She volunteers for several organizations that provide animal rescue and equine therapeutic assistance and in 2010 she became a founding artist of HeARTists for Horse, a group of like minded equine artists dedicated to using their art to benefit horses. In spring of 2012 she was invited to be a participating artist in *Cowgirls with a Camera* at the Desert Caballeros Western Museum. From Lori Faith's Artist Statement:

"Horses *are* Truth, Wisdom, Grace, and Strength. Countless moments of exquisite beauty are gifted to the people who are fortunate enough to spend their life with horses. Courage and tenderness, passion and humor, compassion and playfulness...from wobbly foals to magnificent stallions...the world of Equus brings to our lives images that delight our eyes and take residence in our souls. The horses themselves have taught me how to photograph them. Connection is vital. Allowing time for the essence of an individual, the dynamic of a herd, or the unique bond of a horse and its human companion is essential for images that transcend the ordinary.

"Faith is essential to the way I receive images. In the world of photography, the word *capture* is often used to describe the moment when an image is created. I prefer the word *receive*. That magical moment when an image comes to life, infused with luminous spirit, is a gift best graced by freedom. Anyone who truly knows horses understands that the best way to catch one is to let them come to you, to gift you with their presence. I apply the same philosophy to my photography and the generous nature of the equine soul continues to amaze me with gifts of evocative, mystical, and inspiring images that live and breathe."

Based in Tucson, Arizona, Lori Faith travels extensively for photo shoots at ranches and barns, portrait sessions, and to create images for her portfolio. She mentors privately and is starting to conduct photography workshops. Learn more at www.photographybyfaith.com





Reward

At the end of a long day's work, a horse that stays with you after you've slipped off the halter is reward for the cowboy and a boy who takes the time to thank his partner with a word and a kind touch before he runs to the house for dinner is reward for the horse. Coy Newman is growing up cowboy, the action of the word becoming the description of this young man, and his life on the PO Ranch Camp at Arizona's Lone Mountain Ranch is something he knows the worth of and treasures. Coy is part of my Legacy Series and I look forward to photographing him again as it brings me joy to witness a boy who'd rather work horses and cattle than sit on a couch watching TV.



Buck Brannaman

The best of what I know about horses was taught to me by the horses themselves and most times I've been hurt or not done right by them came from not honoring our connection, often by doing something a person told me to do that I knew in my soul wasn't right. I may not have had the fortune of being a student of horsemen like Ray Hunt or Tom and Bill Dorrance as I was growing up, yet I feel blessed to learn from and photograph some of today's finest horsemen, including Buck Brannaman. This image was made at the 2008 Advanced Cowboy School in Benson, Arizona, where I first photographed Buck and noted that almost every student at this clinic was an accomplished teacher themselves, many cowboying for a living.



Ever Ready

While photographing Buck Brannaman's Advanced Cowboy School in Benson, Arizona, in 2008 I found my eye drawn repeatedly to this cowy little horse named Bandelaro and noted that he was ever ready for work with an energy and intensity I admired. The equally impressive horseman is Kip Fladland of La Riata Ranch, a long time friend of Buck's. Even at the end of several days of hard work this horse was looking for more to do, ears up and eyes bright, so connected and light that the shift of a hip sent him wherever Kip needed him to go. Kip tells me he's now straight up in the bridle.

Legacy Continues

This is Creek Newman finishing up his first full shoeing job as his father Joe Bob keeps a close eye on the quality of the work. The Newmans work at the PO Ranch Camp on the Lone Mountain Ranch in Arizona, where the boys are learning the cowboy way of life every day. I met Creek and his younger brother Coy at a ranch rodeo in 2006 and their charisma and work ethic inspired me to photograph them then and now as part of my Legacy Series.





Meeting of Spirits

I'm an Arizona gal and don't tolerate cold well, so I almost missed one of the most miraculous days in my life when I woke to a bitterly cold morning with heavy fog. I'm not one to waste a moment I can spend with horses, though, so I layered up, protected my gear, and went off to find mustangs in the pre-dawn. I could write a book about that day, which began by finding a 20-minute-old foal standing wobbly by her mother, and was filled with images and memories I will treasure all my life, including this one of two mustang stallions meeting and deciding whether or not to fight. A stomp and a snort and they trotted back into the mist.



Waiting for the Sun

Life on the ranch starts early, getting up hours before sunrise to feed and water horses and get ready for the day's work. At the 2010 spring works on the PO Ranch Camp in AZ, I made this portrait of Creek Newman before any shadows showed themselves as the crew waited for the sun to peek over the horizon. Moments later, a thin sliver of light appeared and all were up and riding out to gather cattle.

Juni Fisher

Juni Fisher is known in the western music world as one of the best of our time, winning awards as entertainer, performer, vocalist, songwriter of the year and more as she devotes herself to working and playing hard. I'll agree that she is wonderful in the genre yet will also say that she is a strong, free spirit who "rides whichever horse" she wants to on any given day and re-invents herself in career and life with determination and passion. I've photographed her often and we got together when she needed promotional images for her CD *Secret Chord*. During this photography session I played songs to set the mood while we chatted, laughed, sang and made what are, to date, my favorite photographs I've created with her.

Juni's brocade frock coat by Larry Bitterman, Old Frontier Clothing Co.





Remembrance

I found Lanny Leach in 2006 when I was creating images for a music video and photographic project with singer/songwriter Donnie Blanz. From the first handshake I felt the strength and honesty of a true horseman and he was earnest while working to create images with me for that that project and more as I photographed him and his family over the next few years. Lanny and his family, including fellow horseman and son Logan, have moved to Texas to continue their work with horses, which has included success in the Extreme Mustang Makeover competitions.



Vigilant

In the late spring, mustang stallions must be ever vigilant as foals are born and need protection from prey, and breeding season gives courage to bachelor stallions looking to start a band and other stallions looking to increase their families by stealing away mares and foals. This fiery, battle-scarred older stallion was challenged by a young bachelor repeatedly over several days, with fights increasing in intensity as he fought to keep his band intact. In this final fight, experience and fury won over youth as the bachelor was driven to his knees and then chased away to try his luck elsewhere in the herd.





RANGE RADIO

Six Favorites – Patsy Cline’s Enduring Legacy



By Bruce Pollock

Two issues ago we featured the late and great Patsy Cline in our “Road Trip List” feature. One of the reasons is that there are few artist’s whose music one could call “timeless” but the artistry of Patsy Cline is assured that description. Her career was cut short with her death at age 30 in a private plane crash in Tennessee, in 1963. This just six short years after her big break on a talent program hosted by one the 50s biggest celebrities, Arthur Godfrey.

Her hit, 1957’s “Walkin’ After Midnight” would launch her career as she would appear in 1958 on the *Grand Ole Opry*. Years after her death, Cline’s seminal hit would be covered by such diverse artists as Kellie Pickler and Madeleine Peyroux. A later Cline hit, “I Fall to Pieces” would be recorded by artists including Michael Nesmith, LeAnn Rimes, Lynn Anderson, Linda Ronstadt, Loretta Lynn and even Willie Nelson.



Cline was best known for her rich tone, emotionally expressive and bold voice contralto, unusual for the time. This, along with her role as a pioneer in the country music industry, helped pave the way for headlining women in the genre. Prior to the early 1960s, so-called “girl singers” were seen by the male-



I Fall To Pieces
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTH-H82Ur8k&feature=related>



Sweet Dreams
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWFft5dMVeQ&feature=related>



Walkin' After Midnight (HUGE)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWeCdxZIU5E&feature=fvwrrel>

dominated realm of country music as mere “window dressing,” only necessary to attract male listeners to their shows. Cline’s rise to popularity changed that, and she has been cited as an inspiration by singers in several music genres. There are books, movies, documentaries, articles and stage plays documenting her life and career.

A current effort is under way to create a museum in her childhood home in Winchester, Virginia where she lived from 1948 to 1963. Keeping true with one of Patsy Cline’s signature songs, “Come on in and sit right down and make yourself at home,” Celebrating Patsy Cline, Inc., the nonprofit committed to preserve and perpetuate her legacy and music, operates the Patsy Cline Historic House.

The house is on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register. Cline resided there longer than at any other residence associated with her in the Winchester and Nashville, Tennessee areas, and she returned to it intermittently until her singing career began in 1957. The house serves as a proud testament to Patsy’s love of family. Her devoted and influential relationship with her mother and their drive and determination launched Patsy’s career.

Today, almost 50 years after her tragic death, Patsy Cline’s legacy lives on as her music continues to inspire and entertain new generations of fans and recording artists. We play a great deal of her music on Range Radio as she is one of the top five requested artists from our Facebook fans so we include here links to the top six requested Patsy Cline songs. You can access the videos on our digital edition at rangeradio.com. For more information regarding the Patsy Cline House project, visit www.celebratingpatsycline.org.



Your Cheatin’ Heart
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKZRp515SmY&feature=related>



She’s Got You
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWCUh6tf7PA&feature=related>



Crazy
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-wJNpWgss8>

Digital issue readers: click on links or photos to view videos

The Road Trip List

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

#9, 10, 11, 12 – Tom Russell, Adrian, Linda Ronstadt and the Montana Folklife Project

Since we broke trail last issue with four albums, there's no turning back as we let enthusiasm get the best of us. Actually there are five as we couldn't simply go with just one album from Tom Russell. Aside from the fact that Tom provides his superb stories to us every issue; there are few artists in the West that can achieve what Russell does with a song. His words are so cleverly stitched together – their message clear and smooth – that one sometimes doesn't realize the rough terrain just covered. All of these artists' work – even the album from the Montana Folklife Project – are deserving a place in your pick-up glove box or your iPhone.

Tom Russell

Indians Cowboys Horses Dogs

Cowboy'd All To Hell

Indians Cowboys Horses Dogs covers Russell's cowboy country from the hell-bent-for-leather pursuit song, "Tonight We Ride" to the soothing romance, story song "Bucking Horse Moon." In "Tonight We Ride," Russell conjurs the ghost of Pancho Villa who watched the end

of the wildest West, always pursuing freedom with civilization close behind. Here, in some of the lyrics, is a reach for freedom.

"Tonight we ride, tonight we ride

Tonight we fly, we're headin' west

Toward the mountains and the ocean where the eagle makes his nest

If our bones bleach on the desert, we'll consider we are blessed

Tonight we ride, Tonight we ride..."

Russell's career, he self-describes, has been a careful climb, by intent. "My career seems to have gone in the opposite direction from a lot of people whose notoriety

came over their first half dozen records," says Russell. "Mine didn't. My career built very slowly, and then I moved to El Paso in '97, further outside than anybody could imagine. By not plugging into the machine, the records I've made in the past 10 years have been my strongest and most outside records, especially the past two. It seems that the older I get, the more I've been able to

keep on the outside."



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With twenty-six albums to his credit, Russell has had songs recorded by the likes of Johnny Cash, Dave Von Ronk, Jerry Jeff Walker, Doug Sahm, Joe Ely, Nanci Griffith, Ian Tyson, Alice Dement, and Ramblin' Jack Elliott to name a few.

Cowboy'd All To Hell is the true collection of the Russell Cowboy Universe. It features all remastered favorites along with a couple duets with Ian Tyson. The classic "Navajo Rug" and the story song, "Gallo Del Cielo" about a one-eyed fighting rooster. The album features a couple of songs from the other album – they all fit so well you're simply glad they're there. Also on the album is the sit-back-and-visualize revenge song that's requested everywhere he goes. "The Sky Above and the Mud Below" is classic Russell. The story of two horse-hair braiders who were in the wrong place at the wrong time and a bar-owning deacon whose horse the two braiders decided they wanted. The lyrics lead the listener through to the deacon's righteous conclusion as judge jury and executioner:

"Well the trial commenced and ended quick, they didn't have a hope
 (The sky above and the mud below)
 Deak says, "We'll cut your hair now boys – then you can braid yourselves a rope...
 (The sky above and the mud below)
 The Old Testament it says somewhere – "eye for eye and hair for hair
 Covet not thy neighbor's mare' – I believe that's Revelations."

Russell's words and music take us away and make us think. Sometimes he simply makes us smile. A one of a kind.

And yet, there's more. Tom Russell has published



three books: a detective novel (in Scandinavia), a compendium of songwriting quotes with Sylvia Tyson (*And Then I Wrote* – Arsenal Press), and a book of letters with Charles Bukowski: (*Tough Company* – Mystery Island Press). He is an established painter represented by Yard Dog Folk Art in Austin (www.yarddog.com) and Rainbow Man in Santa Fe (www.rainbowman.com) Many of his paintings illustrate his pieces in this journal. A book of Tom Russell's art: *Blue Horse/Red Desert* was published by Bangtail Press in September 2011.

www.tomrussell.com

Adrian
Highway 80

Twenty-year old Adrian is a true anomaly in the music business. She started singing about the vaquero culture – a true niche – when she was just fourteen and three albums later she is fast becoming the queen of the Pacific Slope. Her first album, *Highway 80*, took the far west by storm with her sensitive, older-than-her-years writing. With songs like "Old Time Vaquero," "Nighttime in Nevada" and the title track, "Highway 80," this horseback artist knows of what she writes. Her second album, *Boots and Pearls* was produced by Tom Russell. Adrian sings of the life she loves, the people who make up her world and of the places in the West that inspire her. Her most recent release, *Buckaroo girl* features a cover image of Adrian riding a ranch bronc. This one is the real deal. www.buckaroo girl.com





Linda Ronstadt

The Very Best Of Linda Ronstadt

Many people do not realize that the singer who started her career in the mid-1960s with hits like



“Different Drum” – backed by the Stone Poneys and “Heart Like A Wheel” and later to be named the most successful female singer of the 1970s – came from an historic western family.

Linda’ Ronstadt’s father, Gilbert, came from a pioneering, Arizona ranching family and was of Mexican descent. Her great-grandfather, Federico Augusto Ronstadt immigrated to the West in the 1840s from Germany and married a Mexican citizen, eventually settling in Tucson.

In 1991, the City of Tucson opened a transit terminal and dedicated it to Ronstadt’s grandfather, a wagon maker whose early contribution to the city’s mobility included six mule-drawn streetcars in the early 1900s. Probably more than you need to know, but Linda Ronstadt’s tie to the West was proven along with her position as an artist at the forefront of California’s emerging folk-rock movement of the early 1970s. During that period she actively toured with the likes of Jackson Browne, Neil Young and The Doors.

This collection is a superb grouping of her early best and includes everything from “Blue Bayou” to “Love Is A Rose” and “Tracks of My Tears. ”

When The Work’s All Done This Fall

Montana Folklife Project

This one is tough as it is only available in vinyl and hard to find but it’s too good to pass up. Quite a story to hear for a living-history, spoken word project. But great listening. The Montana Arts Council was created in 1965 to “promote the arts for the benefit of Montana citizens and to provide a cultural climate favorable for the attraction of new business.” A survey was ordered and conducted and field workers divided the state into five regions. From those cities the fieldworkers traveled to various small towns, conducting interviews, taking photographs, and writing field reports. One of the truly landmark achievements was this album which featured voice recordings of many cowboy songs and poetry standards such as “When the Work’s All Done This Fall,” “Roundup Memories on the Big Horn,” “Git Along Little Dogies,” “A Quiet Night on the Prairie,” “The Zebra Dunn,” “The Shooting of Dan McGrew,”

“The Old Chisolm Trail,” “Home on the Range,” “The Strawberry Roan,” “Major Stories,” “Little Joe the Wrangler,” “Reincarnation,” “Tying a Knot in the Devil’s Tail,” “Dayherding in the



Rain,” and “The Cowboy’s Dream.” The album is hard to find, but it’s out there. It was produced in 1979 and can be found – try amazon.com first – it includes a 12 page booklet with song lyrics.



Scott Hardy

The Alberta silversmith infuses his work with the Western spirit.

By Wendy Dudley

Scott Hardy was about 5 years old when he sat on the hood of the family car, his mom at his side, watching his first ever Calgary Stampede parade. All those prancing horses, and proud cowboys and cowgirls in their flashy outfits, shouting their hearty yahoos – pretty cool stuff for a kid from the flats of Saskatchewan. The next stop was at the Western Outfitters where his mother purchased his first saddle. Like most young cowpokes at that time, Hardy had learned to ride bareback, terrorizing the neighbors as he and his cousins charged around on their snorty Shetland ponies.

“Getting my own saddle was a really big deal,” he says. “And then we went to the rodeo, and by the end of the day, they were all my heroes. I had grown up watching the Stampede on TV, so it was all pretty cool to finally get to Calgary and see it live.”

Fast-forward 50 years, and Hardy, who ranches in the hills east of Longview, Alberta, is now making Stampede memories for others to enjoy. A master silversmith, he was commissioned last fall by the Calgary Stampede to handcraft 100 limited-edition buckles to commemorate

the Stampede’s centennial, held this year from July 6-15. Wanting a design that would capture the rodeo’s spirit and history, he browsed the archives, a 1923 poster of a bucking bronc catching his eye. The sunfishing horse, its rider perched at the apex of the action, resembled the figure he had seen on a 1912 Calgary Stampede gold buckle that arrived in his workshop several years before for some touch-up work. A similar image appeared again on the 1932 sterling silver buckle that was presented to Calgary Stampede saddle-bronc champion Pete Knight.

Hardy discovered the horse was known as I See U, named for the way it seemed to be looking back at its rider who is also looking down at the steed’s wild eye. For a single second, they are in each other’s sight, competing as equals in the Calgary Stampede’s signature rodeo event.

The horse came to the Stampede with the letters IC branded on its neck, meaning inspected and condemned. A former military horse, it was deemed too wild for service. Calgary Stampede founder Guy Weadick heard about the rank mount, and added it to his saddle-bronc string.



photo courtesy Don Bellamy

Scott Hardy may be a full-time silversmith, but he would never be without a horse. He is a fifth-generation stockman, and manages to keep eight horses and a small herd of Longhorns on his ranch near Longview, Alberta.



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Artist Edward Borein, who frequently attended the Stampede with his friend Charlie Russell, sketched the bronc in its tornado twist, calling it I See U. His drawing was used on the 1923 Stampede poster that Hardy found in the files.

Hardy knew he needn't look any further, as this



The Calgary Stampede Centennial buckle, by master Western silversmith Scott Hardy, of Longview, Alberta. The silver buckle is available in two sizes, featuring key elements of the design in gold, including the bronc and its rider. Hardy was inspired by a similar design on the 1912 Stampede buckle. Even the back of the buckle is engraved.



image told the story of the Calgary Stampede. He added the centennial aspects, and gave it his unique embellishment. When Stampede officials saw his finished product, they were left speechless by not only its stylized beauty, but in how it captured the famous rodeo's heritage. The bronc and rider are in 10-karat gold, as are the centennial dates (1912 to 2012) and the words Calgary Stampede and the CS brand. Around the edge is a twisted rope, its loop circling the brand. The background is typical Hardy, fully filigreed with powerful scrolls echoing high-action excitement.

It is available in two sizes, with the smaller piece

(2.5 by 2 inches) priced at \$2,600 (CAD), and the larger buckle (3 inches by 2.5 inches) selling for \$2,950 (CAD). He intentionally steered clear of a trophy buckle, since he believes the oversized mass-produced buckles have given silversmiths a bad name.

"Because good craftsmanship has not been encouraged, our work has been considered crude," he explains. "We need to change that." Also, he said the smaller buckle reflects the style of the reflected era, being made for a one-inch belt that could be worn with either work or dress pants. "People want something classy that can be worn in any circle. We have to cross that border and reach out to people who are not in the West, but love the West."

Crude is a word never associated with Hardy's fine, yet functional, collectible art. Each step of the process, from cutting to engraving, is hand-done.

"When he came in and pulled the buckle out of a little black velvet bag, we all gasped because it was so

beautiful. It is so fluid, it just flows," recalled Victoria Austin, merchandise manager for the Calgary Stampede. "We had gone out and met him at his shop, and knew he was the one. He works with such passion, and the buckle is such an iconic symbol of the West and with the Stampede, going right back to that buckle in 1912."

The scroll on the back of the buckle, complete with his signature and limited edition number, is also typical of Hardy's work, unseen except by the owner.

"It's there for the wearer to enjoy," Austin says. "It's that unique aspect, that extra detail."

And it's that intricacy that had Hazel Bennett, a



senior who hasn't missed a Stampede in her life, cueing up for the first buckle available to the public.

"I have one of Scott's three-piece buckles, and he did the silver cap on my saddle horn, so I just had to get the first one," she says. "I've been going to the Stampede since I was four months old, so there are a lot of memories. I live with these things. I like them around me."

Being asked to make the centennial buckles is one of Hardy's career highlights, and he was equally excited about the buckle image being featured on a Canadian postage stamp issued in May, as a precursor to the Stampede centennial celebration.

"How cool is that?" he said. "Can you believe it? It's unreal."

Hardy is humble in his disbelief, as those familiar with his work know the accolades are well-deserved. In the early 1990s,

photo courtesy Wendy Dudley



Hardy's Stampede centennial buckle is featured on a Canada Post stamp, issued in May. The stamp is used on U.S.-bound mail.



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This wine boat, fashioned from the horn of one of Hardy's Longhorn steers, remains one of the silversmith's favorites. It was purchased by a Texas rancher at the 2011 Traditional Cowboy Arts Association exhibition, held at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.

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he was commissioned to make monogram buckles for all of Canada's premiers, and in 1994, he won Best of Show at the 10th annual National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada. Five years later, in 1999, he became a founding member of the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association. Its membership includes saddle-makers, rawhide braiders, bit and spur makers and silversmiths. He received the 2001 Will Rogers Award for Engraver of the Year by the Academy of Western Artists, and in 2006, he was invited to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., to represent western craftsmanship in Alberta.

Still, he winces when called a true master of his

craft. Like most artisans, he knows he hasn't reached the pinnacle, though he concedes he is well on his way.

"Life is like climbing a mountain and coming to a plateau where there's a fence and a gate," he says. "If I don't open that gate and keep on climbing, then I feel like my work starts to look the same and I'm not moving ahead. Then I get frustrated." Always the student, he vows to never stop pushing, to never stop learning. "My great-great grandfather said that when you quit learning, you're dead, and I've adopted his attitude. Life is fun, and life is attitude."

Hardy need only look outside his workshop window for inspiration, whether he's listening to the wind in the wires, or watching the clouds pile high like buffalo humps over the shoulders of the Rockies. His ranch is tucked into a hillside, not far from where the Texas cattle drives used to reach the end of the trail at the Bar U Ranch, once run by George Lane, who helped found the Calgary Stampede. On the flats below, Hardy's small herd of Longhorns rest comfortably, while his horses stand with their tails to the wind. All of this makes its way into his work, whether it be a three-piece buckle set, napkin rings, saddle silver, canteen, wine flask or headstall. All of nature's curves, whether rippling waters or a curling petal, become part of his filigreed work. Just as nature abhors a vacuum, Hardy leaves little unfilled space in his work, with some pieces, such as his flask and shot glass set, taking up to 600 hours to complete. Such sophistication is rare among North America's silversmiths.

"My work is technical, but you have to breathe life into it," he said. "Nature flows, and my work mimics nature, and there's the wildness, individuality, and hardships. Everything about the West – all that pride, fortitude and determination – goes into my work. It's intoxicating."

It's been a long climb, with sacrifices along the way, as he tried to juggle silversmithing with other paying



jobs. After moving to Alberta in 1972, he spent several years guiding, shoeing horses and packing for outfitters. He was drawn to the backcountry, with only his horses for company. He recalls those days of breaking horses, blowing blizzards, and facing nature's will with passion and humor.

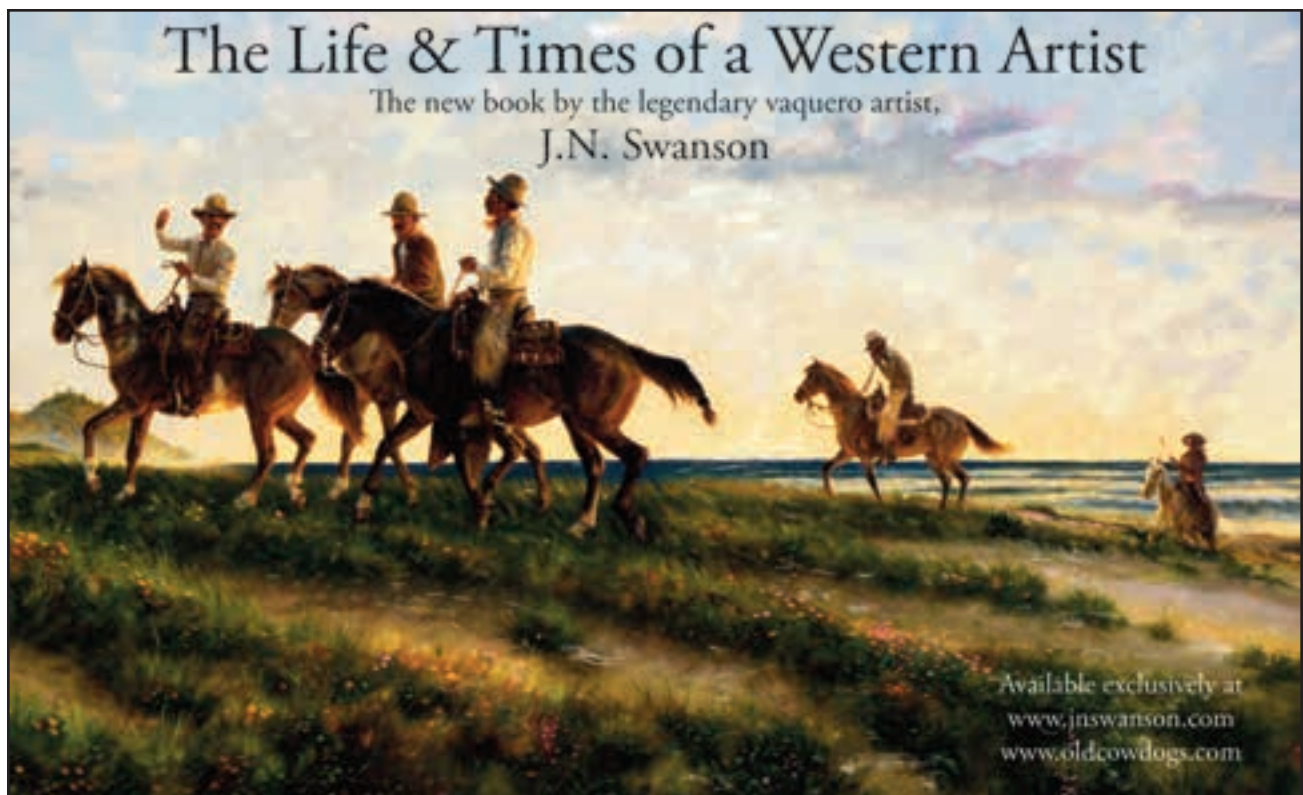
“When I hit a tough spot doing my work, I think about how tough it was doing that, and it keeps me going,” he says. “Adversity is a big part of living in the West. Problem-solving is part of day-to-day life, and I have to deal with it in my work.”

Hardy could have kept on cowboying, but he couldn't ignore his artistic yearnings. Ever since he laid eyes on his great-grandmother's silver tea set, he wanted to make beautiful things, and he wanted to be great, not just



courtesy National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

Hardy's other creations have included headstalls, shot glasses and, of course, three-piece buckle sets.





good. Making the decision in 1981 to become a full-time craftsman instead of a cattleman went against industry convention.

“Anybody who isn’t out driving fence posts or moving cattle is seen not to be working,” he says, “but you can’t just do this as a hobby, as something to do in the winter.”

And it’s not like he turned his back on the western scene. Silver has always been part of cowboy culture, starting in Mexico and California and moving north through the United States and into Canada. For centuries, people have adorned horses with precious metals, traditions that came with European tradesmen, Hardy noted. And in Canada, many of the early Alberta ranches were owned by wealthy businessmen from central Canada who brought their fine tastes in silver to the West.

Reflecting on his 30 years as an artist, Hardy shakes his head when recalling how he initially took a few courses, and then hung out his shingle. It was saddlemaker Chuck Stormes (another TCAA founding member), of Millarville, Alberta, who called him on his shortcomings, suggesting he study art and architecture.

“I had to study architecture to learn about form, function and design,” Hardy explains. “And then I had to study art to learn about movement and flow.” To this day, he still researches different styles, strongly influenced by the artisans of Tiffany’s and modern-day silversmiths Mark Drain and Al Pecetti.

At day’s end, it’s not the buckles that he’s made for



such big names as country music’s Dwight Yoakam or Alan Jackson that he likes to talk about. Instead, he fondly describes the wineboat he fashioned from one of his steer’s horns, a piece of art that rose from the dirt. It came from a soft-eyed steer he found dead one morning.

“I waited years for the right horn,” Hardy says. “When I saw the ol’ boy lying there, I knew I had to do that piece. I hand-sanded it, but left on some of his battle scars.” The ebony and granite base boasts fully filigreed and hand-engraved sterling silver. A cradle of solid silver holds the wine bottle, reinforced with two major silver scrolls. It took 400 hours to create and fetched \$35,300, reflecting its sophistication, intense labor and the price of silver. Such creations evoke strong emotions, just like the hide of a favorite horse that hangs from a railing in his home, and the Hereford skull that came from his great-grandfather’s first homestead at Dundurn, Saskatchewan.

Austin expects some of Hardy’s Stampede buckles will be kept in safes, or put away for grandchildren as heirlooms. A buyer in Washington state was emphatic he receive buckle #100, and another fan ordered a special edition, requesting 18K gold. What matters most to Hardy is the emotional response to his work. When someone wearing his buckle reaches down to lightly touch it, whether tucking a thumb behind it or brushing it lightly, he knows there has been a connection.



Wendy Dudley is an Alberta-based writer and the author of *Don’t Name the Ducks: And Other Truths About Life in the Country*. Learn more about Scott Hardy at www.scotthardy.com.

To inquire about Calgary Stampede centennial buckles, call (403) 261-0101.

The West will never be the same.



Ranch & Road
ROADHOUSE

Opening this Summer in Santa Ynez, California

Ride to Work, Ride to Win

Ranch rodeo competition is just an extension of what the Hairpin Ranch cowboys do everyday, but just a little bit faster.

Photography by Mary Williams Hyde

Whether working a cow in ranch rodeo competition, doctoring one in the pasture, dragging calves to the fire at a branding or moving a herd to seasonal range, good horses and good cowboys are all that is necessary to get the job done. The cowboys from Montana's Hairpin Ranch, the reigning Western States Ranch Rodeo Association World Championship Team, get plenty of experience working cattle horseback everyday.

"We use our horses everyday; all of our cattle work is done horseback," says Hairpin cowboss Ike Folsom. "It's still the best way and makes good horses."

Ike grew up on ranches with his five siblings and his parents, John and Tracy, in central Wyoming, near Ten Sleep, and then they moved to Idaho. Ranching, rodeoing and football all run deep in the Folsom family. Ike's brothers Charlie, Ben and Monte all earned accolades in high school football, Monte was an All-State

linebacker and Charlie played two seasons in the NFL.

In 2003, their father, John, became manager of the Hairpin Ranch, located about 45 miles east of Dillon, Montana. A year later, Ike started dayworking on the ranch and became the cowboss. Ben also currently works on the ranch.

The original ranch was settled in the 1800s. A young Swede named John Peterson bought it in the 1970s, and since then it has changed hands a couple of more times. Today, the ranch is made up of about 26,000 deeded acres of high-desert sagebrush country and irrigated meadows rimmed by timberland. The ranch runs 2,500 pairs and up to 5,000 yearlings, steers and spade

heifers that are brought in to graze on the Hairpin.

"We basically sell grass in the summer," Ike says. "We try to get the cattle here between May 15 and June 10, and then move them out on grass.

"We ride through the cattle five days a week. Some



Ike Folsom (front), Jason Ward (center) and Casey Brunson compete at the 2011 WSRRA National Finals. "[Ranch rodeo] is a good way to win a little money and compete against good ropers," Ike says.



John Ward (left), Jason Ward (center), Casey Brunson (right) and Ike Folsom (behind) make up the Hairpin Ranch team.

of the ranch is marshy, so we doctor quite a bit of foot rot in the cattle we graze.”

Most of the horses on the ranch are registered Quarter Horses that come from Ike’s father-in-law Stephen Shiner of Shiner Ranch, a fourth-generation Quarter Horse and Commercial cattle operation in Lemhi, Idaho. The Shiners run around 30 broodmares and cross them on four stallions: Bonnets Blue Roan, Mr Irish



Ike Folsom (left), John Ward (center) and Jason Ward compete in the doctoring event at the 2011 WSRRA National Finals.


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Ike Folsom (left) and Jason Ward (right) show how working and rodeoing together pays off in the heat of competition at the 2011 WSRRA National Finals. “We might take a different shot [in competition] than we would outside on the ranch, but that’s what makes it fun,” Ike says. “We have to do things a little quicker.”

Whiskey, DashofIrish Whiskey and Drift Sunny Four.

“I look for a horse that has some size, is athletic and can move quickly,” Ike explains. “But I don’t want a horse that gets chargey when we’re out doctoring.”

In the fall, the yearlings are shipped and the calves are weaned. Then Montana rancher John Erv brings in more cattle to graze on the Hairpin through the winter and eventually to one of Erv’s feedlots around Dillon.

“We ride feedlot pens most of the winter, until we start calving,” Ike says. “That’s another thing we



The Hairpin Ranch team has skilled cowboys who also do a lot of team roping, including header John Ward and heeler Casey Brunson, shown here.

do on our horses.”

Between spring and fall works, the Hairpin cowboys find time to compete at nearby WSRRA-sanctioned ranch rodeos. The team has been WSRRA members since the organization formed in 2010 and has qualified twice for the WSRRA National Finals, held in November in Winnemucca, Nevada. At the 2011 Finals, they finished the long go-round in second place and won the clean-slate final round, claiming the world championship.

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Casey Brunson and John Ward load the cow at the end of Jason Ward’s rope into the trailer during the trailer-loading event.



Casey Brunson (heading) and Ike Folsom (heeling) have team roped together for a couple of years. Ike is the cowboss on the Hairpin Ranch, while Casey is a rodeo pickup man, leases roping steers and dayworks on ranches.



The Hairpin team consists of Ike, Casey Brunson, and John and Jason Ward.

Casey dayworks for Camas Creek Ranch, which is based in Fairfield, Idaho. He also team ropes, leases roping steers and is a pickup man. He and his wife, Jazz, have three children: sons Hayden and Jag, and a daughter, Blake.

Jason Ward works on the Hairpin Ranch and rodeoed with Ike in high school. Jason and his wife, Amy, have a son named Ace.

John Ward, Jason's brother, works for Draggin Y Cattle Company in Dillon. He and Ike help each other out on their respective ranches. John and his wife, Ellen, have two daughters, Josi and Madison.

The Hairpin Ranch is back on the ranch rodeo circuit this summer. The team placed fourth at the 23rd Annual Ranch Hand Rodeo in Winnemucca this past March but is still trying to qualify for the 2012 WSRRA National Finals.

"We're pretty competitive in roping events, and the doctoring is always fun," Ike says. "The best thing about the Finals is that the events all involve roping; nothing is judged, just timed. It's something else to get to rope against some of the best [big-loop] ropers, such as the Jims, the Eigurens and Ira Walker. The horses we ride are good using horses and do well at roping and sorting cattle, but not showing."

For more on the WSRRA, visit wsrra.org or its Facebook page.



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RANCH LIVING WITH THEA MARX

Inspired by Wyoming; Made in France

Beautiful leather accessories are created one at a time by Brice and Yazmhil Corman in the Chablis Countryside

He was a young law student. She was in the television business. They were both searching for their own foothold in life. Brice didn't really want to be a lawyer and he knew it. Yazmhil had worked as a fashion stylist and was attracted to the arts, in particular painting and drawing. The setting was Belgium, his life long home, her second.

They met because of a common interest in an American Motorcycle called the Harley Davidson and within months began, unknowingly, to build a legacy together. Brice wanted to raise American Bison in Europe so he set out on a quest to discover how. After many

letters of inquiry landed on U.S. soil, he was invited to the Durham Ranch in Northeastern Wyoming, one of the largest and oldest bison ranches in the world, boasting 65,000 acres of high mountain desert and prairie in the least populated state in the United States.

Coming from a densely populated country that prides itself on verdant countryside's filled with rolling hills and ancient villages, Brice found the Durham Ranch headquarters miles from any town, light in the dark, or major highway. He mused if there were still bands of Indians and wagon trains. If there were not, the setting was certainly appropriate. Brice quickly found that learning the trade of





bison rearing was not going to happen quickly and taking the idea to Europe was yet another enormous hurdle, so he settled in to enjoying life as a ranch hand. In the meantime, he had found peace with himself. He knew he was where he was supposed to be – far from home in a strange land near the revered creatures he wanted to study.

His ranch education was somewhat like baptism by fire and never less than exciting. From small triumphs to big letdowns, Brice learned from the best vantage point, in the middle of it all. Soon he would have someone to share the profound

experience with whether it was the hard labor of daily work on the ranch or intimate, life-changing moments of life and death that are a natural part of raising animals.

The ranch, outside of Wright, Wyoming, quickly became Brice's home. The Durham Ranch runs 3000 bison through sustainable ranching programs that were sustainable long before it was a buzzword. Their primary focus is raising seedstock – any animals not suitable for breeding are utilized for their lean, healthful meat sold to select restaurants providing another crucial revenue stream for the ranch. Being a part of the lives of the once almost extinct symbol of the American West does have a romantic twist to it, once you take out all the dirt, terrifying experiences and long hours. Within two months of his arrival on the Wyoming prairie, Yazmhil, his then girlfriend, joined him over the pond for his



wild west adventure. Belgian to the core, this raven haired Bolivian born beauty spoke little English and was faced with supreme culture shock living on the fringes of humanity with miles of nothingness between them and the nearest town. But, true to her nature, she embraced the land and the culture of the West and within 2 years of her arrival, Brice and Yazmhil founded Bison Legacy.

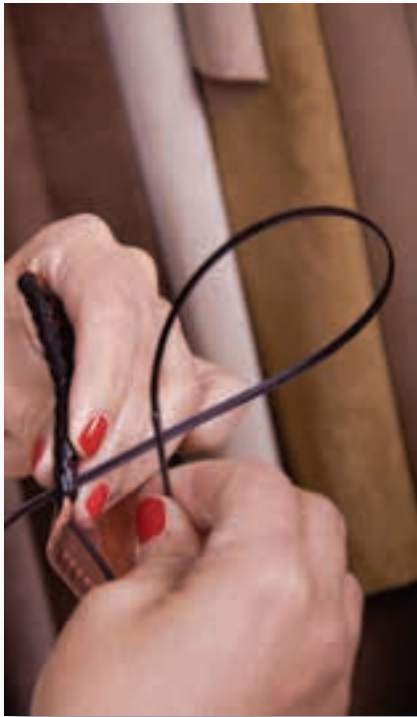
Bison Legacy was first just a dabbling with pieces of leather and bone they found on the ranch, realizing that there was so much more than just meat and fine animals to be created. The pair started making rather crude or, in marketing terms, rustic bison leather goods: belts, handbags,



Brice and Yazmhil

coin purses. Their intent was to utilize as much of the bison as possible. They found they needed little else to complete their creations other than what one bison provided: hide, horn and bone for buttons and if they were really industrious the sinew to sew the pieces with, though they opted for a second-hand leather sewing machine to do the hard work for them.

With a keen sense of fashion and an artistic flair, Yazmhil infused their Western creations with European style while Brice developed hardware and patterns. Having a veritable sense of style himself, they made a dynamic



pair. Over their 20 years in the United States, the couple not only felt the uniqueness of American West penetrate their souls, they developed a cult following for their handbag and belt designs. Their work was well beyond rustic and easily classified as couture, meaning each piece was designed specifically for its new owner. Brice and Yazmhil still worked almost exclusively in bison leather, utilizing its beautiful textures and superior wearability to create contemporary pieces that steadily gained popularity in the upscale market in the United States.

Moving from the far reaches of the Wyoming prairie, they relocated to Cody, Wyoming to open a gallery on the main street of the town made popular by Buffalo Bill Cody. The town boasted his namesake museum nicknamed the Smithsonian of the West for its stunning collections of western artwork and memorabilia. Not only did the little western town have a booming tourist trade, but Cody had the largest concentration of western craftsmen in the United States. Its reputation for fine western design was known worldwide through the names of Thomas Molesworth and the Western Design Conference, a

renowned event, where collectors came each year to see the latest work by the most talented designers and craftspeople in the industry. To be in the middle of a bustling town full of those who celebrate and appreciate western art and craft made sense to Brice and Yazmhil.

With a beautiful gallery across from the historic Irma Hotel, the world seemed to be their oyster, but then reality set in. Artist loyalty to the gallery was paramount and a few chose not to honor it, leaving Brice and Yazmhil scrambling to make ends meet because commissions from sold pieces were





not realized, not to mention that when the Wyoming winter sets in the streets of Cody became almost deserted. Closing the gallery was a business decision, but none-the-less heart wrenching. Knowing that working the custom craft and art show circuit in the United States was exhausting, Brice and Yaz understood the three remaining years on their visas would go quickly and with each day, the critical documents were getting harder to renew.

Ultimately, the pair gave into the call of Europe two amazing decades after they set foot in the Cowboy State. After being in the far reaches of the sparsely populated American West that fostered not only a great deal of creativity, but

closeness with other artists, they were not about to settle just anywhere in Europe.

Not just anywhere ended up to be an enchanting medieval French Village where cultured modern society meets ancient architecture mixed with dynamic worldly artistry. Quickly becoming an artist's and collector's haven, Noyers-sur-Serein seems the perfect match for the couple who once found themselves in the Wilds of the American West deep in Wyoming amid buffalo herds creating sultry, sexy handbags and belts. As their supply of



American Bison leather dwindled and it proved increasingly difficult to get in France, they painstakingly found new types of leather, though the years of Western inspiration remain at the forefront of their designs.

Inspired first by the wide open frontier of the American West and fueled by creative passion, the pair have indeed created a legacy proudly stamped with Brice & Yazmihl Corman, Made in France – available only in the small medieval village of Noyers-sur-Serein. It's just not the story, even their bags are enchantingly beautiful.



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A Western Moment

In reviewing albums and songs for our Road List department, we came upon Don McLean's 1971 release, *American Pie*. Much has been written about the album's title track – what it means and who is it talking about? That loss of innocence tribute to an America long gone was McLean's moment in the sun as he laments the passing of a simpler time. On the inside of the album cover – as if to drive his point home, Don McLean wrote this little poem to one of his own heroes – and ours, Hoppy.

So Long Hopalong Cassidy

No matter how scary life got I could depend on you
You had that easy smile and white, wavy hair
You were my favorite father figure with two guns blazing
Not even Victor Jory could stand up to those 44-40s you packed
And that stallion you rode, I think his name was Topper
He was so beautiful and white he even came when you whistled
I've always liked black and I loved your clothes
Black hat, black pants, and shirt
Silver spurs and two guns in black holsters with pearly-white handles
Black and white, that was you Hoppy
The bad men fell the good guys lived on
The ladies touched your hand but never kissed
Whenever John Carradine asked a question you'd say
"That comes under the heading of my business"
Then you'd call for another sasparilla
I believed in you so much that I'd take my Stetson
off and put it over my heart whenever anybody died
My hat's off to you, Hoppy
Say good-bye to all the boys at the Bar-20
The black and white days are over
So long Hopalong Cassidy

Thank you, Don.





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TWO WRAPS AND A HOOEY

One of the grand things about *Ranch & Reata* is the high level of enthusiasm that every one of our contributors have for the West. We make it a requisite that they know more about our subject than just which end of a horse to feed. So it comes as no surprise that a number of our colleagues are published writers on their own. It comes from the fact that we all simply love the West and can't contain ourselves, I guess.

Our stalwart editor-in-chief, A.J. Mangum, has just published a volume titled, *Saddles & Silver* with co-founders of the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association, silversmith Scott Hardy and saddler Cary Schwarz. Their book is really an adventure story as we follow two artisans of the cowboy crafts in their collaborative efforts to create ever-finer works in their creative journey. The adventure comes in as we watch the design and creative processes go to work as the book is filled with lovely rough sketches and drawings. These kick-outs of idea tries and brain storming sessions give the reader a glimpse into what it takes to not only create but collaborate with another, checking egos at the door. A.J. Mangum has been the fly-on-the-wall, reporting the ins and outs of what it takes for two creative forces to work together for the greater good of both. He succeeds with a charming and insightful read. As an added benefit a collection of "tenets" – rules to work by when one considers a creative partnership, be it at the stamping table, the engraving ball or simply on the journey of

quality relationships – is included.

One of the long-standing, go-to reporter types, who is always up for adventure is Mark Bedor. Mark has yet to find a dude ranch assignment he doesn't like. This fact stands whether it's a two-cot barn in Dubois or a five-star, Colorado getaway; Bedor is our, "Have Bedroll, Will Travel" guy. Mark has just released a glorious volume that brings together many of his visits and adventures at guest ranches all over the West. *Great Ranches of Today's Wild West* takes readers on a journey to twenty of the great working and guest ranches of today's West. As Mark described it to me, "Bill, there are over 200 very cool, full-color photographs in it, in fact, reading *Great Ranches of Today's Wild West* is almost as good as being there." That's our Mark. But he's right. It's a terrific arm chair adventure. You can take a horseback ride through the snowy woods at Vista Verde Ranch in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, or follow in the footsteps of Butch Cassidy on the Outlaw Trail at Utah's Tavaputs Ranch – it's all part of the American guest ranch experience. A captivating read.

My point here is that everyone associated with *Ranch & Reata* and Range Radio are committed to giving you a grand western experience in so many ways. Think of it as an invitation to enjoy the West as more than a geographic area, but as a cultural celebration of one of America's own root-based cultures. We hope you enjoy all of our efforts and as always, we thank you for your support. BR



Keith Seidel

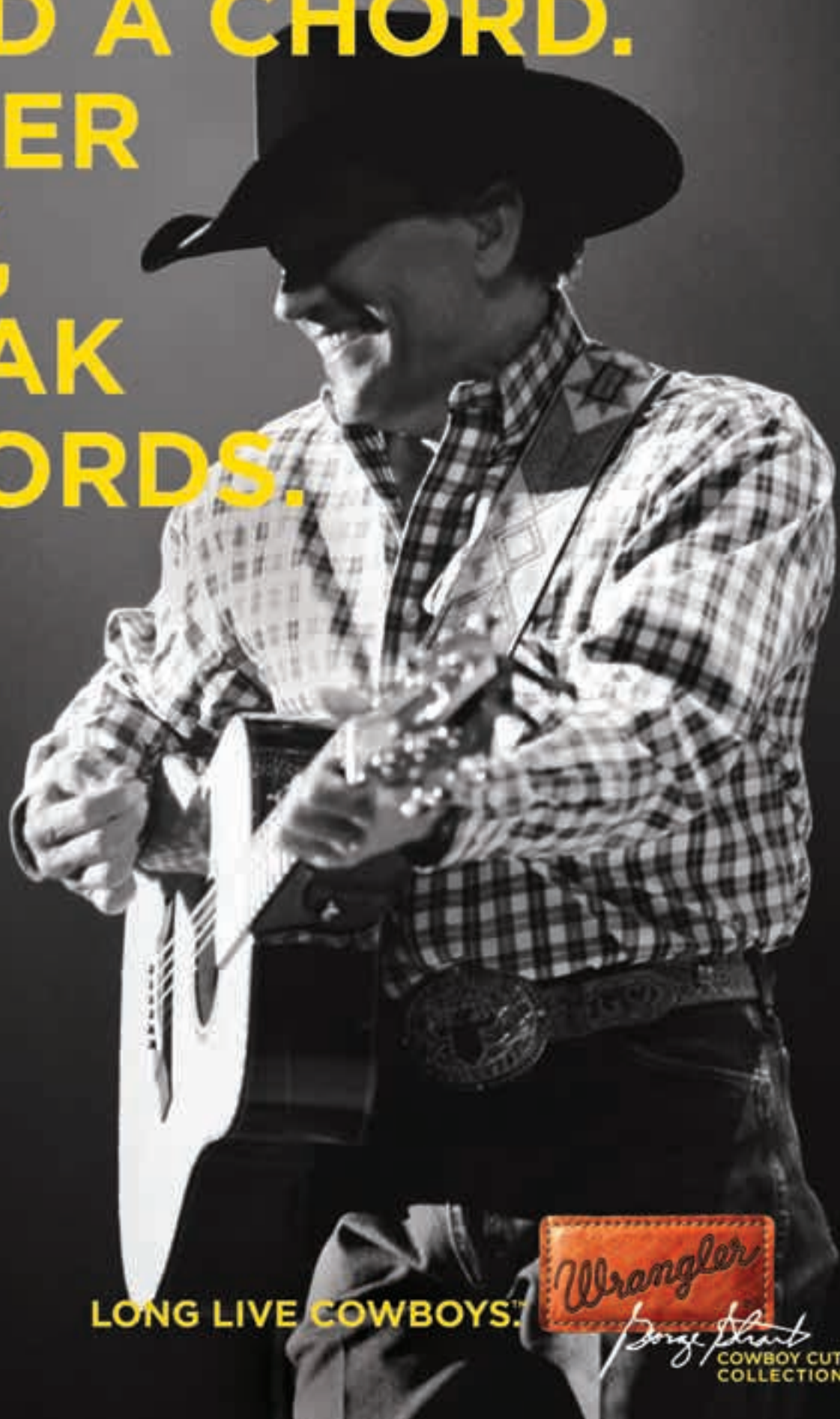


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