

The Journal of the American West

Ranch & Reata

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FRONT GATE



photo by Adam Jebiel

A Fresh Horse, Nevada

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Cover image: Dogs let us know when they are happiest – nothing like a truck cab and an open window. Photograph by Jim Arndt.



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EDITOR'S NOTE

What is Possible

By A.J. Mangum

Clutching notes in one hand and a dog-eared catalog in the other, a young woman makes her way through the crowd that's gathered inside one of the vast galleries at Oklahoma City's National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. Wearing high heels and a western-themed evening dress, complete with fringe and turquoise, she tucks her elbows close as she squeezes through narrow gaps between other attendees, navigating a continually shifting pathway toward one corner of the exhibition, where a Mark Drain belt buckle occupies wall space near a Wilson Capron bit and a John Willemsma saddle. It's opening night of the 2013 Cowboy Crossings, an event featuring concurrent exhibitions by members of the Cowboy Artists of America and the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association, and the action is about to begin.

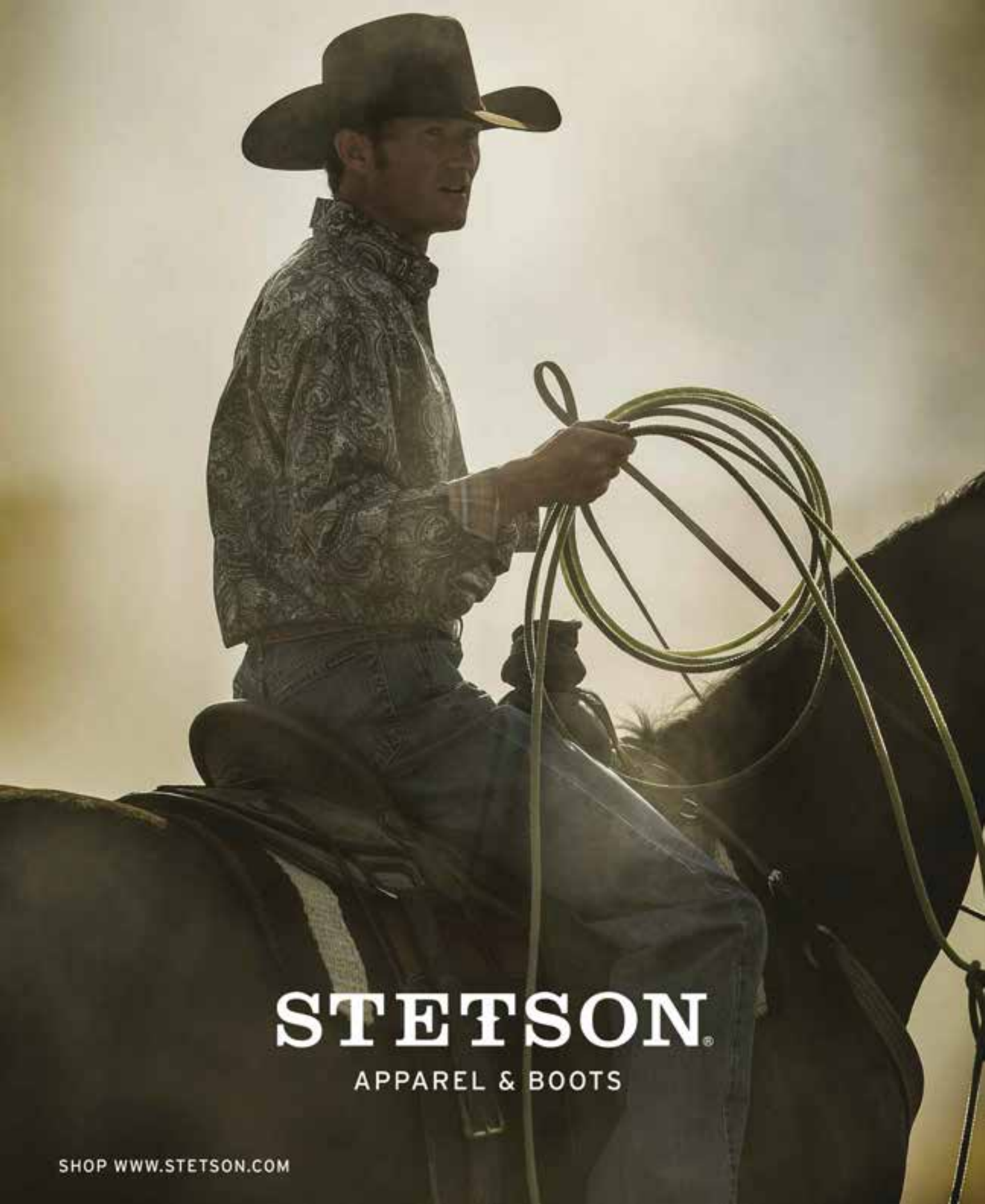
The woman emerges from the crowd just as a horn sounds, signaling that the first round of names will now be drawn from bid boxes next to exhibited works, which



courtesy National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

Sterling silver belt buckle, by TCAA member Scott Hardy.

include paintings and sculptures, as well as handcrafted saddles, bits, spurs, rawhide and western silver. A look of nervous impatience comes across her face as a museum docent opens the bid box next to the Mark Drain buckle, withdraws a scrap of paper, and reads to himself a



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handwritten name. The docent uncaps a dry-erase marker and begins copying the name onto a wall-mounted placard, effectively announcing to the room who will have first crack at buying the buckle. The tip of the marker touches the white placard and the woman stands on the tips of her toes, craning her neck so she can see the first letter written. The suspense is killing her.

Toward the back of the gallery, a young man leans against a wall, taking in the scene. He has no reaction to the name on the placard. He isn't in the running to own the buckle. Prices at the show run well into five-figure territory, far past his disposable budget. His gaze shifts from the buckle to the crowd that has come to bid. For this onlooker, the evening is not about adding acquisitions to a collection. It's about contemplating what is possible, what opportunities his career might yet hold.

A western silversmith, he's traveled from afar, family in tow, spending more on the trip than he can likely afford, to study pieces created by the masters of his trade, and to gauge for himself buyers' reactions to such a high level of craftsmanship. The long drive home will involve much soul-searching as he compares his work to that which he saw in the show, and ponders what it might take to bridge that gap.

The Traditional Cowboy Arts Association preserves cowboy crafts through education programs. The group holds two annual workshops at the National Cowboy Museum, and awards a sizable annual fellowship (at present, \$12,000) to a student craftsman.

To the uninitiated, the group's yearly exhibition might seem an effort outside of that educational mission, a means of celebrating the crafts the group represents, or the talents of participating makers. On closer examination, however, the show has an obvious and undeniable educational element. Young makers – and veterans unashamed to admit they still have plenty to learn – scrutinize the work on display, contrasting it

with their own. They quiz TCAA members in attendance, glean insight into methodology. They leave with the inspiration to advance their own work and, if they've taken full advantage of the evening, some of the knowledge they'll need to take those first steps toward improvement.

The night holds lessons for others, as well. Horsemen leave with higher standards for what they allow in their tack rooms and, more importantly, on their horses. Collectors head home with a better grip on ever-increasing standards for quality, and a stronger understanding of the blending of art and craft. And, older craftsmen, those from generations in which trade secrets were held close, see firsthand the value in sharing



Rawhide bosal and mane hair mecate, by TCAA member Nate Wald.

information, with nothing less at stake than the preservation of age-old professions.

The sale concluded, the crowd begins to thin. The woman in fringe and turquoise missed out on the Mark Drain buckle, and will depart empty-handed. The young silversmith, however, leaves the gallery with something of great value: a belief in a promising future.



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COWBOY ARTISTS OF AMERICA 48TH ANNUAL SALE & EXHIBITION TRADITIONAL COWBOY ARTS ASSOCIATION 15TH ANNUAL EXHIBITION & SALE THROUGH JANUARY 5, 2014

In one of the most significant happenings to hit the world of fine art, the Museum hosts two outstanding exhibitions. TCAA showcases the best of saddlemaking, bit and spur making, silversmithing and rawhide braiding, while the CAA features art from two dozen members who celebrate the West through painting, drawing and sculpture



Spanish Colonial-style spurs in Sculpted Steel by Ernie Marsh, TCAA

Buckaroo Roper, 40" x 32", Oil by Jason Rich, CA

THE MUSEUM STORE

A Western shopping destination, The Museum Store offers jewelry, books, home accents, art and more



WALTER UFER: THE RISE, FALL, RESURRECTION FEBRUARY 7 – MAY 11, 2014

Organized by the museum and guest curator Dean Porter, Ph.D., this is the most significant exhibition of work by Taos Society artist Walter Ufer (1876-1936). Experience an in-depth look at an artist whose fall from fame has long overshadowed his remarkable achievements as an artist and humanitarian during what proved a short career

Jim and His Daughter, Museum Collection, by Walter Ufer



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OF NOTE



Interesting Things and Stories from Out West



photos by Loy Andrus

BEYOND THE SADDLE HORN: THE ART OF GORDON ANDRUS

One would think in a world so dedicated to technology that the passion for the handmade would be a contradiction. Step inside the saddle shop of Gordon Andrus and you will see that passion flourishing all around. Andrus is very clear to tell you he is someone dedicated to doing whatever he can to help keep the cowboy crafts alive





and it shows in everything he crafts – from great using saddles and beyond.

His is not just a maker’s approach but also that of a living historian. Over the years, Gordon has gained mastery with the materials of his art and trade. He makes saddles, tack and harness, highly artistic buckles, belts and other personal adornments. He can sense the potential within a piece of leather or sterling silver and has developed the ability to apply the time-honored processes needed to coax these materials into beautiful, glowing works of art and function.

At the age of 14, he started cutting leather in his family’s basement, making gifts for friends. He learned braiding from a neighbor and taught himself how to carve and stamp leather with a handful of old stamping tools inherited from his grandfather. And even though he worked at a number saddle and leather businesses, he left the leather trade for a while to study other forms of art and received a Master of Fine Art at the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University, Alfred, New York, in 1990.

For a while horses and traditional gear-making took a back seat, as Gordon honed other maker’s skills – his ceramic art carried the look and feel of oiled leather. But the West was never far from Gordon’s aesthetic choices. He relates, “School taught me how to learn and graduate school taught me how to really be a designer. Something I knew I could bring back to the saddle shop.”

That designer mentality meant he wanted his “mark” on everything he produced. “I do the silver for my saddles, including the fabrication of buckles and (occasionally) the overlays on the rigging rings. My leather tooling style is a little different than other Wyoming or Utah makers – as I started engraving in the Western ‘bright cut’ style in silver, it has cross pollinated in my leather tooling. It’s led me to a unique scroll layout on leather, based on the classic bright cuts of silver.”

Talking with Gordon about his work, the usually mild-mannered westerner can get decidedly animated. “I love creating something that is simple, yet surprising.” Gordon has shared with us several images showing the diversity of his work – from buckles to Bible cases, the Andrus attention to detail, his “mark” is apparent. To see more of Gordon’s work, visit www.sagecreeksaddles.com



TIED TO THE WEST

There was a time when cowboys worked and roped in neckties. During the last years of the 19th century, encroaching civilization, along with a growing Victorian influence from the east, began influencing the ways of Westerners.

Pride in one's appearance and one's work was not alien to the working cowboy – then or now. For the serious, it has always been prideful work. And, as the 20th century wore on, along with the evolution of the necktie and its design, came the advent of unique accoutrements and accessories to help hold the tie down and keep it from flapping – an advantage for one working horseback. Genre tie bars and tie chains were all the rage in the '30s, '40s and '50s with many becoming unique collectables of the era.

Today, seemingly a billion years later, there is a renaissance of sorts occurring in many aspects of the Western horsemanship world – a return of respect, if you will, for some of the old ways in working and training fine bridle and using horses. Along with that has come an increased interest in ranch





Ties courtesy High Noon Collection
Tie bars courtesy Museum of the Cowboy



ropings and in classic vaquero-style roping techniques. It is only natural, then, that an interest in certain aspects of classic Western dress would follow. Re-enter the necktie. Today, at many ranch



ropings and competitions, Western gentlemen can be seen roping in neckties – a style that is “tied” to the West.



SOME HOLIDAY ITEMS FOR PAST THE HOLIDAYS



Kitchen Herb Wreath

This fragrant wreath contains six different culinary herbs – fresh bay and rosemary, dried dill, oregano, sage and lavender. Creekside Farms grows their herbs naturally without harmful pesticides. It measures 15" and would be perfect for any kitchen. See I at www.creeksidefarms.com.

HatCozy Ear Warmers

Because You Just Can't Warm Your Ears in Your Armpits

Jack Frost is nipping at your ears, but you want to keep the snow off with the brim of your favorite cowboy hat. What to do? Don the HatCozy! High-quality PolarTec® fleece and washable windproof fabric suede cozies your ears and the back of your head, without changing the fit of your hats. It's fully adjustable with no attachment hassles; great for ball caps and riding helmets, too. Made in the U.S.A. See more at www.WoodwardCreative.com or PO Box 444, Sisters, Oregon 97759.



Motoring with Mora

An absolute must see when visiting beautiful Carmel, California is the incredibly cool Carpe Diem Fine Books. If you love to read and equally love to browse fine, indie book stores – an experience rapidly losing its availability – look no further than Carpe Diem. James and Mary will make you feel at home and share their seemingly limitless information. They have an array of publications that feature the late local artist and designer, Jo Mora and have available a limited number of a wonderful map, "A Motorist's Guide for the Public Art of Jo Mora." Contact them at www.carpediemfinebooks.com



Speaking of Reading

Here are some diverse reads that have been slipped under the bunkhouse door or flew over the gear room transom.

Just for Kids Who Love Horses – *Christmas Major*

Here is a heartwarming story about an orphan and a spirited draft horse and how they worked together to help save lives. *Christmas Major: The Fire Horse That Saved Christmas* is told during the era of fire horses in the very early 1900s. Readers will learn about fire wagons, horses, truth and trust – along with the meaning of friendship and love. Not bad. Dave and Barbara Hubert's effort is a wonderful book that will be read again and again. www.deervalleypress.com





Everything Vaquero

Step into Jane Merrill's fine gallery in the mission town of San Juan Bautista and one will be greeted with the art and gear and sculpture that celebrates all things vaquero. A tireless advocate of the vaquero culture, Jane is the cultural leader of the bi-annual Vaquero Heritage Days also celebrated in this wonderful little town near Salinas. Jane's newest venture is a marvelous little publication that comes out, as she states, "seasonally" and celebrates the lore and legend of the vaquero. *Vaquero Heritage Times* is the essence of passionate publishing. It is limited in its printing and well-worth a subscription. www.vaqueroheritagetimes.com



The TCAA Ball Cap – Yes, you need one.

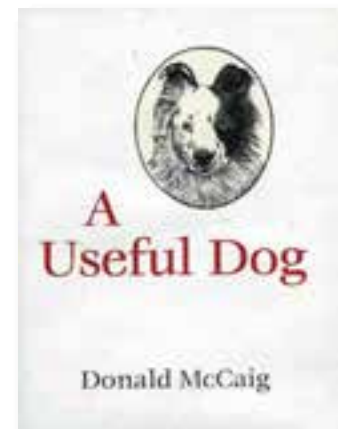


In our editor A.J. Mangum's opening comments, he tells the true tale of the suspense that wraps around the yearly doings at the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association sale at the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City – yes we fully realize it's the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum but to those of us with a charming amount of grey, it is still "the Hall." The buckle he spoke of by Mark Drain was featured on last issue's cover and garnered a tremendous amount of response. The cowboy crafts are alive and well and getting lots of solid promotion,

much of that due to the hard work of the TCAA members. Just recently they added, smartly, "enthusiast merchandise" to their website. Ball caps are always up for debate in the West where the cowboy hat is still king, but the idea to support and celebrate those who stand over the stamping bench or the engraving ball, day after day is a good one. C'mon, everybody needs a ball cap. www.tcowboyarts.com

Useful Dog

Donald McCaig is a sheep dog trainer and writer and is the author of the classic working dog story, *Nop's Trials*. If you are a dog lover, or worse, a working dog lover, you probably have memorized every word McCaig has ever written on the subject. If not, this charming little collection of poetry and short stories is vintage McCaig and shares a window into the simple- yet-rich relationships between dogs and humans. *Useful Dog* is the perfect size and will fit in your barn coat pocket. www.upress.virginia.edu



Winter Art Treats

Christmas may be past but its anticipation always brings in the mail a wonderful little catalog of offerings from the Big Horn Gallery – or galleries as one is in Tubac, Arizona and one is in Cody, Wyoming. Me thinks there is a wintering-in-warmer-weather plan afoot here. Nothing could be better for arm chair western art shoppers as the gallery represents many of the genre’s finest, including the wonderful art, sculpture and prints of Buckeye Blake.

www.bighorngalleries.com



Through the Organ Pipe
by Buckeye Blake



Ernest Bryant Collection – Sold

Last issue we showed some of the items up for bid at the November 12th auction at Pasadena’s John Moran Auctioneers. Items included a load of Edward Borein art – etchings and watercolors along with other drool-worthy items. Here are three of some of the items sold – A Buckle from the Edward H. Bohlin Company, (\$2,082.50); Edward Borein’s “Trail Boss” etching, (\$3,900); and a gorgeous Brydon Brothers silver-mounted parade saddle, \$19,200).

Visit www.johnmoran.com for the



prices realized on these and the other items in the 11.12 sale.



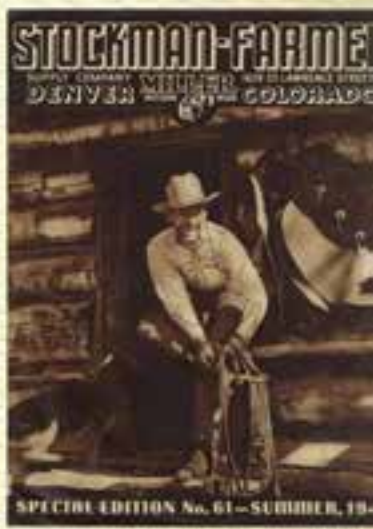
Pure Country, Pure and Simple

Throughout the 1950s and 60s many of country music’s greatest stars won over their first audiences on the small outdoor stages of rural America’s outdoor music parks. These were intimate, \$1-a-carload picnic concerts that might have been forgotten if not for the photo collection of one specific music lover in Leon





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Kagarise. *Pure Country* is filled with his charming candid photos. We see the likes of Johnny Cash, George Jones, Dolly Parton and others – working the “room” in their prime. The musicians often mingled with the audience between performances and sat down at the picnic tables to eat or talk. This approach to gaining audience “share” obviously lived on borrowed time but as era artist Eddie Dean points out first-hand in his text in the book, “It was a subculture bypassed altogether by mainstream Americans during the Eisenhower Era. For a buck per carload everyone was welcome.” www.amazon.com



A Moment of Reflection

Just to show how style evolves, here is what cowgirls-in-the-know were wearing in the spring of 1992 as shown on the cover of the Sheplers catalog. Pre-internet, Sheplers was the largest seller of western wear in the country. Sheplers continues today as one the most shopped websites in the category. www.sheplers.com



OUR COVER PHOTOGRAPHER – JIM ARNDT

Sometimes covers just happen. It’s not often. Sometimes all the stars align immediately and a shot reveals itself, like this issue’s cover. Sometimes it’s a treasure hunt. It all fell together after we saw Jim Arndt’s new book, *The Art of the Buckle* and we started reviewing his work again. Jim has been an incredibly positive force in the western genre for many years, creating some of the West’s most impressive images. Along the way he has created some benchmark photography and books. The new book, his fifth collaboration with author Mary Emmerling, celebrates makers and their fabulous belt buckles – new and from vintage collections, including trophy buckles, beaded and bejeweled varieties, ranger sets, and classy contemporary designs – all celebrating “buckle art.” www.amazon.com




Jim Arndt is a nationally recognized advertising and editorial photographer based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. His clients include Wrangler, Marlboro, Harley-Davidson, Ronnie Dunn, Nathalie, and recently the Ram truck in their ‘Farmer’ Super Bowl commercial. He is the recipient of over 500 photography awards and was named *Adweek* National Photographer of the Year. We have known Jim for many years and his work speaks for itself – as does his image that became our cover this time. Oh, to feel the joy that dog is feeling in that pick-up cab. Luckily, Jim was there to capture it and share it with all of us. www.jimarndtphotography.com



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RANGE WRITING

It always is interesting to see what people hang in barns – as décor. This poem by Gail Gardner has been performed as a song and a poem. The song was originally a poem called “The Sierra Petes,” for the Sierra Prieta Mountains of Arizona. This version was especially nice as it was illustrated by one of our favorite waddie pards, Joe DeYong.



The Sierra Peaks

Illustration by Joe De Yong

WAY high up in the Sierra Peaks,
Where the yellow pines grow tall,
Old Sandy Bob and Buster Jiggs had
Had a roundup camp last fall.

They took their strings and their running irons,
And maybe a dog or two,
And 'lowed they'd brand every long-eared calf
That came within their view.

Any old doggie that flapped slick ears
And didn't brush up by day,
Got his long ears whittled and his old hide scorched
In a most artistic way.

One fine day, says Buster Jiggs,
As he throws his sago down,
"I'm tired of cow pyography
And 'low I'm goin' to town."

So they saddles up and hits a lope
For it wasn't no sight of a ride.
For them was the days when a good cowpunch
Could oil up his inside.

They starts it in at the Kentucky Bar,
At the head of Whiskey Row,
And winds it up at the Depot House,
Some forty drinks below.



Joe DeYong

The Sierra Peaks

They sets 'em up and turns around,
And goes the other way,
To tell the God-forsaken truth,
Them boys got stewed that day.

While they was on their way to camp,
Packin' a pretty good load,
Who should they meet but the devil himself,
Comin' a prancis' down the road.

He says, "You ornery cowboy skunks
You better hunt your holes,
For I've come up from hell's rim rock,
To gather in your souls."

Old Sandy squalls, "The devil be damned,
Us boys is feelin' right,
And you'll not gather in any cowboys' souls,
Unless you're rigged to fight."

So he punches a hole in his old sago,
And throws it straight and true,
And lays it on the devil's horns,
And takes his dallas too.

Now Buster Jiggs was a riata man,
With his gut line coiled up neat,
But he shakes it out and builds a loop
And snares the devil's hind feet.

They takes him down and stretches him out,
And while their irons were gettin' hot,
They crops and swallow-forks his ears,
And brands him up a lot.

They prunes him up with a debornin' saw,
And knots his tail for a joke,
And rides away and leaves him there,
Necked up to a Black Jack Oak.

Now if you're ever up in the Sierra Peaks,
And hears an awful wail,
You'll know it's the devil a bellerin' around
'Bout them knots that's tied in his tail.

(Just so you know, we put it back up on the barn wall.)

WORDS AND MUSIC

Mystic Canyon

Bill Alves

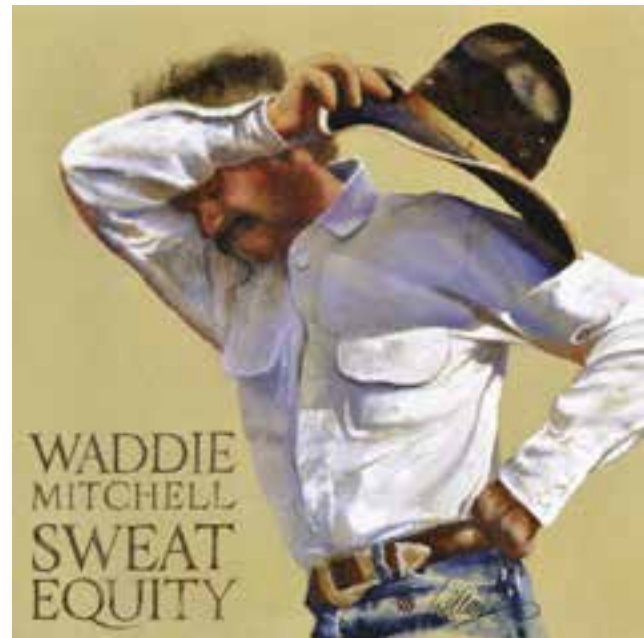
We love music and are always looking for new music and new entrepreneurial spirits in the West so we were very pleased to hear of a new, indie record label. Grammy nominated producer John Schneider and award winning pianist Aron Kallay, themselves critically acclaimed performers of ‘microtonal’ music, created MicroFest Records to share their love of exciting repertoire that is simply unavailable anywhere else. The label’s recent release, Bill Alves’ *Mystic Canyon*, features the virtuoso violin of Susan Jensen and the radiant, bell-like tones of the Javanese Gamelan Orchestra (featuring Bill Alves). Their thoughtful performances feature minimalist polyrhythms, lyrical melodies, and propulsive percussion. *Ranch & Reata* readers are very eclectic in their creative choices and *Mystic Canyon* will be a new lyrical adventure, well worth the trip. To see and hear other offerings from this fine, new label, visit www.microfestrecords.com

*Sweat Equity*

Waddie Mitchell

In this year of the 30th anniversary of the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, there is probably no one who fits the image of a cowboy poet more than Waddie Mitchell. A charming and engaging character, his new album will make you think, laugh and cry – with lovely instrumental interludes by the Gillette Brothers of Crockett, Texas. Waddie is way more than a cowboy poet, he is an ambassador to a unique way of life and we are better off just having him around. This album has been described as “better than a new roll of duct tape.”

Almost. It’s way better. This one’s a keeper. www.westernjubilee.com



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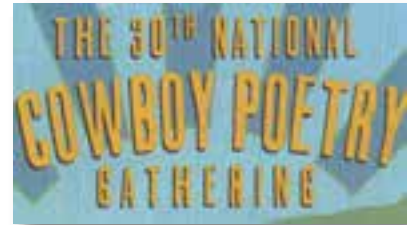
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HEADING FOR ELKO!

Can you believe the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering is celebrating its 30th Anniversary?

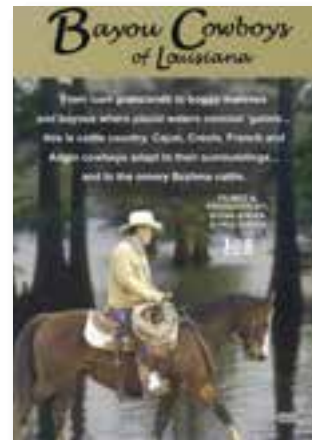


The daddy-of-em-all is doing just that and has a packed roster of events and performances.

Appropriately, this year's focus is on the future of rural communities and their unique cultures. Young and old will gather in Elko from January 27 – February 1, 2014 to discuss the region's future while enjoying some of the finest entertainment, crafts, workshops and, of course, cowboy poetry. For information and special ticket packages, visit www.westernfolklife.com

BAYOU COWBOY DVD

Our friends Susan Jensen and Paul Singer have been producing their on-going vaquero series since 1989. Over the years they have contributed much to the visual culture of the west and this series of fine DVDs is at once educational while being celebratory. The series follows the trail of the Vaqueros from Spain to Mexico to Santa Fe, Texas and California, to the far corners of America as the cowboy



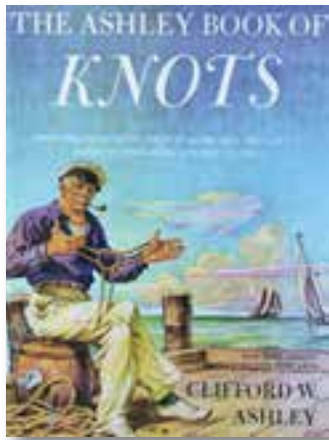
tradition evolved. It takes you behind the scenes to historic ranches, featuring real working cowboys and their families. These feature-length documentaries provide a vivid picture of the working Cowboys, Buckaroos, Californios, Vaqueros, Paniolos, Punchers, Cajun and Creole Cowboys who spend their lives horseback, working cattle.

Their new DVD, *Bayou Cowboys of Louisiana* gives us a wonderful and informative look into the lush grasslands and bayous of this special cow country worked by a diverse and adaptable group of stockmen and women. Check out all of Paul and Susan's DVDs at www.vaqueroseries.com



BOZEMAN LEGACY GALLERY OPENS

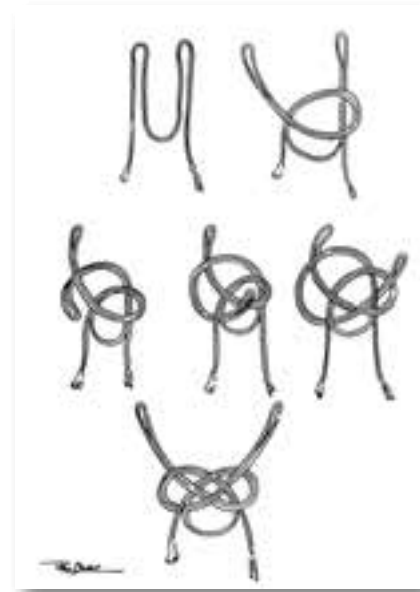
Legacy Gallery is embarking on a new venture in Bozeman, Montana, opening their third location with two other galleries in Scottsdale, Arizona and Jackson Hole, Wyoming. The grand opening is on December 28th from 6:00 – 8:00 pm. This gallery, like the other two, will feature some of the best western and wildlife artists including G. Harvey, John Coleman, Roy Andersen, Michael Coleman, Ken Carlson, Ron Riddick and Tim Shinabarger, just to name a few. www.legacygallery.com



MORE THAN KNOT

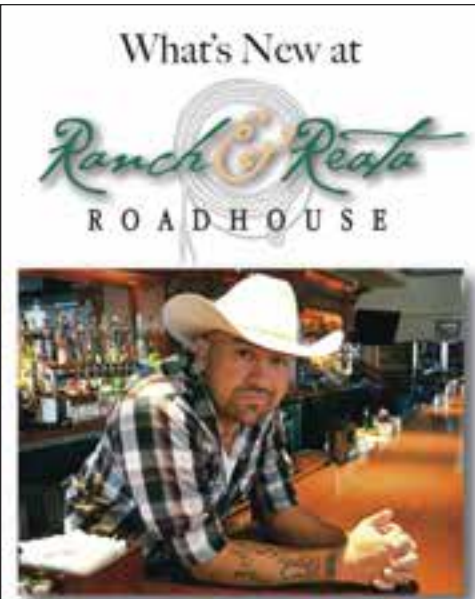
A few issue back we ran a graphic about tying the Alamar Knot that was illustrated by our own Teal Blake. So many of you asked to see it again...well, here t'is. This knot along with numerous other presentation and decorative knots can be found in the ultimate knot-tying book, *The Ashley Book of Knots*, written by Clifford Ashley. First printed in 1944, Ashley died just three years later and did not live to see

his book become the bible for dedicated knot tiers. As he said of the craft's exactness, "A knot is either exactly right or hopelessly wrong." Amen.



A CUT ABOVE

We love silver buckles and here's a bench-made, custom trophy buckle, featuring a frosted, hand-engraved, and antique background from A Cut Above Buckles. From concept, to design, to handcrafted execution, A Cut Above Buckles are guaranteed for life and built to last for generations. Want more? See over 300 uniquely tailored designs at www.acutabovebuckles.com, and ask about their special group and association discounts.



This season our bar manager A.J. has created a new drink filled with cowboy cheer:
The Ranch Mule.



It's fabulous. Here's A.J.'s recipe:

- 1 ounce
Tito's Vodka
 - 3/4 ounce
Grandma Tommie's
Apple Pie Liqueur
 - 3/4 ounce
Angry Orchard Apple Cider
- Serve in a chilled copper mug.
Enjoy!



“A GOOD STRING”
By Chris Owen

All large cattle ranchers keep a sizeable herd of horses for the cowboys use while gathering and moving cattle. These ranches will often have their own horse breeding programs with each year's foal crop destined to become either mounts for ranch work, or for brood mares. Typically, when a new cowboy first arrives for work on the ranch he is "strung" with a group of horses – usually unbroken three- and four-year-olds that have been living out on the open range. This string of horses will be his and only his for use while he remains on the outfit. Real ranch-broken horses are highly prized for their versatility and broad range of experience. One oft-cited reason cowboys leave a ranch job is that the horses have become too broke, making the job less exciting and challenging. Owen's art always tells a story. Stories he has lived. For more of Chris's fine work, visit www.chrisowenart.com

COWBOY PARLOR GUITAR

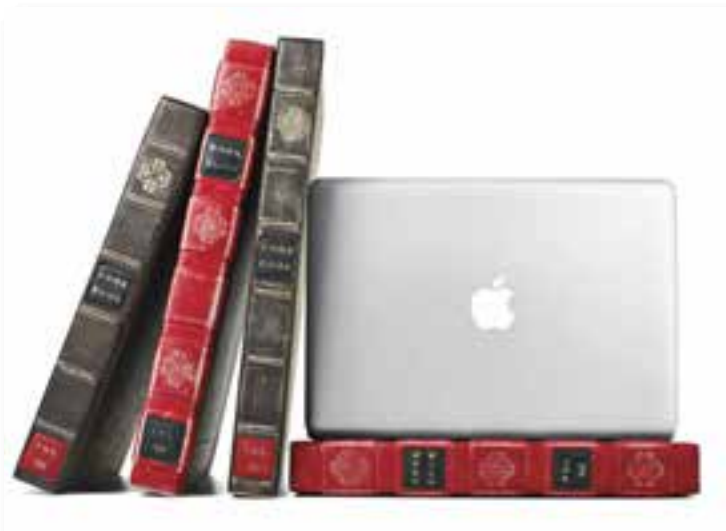
The folks at RedLine Resophonics and Cumberland Acoustics sent along pictures of their new "Cowboy Parlor Guitar." This is available as of this writing and is crafted with an ash body, mahogany neck, and a spruce top. We've included a link to a video of the guitar being played by Tim and Myles





Thompson. If you are reading this on our online edition, just click the link. (We will also post this on ranchandreatata.com.) Redline instruments are superbly crafted and meant to be PLAYED. It's why they sound so good. Check out their stuff at www.redlineresophonics.com
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqgMEL3DQ6A>

TWELVE SOUTH “BOOK BOOK”



Everything you are reading here is done on a MAC. It is true we are rather confirmed Apple freaks here at *Ranch & Reata* and some Apple tower, laptop or iPad is not far from reach. Many of our images are shot on iPhones. This isn't an Apple plug (actually it probably is) but we do get a lot done on their products. One little accessory we have seen that is very cool as well as functional is the Book Book by a company called, Twelve South. Kinda weird name but it protects your Mac Pro Retina while looking like a leather bound book. A lovely contradiction. www.twelvesouth.com

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A LEGACY OF LEGENDS SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 2014

Once again, horsemen and women will flock to Las Vegas, Nevada January 31 – February 2 for the 2014 Legacy of Legends, helping to promote and protect the teaching and ideals of legendary horsemen, Tom Dorrance and Ray Hunt. Check out www.alegacyoflegends.com for complete details.



Carolyn Hunt, Buck Brannaman and Jatón Lord

THE ART OF TOM BROWNING

The work of horses and cattle inspires Tom Browning and he has been painting professionally since 1972. Starting out with western and wildlife subjects, Tom has had a multifaceted career that has provided many incredible paintings of many different subjects and mediums. But his love of the west has always been the most inspiring, and has kept the western theme alive on his easel.




In 2009 Tom won the prestigious Prix de West Award at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City and later that same year was elected into the Cowboy Artists of America. His paintings have been described as “a moment in time, full of impact and emotion, with a keen observation of light.” We are pleased to show a couple of works – to see more, visit www.tombrowning.com



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 ranchoestancia.com

VEL MILLER AND GARY MCMAHON

Here's a pair to draw to. Two of the West's most creative have collaborated on a new book filled with the writing of Gary McMahon and illustrated by the-one-and-only, Vel Miller.

The title tells the premise, *Sometimes the Best Cowboy Isn't Human*, and this little book will keep you in stitches and they will sell bunches of books as you will tell your friends and word will spread, quoting Gary here, "like a smashed spider." A "Gumption Publishing" release, see more at their websites, www.singingcowboy.com and www.velmiller.com



VINTAGE COWBOY WINERY



This unique winery was inspired by a family's heritage of cowboys, western lifestyle, and love for ranching in San Luis Obispo County. They believe in cowboy values and keeping the western way of life alive. For five generations the Arnold family has lived and worked on the original ranch land in Pozo, California, near San Luis Obispo raising beef cattle, horses, and farming a variety of crops. In 1995, they planted 32 acres in grapes vines. Their vineyard sits beneath the Santa Lucia Mountain Range where it benefits from the coastal influence coming through the mountain passes. The extreme temperature fluctuation during the growing season results in uniquely flavorful wines. Vintage Cowboy is a true family-owned and operated winery and their Zinfandel offers exotic aromas of plum and wood spice while delivering deep flavors of wild blackberries, dried figs and anise. A vintage that carries a balanced tannin structure that leaves you with a lingering taste of sweet wood spice. Learn more at www.vintagecowboywinery.com

OLD FRONTIER CLOTHING COMPANY, HEADING TO 30 YEARS.

For close to thirty years, the Old Frontier Clothing Company has steadfastly stayed the course of creating couture quality, vintage inspired apparel that at once embraces the romance and style of the Victorian West while tipping its hat to the realities of today's stylistic fashion needs. The company's signature, go-to pieces are classics – a notched lapel vest and the ever stylish, yet ever forgiving, frock coat. OF's designers have, for the last twenty-nine years, effectively reinvented their signature looks with luxurious





fabrics and meticulous detail in fabrication, leaving wannabes and perceived competitors along the road side. With that, Old Frontier has become the benchmark in the category of “contemporary-vintage” western themed apparel and the company’s dedication has not gone unnoticed over the years. From entertainers such as Michael Martin Murphy to ZZ Top, Old Frontier reaches a diverse demographic that embraces the look and style reflecting the West’s root based culture. The outfit in the photo at left, presents some interesting, time-warp mixes: A

luxurious earth-toned, hounds tooth vest, coupled with a 100% worsted wool frock coat – classic OF style – coupled with an Old Frontier pinpoint shirt and an “off-the-closet-door tie” – it is a mix ready to greet the day in West Texas or the South of France. To see more, visit www.oldfrontier.com



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WESTERN WISDOM

Cowboy Boots: Function over Form

By Hale Fletcher

Sometimes it's the simple solutions that really matter. Over the past fifty years I've probably owned over 200 pairs of western boots. Dress boots and work boots, and dress boots that became work boots. I've had high tops and ropers, round toes, square toes and cockroach stompers, riding heels and walking heels, snake skin, bull hide, alligator and ostrich – you name it and I've had them. But the one thing that they all had in common was that they were all pull-ons. You put your foot in the top and pulled until it finally slipped into the bottom, no lace ups. The first pair of boots that I ever bought myself was when I was 11 years old. I was to ride in a local parade in a suburb of Los Angeles. The parade went right down the middle of the main street and my little pony Peanuts and I wanted to look like a cowboy and his trusty steed. My folks took me to the local western wear mercantile where they paid for a new pair of jeans, a fancy shirt and new silver belly hat. They said that my old boots were fine and if I wanted new boots I had to buy them myself and I wanted a new pair of boots for this special occasion. A fellow who worked in the store showed me a shiny pair of black stovepipes with yellow and red stitching. They were just the thing. I remember they cost \$12 and I paid them off on time, 50 cents-a-week that I earned hoeing weeds for my dad. They were pull-ons.



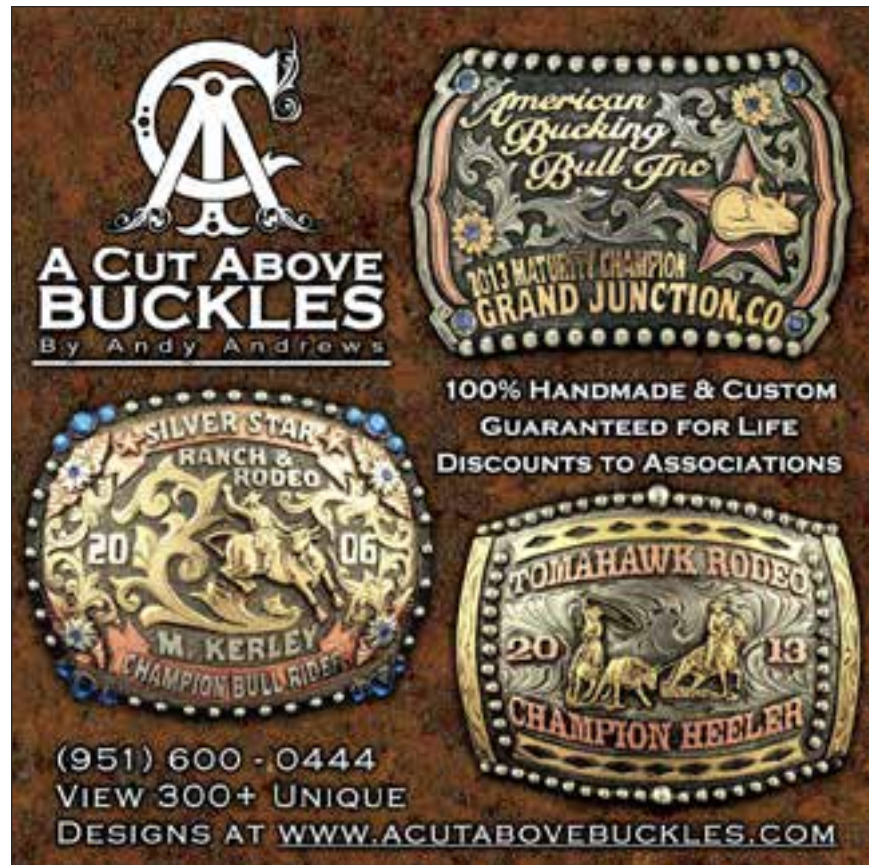
Now I know that most of us aren't forking too many bad ones these days, and I know your good ole gelding hasn't taken a missed step or gotten a hump in his back since Johnny Cash topped the charts. But sometimes, it can sneak up on you. A couple of years ago I was announcing at a local team penning. It was the series finals and the competition for the beautiful silver buckles was fierce. A fellow I knew – who could ride anything – and his team were working on a fast time. As my friend John came scooting around the pen to plug the hole his good sorrel mare slipped and fell on her right side. John got his right leg out of the way before it was pinned under her but as she scrambled to her feet his left leg came over the top of the saddle and



his foot was hung up in the stirrup. It was a scary sight. There he was with his left foot hung-up four feet above his head right between the mare's hind legs. Before she could take off with John doing a fender drag with his head bouncing off the ground he was able to pull his foot out of his pull-on cowboy boot. He got up, jumped back on the mare and finished the run with his boot still hanging in the stirrup. Now while my friend's quick actions may have saved the run, his pull-on boots surely saved him from a really bad headache or even a stay in the hospital. Later he told me that he always rides in pull-ons and that he buys his boots a little big. Not just so they pull on little easier but so they come off if he needs them to.

We all know the song and the story of The Strawberry Roan – *the old cayuse with pigeon toes and a big roman nose, the bronk that could never be rode and the cowboy that could never be throw'd.* Well, never never happens, everybody has a weak at some point.

Everybody gets to choose in this world so it's up to you: lace ups or pull-ons? Me? Love those pull-ons. May seem like a little thing, but it's the little things that can save you.



HAMLEY & Co.

From the time William Hamley built the first Hamley saddle in America in 1840, the Hamley family philosophy had been about providing quality to the customer. They believed that there was and always will be a market for quality products. In 1909, when the first Hamley Cowboy Catalog was printed, on the back cover of the catalog was printed the phrase: "Quality articles are made for the man tired of the extravagance of buying cheap things." That slogan was subsequently printed on virtually every Hamley catalog over the next 75 years and the slogan hangs in the store today. In addition to providing quality and value to their customers, the Hamley owners hunt far and wide to find special and unusual items for their customers – like this hand-tooled barber chair.. Hamley's owner, Parley Pearce says "If we want people to come out of their way to come find us in downtown Pendleton, we better have some really exceptional things that they can't find anywhere else. We do have many exceptional things in our store." www.hamley.com





DREAM RANCHES

Our friends at Mason & Morris told us about a couple of properties they are offering that we thought would be of interest to our readers. Both are working ranches as well as superb recreational properties.



The Broken Circle Ranch

Here is where dreams come true, conveniently located close to the mountain and agricultural community of Deer Lodge, Montana in beautiful southwestern Montana. At over 8,688+/- deeded acres, the Broken Circle Ranch is one of the largest contiguous ranches available in the Deer Lodge Valley, in scenic Western Montana. Not only is this ranch a productive commercial cattle operation with annual surplus hay sales, but also a sportsman's paradise. Miles of the Clark Fork River wind through the ranch and create an active riparian area supporting a large whitetail deer population and offering abundant fishing opportunities. The ranch is also home to an abundance of antelope with several trophy bucks harvested in the past few years. With excellent cattle working facilities and several well-situated and comfortable homes, this ranch is a complete package. \$15,000,000.

Gutierrez Cattle Company

The 72,000-acre Gutierrez Cattle Company is one of Oregon's

premiere large cattle operations. From the magnificent deep timber-covered canyons of the North Fork of the Crooked River, to the hayfields and lakes of the Rabbit Valley, and including all the big country in between, the ranch reflects the pride of ownership and touch of a cattleman's vision. Located in Post, Oregon, just 85 miles east of the Bend and Redmond area, the ranch consists of 21,529+/- deeded acres, plus another 50,000 acres of Ochoco National Forest and BLM grazing permits. The ranch has an incredible diversity of wildlife, thanks to over five miles on the South and North Forks of the Crooked River and seven lakes.

The ranch is not only recognized as a leading producer in the cattle industry, it is also every bit as well known for





its hunting, fishing and general recreation. There is also a 600-acre lake in Rabbit Valley and Fish Lake, closer to headquarters, is 30 acres and 40' deep. For the recreationist there is superb hunting, fishing and hiking – all without ever leaving the ranch! \$19,000,000
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MORE GREAT READS

Stick Horses and Other Stories of Ranch Life

Wallace McRae
www.gibbs-smith.com

The world-at-large got their first glimpse of Wally McRae as he stood on stage in Elko during the “early” poetry gatherings of the 1980s. And, after they heard his signature poem, “Reincarnation,” their concept of poetry changed forever. Part



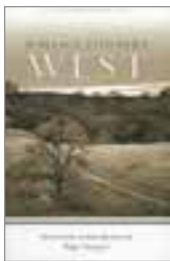
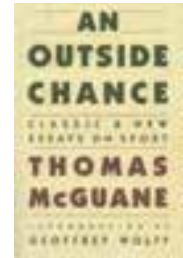
Montana rancher and part cowboy philosopher, Wally McRae has given us true-life stories about cowboys, Indians, ranch hands, sheriffs and the milieu of characters that populated the legendary American West. McRae tells about his heroes as well as hometown vagabonds who came and went through the landscape while he was growing up as a ranch kid and his adult life as a third-generation Montana rancher.

An Outside Chance

Thomas McGuane

www.amazon.com

This book was originally published in 1980 and contains some of Tom McGuane’s most enduring short, non-fiction works on horses, fishing and hunting – all McGuane passions. This edition of McGuane’s 1980 collection of the same title contains five new pieces. In classic McGuane form, he takes the reader by the hand, into the cab of the pick-up as we join him on his journeys “outside.” Many of the selections have been printed in journals and magazines but this collection is a wonder, giving the McGuane junkies of the world their own collection of writings by one of America’s most significant writers working today.



Wallace Stegner’s WEST

Edited by Page Stegner

www.heydaybooks.com

Stegner – winner of a Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award – devoted his career to writing about the West. As the director and founder of Stanford University’s creative writing program, he helped

influence the likes of Wendell Berry, Edward Abbey, Larry McMurtry and Barry Lopez. He fought not only for recognition of a Western cultural base, but also for the protection of the region’s delicate environment. The West was not simply a source of inspiration to Stegner, but a state of mind – a revelatory concept to many people at the time. His writing, however, remains the centerpiece of his legacy. A brilliant observer and a master of language, few writers have come close to capturing the essence of Western life as well as Wallace Stegner.



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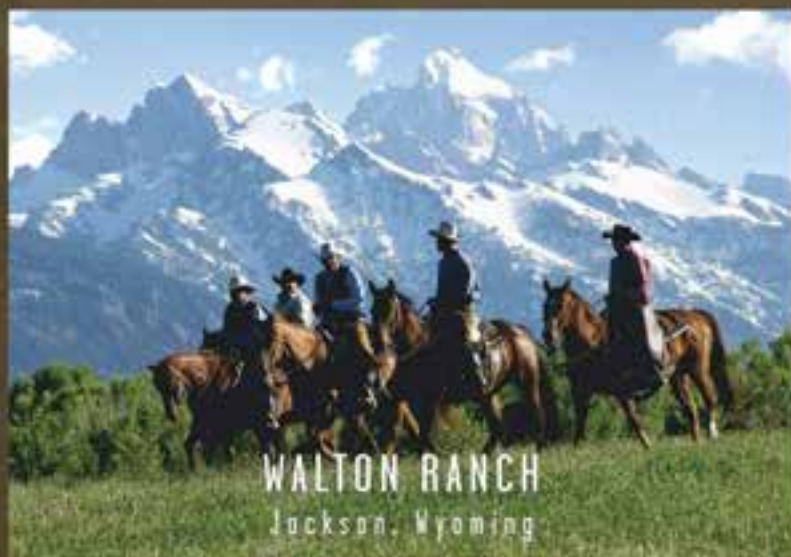
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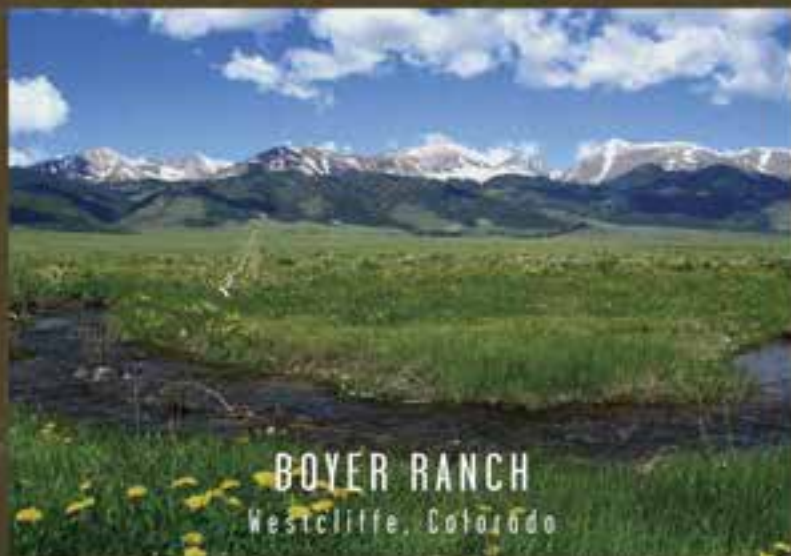
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**RMA****THE WEST IS OUR HERITAGE.****WALTON RANCH**
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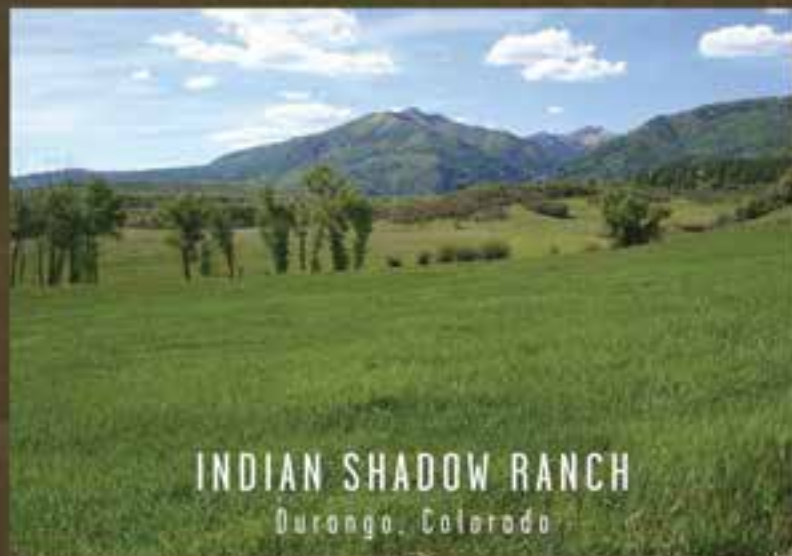
An exceptional property in an extraordinary setting, the 1,848-acre legacy ranch abuts three miles of the legendary Snake River, is surrounded by Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and is just ten minutes from the renowned Jackson Hole. \$68,700,000. Billy Long, 970.948.1333 or Ron Morris, 970.535.0881

**UNDER CONTRACT**
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Durango, Colorado

An exquisite 565-acre fly-fishing and equestrian estate with 3 miles of the Pine River, architectural masterpiece main home, private guest house and historic cabins. Beautifully scaled and landscaped, it is encircled by majestic granite peaks with direct access into the 500,000-acre Weminuche Wilderness. \$18,000,000. Ron Morris, 970.535.0881

**BOYER RANCH**
Westcliffe, Colorado

12,505 total acre cattle and hay production ranch rimmed by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains just 1.5 hours from Colorado Springs. Well watered with over 18 CFS of water rights, streams, ponds and wells irrigating 700 acres putting up 1,200 tons of premium hay. Runs 900-1,000 yearling cattle. \$9,000,000. Ron Morris, 970.535.0881

**INDIAN SHADOW RANCH**
Durango, Colorado

1,769-acre ranch with 1.2/3 miles of the La Plata River running through the property and just twelve miles from the popular town of Durango. 6,000+ sq. ft. main residence, guest home, manager's home, barns, shop and exceptional wildlife. \$22,000,000. Carl Luppens, 303.394.1400 or Ron Morris, 970.535.0881


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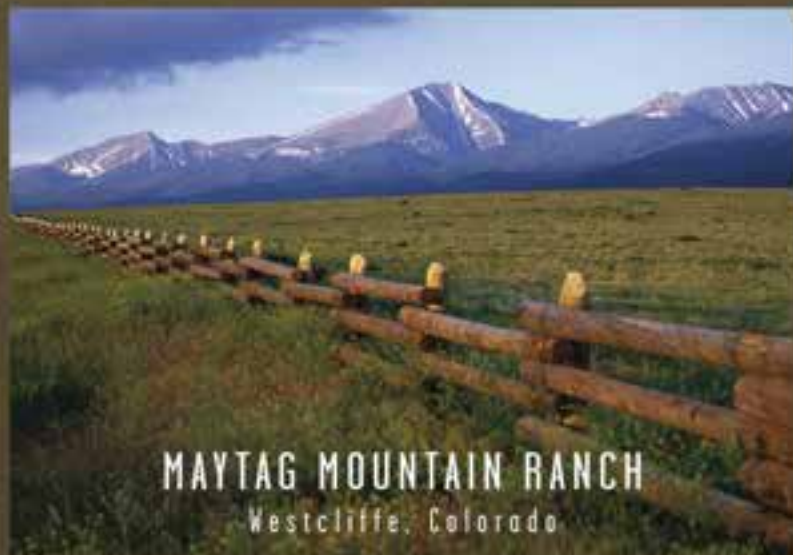
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BIG CREEK RANCH

Steamboat Springs, Colorado

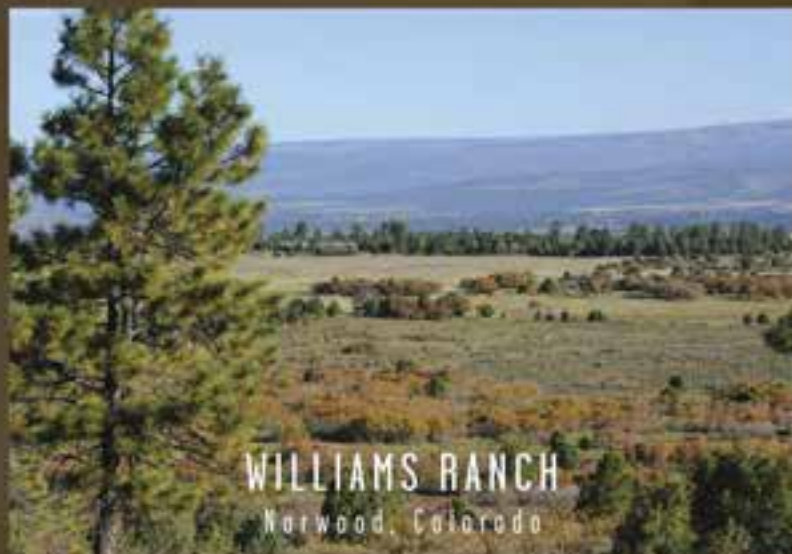
Private yet only 15 minutes from Steamboat Springs, 5,034-acres nestled in its own valley with 85% of the perimeter boundary on national forest. Five miles of Big Creek, 11,000 sq. ft. lodge, houses, utility buildings and historic barn. Development potential. \$59,900,000. Billy Long 970.948.1333, Ron Morris 970.535.0881 or Christy Belton 970.734.7885



MAYTAG MOUNTAIN RANCH

Westcliffe, Colorado

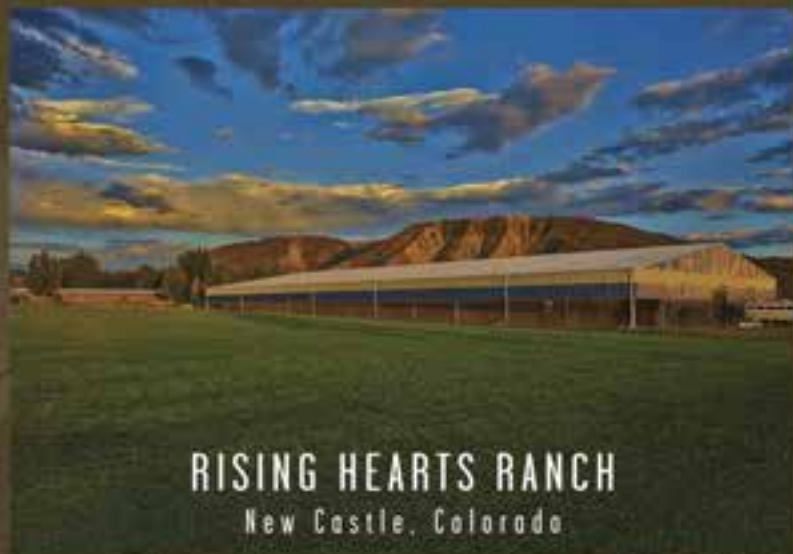
Located at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains with close proximity to Denver and Colorado Springs, the thirteen, 100-acre ranch sites within the 2,953-acre shared-amenity ranch offer luxury ranch ownership on a certified-organic, income-producing cattle ranch. \$500,000 to \$900,000. Billy Long, 970.948.1333 or Ron Morris, 970.535.0881



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Norwood, Colorado

This 1,020-acre working cattle and sporting ranch is just 35 miles from the world-class ski resort of Telluride. Features spectacular views, ample water rights, excellent hunting, nearby fishing and recreation, a 4,000 sq. ft. newer lodge/home for multi-family entertaining, large shop and 4-stall horse barn. \$4,475,000. Billy Long, 970.948.1333 or Ron Morris, 970.535.0881



RISING HEARTS RANCH

New Castle, Colorado

256-acre premier performance horse operation conveniently located near Glenwood Springs and close to Aspen and Vail features a new 6,814 sq. ft. trophy home and a 48,000 sq. ft. barn and arena. This property can work for breeding, showing or any quality horse enterprise. \$6,900,000. Billy Long, 970.948.1333



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BOOKS TO FIND

Celebrating Handmade

Photographer Tadd Myers' new book about the state of things handmade in America is an uplifting and solidifying testament that craft and artisanal skills are alive and well – here, right here in the United States. *Portraits of the American Craftsman* – just released as a huge, landscape formatted volume by Lyons Press is more than a grand read – it is obviously a work of love by the author. Myers started the project first as a commercial assignment to photograph Texas craftsmen carving wooden moldings and appointments for a historic building. As Todd puts it, “What started as a personal curiosity soon grew into something that feels much more important – an opportunity to record and help preserve this aspect of American culture and tell the story of some remarkable people.”



The book succeeds on a number of fronts. The visuals created by this award-winning photographer are not just declarative, set-up, guy-in-front-of-a-workbench type images; they take the viewer into the passionate process of craft, helping us to understand the commitment and passion of each enterprise. From a jean maker in Los Angeles to an accordion maker in Eunice, Louisiana; we the viewers are treated to an in-depth look at hands-on manufacturing in America. What a concept in 2013.

**“Beauty is found in the grace
of handmade things.”**

– Soetsu Yanagi (1889-1961)



And some of the big names we associate with handmade wares are here as well from the Nashville *couture* legend Manuel to the piano-making Steinway & Sons of Long Island City, New York. Even the famous creation of Ridgway, Colorado's Billings Artworks is displayed – the little gramophone awards given each

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year at the Grammy Awards.

We learn a lot about each of the subjects in this book and their competencies are displayed with gracious and loving detail. It cannot be overstated what

potentially this book could accomplish, beyond being a glorious homage to the work of hands. The idea that in this big world we can make an item, one-at-a-time, for an appreciative audience is beyond gratifying. It is a



visual hope for the idea we CAN make things of intrinsic worth HERE. Equally important is to realize that most photo-type books are produced by publishers outside the United States – kudos to Lyons Press realizing the importance of presentation with this book.



But enough talk, the real inspiration comes from Myers' wonderful images, so here's a bunch to wet your appetite. For more information and images, please go to www.AmericanCraftsmanProject.com and www.TaddMyers.com



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THE COOK HOUSE

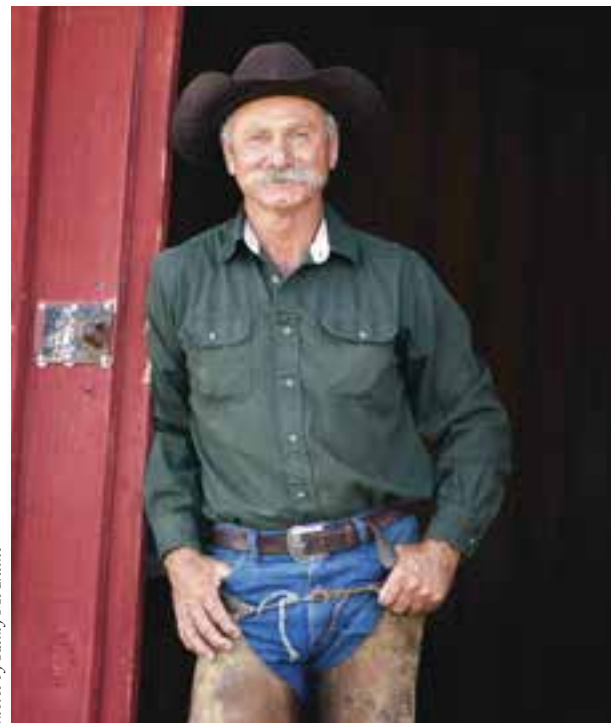
Santa Maria Barbecue



By Kathy McCraine

In the last issue of *R&R*, I wrote about Pam Ewing and the *Californio* style of cooking she grew up with on the central California coast. A big part of California's culinary history revolves around barbecue, an art Pam's husband, Nick, has mastered. California barbecue traces its roots to the big *ranchos* of the Spanish land grants, but with the later arrival of Swiss-Italian immigrants to work dairy farms, Santa Maria-style barbecue came to define the cooking style and social life of the ranching communities between Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo. The town of Santa Maria, where the cooking style originated, is so proud of its unique grilling method and menu that its chamber of commerce copyrighted it in 1978.

Nick grew up in Los Alamos, and was initiated at an early age into this barbecue tradition that's been passed down from generation to generation of ranchers. At 60, Nick is a slender, gregarious cowboy with ice-blue eyes and a salt-and-pepper mustache that all but covers his smile. Over the years, in California and Arizona, he's leased and managed ranches, day-worked, packed, outfitted and



photos by Kathy McCraine

Arizona's master of Santa Maria barbecue, Nick Ewing.

operated a fencing business. Today, he and Pam live near

FAMILY TRADITION

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AQHA

   Instagram

Springerville, Arizona, near the New Mexico line.

“Most of the ranchers in Los Alamos were Swiss-Italian,” Nick says. “An old guy named Alfonso Monighetti was one of the best barbecuers in Los Alamos, and he taught all of us.”

Monighetti always started his fire with oak moss, followed by smaller branches, then larger branches, with no paper or diesel to fuel the fire. He would drop a match into a 6-by-8-foot pit, then nurse the flame into a monster fire. Nick and his friends, then in their 20s, were impatient with his meticulous method.

“It just killed us to stand around and wait that long to build the fire,” he says. “So, one guy would grab Al and drag him down to the bar to get a drink, and we’d pour diesel on the fire and light it. He’d come back, and a hundred yards from the pit, you’d hear him complaining in that Swiss-Italian accent, ‘Dem sons of bitches, dey poured diesel on that fire!’ He was in his eighties then, and always had a cigar hanging out of his mouth.”

Historically, you couldn’t go to a roping or branding in the Santa Maria Valley without chowing down on Santa Maria barbecue afterward. Branding was a “neighbor deal” where everybody showed up to help, then celebrated with a party. There might be only 300 calves to brand, but anywhere from 75 to 150 people often turned out. The tradition started back in the *Californio* days, when vaqueros would ride from ranch to ranch to help at branding time, then hold a rodeo, followed by a huge party, with a barbecue, singing, dancing and merriment.

“When we were younger, we’d start branding in January or February,” Nick says, “and we were gone at least three days a week clear up into May. We branded a lot of calves. It was just starting to change when we left California in the 1990s. Barbecue is still a big thing, but most of the cattle land has been turned into vineyards.”

The tri-tip is the tender and flavorful cut of meat

traditionally used in Santa Maria barbecue. Also known as the triangle roast, it sits at the bottom of the sirloin on a carcass. Prior to the 1950s, it was ground into hamburger, but now has become so popular, it’s almost as expensive as steak, which is not to say it isn’t just as good as steak. Unlike other methods of barbecue, in the Santa Maria style, the meat is not smoked, but cooked uncovered on an open pit, over California red oak, seared and cooked slowly until it’s rare in the middle and crusty on the outside from a special rub used to coat the meat.

The meat is traditionally served with a mild salsa rather than a sauce, a creamy macaroni salad, and tiny, pale pink *pinquito* beans grown only in the Santa Maria Valley. Big loaves of French bread, sliced lengthwise, dipped in garlic butter, and toasted right on the grill until crunchy, round out the meal.

Frequently, the pit master throws a few links of Linguica Portuguese sausage on the grill to cut up as hors d’oeuvres for a hungry crowd. Nick remembers a roping at which he helped grill 200 pounds of sausage for sandwiches.

“Everything was going great, but we weren’t paying attention to how much fat was dripping into the fire,” he says. “All of a sudden, *whoof!* We had flames as high as the roof. We had to get a fire hose to put it out, and that’s the last time we ever tried to do 200 pounds of sausage at once.”

Nick is obviously *into* barbecue, so much so that when he and Pam lived in Eagle Creek, Arizona, they often volunteered their time to cook for big community groups like the Eagle Creek Watershed Association or the Greenlee County Cattle Growers. There, they built a portable 8-by-5-foot pit that could cook 100 pounds of tri-tip.

In Springerville, Nick cooks on a Santa Maria style grill he built years ago out of a 55-gallon barrel. A chain hoist hooked to the grill screen raises and lowers the meat over



the fire in order to regulate the flame and heat. Red oak is the wood of choice in California, but in Arizona he's had to replace it with white oak.

At his new home, Nick also built a meat room chock full of the tools of his trade: meat saws, a sausage stuffer, a meat grinder, a butcher block, cooking pots and knives. A walk-in box he and Pam built hangs four beeves. When he barbecues, he likes to order bags of six four-pound, untrimmed tri-tips from the local grocery, leave them in the refrigerator for a month to age, and trim them himself.

These days, tri-tip is readily available in most western groceries, and it's possible to do a decent job of cooking it on any home grill. Be sure to buy only choice grade beef, and if you're cooking for a branding, plan on three-quarters of a pound of meat per person. It disappears in a hurry.

Santa Maria Barbecue

For the rub:

1 cup garlic powder

½ - ¾ cup salt

½ cup ground pepper

½ cup parsley flakes, crushed fine

2 tablespoons sugar



Mix well and place in jar with a sprinkle top. Makes enough for several barbecues.

For the barbecue:

1 or more 4-pound, untrimmed (if you can get it), tri-tips

Trim the top layer of membrane, leaving about ¼ inch fat on the meat. Score the fat with a knife and season generously with the rub. Let sit an hour at room temperature. On the grill, cook the oak down to hot coals, about an hour. For medium rare, cook the meat about an hour and 15 minutes, depending on size, flipping half way through. Cook fat side up first, and if you have fat trimmings, cook them on the grill, then layer over the meat after flipping to the lean side.



Billy Ruiz: The King of Santa Maria Style BBQ



You can see him from a hundred yards off. Between the handlebar mustache and the big black hat, BBQ Master Billy Ruiz is not someone you would miss. And very few do – especially if he is cooking. And that seems to be all the time. Visit a cow camp or a ranch party out West and the murmur among the guests is the hope that Billy Ruiz is manning the grill. And if he is, the festive flavor of an old world fandango, a classic Rancho era feast, will be waiting for the lucky guests. And even though Billy offers the ultimate in “over the top” Santa Maria Style meals – a Ruiz specialty – he offers many other options, no matter how many guests – from 20 to 2500 of your closest friends. In addition to their catering business, Billy and Sue offer a full selection of savory seasonings, grills and just about anything anyone would need for great BBQ – including their Award Winning Buckshot BBQ Sauce. Visit www.cowboyflavor.com to learn about them and what they are up to.

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

The Grand Experiment

Cowboy Crossings redefines the presentation of western art.

By A.J. Mangum

It's a Saturday night in mid-October and I'm seated with Cowboy Artists of America members Paul Moore, Dave Powell and Jason Scull at the opening-night banquet for the third annual Cowboy Crossings, an event held at Oklahoma City's National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum and featuring joint exhibitions by CAA and the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association. An audience of around 300 looks on with suspense as Texas painter and sculptor Bruce Greene, CAA's president, takes the stage to announce the names of the show's CAA medalists, the artists who will take home the group's most prestigious awards.

Moore, a sculptor from Oklahoma, is seated to my right, occasionally wincing from a back injury suffered earlier in the day. He's soldiering through the evening, leaning on a cane, making no sudden movements. Each breath he takes seems an exercise in pain management.

Onstage, Greene segues to the sculpture category. *Turquoise Woman*, by New Mexico artist Oreland Joe, takes the silver medal. Moore's bronze *Offering to the Sun* wins gold.

The museum's special events center is a vast room, one of the largest in Oklahoma, if not in the Central Time Zone. Our table is near the back of the room,

practically as far from Greene's on-stage position as the seating chart allows.

Once Moore's initial shock at winning wears off, he stands and carefully plots an efficient course to the stage. The audience bears with him, applause continuing as he and his cane slowly travel the length of the room, skirting the collection of crowded tables, up a short but potentially treacherous set of steps, and across the full breadth of the stage to meet Greene and accept the gold medal.

Moore makes an unhurried return trip to our table, his expression a blend of unbridled joy and unrelenting physical pain, and carefully takes his seat just as Greene reads his name again. *Offering to the Sun* has won the Ray Swanson Memorial Award. Steeling himself, Moore stands and makes a repeat trip to the stage. Again, the audience maintains its applause for the duration of his journey.

This time, though, Moore does not immediately return to our table. After he collects the Swanson award, he walks stage right and, in a precautionary move, quietly ducks behind the curtain as Greene continues with the program. When his name is read a third time, as the winner of the best-in-show award, Moore steps



photos courtesy National Cowboy & Western Heritage



At the 2013 Cowboy Crossings show, sculptor Paul Moore's *Offering to the Sun* earned three CAA awards: the gold medal for sculpture, the Ray Swanson Memorial Award, and the best of show award.

forward from behind the stage backdrop and walks just a few steps to meet Greene at the dais.

With the award presentations complete, Moore returns to our table, medals hanging from his neck, a trophy under one arm, his cane at the end of the other. As he again takes his seat, and a look of relief comes over him, an obvious metaphor takes shape: in art, as in life, reward requires no small amount of pain.

The third Cowboy Crossings represented a maturation of a grand experiment in the western art culture: showcasing fine art – paintings and sculptures – and “functional fine art” – handcrafted saddles, bits,

spurs and rawhide – in a single high-profile show. The concept's *rewards* have been considerable: art-world buzz, a broadened definition of western art. As for *pain*, organizers no doubt suffered more than a few sleepless nights thinking through the logistics of each of the three Crossings shows to date, and weathering the trepidation that goes with reinventing the concept of an art show. Beyond those assumed challenges, though, the event's organizers, its venue, and its participants have come out far ahead in the reward-pain equation, potentially giving license to other major western art shows to rethink familiar formulas.



Caught a Little Deep, featured at the 2013 Cowboy Crossings, was the late artist Bill Owen's final painting, completed and signed just days before his death. It sold to Bill Rey, of Vail, Colorado's Claggett/Rey Gallery, and earned the CAA Buyer's Choice Award.



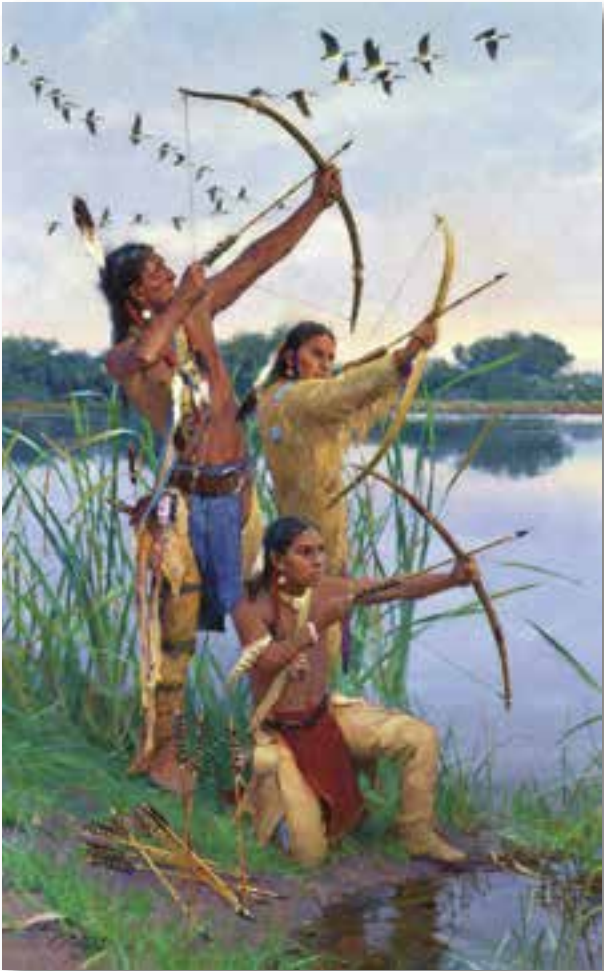
Guardian of the Spirit Dogs, by John Coleman, 2013 Cowboy Crossings.
The charcoal won the CAA silver medal for drawing.



Arizona Globe Bit, by Wilson Capron,
2013 Cowboy Crossings.



Snake Pattern Bit, by Ernie Marsh,
2013 Cowboy Crossings.



The Bowmaster's Lesson, by R.S. Riddick,
2013 Cowboy Crossings.



Saddle by John Willemsma, 2013 Cowboy Crossings.



Since Early Light, by Tim Cox, 2013 Cowboy Crossings.



In the Path of the Iron Horse, by Fred Fellows, 2013 Cowboy Crossings.



Old Mary of Moccasin Flats, by Dave Powell, 2013 Cowboy Crossings.



The Brotherhood, by Clark Kelley Price, 2013 Cowboy Crossings.



The next Cowboy Crossings show, featuring work by members of the Cowboy Artists of America and the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association, is scheduled for October 2014.


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YOUR HORSE'S FEET, A SERIES

Mechanics

By Pete Healey, APF

I remember years ago, I was with a friend hauling horses when one of the wheels on his stock trailer froze up. When he got out to look at the destroyed tire, it was like a scene from an Ace Reid cartoon; he looked at it with a puzzled face and said “Well I’ll be damned; I’ve had that trailer for thirteen years and never had to grease it.” This is a good analogy to the hoof care industry: If it isn’t lame, don’t fix it.

The horse is a four-wheel-drive, all-terrain vehicle and the wheels that he runs on are his feet. Often the feet are overlooked until there is a major breakdown and then they require a major overhaul. Like the axle of a wheel, the foot has a center that it moves around. This spot is just above the joint of the coffin bone in the center of the bottom or condyle of the short pastern bone. Known as *Center of Rotation* or *Center of Articulation*, the physics of the foot as it relates to this point is a key element to the soundness of the horse. In a study of sixty-nine horses that had an MRI, the three most prominent injuries involved areas around the Center of Rotation. These were injuries that involved the coffin joint itself, strain or tears to the collateral ligaments or involvement of the navicular bone or its surrounding structures.

Break-Over is the point on the bottom of the shoe where the foot starts to roll forward. The farther the point of Break-Over is from the Center of Rotation, the more leverage to the foot. As simple as this is, the Farrier and Veterinarian industries still can’t get their heads around this fact. Most often this very important mechanical aspect is left for the horse to devise by himself as he wears his shoe off at the toe. One thing that all sixty-nine MRI horses had in common was that they were wearing a flat shoe with the Break-Over way out in front of the coffin bone. We would never put square tires on our cars or trucks because they wouldn’t be able to move but we do it to our horses all the time and then we wonder why the bearings go out.

Besides protection from wear, the purpose of shoeing should be to enhance the mechanical nature of the foot. When this doesn’t happen it can cause destruction to not only the foot, but the upper limb as well. This is where the barefoot trimmers get their ammunition, claiming that the shoe is the root to the problem – but it’s not the shoe, it’s the shoeing. Besides Break-Over there are three other aspects of the foot that need consideration. These involve the Hoof-Pastern Axis, the side-to-side balance of the foot, and the vertical depth of the foot. All of these have a mechanical influence on each other and contribute to the health of the foot. I’ll go over these in more detail in future articles, until then, www.balancedbreakover.com.



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Back to the Hi Lo Country

Writer Max Evans has always found inspiration
in northeastern New Mexico.

By Stuart Rosebrook



photo courtesy Max Evans

Max Evans gained fame as a writer with such novels as *The Rounders*, *Hi-Lo Country* and *One Eyed Sky*.

Max Evans' voice rumbles like thunder echoing off the walls of a canyon during a summer monsoon. His years of riding the windswept mesas and mountains of northeastern New Mexico, territory he long ago dubbed the Hi Lo Country, define every line on his face, and inspire every stroke of the award-winning writer and artist's pen and brush.

Born nearly nine decades ago to W.B. and Hazel Evans in Ropes, Texas, on the Llano Estacado, near the New Mexico line, Evans grew up riding, herding and hunting. Equipped with what he calls a "sense of history," and possessing a penchant to write about "the land and nature and the cowboy and how all that was changing," Evans paints pictures with his words, capturing the people that have helped define his life's experience in New Mexico: their work, their heartache, their dreams and their survival. Drawing from the palette of his own life, he writes with poignancy and passion, revealing the humor of living and dying in the Southwest.

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Evans' illustrations depict the Hi-Lo Country he's known since his boyhood.

“You have to humor about those rocks you get thrown into,” Evans says. “Humor becomes a natural part of life. That is survival.”

Growing up on the drought-stricken plains during

the Depression, Evans developed an early understanding of survival. His father dreamed of starting his own town, Humble City, on a section of his ranch across the Texas line in Lea County. Just west of Hobbs, W.B. laid out



his parcels for sale and even built a one-room schoolhouse on the nearly grassless plain.

“My dad was a survivor, like me,” Evans says. “I admired him so much for that.”

Young Evans’ life in Humble City was filled with adventure. He hunted rabbits, herded cattle, and rode pastures and plains on his gelding, Cricket, with his dog, Depression, running alongside. He became a crack shot with his .22 rifle and many a night it was Evans’ hunting skills that put meat on the table. He listened to stories of drifting cowboys and stories his mother told of the mesas and mountains near Santa Fe.

The little Steel Dust gelding, Cricket, played a role in defining Evans, instilling a love of nature, and a respect for the relationship between a man and a horse. Evans, who started riding around age four, says of being horseback, “That is when you become acquainted with a different world. You are out there alone and

responsibilities fall on you together...you become dependent on [a horse] for life.”

The Dust Bowl ended W.B.’s dream for Humble City. He sold his son’s horse, the ranch and the town site, and the family retreated to Andrews, Texas, near Lubbock, to find the next opportunity, which arrived in the form of a couple dozen horses for sale near the Mexican border, on a ranch outside Jal, New Mexico.

Young Evans was drafted to partner with a drifting cowboy named Boggs to drive the horses for four months, across three states, living off the land while fattening the herd, to the stockyard auction at Guymon, Oklahoma. The experience would shape the storyline for Evans’ novel, *My Pardner*.

As Evans recalls in the biography *Ol’ Max Evans*, by Slim Randles, “Ol’ Boggs taught me so much. He’s the first one to tell me about Taos. Told me about the mountains and the Indians and everything. And that

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same year, my Uncle Slim came around and was telling me about that Glorieta Mesa country, south of ancient Santa Fe. Dreams were being created for me by two old rank cowboys without my realization.”

Evans returned from the horse drive and, at the age of 11, asked his folks if he could take a job as a cowboy. A return to school in Andrews could not satisfy his sense of wanderlust and his longing to see the country near Santa Fe.

“I was determined to go there,” Evans recalls. “Ed Young was my first cow boss at the Rafter EY. They made it rough on me. I made a hand by 14 and they paid me 75 cents a day. I wasn’t the greatest cowboy. I did the work to get there. Each ranch had one crew. We’d get loaned out, many times. We all depended on each other. No telephone, no mail, no radio. There was no contact with the outside world. You had to invent your own entertainment. And survival came through

camaraderie. This wonderful camaraderie was in the blood of all the cowboys.”

In New Mexico ranch country, Evans developed his sense of humor and his imagination, and refined his abilities to adapt, survive, fight, laugh and love. His days as a youthful cowboy came to a close with his enlistment in the Army following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Fast forward 30 years. Max Evans is a guest in my parents’ California home, sharing stories with my sister and me, drinking bourbon with my dad, writer Jeb Rosebrook, cigarette smoke swirling in the air around them, and my mom, Dorothy, preparing a home-cooked meal for a man who would soon be a regular part of my life.

“Uncle Max,” as Katherine and I would call the cowboy-writer from New Mexico, had been introduced to my father by the director Sam Peckinpah. They’d just released *Junior Bonner*, filmed the summer before in



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Prescott, Arizona, where Sam had my father, the screenwriter, on set all summer.

“I will always be grateful to Max that he told Sam the script didn’t need his help, that it was ready to shoot,” my dad remembers. “That’s why I was in Prescott that summer, and not Max. Sam brought us together, knowing our shared love of the Southwest might result in creative sparks, might create stories and scripts the director liked to film. Thanks to Sam, we’re still close friends today.”

Evans and Peckinpah had become friends 10 years before, after Max’s novels *The Rounders*, *Hi-Lo Country*, *One Eyed Sky* and *The Great Wedding* started circulating through Hollywood. Peckinpah loved Max’s writing and the truth it revealed about the men and women living through the years of transition in the West, in the 1920s and ’30s.

“Nobody likes a good shoot-em-up Western as much as I do, beautifully written and filmed, but that wasn’t my experience,” Evans says. “Why would I write about the mythology I didn’t experience? I had to write about what I knew, what I experienced. It became a part of my blood.”

Peckinpah optioned Evans’ novels and hired him to help with his scripts. Their mutual friendship led to Evans acting in one of Peckinpah’s finest films, *The Ballad of Cable Hogue*, starring Jason Robards and Stella Stevens. Filmed in Nevada, *Cable Hogue* is a masterful look at the changing West.

“We were writing about transitions,” Evans says. “We were writing about friction, and friction brings sparks, and light and life. I survived, maintaining my family, on the options of those stories. Sam always

wanted to make *My Pardner*. Three weeks before Sam died, in 1984, I was in Malibu to sort out which one of us owned *My Pardner*. I’ll never forget those black eyes shining. There was a sadness.”

Soon after their meeting in Malibu, Peckinpah had a heart attack while in Mexico and died in Beverly Hills. Evans’ time in Hollywood had come to an end, and he returned to New Mexico, to Albuquerque, where he poured himself into his writing, and into illustrations that had been swirling in his imagination for decades.

At the age of 60, Evans was reborn, and has since written 17 books. He’s also devoted much energy to his home state. He invested his own money and years of campaigning into establishing the New Mexico Film Commission, which has resulted in the state becoming a thriving center for film and television production. And, he spent nearly two decades raising money to help found the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Museum, headquartered in Las Cruces.

Since penning his first novel’s first line – “High up in the cool mountain air, an eagle soared in ever-narrowing circles.” – Evans has been a magical teller of tales, an artist whose palette has been his life, and for whom inspiration has always been found in a particular patch of the American Southwest.

“If I could go for one more ride, I’d go up on the Hi-Lo, in northeastern New Mexico,” Evans says. “It’s magnificent country, mountains, mesas, canyons, grasslands, some of the best grass in the west. The most beautiful thing in the world, waving in the wind. It goes on forever. The crooks and crevices are filled with coyotes, bugs and critters. Some call it the Big Empty, but it’s full of life.”



Stuart Rosebrook, PhD, is a historian of the real and imagined West. Max Evans’ latest book, *Animal Stories: A Lifetime Collection*, published by the University of Oklahoma Press, features 26 original stories, with illustrations by New Mexico artist Keith Walters.

Cowboy Stories that Count

Reflections on the West's cautionary tales,
and the value of truth in storytelling.

By Hal Cannon

When I was a kid, we lived in the city but were expected to spend weekends and summers working on the family farm. I loved exploring the country, but working with cattle, crops, horses and mechanized equipment left me baffled. I could do what I was told, but never understood the underlying rationale.

Nonetheless, our rural neighbors fascinated me. They spoke a different language – English, but with a different sound, a different cadence. Country kids my age did their chores with ease and what they talked about, the way they constructed their narratives, was foreign to me. I was a kid transplanted from the city, where my friends were home watching Saturday morning cartoons instead of feeding leppy calves and cleaning stalls. I was at home on the farm, but also a stranger there.

One particular Saturday, in early spring, when the fields had just been plowed and there were great curvy furrows in the dark, dank earth, I found a particularly comfortable furrow in which to curl up out of the stiff breeze and weak sun. I'd brought a box kite with me and, as I lounged in my earthen easy chair, a literal lazy boy, I pulled at the string to control my kite high overhead. I thought I was well hidden and ignored several calls from my dad to come do chores. Little did I realize I was a sitting target. All my father had to do to find me was follow the kite string down to my hiding place.

It's the same between real cowboys and those of us who simply wear the correct hat and boots: we stick out by wont of what we talk about, the stories we tell. It's the telltale string between the box kite and our leisurely comfort. Luckily, cowboys are most critical of each other, so they give outsiders some slack. It's part of the cowboy code, after all, to be hospitable to strangers.

Because of my time with our farm neighbors, true country people, and my interest in their stories, you might think I would've enjoyed western TV shows and movies, so prevalent in the 1950s. But those cowboy stories of romance, justice and heroes weren't nearly as interesting to me as the real thing, the real tales of people who lived the West rather than acted it. Maybe that's why I became a collector of stories and wisdom shared by everyday people.

In years since, I've spent much time around cowboys and ranchers, and their stories no longer baffle me. Much of their rich conversation has to do with sharing experiences. Outside of ranching, most people underestimate what it takes to be a good horseman, to know the ways and ailments of cattle, to understand the country, and to be in the right place at the right time, with the right tools and skills. Cowboys work toward self-reliance, but know they're dependent on each other, not just physically, but in sharing knowledge informally through story.

The first cowboy poet I met was an old man

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named Eldon Walker. It was in the mid-1970s and he'd retired to a small house in Wells, Nevada, after buckarooing on big ranches. He was stove-up and so wind- and sun-blown that I didn't expect him to provide me with much of a literary experience. I was flabbergasted when he asked if I wanted to hear a poem or two. I was struck by how directly his recitations were tied to his life's work as a cowboy. They employed poetic form, using the most effective language at hand, telling a story from a singular point in verse. Crafted in rhyme and meter to make it memorable, this kind of cowboy poetry struck me as being crafted as much for instruction as for entertainment.

There have always been cautionary tales in cowboy life. Such stories have served traditional occupations throughout the ages, particularly in dangerous work. They serve to teach in the absence of a job manual or,

in the modern age, a YouTube demonstration video.

The classic cautionary tale has three parts. First, it invokes danger, often a taboo or prohibition. Then, we hear of a person who disregards warnings and performs a forbidden act. Finally, the violator comes to an unpleasant fate, often described in grisly detail. There are many old-style fairy tales that follow this pattern: kids disregard warnings and get eaten by wolves with much blood and gore.

Cowboy lore has these classic cautionary tales and poems. There are several old cowboy poems, for instance, that weigh in on the merits of tying hard and fast versus taking your dallies on the saddle horn. Here's a verse making it illegal for cowboys to do anything but wrap the rope around the saddle horn – dallying, from the Spanish *darle vuelta* – for increased give or take when containing a critter.



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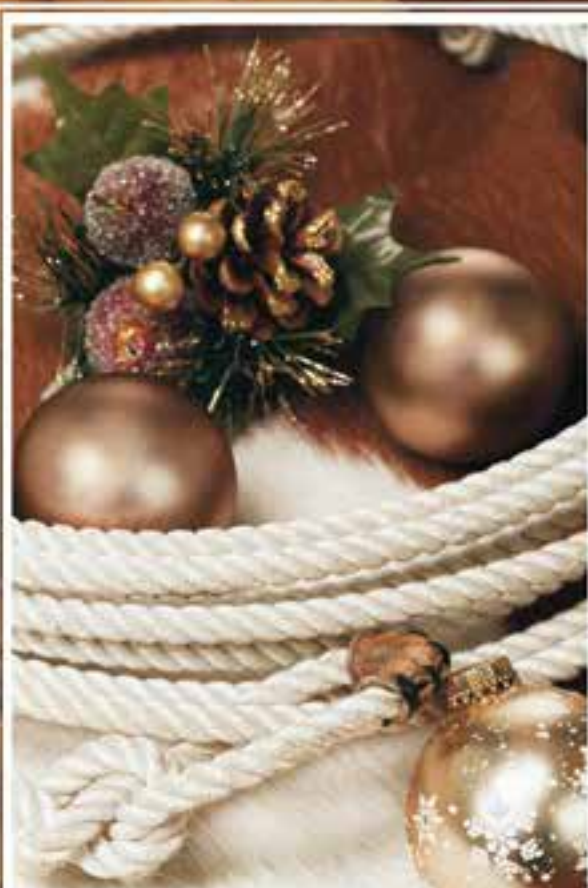
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*But take your dallywelters
Accordin' to California law.
And you'll never see your Sam Stack tree
Go driftin' down the draw.*

– “Windy Bill,” Anonymous

Many cowboy stories of caution come with heroic endings: cowboys are, after all, heroic, as are their horses. An example is a lovely poem written by one of the great old poets of the early 20th century, Bruce Kiskaddon, called “The Little Blue Roan.” It tells the story of a cowboy building a fire in order to put his own brand on an unmarked calf while the branded mother grazes nearby. The cowboy notices his horse acting skittish, a warning that strangers are in the vicinity. Because of the warning, the cowboy decides to use his running iron to brand the calf with the mother cow’s mark. As the horsemen ride up, Kiskaddon concludes his poem:

*They both turned to the critter and got a good look
While I wrote the brand down in my old tally book.
There was nothing to do so they rode up and spoke
And we all three set down fer a sociable smoke.
The one owned the critter I'd happened to brand.
He thanked me, of course, and we grinned and shook hands,
Which he mightn't have done if he only had known
The warnin' I got from that little blue roan.*

There’s nothing fancy about this poem, but it says volumes about the trust between a man and his horse. Nowadays, I rarely hear “The Little Blue Roan” recited. The poetry heard at cowboy events has become more attuned to audiences, many of which would need a translator to get the nuance of such a poem.

One year, the great Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko came to Elko for the Cowboy Poetry



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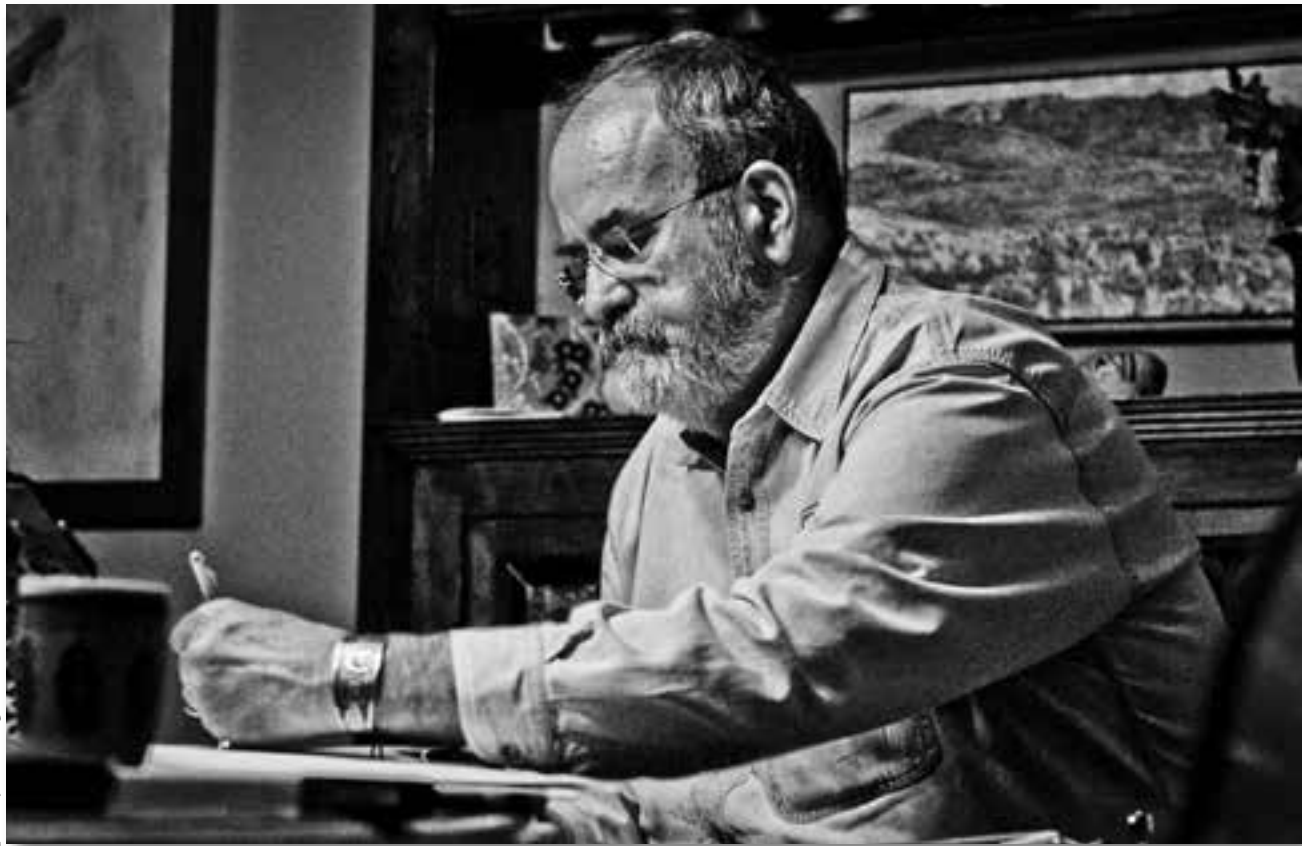


photo by A.J. Mangum

Hal Cannon, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Gathering. Kim Stafford, from Oregon’s Lewis & Clark College, had facilitated Yevtushenko’s visit and, on the last night of the Gathering, asked the poet what he thought.

“Kim,” Yevtushenko said in his warm Ukrainian accent, “the poetry from your American academies, it is very fine, very precious. But this...” and here Yevtushenko put his hand on his heart, “this is the real thing.”

I’ve always loved poetry, but found college poetry readings tedious and often self-indulgent. When I discovered cowboy poetry, I couldn’t figure out why it was absent from poetry anthologies. In fact, such collections rarely included vernacular poetry of any kind.

I’ve come to believe that art thrives when something is at stake, when something larger than the art gives it

meaning. A saddle is beautiful not only because of its elaborate tooling; its utility enhances its beauty. Charlie Russell’s paintings are not just pleasing to the eye; they’re narratives that captured a way of life before it passed on.

Having been involved in providing cowboy entertainment for the past 30 years with the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering, I value the artistry and the artists. There’s a nice cowboy ethic that goes along with the genre, refreshing in a world of egocentric pop stars.

We love our singing cowboys and great swing fiddlers. And, we can’t get enough of cowboy poets who make us laugh and cry all in the same performance. And yet I feel nostalgia for the poetry and music that comes with the grit of work imprinted upon it.



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



THE WESTERN HORSE

Straddling the Fence

As an asset manager, competitive rider and cattle rancher, Heather Stiles has one foot firmly planted on the pavement and the other in the pasture.



By Paul A. Cañada

72

Having finished her daily ride, 10-year-old Heather Stiles turned her two-year-old mare onto the dirt road leading back to one of the King Ranch's many barns. In the distance, she could hear the slow approach of a truck.

At the wheel was the girl's grandfather, Leonard Stiles, inbound from a distant pasture and heading in for lunch. As he approached his granddaughter, Leonard slowed the vehicle to a crawl and stuck his head out the window.

"Heather," he called out, "turn the mare around so I can see her right rear brand."

Horses on Texas' vast King Ranch bore two brands. The mark on the left rear denoted the animal's sire; the mark on the right rear, the dam's sire.

"I thought I might be right," Leonard said. "Her mother was the last mare I rode before I hurt my back and quit riding. That was a heck of a mare."

That brief encounter has stuck with Heather though the many years that have since unfolded.

"At that time, I hadn't seen my grandfather ride a horse, so that was a real revelation," she says. "But I was more amazed at how he recognized the breeding and remembered the mare's dam."

Heather's grandfather managed the King Ranch's Santa Gertrudis Division, outside Kingsville. Before coming to the renowned ranch, Leonard served as a brand inspector for the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association. Heather's father, Joe Stiles, managed the ranch's Quarter Horse program and,



photos by Paul A. Canada

Heather Stiles at home on her ranch south of Dallas, Texas.

along with his wife, Carla, raised his daughter and son, J.L., on the King.

As Heather grew older, she too became a student of equine bloodlines. As her knowledge of horses grew, so did her appreciation for her grandfather's and father's life work with cattle and horses.

"If I didn't know better, I'd say I was born on a horse," she says. "My brother and I rode and worked, gathering and driving cattle, chasing hogs, and hunting anything that would run."

Growing up in south Texas ranching country,

Heather learned to rope and drag like most ranch kids. However, Carla made sure her daughter experienced the refined side of life. Heather played tennis, learned piano and tried ballet. Heather and her brother lived on the ranch, but attended a prep school in town.

Horses and the ranch, though, remained a focal point for the teenaged Heather, who spent her summers with cutting-horse trainer Buster Welch and his wife, Sheila, who also lived on the King Ranch. Heather showed horses in cutting competitions throughout her high school years.

“Shortly after Buster and Sheila moved off the ranch, my mother died,” Heather says. “I was 13 when my mother passed. My dad remarried and sent me to Buster’s new place. It was a good idea, and wonderful for me.”

After graduating from high school, Heather quit showing horses, seemingly spurning rural life for more urban surroundings. Many of her ag-oriented peers enrolled at Texas A&M and Texas Tech, but Heather opted for the University of Texas, in metropolitan Austin.

“I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do,” she says. “I had no plans to get an education in agriculture. I was interested in the stock market.”

While studying finance, Heather worked part-time for a company that managed commodities and futures, and that traded in more than 80 international markets. She worked the Australian and Japanese markets after classes.

“The company was new, and I was able to get an early start with them,” she says. “I learned as the company succeeded and grew. The business consumed me.”

The Austin-based company moved to Florida and, after she graduated from UT, Heather joined them, although her stay in the Sunshine State was short-lived. (The weather didn’t suit her, she shares.) Heather moved first to Chicago, where she worked as a trader for Merrill Lynch, then to New York City, where she continued to trade futures. After nearly three years, she

began to question if the fast-paced metropolitan lifestyle was what she wanted.

“I liked New York, but I never felt like it was my home, where I wanted to spend my life,” Heather says.

“Not many people could relate to my ranch upbringing. I was at a point where I needed to decide to stay and embrace it or to change my lifestyle for good.”

Heather returned to Texas in 2000 and found that, while she’d been away, Texas had deregulated its electricity market, creating a new trading opportunity.

Eager to capitalize, Heather went to work for TXU Energy, which had just opened a trading desk in Dallas.

Once settled in her home state, Heather began looking for ranch land. She found 70 acres in Kaufman County, south of Dallas, where she now has a home, an arena and plenty of good pasture.

In addition to the small herd of cattle she keeps for cutting, Heather has partnered up with her brother J.L., a professional firefighter, in a cow-calf operation. The siblings lease neighboring acreage on which they run a herd of Tiger Stripe cows. They work the cattle together, just as they did on the King Ranch.

Today, Heather runs her own company, Alazan Asset Management, from her ranch office. She specializes in helping customers hedge cash positions to manage market risks. She also partners in a debt fund that identifies and participates in lending opportunities.



Texas rancher and businesswoman Heather Stiles.



Heather made a return to horse-show competition with the purchase of a finished six-year-old mare she rode in weekend cuttings while starting a King Ranch filly she purchased from her father. Heather also made a strategic decision to purchase promising yearlings, rather than breed her own horses. Some might argue that purchasing unproven yearlings is risky, but Stiles isn't worried. Much of what she does in her trading career is about risk, reward and playing the odds. She contends that horse-market risks can be mitigated through studying horses' pedigrees and conformation.

"Trading futures, we deal with what we call 'outliers,' unforeseen factors that are difficult to

anticipate," Heather says. "When buying performance horses, an unanticipated factor can turn a 'sure bet' – an animal with a great pedigree – into a bust. Finding out about a prospect's soundness, structure and balance helps mitigate that risk."

Still equipped with the lessons of her ranch upbringing, Heather equates such strategic thinking with working stock.

"It's no different than finding my way through the south Texas brush," she says. "I choose my paths carefully, pay attention, and try not to get into any tight spots. Surviving a ranching childhood prepares you for anything."



Texas writer Paul A. Cañada is a past recipient of the Western Heritage Award.

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Bitter Tears & Mean as Hell:

Johnny Cash in the Wild West

By Tom Russell

I Visions from an Indian Burial Ground

*I seemed to be surrounded by a mystery
so heavy and oppressive I could scarcely breath...
For weeks I wandered aimlessly, seeking answers.
How I arranged to escape from the valley,
I don't know...but I must tell you what I learned
out on the desert...and the secrets of the shifting,
whispering sands.*

Johnny Cash

“The Shifting Whispering Sands” (Part 1)

Ballads of the True West

76

Maricopa, California, lies in the San Joaquin Valley, just over the Grapevine Hill from Los Angeles County. It's due west of Highway 5 and a few miles east of the Carrizo Plain. Steinbeck territory. *Almost*. A little crossroads town circled by blown-out oil wells, cattle ranches, and citrus groves. Thirty years ago I recall a one-armed guy named *Shorty* running the gas station at the stop sign. A character right out of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Bakersfield is further down the road, forty miles deeper into the Valley. Tulare dust and neon lights.

In the early 1960s Johnny Cash used to roam around out here, kicking at cow skulls and digging up old bottles and bones – communing with the desert

spirits. *Talking to himself*. Something was gnawing at him. What happened to the old-time cowboys and prospectors? Where had the Old West gone? The Indians who'd painted on these cave walls? What was their story? Johnny was *acrawl with nerves* back then. Fidgety. Restless. He'd trek deep into the Western outback. Disappearing for days. Hearing voices. Talking to the ghosts inside his skull.

He wrote:

I often go to an old abandoned ranch near Maricopa in my 1946 Jeep. No electricity. No running water no phone. There are rabbits, deer, badgers, coyotes, squirrels and, once and awhile, a bear. I know the 480 acres like the back of my hand. I sleep in a little cabin heated by a wood burning stove and use candles for light...I sat under a Manzanita bush one hot day, with pen and paper, all set for song inspiration...I was in an Indian burial ground...to my knowledge no one else knows of this Indian graveyard and I won't show you where it is.

Cash was mining for material for what would later become a two record set of cowboy songs, eventually titled: *Ballads of the True West*, and re-issued in short form as *Mean as Hell*. The initial record was released in 1965, following on the heels of his Native American collection: *Bitter Tears*. A pair of folkloric masterworks.



Vintage Publicity Shot

There is a great dose of rage in these records, for these were troubled years for Johnny. He'd been indicted for starting a forest fire – with the spark coming out of the exhaust of his old pickup truck. 400 acres burned. He was also developing a craving for speed pills, an addiction that would land him in an El Paso jail. He was caught crossing back from Juarez with a thousand pills inside his guitar case. He was also going through a divorce, and performing over 300 road dates per year.

To top off the mayhem, Johnny was kicked off the Grand Ole Opry for smashing out the footlights with a microphone stand. *Who gave a damn, heb?* The Opry had kicked off Hank Williams, didn't they? Johnny's plate was overflowing with turmoil and wrath. Hunter S. Thompson once wrote: *a man doesn't know where the edge is until he jumps over it.* Johnny was performing backflips off the rim of a *grand* canyon. Yet he'd

recorded at least ten great records in the previous decade. All of them included a hit song or two. Records which re-invented country music.

All this pain, chaos, and road-weariness played out in his voice. You could hear the rattle dance of a man fighting hard with his soul. The perfect voice for an old cowboy song, like "The Streets of Laredo" or "Sam Hall." No one, save Tex Ritter, had given such a rugged and authentic reading to the lyric of a man dying outside a whorehouse, or the whine and wail of a gunfighter about to be hung.

The golden years of Western music, the last major wave, had all but played out by the time Cash got around to recording this record in 1965. The 1930s through the mid '60s were fruitful years. The B-Westerns, the Singing Cowboys, the Western T.V. serials, and the Broadway Frontier Musicals (*Oklahoma!*,

Annie Get Your Gun, Calamity Jane, Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, and others) were simmering down in appeal as “pop country,” modern folk, and rock and roll



Vintage Publicity Shot

hit town for good. Even a few Jazz greats had been on board the Western train. Saxophonist Sonny Rollins recorded a Western jazz record titled *Way Out West* in 1957. Sonny lets loose on a bop version of Johnny Mercer’s *I’m An Old Cowhand (From the Rio Grande)*.

It would take Nashville another dozen years or so to bleach the word *Western* out of *Country & Western*. Adios to the image of a cowboy with a guitar, sitting on a horse. Say goodbye to the gunfighter ballad. Welcome the *new country* sounds aimed at strip mall suburbia with singers with fake twangs and stove-in, cheap straw hats. Goodbye to classic songwriting. Of these changeling music-cultural trends – I feel *sorta* like Winston Churchill, when he remarked: *The substitution of the internal combustion engine for the horse marked a very gloomy milestone for mankind.*

Johnny Cash wasn’t concerned with fading fashions. He’d been toying with cowboy songs for a long while. He’d crawled across those old ranches and Indian burial grounds. He’d already written and recorded: “Don’t Take Your Guns to Town,” which proved a minor hit, and he didn’t give a damn how the winds had shifted in Nashville. He had a vision of The West.

Marty Robbins re-invented the western wheel with his song “El Paso,” and that song, and Marty’s eight Cowboy-based records, were a hard act to follow. But Marty was almost a *crooner* with a polished voice and a deep respect for Gene Autry and the singing cowboys. Cash sang from the other end of the spectrum. *Mean as Hell*. Cash’s sound and snarl gave off the feeling of walking the wrong way around a outcropping of prickly pear and stepping on a gila monster. Tension hung in the air above each song. There was no over-romanticizing to his approach. Some of the vocals on the Native American and Cowboy records are almost hysterical with venom. No matter. Johnny Cash had lived it. And he had done his homework.

I went through a period in my career when I collected Cowboy songs. Westerns. And I went to the source, John



Vintage Publicity Shot

Publicity still from “The Johnny Cash Show” circa 1969



Lomax's Cowboy songs which was published in 1910...I listened to cowboy singers...just to weed them out and choose for myself the right songs...I had a total collection of cowboy songs and I've lived with them and I've loved them and then I recorded some.

He also read books by J. Frank Dobie and perused the Carl Sandburg song collections, but became confused with the possibilities of a direction. He called on Tex Ritter for advice. *Birds of a feather*. Tex was not only a great cowboy singer, in that raw and real vein, but a folklorist with a wide knowledge of traditional Cowboy songs. Both men possessed rugged voices and appreciated hard, truthful cowboy poetry.

Tex had appeared on Broadway in the 1930 play *Green Grow the Lilacs*, which later became the basis for Rodgers and Hammerstein's successful Broadway hit *Oklahoma!* Here's a bit of cowboy-trivia for you: "Green Grow the Lilacs" is an old Scots-Irish song. When American soldiers sang it during the Mexican-American War of the 1840s (with its first line: *Green grow the lilacs, and so does the dew...*) The Mexicans thought the US soldiers were always singing the word *gringo* instead of *green grow*. Thus came the Mexican slang word for white men – *gringo*. That's one version of the etymology.

Tex and Johnny sat down and narrowed in on the material. Cash later acknowledged the influence of Peter LaFarge (composer of "The Ballad of Ira Hayes"), and Ramblin Jack Elliott, who knew a hell of a lot of old cowboy songs. Jack gave Cash a version of "Mister Garfield," about President Garfield being assassinated.

Don Law, Cash's producer at Columbia records, wanted the cowboy album *pronto* – but Johnny kept disappearing out in Maricopa, or deep into the Mojave Desert, allowing the material to distil inside his gut.



I slept under mesquite trees. I ate mesquite beans and squeezed the water from a barrel cactus. I was saved once by a forest ranger, lying flat on my face, starving. I learned to throw a Bowie Knife and kill a jackrabbit at forty yards, not for sport, but because I was hungry...I learned the way of the True West the hard way.

The record was an odd watermark for Western music. 180 degrees away from Marty Robbins territory. (And I love both slants) The album artwork tells the story. On his record *More Gunfighter Ballads and Trail Songs*, Marty is crouched under a cottonwood tree with a pistol raised. His clothes looked laundered, his face seems to indicate he is well fed. His flat-brimmed hat is perfectly creased. Marty was a gentleman. He's dressed in black, but doesn't look like a rake that frequents whorehouses, card rooms, or saloons.

Cash, on the front of *The Ballads of the True West*, is also lying beneath a tree. A thorny Mesquite. He looks like a bushwhacker who woke up on the wrong side of his bedroll – after sleeping off a three-day bender. He's

unshaven. His hat is caved-in and there's a cigarette pack stashed down into the band, or is that envelope of hop-opium? His pistol is cocked and a snarl is locked into his face. A man about to be run down by a posse. And *hung*.

The music follows the cover art. *Mean as Hell*. Whatever Johnny went searching for in the desert, he seems to have found. And he's fixing to tell us about it in a voice that wavers between death and frenzy – an hombre who's seen a ghost in a cracked mirror that turned out to be himself. If the overall feel of the music resembles anything – it's Tex Ritter's *Blood on the Saddle* album. The stories crawl up your spine.

There are twenty reflections on the West, some of them straight ahead and stark. Others are backed with string arrangements and added vocals from the Carter Family. All of it is grounded by the bottom line of Cash's voice. An honest *American Voice*. In capital letters. A man

who's been to places you don't want to pass through.

There's a mixed bag of traditional standards like "Old Paint," "Streets of Laredo," and "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie," along with original songs by Shel Silverstein Ramblin Jack Elliott, Peter LaFarge, and Harlan Howard. Cash has added a few of his own songs, and three spoken-word ruminations on the West. Here are the highlights.

II "Hardin Wouldn't Run" and other Tales

I never killed a man who didn't need killin'

John Wesley Hardin

Ten miles east of our hacienda, in El Paso, sits one of the best Mexican restaurants in the West: *The L and J*. It's been there forever, and was originally

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called *Tony's Place*. Soldiers from Fort Bliss, fifty years ago, used to send a trained mule down to pick up a bucket of beer and bring it back to the base. It's also called *that restaurant next to the graveyard*. The graveyard in question is *The Concordia*, which embraces the remains of John Wesley Hardin, as well as dozens of Chinese railroad workers, various Buffalo Soldiers, and the odd Texas Ranger. Hardin is the star of the show.

There's no telling how many men Wes Hardin killed. Like most gunfighter legends he fine-tuned his own myth, embellished the details, and published a hero-rigged autobiography. The El Paso locals gave Hardin a wide berth. He was a card cheat, a bully, and a mean drunk. Sheriff John Selman finally shot him in the back of the head, and then drug John Wesley out into the El Paso street, so the citizens could gawk at

another dead gunfighter with a big mouth.

Hardin was also a half-assed lawyer. He'd earned his law degree during the fifteen years he spent in Huntsville prison. Clients in El Paso were scarce, so Hardin resorted to extortion and cheating at craps and poker. Until Selman intervened. You notice how many of our outlaw legends were shot in the back? Jesse James, Wes Hardin and others? You didn't approach a rattlesnake from the front.

Johnny Cash read Hardin's book, and other history tomes, and wrote the song "Hardin Wouldn't Run." He takes us into the barroom where John Selman *came with a swinging gun*. Hardin doesn't have a chance to raise his *plow handle hand* and lift his pistol. No eyeballs in the back of his head. Cash's liner notes illuminate the details of the action, western jargon, and history of the Colt firearm:

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*Plow handle hand is the (gun) drawing hand...
 plow handle
 is a nickname for the shape of the Colt single-action army
 Revolver. Colonel Sam Colt invented the revolver...
 his first
 one was a five-shooter, not six. He said he got the idea
 from watching
 the paddle wheel of a ship he was going on to India
 in 1835.*

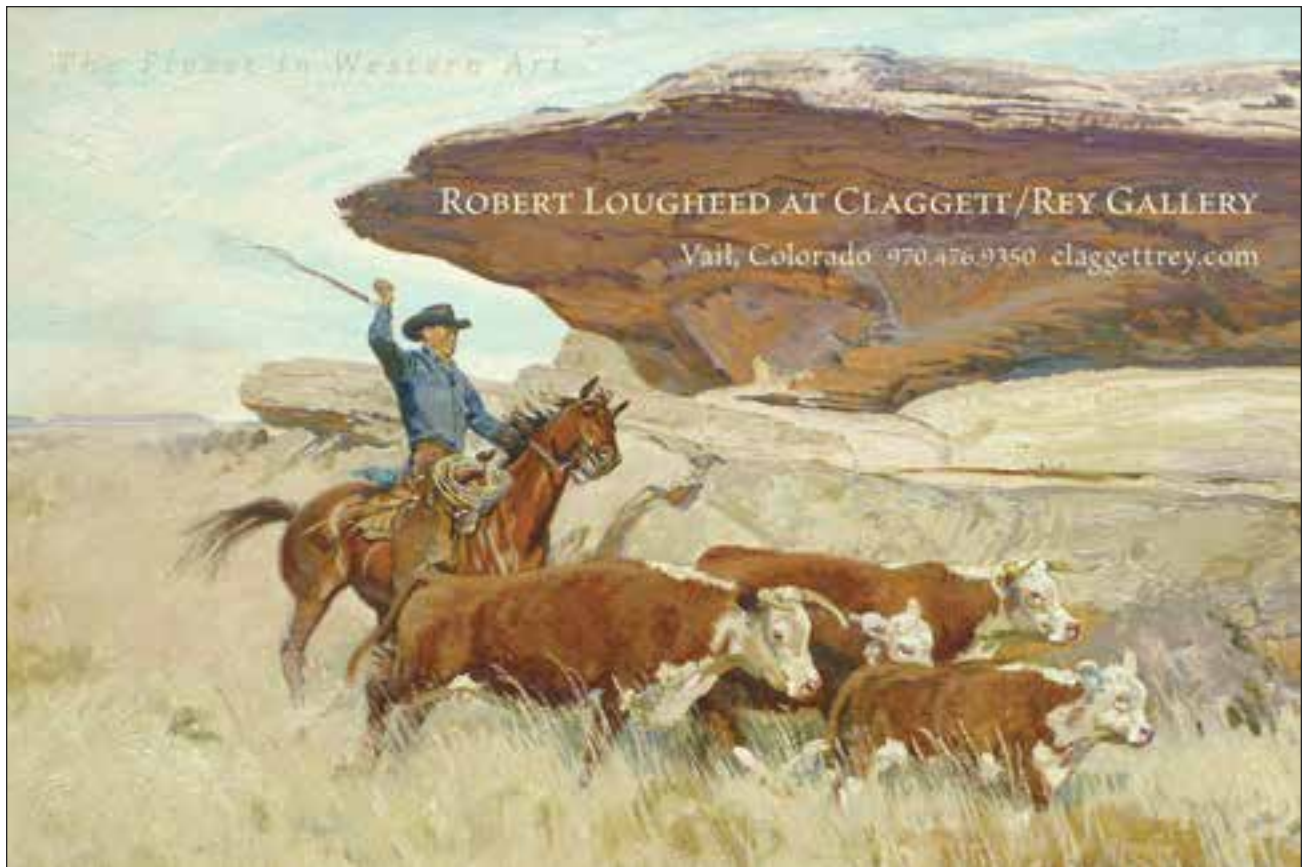
Sherriff John Selman evidently shot Hardin because Hardin's Mexican girlfriend had "pistol whipped" Selman's son. I'm sure you can dig out the rest of the story. A fine El Paso historian, Leon Metz, has written plenty about Hardin. Cash wrote the song.

Cash found *The Streets of Laredo* in John Lomax's 1910 edition of *Cowboy Songs*. The song dates back to

various Scots-Irish sources such as "The Unfortunate Rake," which also spawned a later version know as "St. James Hospital" or "St. James Infirmary." The early variant concerns a young man dying of syphilis in a London infirmary due to an unwise encounter with a *soiled dove*. The cowboy version replaces London with Laredo.

Cash does the best version of "Sam Hall" this side of Tex Ritter. Sam is singing to us from the gallows – a rope around his neck, as he curses the crowd, his girlfriend, the Sherriff and all of mankind. He stops short of messing with God. Seems he hasn't been rehabilitated in the clink. This song is a variant of an old English ballad: "The Climbing Boy," about a rotten-hearted chimney sweep in England.

Cash's screedy rant, as he portrays the doomed Sam Hall, reminds me of Warren Oates in *Bring Me The Head of Alfred Garcia*, or Harry Dean Stanton in *Paris*,





Texas. Or maybe the character *Festus* on the old *Gunslinger* TV show. Creepy and sly and Western as all hell. Ben Johnson and Slim Pickens territory.

Then there's "Mean as Hell," a traditional poem Cash has adapted to suit the rough texture of the record. We reside in the border-badlands of West Texas, so I take this one to heart. It seems the Devil is seeking a place to make a decent hell, and God talks him into utilizing sorry ground down near the Rio Grande (El Paso-Juarez will do just fine.) God set the landscape tones:

*He began to put thorns on all the trees,
And he mixed the sand with millions of fleas,
He scattered tarantulas along all the roads,
Put thorns on the cactus and horns on the toads...*

*The heat in the summer is a hundred and ten,
Too hot for the devil and too hot for men.
The wild boar roams through the black chaparral,
It's a hell of a place he has for a hell...*

There's a dozen verses, and much more to the rest of this record, but you get the picture. *Raw*. Concocted 'neath a mesquite tree in Maricopa, by an artist seemingly reaching the end of his tether. Johnny barely made it out alive. Balance this one with *Bitter Tears* and you have Cash's rugged, historical vision of the True West.

III *Bitter Tears* & Peter Bucking Horse

Of the new songwriters I'm the oldest and most evil with my past. I have no lies to tell about my past and sometimes it strangles me like a black dog putting his foot down my throat...someone once said to me: "I envy you your heart, but I couldn't stand your hangovers."

Peter LaFarge



I once owned an original 8 by 10 black and white photo of the songwriter Peter LaFarge. Peter was riding a bronc named *War Paint* in a Denver rodeo. Must have been the late 1950s. At the bottom of the photo Peter signed it: *To Woody, from Peter*, in ballpoint ink. I assume that was aimed at Woody Guthrie, who died before Peter would give it to him. I copied the photo and gave the original to Peter's sister, Povy, who lives down the road from us in El Paso. The horse in the photo doesn't appear to be the famous *War Paint*, who was PRCA Bucking Horse of the year (1956-57). That *War Paint* was the son of a registered quarter horse stud and a wild pinto mare, and came off the Klamath Indian Reservation in Oregon.

That half-breed, Indian blood deal fits our story. Johnny Cash had Cherokee blood, and Peter LaFarge, who wrote songs about Indian issues, is the key to *Bitter Tears* – Cash's Native American record. LaFarge wrote the classic protest song: "The Ballad of Ira Hayes." Peter's father was Oliver LaFarge, a fighter for Indians rights who won the Pulitzer Prize for the novel *Laughing Boy*. Peter's mother, Wanda Kane, was the organizer and first secretary of *The Rodeo Cowboys*

Association, known originally as *The Turtle Association*.

What to say of Peter LaFarge? There's plenty of color. Too much. In 1959 LaFarge rode a saddle bronc in Madison Square Garden – rode with one broken foot in a cast – a spur set into the plaster. That same week he was appearing in a New York production of *King Lear*.

Peter was not a full blooded-Indian, though he was “adopted” into the Hopi tribe at an early age. He *thought of himself* as



Peter LaFarge

Indian. He had a cowboy radio show in Colorado when he was fourteen and worked on the ranch of his stepfather, rodeo producer Andy Kane. Later Peter joined the Navy and fought in the Korean War, boxed professionally, rode broncs, acted, wrote plays, poems, and songs, and stumbled in and out of mental health programs. He passed away under cloudy circumstances in a New York hotel room in 1965. La Farge's short, tragic life mirrored that of *Ira Hayes*.

“The Ballad of Ira Hayes” is the true story of a Pima Indian from Arizona who was one of the marines who raised





the flag on Iwo Jima. You've seen that photo. It's iconic. Ira Hayes came back home to die a forgotten drunk. The lyrics seethe with dark irony:

*Then Ira started drinking hard...
Jail was often his home
They let him raise the flag and lower it there
Like you'd throw a dog a bone.*

*He died drunk one Sunday morning
Alone in the land he'd fought to save
Two inches of water in a lonely ditch
Was a grave for Ira Hayes.*



Ira Hayes

The poetic irony is based in the fact that Ira's people,

the Pima, had lost their water rights in Arizona – or the rights *were stolen* from them. Ira dies drunk, in a ditch

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filled with *two inches of water*. Ira raised the flag on Iwo Jima and was later allowed to raise the flag every day in jail, where he was doing time for drunkenness and vagrancy. The paradoxes of Ira's sad life are embedded deep in the lyric, and LaFarge admitted crafting the song over a long period of time, with help from Cisco Houston.

Johnny Cash's Cherokee blood was stirred. His voice bit into the heart of the story. The song hit the charts, but there was backlash from radio folk. Cash was so perturbed at the response of programmers and D.J.s, many whom refused to play "Ira Hayes," he took out a full-page ad out in *Billboard* magazine:

*As an American who is almost half breed
Cherokee-Mohawk (and who knows what else)
I had to fight back...D.Js, stations managers,
owners, etc...where are your guts? I'm not*

*afraid to sing the hard, bitter lines that the
son of Oliver LaFarge wrote. "Ballad of Ira
Hayes" is strong medicine..*

Bitter Tears and "Ira Hayes" proved that Johnny was turning his attention toward the *new-folk* crowd in Greenwich Village – writers like Peter LaFarge, Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, Tim Hardin, and others, who were hammering out strong lyrics which would change the face of folk music and create the new image of the *singer-songwriter*. These artists wrote and performed their own material, rather than relying on Tin-Pan Alley or the Nashville songwriting mill. Johnny Cash had a deep respect for singer-songwriters. I know this first hand.

Peter LaFarge didn't have much time to enjoy the recognition that Cash's *Bitter Tears* brought him. Peter died of a stroke (or pill overdose, or suicide...there's many theories) in 1965. Peter had lived a hundred years of hell in his thirty-four years on earth. He rode the *big bronc* to a standstill and said goodbye.

*There's many a fall, and I've had
them all*

In life's great rodeo...

**"Don't Tell Me How I Looked
Falling"**

Peter LaFarge

How about these words scribbled on three cocktail napkins:

*I always love like a high jackrabbit
going through
a bramble. Or a hawk up there
twining the world
around him, just before he falls to
get the jack.*



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Like an eight-wheeler going through a Kansas town at midnight, with only a little boy watching from his bedroom window, riding every non-stop car out. I love like an act of nature...hear me, people, hear Peter Bucking-Horse cry in the New York's dark dawn... hear me Indian-strange...

His fellow bronc riders called him *Peter Bucking-Horse*. The Indian-Cowboy singer. Peter had been the first of the village songwriters to be signed to Columbia Records (by John Hammond) in 1962. Columbia dropped him after one record. (*I thought the best way to make a record was with a bottle of brandy*, Peter said. *I was wrong*.) He then recorded five albums for *Folkways* records – Cowboy Songs, Native American ballads, protest songs, blues, and poetry.

It's hard to focus in on such a brief, fractured career.

A life which left its mark on Johnny Cash. Peter La Farge was what the Navajo called a *seldom man*. This is what Peter called his own father. A *seldom man*. A man *the likes of which* we will *seldom* see again. He was also a bad drunk, suffered from stage fright, and never recovered from his war experiences as a spy aboard an aircraft carrier.

There are eight songs on *Bitter Tears* – two written by Johnny Cash and one by Johnny Horton. Cash wrote the songs “Apache Tears” and “The Talking Leaves,” which celebrates *Sequoia* creating the Cherokee alphabet. Peter wrote the remaining five songs. “Ira Hayes” stands out among these – the *war cry*.

La Farge, along with Woody Guthrie, Ramblin Jack Elliott, Harry Jackson, and Ian Tyson, brought cowboy music to 1960s Greenwich Village folk scene. LaFarge loved the old traditional cowboy songs and once noted:

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all cowboy songs are done to one gait or another of the horse, as you can feel the ship and sea in sailor ballads, here you can feel the horse.

As Peter Lafarge dissolved in self-destruction, Johnny Cash endured and seemed to turn his life around, conquering his demons – but not before registering his passionate, well researched thoughts on the Cowboy West and Native Americans. Cash moved on to record his two groundbreaking prison records, live at Folsom and San Quentin. A tremendous legacy in music.

The town of Maricopa, Johnny Cash, Peter LaFarge, and “Ira Hayes” – we’ve come almost full circle in this tale. I have a sister-in-law, Claudia, with a ranch near Maricopa. And Johnny Cash, Peter LaFarge and “Ira Hayes” left their mark on several of my early songs, particularly “Veterans Day” and “Blue Wing.” “Veteran’s Day” tells of a soldier missing in action in Viet Nam, and “Blue Wing,” concerns an Alaskan Indian dying on Skid Row in Los Angeles – and one day these two songs came to the attention of Johnny Cash.

IV Encounters with The Man in Black

*I got sidetracked in El Paso
Stopped to get myself a map
Went the wrong way into Juarez
With Juanita on my lap....
Johnny Cash & Bob Dylan,
“Wanted Man”*

It was 1989, or *thereabouts*. My bedside phone rang in a hotel in Switzerland. One of my band members:

Tom, you gotta come down here. We’re having breakfast with Johnny Cash and his family. He’s talking about cowboys, and your songs. We’re afraid to talk. It’s awkward. You gotta come down and meet him...

I took the elevator down. Cash was at the table, fiddling with the bowl of sugar packets. He’d grab a little sack of sugar, bite the end off the top, and pour the whole deal directly down his throat. A man who had kicked pills, long time back, might need whatever civilized *pick-me-up* he could get. Besides, *he was Johnny Cash*. He could not make a false move. Not in my eyes.

He stood up: *Glad to meet you in the flesh, Tom. Join us.*

Cash sat down and focused his eyes on me. He told me how much he liked my songs “Blue Wing” and

“Veteran’s Day,” and he was fixing to record both of them. I was trying to hold onto my chair, so I wouldn’t float up and hit my head on the ornate Swiss ceiling.

We talked for a while, then a horde of Swiss photographers swarmed around Johnny. He tapped me on the shoulder and said: *Let’s go up to my room, Tom.* We walked toward the elevators. The *Man in Black*, myself, and 20 Swiss paparazzi walked behind us. The elevator door opened and Johnny and I got in. He turned to face the paparazzi. He held his hand up.

“Stop!” he ordered.

They stopped. Trust me.

“I’ll be right back,” Johnny said.

Then the elevator doors shut on them. Cash turned to me.

“Yeah...in about a million years.”



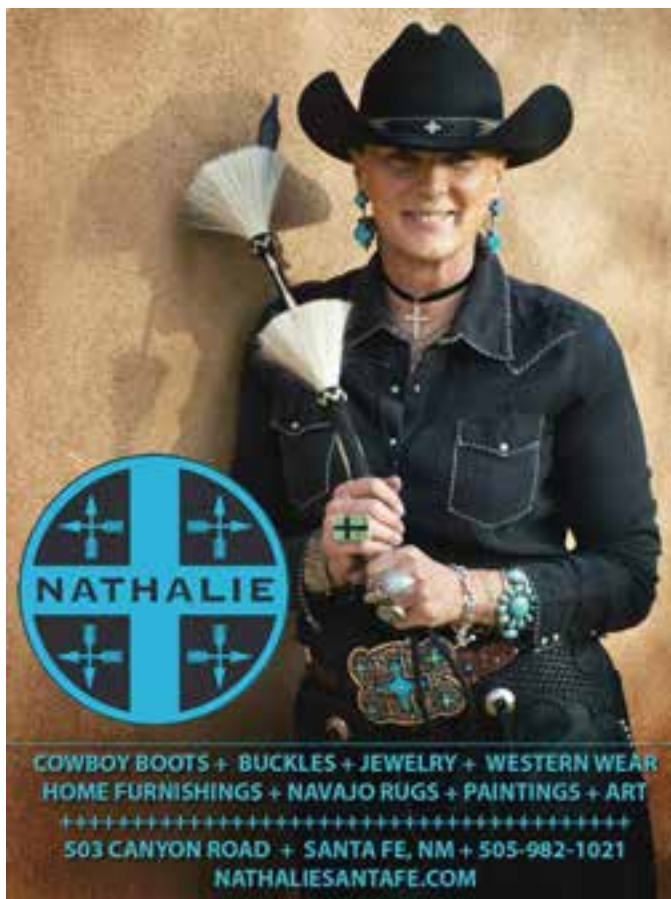
photo courtesy Tom Russell

Our embedded reporter singing with Johnny Cash at a 1991 gig in Switzerland plus signed CD notes.

That night Johnny called me out of the audience in front of ten thousand people. He wanted me to join him for the encore. “Peace in the Valley.” There I stood next to a hero of mine. I thought I’d try to sing along in the background. The last verse came around and Johnny said: *Take it, Tom.*

I had to mumble to him that I didn’t know it – so Johnny said: *I’ll tell it to you,* and he sang the last verse into my ear. Something about *lions lying down with the sheep.* It was a biblical moment. Old testament style. I sang the verse and it came out sounding like I was Johnny Cash’s ventriloquist dummy. You should have been there.

I watched him the next afternoon, backstage, as he was about to go on for an added, sold-out matinee. He was *hurting.* Bent over in some kind of internal pain. Or a bad back, or muscle memory from the wild years. Then the MC announced him. Cash pulled himself upright, like Lazarus, and planted a smile on his face, and then walked out and declared: *Hello, I’m Johnny Cash.* The crowd, of course, went wild. A chill ran down my backside. He had resurrected himself for





the people. I'll never forget that moment of bravery. Of a big soul *sucking it up* and delivering.

After the show Johnny ran for the cover of his limousine. Reporters were descending. He stopped, and turned around and looked for me, eye to eye across forty yards of Swiss parking lot. He raised his hand in a Cherokee salute and yelled: *Keep writing them, Tom. Keep on writing them...* then his head disappeared down into the long black car.

I never saw him again.

I'll hold on to these visions. The *man* resurrected backstage, and then the Cherokee salute. I think of him when I pass through Maricopa on my way to Cuyama. I scan the hills for that scraggy Mesquite tree he might have sat under as he envisioned his epic *Ballads of the True West*, almost fifty years ago. After *Bitter Tears* and "Ira Hayes" and all of it.

Now the Post Office has issued the *Johnny Cash Forever* stamp. On top of the stamp sheet it states: *Johnny Cash sang of love, loss, hardship, and faith, telling the story of the nation one person at a time.* And he sang of the Cowboy and the Native American, and sang it true. One person at a time. He was a *seldom man*, was Johnny Cash. A

seldom man. He went searching for The West and crawled through the desert, and dug deep into his gut and heart until he found his own vision. Then he sang it true, in that soul-wrenching voice. For The Ages.



The advertisement features a woman in a white cowboy hat and a white shirt over a black dress, sitting on a black stool. To her left is the Barranada logo, a stylized 'B' inside an oval. Below the logo, the text reads: "BARRANADA Made in the USA, Barranada shirts for men and women offer unequalled elegance. Exquisite tailoring makes them the perfect choice for performance wear and lifestyle apparel." Below this, it says "SHOP NOW AT WWW.BARRANADA.COM" and "FROM ARENA TO BOARDROOM, OUR SHIRTS ARE A PERFECT FIT". At the bottom, there are four shirts displayed: a green and blue plaid, a red and blue plaid, a white and blue striped, and a solid blue. Social media icons for Pinterest, Twitter, and Facebook are also present, along with the address "1711 South Stuhr Road • Grand Island, NE 68801 • (866) 693-2323".

Tom Russell's CDs, books, and art may be found via www.tomrussell.com, as well as www.villagerecords.com

Thanks to Gary Brown for photo help. Sandra Shulman has done a fine film on Peter LaFarge: *The Ballad of Peter La Farge*.

Two Foaling Seasons

One brought despair. One brought hope.

By Gin Getz

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from writer Gin Getz's book-length manuscript The Color of the Wild, a memoir about her life on the Lost Trail Ranch, a remote Colorado guest ranch that has been in her husband's family for more than 70 years.

Although our horses are an extension of our family, and an essential part of our lives, through the winter – half the year – we have limited time with them. When they are here, we are never alone. They complete our work of outfitting and packing into the wilderness. They bring me balance. They listen and do not judge. They allow me to try, forgive my mistakes, and run with me in harmony through the hills when we get it right together.

Tres, my big red mare, was one of my first here, and the third horse we had named Star. There's a lacking of original nicknames in the horse world. Star is clearly overused. Now we have a Quattro, too.

During my first fall on the mountain, my husband Bob came in a snowstorm and took away the horses – his horses, the old family stock. This is what he did, he told me, every year. The horses would spend the next six months on winter pasture in the valley.

“No,” I told him. “I have to have horses here.”

Two weeks later I rode Tres, ponying another behind me, along the road. It was already closed for the season, covered with ice and snow. Sections were so slick that I stepped off and walked.

We rode into the ranch in the pitch black, my numb fingers tucked between the saddle and Tres' warm, sweaty back. The temperature was 10 degrees. She was three years old at the time, young and fresh, but she trusted me from that very first day.

This is why I love my horses. This is why I must do all I can for them.

Tres is showing signs of getting ready for foaling. Her teats have filled, indicating that her baby will be arriving within the next 30 days. We are working to complete the foaling shed, a place for her to birth, warm, dry and protected. She's due earlier than I should have allowed. Somehow, I had believed she would find comfort being back with the stallion after the trauma of losing her four-day-old foal last year. She did. More than I had hoped for.

I suppose I should have kept them separate just a little while longer to prevent nature from happening, the stallion from having his way – or if you've seen a mare in cycle, I suppose she's the one who got her way. The stallion simply agreed.

Now we have an early baby due. With over a foot of packed snow remaining on the ground.



photo courtesy Gim Getz

Horses on pasture at the Lost Trail Ranch in Colorado.

For a dozen years, foaling season has been the highlight of my year, the moment that the rest of the year leads up to, or comes after. I watched my mares for months, noticed their changes and anticipated problems, planning a safe birth. I read every book I could and had pages of notes from my vets. Like an expectant mother, my vet bag was packed and ready by the door. I once set a mattress out in the pasture to sleep with an expectant mare. I was finally rewarded with a wet, warm foal in my arms, tears in my eyes, listening to the mare gently nicker at her beautiful baby, her head

back to nuzzle and lick as I praised her for this wonder. Always such a wonder.

It is different now. I have seen such sadness – for me, my family, and mostly the mares – at times when I expected a barnyard filled with joy. There has been loss, trauma and death. Now I approach foaling season with worry. A black cloud follows me, close and heavy, every day. I know it could happen again.

Throughout the years, I have lost many sheep, rabbits, chickens, cows and even older horses that had lived out a full life. Death on a farm is a part of



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living. It is the balance that allows new life. It is often expected, but never easy.

The loss of a foal was harder for me. You would think I would have been toughened by my other losses. You may think perhaps a loss is a loss, no matter what, but it isn't. With a horse, it is somehow so much worse. Perhaps it is our connection with these magnificent creatures that makes the bringing of new life so much more special, and their loss so grave.

I had been so lucky. I had helped birth many foals over the years, all healthy, all well, all living. Complications were minimal, never more than I could handle from the advice found in my books or from a helpful neighbor stopping by to admire the leggy new life. I was thrilled anticipating the next. Every one.

It was Tres' third birth. She knew what to do, and did it well. It should have gone well. It did. It was beautiful as the miracle of birth always is. Almost always.

At 10 in the morning, while doing dishes, I watched as she began biting her sides. A sure sign. How could that be? I must have missed a day, missed a sign, for I was certain it would be tomorrow. There she was, out there in the middle of the winter herd, now kicking her belly and getting down on the ground. I grabbed my vet bag and a few fresh towels and ran out.

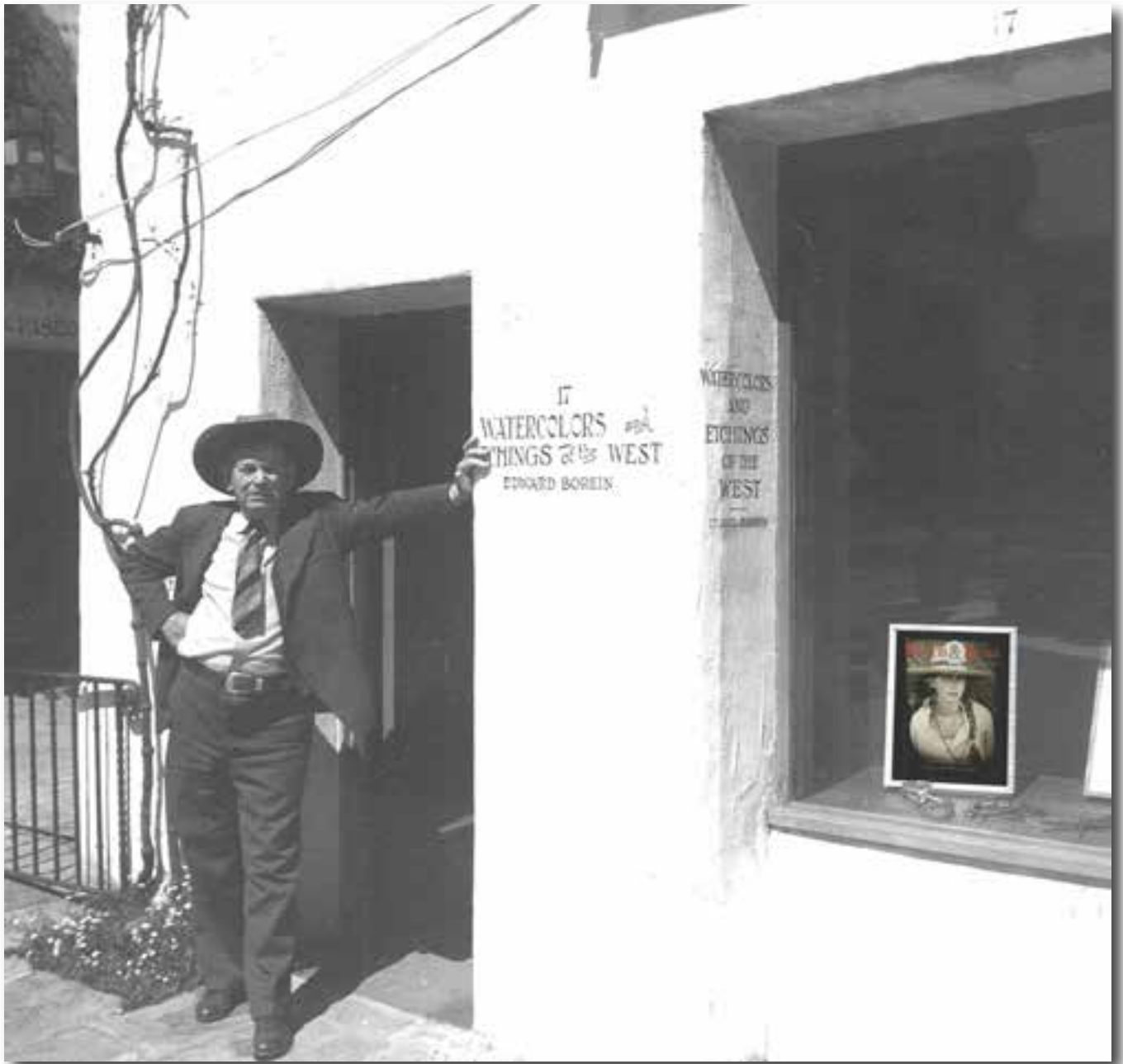
Within minutes, the foal was there in my arms, wrapped in a towel as Tres caught her breath. Slowly she arched her big red neck around, nuzzled and smelled her baby and nickered so soft and sweet. She looked me in the eye and for a moment I think she was glad I was there, again, helping her bring another beautiful baby into this world.

On the morning of the fourth day, the foal was down when I went to feed Tres at first light. She had that look in her eyes that I've seen in lambs – an odd, faraway look that tells me they are leaving. They look past, beyond anything here. They are heading for another world. It is a look of goodbye.

Isolated and remote as we are, our road was not yet plowed open for the season. We bundled the baby up in blankets and I held her down through fits and convulsions as Bob hauled us out to our truck in a toboggan he pulled with a snowmobile. In the back seat of the pickup, the foal's body alternated between violent convulsions and

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the more frightening nothingness. A putrid odor reeked of death.

The vet was ready for us when we arrived. We carried her in and laid her down. As he worked to put in the IV tube, she left us.

I cry even writing this.

Tres had watched at the gate as I hauled her baby off. She did not nicker. She did not call. She knew.

The vet was pretty sure he knew what was wrong, and it wasn't good. He'd seen this ugly face before. We had two more foals on the way. We had to know what we were dealing with. We had to know what we could do. We asked for an autopsy.

It confirmed that we were dealing with a bacterium that lives in the soil. Once it is found in your soil, it

remains there forever. Some years it will get the foals. Some years it won't. It is a game of Russian roulette. There are no certain preventative measures. There is no vaccine. Usually, there is no cure. By the time symptoms appear, it is too late.

There is one story that gives me hope. The story of Bayjura. It happened last year, a month after we lost Tres' foal. Canella – Tres' first born, our first foal born here at the ranch – was the next to give birth. We named her for her red coat: shiny and smooth and redder even than her mama's. Canella, our cinnamon girl.

Young as she was, we were glad to be there for her birthing. Naturally, a foal comes out like a diver. One front foot, followed shortly by the other, then the nose, a big effort for the head and shoulders, then the

rest of the body seems to flow out with relative ease. This time the positioning was correct, and we could feel the feet and nose all in line ready to dive out, but the presentation was too high. The foal's front foot was stuck, and poor little Canella was at risk for tearing. With great caution, we cleaned up, reached in and pulled the foot back down into position. Then working with the mare's contractions, we helped ease the baby into the world.

It was a remarkably beautiful little bay filly, with the grace of her Arabian father, my stallion, Flying Crow, and the calmness and confidence of her Quarter Horse mom. She was perfect, a little fireball from the minute she first was free from the umbilical cord





and sack; such a prim little girl, but so strong. The word that comes to mind is spunk. We struggled to hold her to administer all the hopefully preventative medications that would give her the best fighting chance in case the deadly bacteria tried to take her.

We named her Bayjura. It holds no meaning other than it sounded so fancy, and as she stood there on her feet less than an hour after birth, so proud and strong for such a tiny little thing, the name just seemed fitting. We watched her, all day, all night, sitting with her or staring out the window and observing her in an uneasy silence. She was perfect. Strong, nursing, running, playing, a feisty little fireball.

On the fifth day, Bob and I had a job that took us down the mountain for a few hours. Upon our return, our son, Forrest, was pale with wide eyes, and began to cry. "She has it," he said, and my heart dropped into my stomach as my anger at the world swelled.

She wasn't down yet, but we could smell it. The same pending stench of death. Of course, Forrest was right. He knows the animals as well as I do. She had it.

The road was open now. We hooked up the horse trailer, spread the bottom with straw, and loaded the mare and foal. For such a young mother, Canella was steady. Through it all, she stood stoic over her baby, now lying at her feet, flat on the trailer floor.

It takes nearly three hours to get to the vet. By the time we arrived, the baby was still, not a good sign. The vet was ready. She was nervous. She did not think we had a chance, and I imagine that for a vet that's a terrible place to be. Her hands shook and she stuttered and could not look us in the eyes. I could see was

trying everything and gave her all. She told us she had only seen one other foal survive this, but she would try. She would do everything she possibly could for this little foal.

Canella held vigil just outside the pen where her baby lay flat out in a pile of straw, plugged into an overhead IV, with the vet pumping in medicine, shots and, I am certain, silent prayers.

At 7:30 p.m., the vet told us to go to the hotel and wait. There was nothing else she could do. There was nothing else we could do. We left, dejected, knowing we would return to tears and sadness.

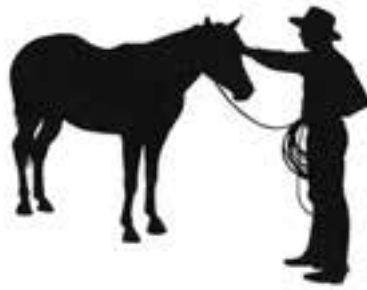
Bob and I sat in the hotel room, empty, numb and red-eyed, filled with a sense of disbelief, like this was just some terrible nightmare and we'd wake up shortly and everything would be fine.

We returned at 9:30.

We awaited words of comfort. The words we received were not what we expected. The tears flowed again, but this time with joy. The baby was up. That feisty little fireball was up. She was not just up, she was moving about the pen with the IV still hooked overhead, trying to figure out how to get to her mother's teats through the stall's metal bars. She wanted to nurse.

That was almost a year ago. This little fireball of a filly now is running around in the snow outside my window as I write. Bayjura of the Rio! She was born here next to the river, and may it be a very long life she lives before she dies here by this or another mighty river, flowing with the goodness of life, hope, and the power and struggle for survival.





A VISIT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN

The 2013 Brannaman Pro-Am Vaquero Roping

Our first annual Pro-Am Roping is now in the record books. We had a terrific turnout, as we had decided early on to try and maximize social media as our primary marketing tool. This decision came as we wanted folks from all over, not just the local Santa Ynez area to be aware of what we were planning. I travel all over and during my clinics I have been constantly telling people about the roping and what we wanted to do. Our plan was simple. Create a Pro-Am style event where two person teams would sign

up and be “assigned” a Pro the night before the event by a drawing. I had selected twelve, significant individuals from diverse areas and backgrounds who I felt could bring to the event: 1) great roping skills, and 2) the ability to work with teams as equally diverse as the pros. Well I can tell you, it worked. Both participants and spectators alike expressed their enjoyment of the event and we hope to make next year’s event in October even better and bigger! – More teams and more added money to be shared by the winning teams. The winning teams this year were as follows:

1. Lorenzo Lauracia, Seth Redding, Caleb French
2. Scott Grosskopf, Matt Clark, Gabe Clark
3. Frank Dominguez, Scott McCulloch, Mike Monighetti
4. Billy Askew, Russell Speaker, Cody Dawson
5. Cleve Anseth, Kip Fladland, Wes Ferrazzi
6. Peter Campbell, Sam Redding, Marty He Does It
7. Cleve Anseth, Mike Monighetti, John Chavez
8. Joe Wolter, Jeff Ohaco, Boone Campbell
9. Cleve Anseth, Bill Barnes, Wayne Anderson



photos by Jenny Coxson

Teams roped in two arenas so there was real action always going on.



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It was so great to see so many friends who came to rope or just to enjoy the weekend and visit.



- 10. Cleve Anseth, Ty Weber, Sean Suwa
- 11. Scott Grosskopf, Silvin Schreiber, Walter Gisler
- 12. Lorenzo Lauracia, Sam Redding, Shirley Redding

Our cattle were provided by Williams Livestock and they sponsored a special horsemanship award decided by our three judges, Ernie Morris, Bob Douglas and Herb French, and given to the team that consistently exhibited solid horsemanship throughout the roping. The award was presented to:

Billy Askew, Russell Speaker, Cody Dawson

We couldn't have done it without the help of our sponsors and I want to thank them all here for the

generous participation and support.

And finally I want to thank all the spectators who showed up – over 1,000 each day. Keeping traditions alive and prospering happen only when an inclusive attitude is presented that invites new people to participate in it and support it. We decided early on the event would be free to spectators for that reason and we are glad so many people decided to invest a weekend on our event. Our photographer, Jenny Coxon, shot some great images during the event and we are proud to share some of them here. More can be seen at brannaman.com and if you wish to purchase any, contact Jenny at www.unaphoto805.com. Thank you again to everyone who came and we'll see you again next October.



Our judges hard at work.



Spectators came from far and wide.



LIGHTING OUT

Rhyming and Diming

A first-timer visits the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering for a test of faith.



By Jayme Feary

104

A woman waylaid me at Cactus Pete’s casino in Jackpot, Nevada, and almost derailed my assignment to Elko. Together, we guzzled free drinks and set down roots at a Ghostbusters slot machine that blared its catchy song – “Ghostbusters!” – and paid money every time we teetered on quitting.

Bells and flashing lights lulled me into a hypnotic trance. All around us, zombies in polyester pants and trucker caps pressed buttons, stared at screens, and exhaled smoke rings. The place smelled like the drapes in a 1969 mobile home.

Ding, ding, ding, “Ghostbusters!”

While drinking, pressing the button, and rooting for the Stay Puft Marshmallow Man to float across the screen and announce another bonus spin, I thought about my destination: Elko, Nevada, and the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering.

For years I had imagined attending the event, a showcase of American ranch culture featuring poetry, music, art and tack. A pseudo-cowboy who, for periods, has made my living a’horseback, I had heard all the stories. The greatest go to Elko: lovers of liquor and verse; believers in God and country; working hands; buckaroos; ranchers; writers; songstresses; dress-up cowboys; the gentle and the hard; and the rabble-rouser poets, a few who’ve been known to sip whiskey before and during shows. One poet, Pat Richardson, was charged with assault and battery and put on probation for 90 days in Colorado for knocking out an audience member who disliked his poem. “If a man takes a swing at you, it’s anything goes,” Richardson said. My kind of people. I hoped to sit around all night in hotel bars listening to crotchety cowboy poets, and raising my glass to the lot of them.

However, I felt apprehensive about going because



many of the hands with whom I've worked hate the notion of cowboy poetry. Some ranchers won't hire a person if he or she admits to reading it. To them, cowboy poets are wannabes, pretenders, dudes. At the university where I studied writing, my peers had often snickered or rolled their eyes at the mention of cowboy poetry. I kept my interest hidden. Sure, some cowboy poetry is cheap and cheesy, but it is unpretentious and authentic. But is it good? I hoped Elko would help me embrace cowboy poetry or give it up for good.

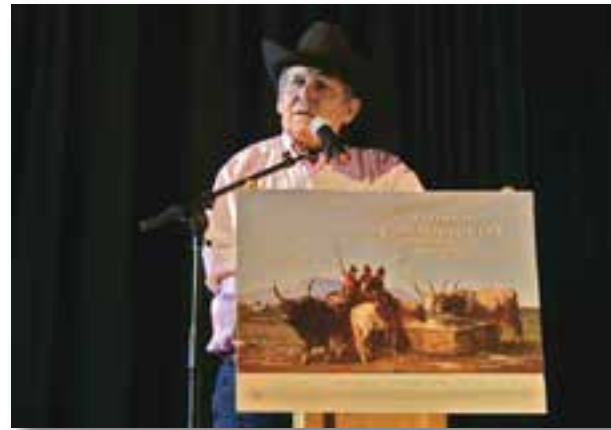
Adding to my apprehension was the fact that I was riding to Elko – Land of Pickup Trucks – in my friend's Toyota Prius. I felt like a PETA activist heading to a ranch branding. God, I thought, they're not going to let us in. I imagined Winchester-toting men guarding roadblocks on the outskirts of Elko. "You one of them environmentalists?" they'd ask. But thank heaven we buzzed into town in our little hybrid horse and tied up in the far lot of the Elko Convention Center without drawing attention.

In a year, high desert Elko, Nevada, 5,066 feet, receives only 9.89 inches of rain. Even in late winter, I could feel the air wicking the moisture from my body.



photos by Leyme Feary

The Star, one of Elko's finest Basque eateries.



Poet Pat Richardson performs.

The topography was mostly flat, but treeless, brush-covered hills stood nearby. To the south the majestic Ruby Mountains rose to 11,387 feet. I hurried inside the Elko Convention Center, a shrine to off-white concrete blocks, a Taj Mahal of odd angles. Inside, block walls held up a sky of drop-down ceiling tiles. Some events take place in the main auditorium, others in breakout rooms, with risers for stages and colorful backdrops of puffy clouds and blue sky painted on what seemed like oversized sheets. The place looked more suitable for insurance company actuaries than cowboy types.

Nevertheless, I didn't come for the ambiance, so I plopped onto a chair. Bring on the crazy-ass cowboy poets! Audience members averaged 50-something in age. The few kids in the room forced themselves to sit still as if in church. Most faces were tanned and rutted. People wore Wranglers, hats, wool vests and silk scarves. They must've all been Lutherans because they sat there stoically. I didn't know if they were having a bad day or one hell of a good time.

The first poet, looking like he had just stepped off his horse, clopped to the podium as solemn as if he were about to give the State of the Union address, and recited in monotone:

“Vast desert sands of subtle gray
 And mountain ranges so far away
 A-rimmed in by deep blue sky
 An occasional cloud a-driftin’ by
 A desert floor of blue and green
 And bunchgrass clumps in between
 A hot dry wind softly moans
 As a cowboy enters the scene alone...”



Poet Waddie Mitchell (right) and friend
 at the Pioneer Saloon.

Our Guernsey girl was 93, her hide shone almost
 red.
 She’d fuss and snort or lick your hair until you
 scratched her head.”

A procession of similar poets rhymed and dimed
 along, expressing their love for a particular horse or
 lamenting the hardships inherent in working the land.
 One man recited a humorous little ditty about a bra that
 got caught on a truck mirror.

After the open mic session, I was done with cowboy
 poetry. I climbed aboard one of several courtesy vans
 that shuttle people around Elko, a city known for
 ranching, gold mining, Basque cuisine and brothels.
 Brothels? Perhaps my trip wasn’t a total loss.

The van driver, Pat Waldvogel, a local woman in her
 early fifties, said she volunteered each year because she
 enjoyed meeting Gathering attendees. She dropped me off
 at Capriola’s Saddlery, one of the West’s best-known tack
 and gear stores. Ropes and used saddles lined the second
 floor, but not a single new Capriola sat for sale. Inside the
 saddle shop, craftsmen worked to fill custom orders.
 Downstairs, hundreds of handmade Garcia bits hung in
 rows in a glass case. A dozen or more customers milled
 around as the owner held a felt hat into a plume of steam

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The rest of the session went about like that.

After lunch, a dozen or so of us filed into a smaller
 breakout room to hear the cowboy poetry version of
 Anything Goes: an open microphone session. This is
 where anyone – cowboy, ranch wife or plumber – can
 recite a cowboy poem. Audience members attend these
 sessions to support the performers or to discover a new,
 fresh voice.

Jim Cardwell, a 50-something nurse and homemade-
 salsa maker, popped up as if he’d been waiting for this
 moment all year. A proud look came over his boyish face.

“...209 was our tallest cow, well over six feet tall.
 With legs as long as hers you hardly had to stoop
 at all.



A leatherman in training at an Elko workshop.



Elko's Stockman's Casino

and shaped the brim to suit a Poetry Gathering attendee from New Mexico. The week of the Gathering, the owner said, is a busy one. "Mostly cowboys, or dudes?" I asked.

"A little bit of everything," he said.

The neon star atop the Star Hotel glowed red against the blue of evening. One of the most well-known Basque restaurants in the country, the Star is one of several Basque eateries in Elko. After gorging on baked lamb and heaping portions of soup, Basque beans, French bread, vegetables, pasta and fried potatoes, I waddled around downtown, followed the flashing lights into the Commercial Casino, and came out a hundred bucks ahead.

At dusk I ended up on brothel row, a nondescript street with three run-down houses painted brightly. The signs read "Asian Girls" and "Dancing and Diddling." I had no idea what diddling involved, but it sounded terrific, so in the spirit of journalistic inquiry, I drew a bead

on Elko's most famous brothel, Mona's Ranch.

A video camera whirred. I'm not sure why, but I looked around to make sure no one saw me. I felt like a drug dealer. I pressed the doorbell, and my palms began to sweat. Footsteps. A slat in the door slid open and then slammed shut. What the hell is this? I wondered, the gate to see the Wizard of Oz?

The door buzzed open into a dark empty hallway. Old yard-sale art of scantily clad women hung askew in groups on the walls. A string of Christmas tree lights around the top of the walls lit the way. At the end of the hallway sat a large wooden bar, scarred as if it had been in a knife fight. There was no music, just a faint musty smell. No people, either, except the man in the mirror, who was trying to look like a whorehouse veteran.

More footsteps, heavier. A fuzzy-haired woman



walked in with an irritated expression as if I'd interrupted her rerun of *As the World Turns*. She asked, "Can I get you something to drink?"

"May I speak to the manager?"

I explained I was reporting on a story and only wanted to ask a few questions and shoot a few pictures. She tried not to laugh. Ever the persistent reporter, I thought, maybe I should pay a girl to talk to me. But real journalists don't pay for interviews. It probably didn't matter because I am about as authentic a journalist as I am a cowboy; which is to say, just good enough to make do.

Two of my compadres at the Poetry Gathering had already given me the scoop. One of them had been so shy he couldn't scare up the nerve to enter, but the other had sauntered in, downed a couple of \$7 whiskeys, and picked from a lineup of two women who, during one of the busiest weeks of the year, were the only two not on vacation. Who knew prostitutes earned vacation time?

My one friend picked the girl who was, according to him, the least ugly of the two. She gave him a tour and led him by the hand to her room. He kept dragging his feet and declaring he was only there for a drink, but hey, she said, it never hurts to talk. He thanked her kindly and skedaddled. Apparently he was no real cowboy either.



The Capriolas entrance



A vintage hat gets spruced up at Capriolas.

My new friend, the bartender, wrote down my phone number and assured me the manager would call me back regarding my interview request. She could barely hide her smirk. I imagined the manager, some woman with a husky voice, was sitting in the back with her feet propped on her desk, watching me on camera, laughing her ass off and disseminating my number to her employees, who would prank call me for months.

I flagged down a shuttle and spent the evening dropping \$7.50 per pull in the Red Lion Casino's Ghostbusters slot machine. It had no pity, however, and the Stay Puft Man never appeared. Four hundred dollars down at 1 a.m. and too late for the shuttles, I caught a cab around town to the various hotels and bars, hoping to find some of these crazy poets at one of the Gathering's famous late-night jams, but all but a few miners and local cowboys had gone to bed.

The next morning, the crowd in the lobby had swelled. Without pretense, legends of the cowboy poetry world such as Baxter Black, Wally McRae and Waddie Mitchell mingled with attendees before performing. Mitchell, an Elko-raised buckaroo who helped start the Gathering, smiled and jawed with anyone who stopped. His eyes twinkled beneath his trademark hat – a telescope crease with a bunkhouse roll



on the back of the brim – and his mustache swooped down and out like a set of Longhorn steer horns. His mustache even wiggled when he talked, and his smile pooched up his cheeks. I was too self-conscious to introduce myself, so I walked back and forth a few times and leaned in to hear the conversations, which sounded less like celebrity small talk and more like conversation between long-lost relatives.

Attendees and performers, some newbies like me and some who had met at Elko for years, shook hands and hugged. People smiled and slapped each other's backs, and eventually the lobby thinned out and the rooms filled up.



For many attendees, Elko is as much about fine tack as it is about poetry.

I was dreading more cheap poetry and planning another reporting visit to Mona's when the session started and Waddie Mitchell stepped forward and took the microphone. He got this wistful look as if he were out on horseback with a 360-degree view of a vast prairie, and started in on a Bruce Kiskaddon classic, "When They're Finished Shipping Cattle in the Fall":

"Though you're not exactly blue,
Yet you don't feel like you do

In the winter, or the long hot summer days.
For your feelings and the weather
Seem to sort of go together,
And you're quiet in the dreamy autumn haze..."

Mitchell matched his rhythm to the meter, and he varied his speed and volume. He leaned in ever so slightly and let that wistfulness seep into his voice.

"When the last big steer is goaded
Down the chute, and safely loaded;
And the summer crew has ceased to hit the ball;
When a fellow starts to draggin'
To the home ranch with the wagon–
When they've finished shipping cattle in the fall..."

For a moment after Mitchell finished, the room fell as silent as a meadow after a new snowfall. The applause rolled up like a wave, and a couple of people whistled. The Lutherans had converted to Baptists.

Some poets performed their own verse. By then I had fallen back in love with cowboy poetry, and decided to perform at an open mic session.

I led with one of the best contemporary western poems I know, the *High Desert Journal's* Obsidian Prize-winning "Gap-Tooth Girl," written by my friend Melissa Mylchreest (a *Ranch & Reata* contributor). I mustered as much emphasis as I could:

"The gap-tooth girl is dancing, and the man
in Wranglers holds his arms around her like
a loose hoop of rope, a snare for her tight
two-step. The band will never play better
than this town limits, and still it's sweeter
than the sounds the country makes, gumbo mud,
trains coupling, a wild Chinook, a place laced
with ice and barb-wire singing. Her hips have

land in them, are good enough for dancing
but in those jeans look ready made to sit
a horse all day; she wears the weather in
her hair..."

I might as well have spoken Swahili. Blank-faced,
the audience stared. I realized these people valued
practicality. They appreciated Quarter Horses, fencing
pliers and axle grease, not impressionistic paintings or
esoteric poems with no practical story or message. To
salvage my performance, I pulled out a poem of my own,
a cheap thing with clear meaning, and let 'er rip:

"When the open is closed, where will we go
When there's a house on every hill?
When the gas wells stretch as far as the gaze
And there is no more oil to drill?
When the solace found in nature is
Polluted with noise and trash
And every meadow is trampled to death
And views are sold for cash?
When men with defeated faces
Begin to boil and then resent
That elbowroom can only be felt
With elbows tightly bent..."

The people nodded in agreement, and, as they had
for several others, applauded in sympathy for the terrible
poet who had tried his best. They clearly believed I
should stick to the open mic sessions; or better yet, to
slot machines.

After dark, shuttle driver Pat Waldvogel dropped
me at the Western Folklife Center's Pioneer Saloon,
where the year before she had sat conversing with an
Elko local, Jim Reilly, who had agreed to ride with her
all night to ensure her safety. Their conversations came
easy, and by morning the two had fallen for each other.

(Pat and Jim are now married.)

In the Pioneer Saloon, an old-style hardwood bar
ran the length of the joint. Poets, musicians, artists,
ranchers, cowboys and wannabes drank, told stories and
laughed. Every once in a while, a poet would hold court
at a particular table, and those sitting around would
applaud. The evening had the feel of a family reunion.

Soon most of the crowd funneled into the G Three
Bar Theater off one end of the Pioneer Bar. The evening
show featured big-name cowboy poet Paul Zarzyski, a
small man with a scrub brush mustache and a
personality the size of Montana. Zarzyski, who as a
young man moved west to rodeo, studied with the poet
Richard Hugo at the University of Montana. When he
began his performance, Zarzyski flailed as if atop a
bareback bronc. His words bucked, snorted and
moaned. He was no Professor of Poetry reciting with an
inflated sense of importance. His was the poetry of
whiplash, the kind that leaps from the chute, plants its
front feet, lowers its head, and kicks:

"She's a motorcycle sister
He's a bareback bronco twister
They're ridin' double-wild 'cross the West.

She's Mescalero Indian
He's full-blooded Paladin
Runnin' on a buck's worth of Texaco high-test.

She drives that bike full-throttle
There's still a half-full bottle
Of Mescal in her studded saddlebags.

He spurs those buckers crazy
But now he's laid-back lazy
As her batwing chaps are flappin' just like flags.



Cowboy grit, Apache pride,
 Wild hearts and minds collide
 In a fiery mix of youth and speed and steel.

Hell on horses, hell on women,
 The West has changed, boys, look what's comin'
 Rearin' up and roarin' toward you on one wheel..."

Jacked up on the show, I wandered the streets of Elko. Casino lights blinked and ran in circles around huge signs. Heavy-duty pickups rattled up and down the main drag. Live music blared from a bar. Motorcycle gang members shot pool. A two-story polar bear statue loomed above the entrance to a Mexican restaurant. Back at the Pioneer Saloon, the socialization continued full tilt.

The next evening, my last in Elko, the sun was

slipping toward the horizon. I stepped into Pat Waldvogel's shuttle van for a ride back to the convention center. When she drove into the parking lot, the sun was streaming pink through purple clouds and hovering just above the horizon.

She turned to me, grinned, and asked, "You want to hear a poem I wrote?"

"Sure."

"In the West
 The setting sun
 In early winter
 Has begun
 To paint the canvas
 With such splendor
 I stop silently
 And thank the sender."

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The moment she finished, I swear, the sky burst into brilliant hues of pink and purple, and the sun slipped below the horizon and disappeared. A feeling of awe and gratitude came over me.

“That’s my favorite poem of the Gathering,” I said.

“Thank you.”

I got out and walked toward my hotel, thinking a fiction writer couldn’t have invented a better ending to my Elko story. I ambled down the sidewalk thinking about my trip. I had learned that in the same way a length of rusty barbed wire can shore up a broken gate hinge, or a loop of baling twine can web around a truck tire to get the vehicle out of mud hole, a good cowboy poem can be put to practical use.

I had learned that cowboy poetry is not for critics, literature professors, or even for poets; it is for the

people, and as such, it includes fine literary-quality work from masters, good poems from amateurs, and crap from hacks like me. It is for old-school ranchers, dude wranglers, mechanics and nurses – anyone who loves cowboy culture. Cowboy poetry is about relating and connecting. Having experienced other literary events steeped in negativity, I marveled at how this poetry inspires people and builds community.

In the morning my friend and I untied her Prius, mounted up, and turned toward home. We intended to drive straight through, but the lights of Cactus Pete’s lured us. To thank us for our business, the nice staff gave us \$50 in gambling money and a free all-you-can-eat buffet dinner. We gorged like hogs at a trough, and then headed straight for the Ghostbusters machine.



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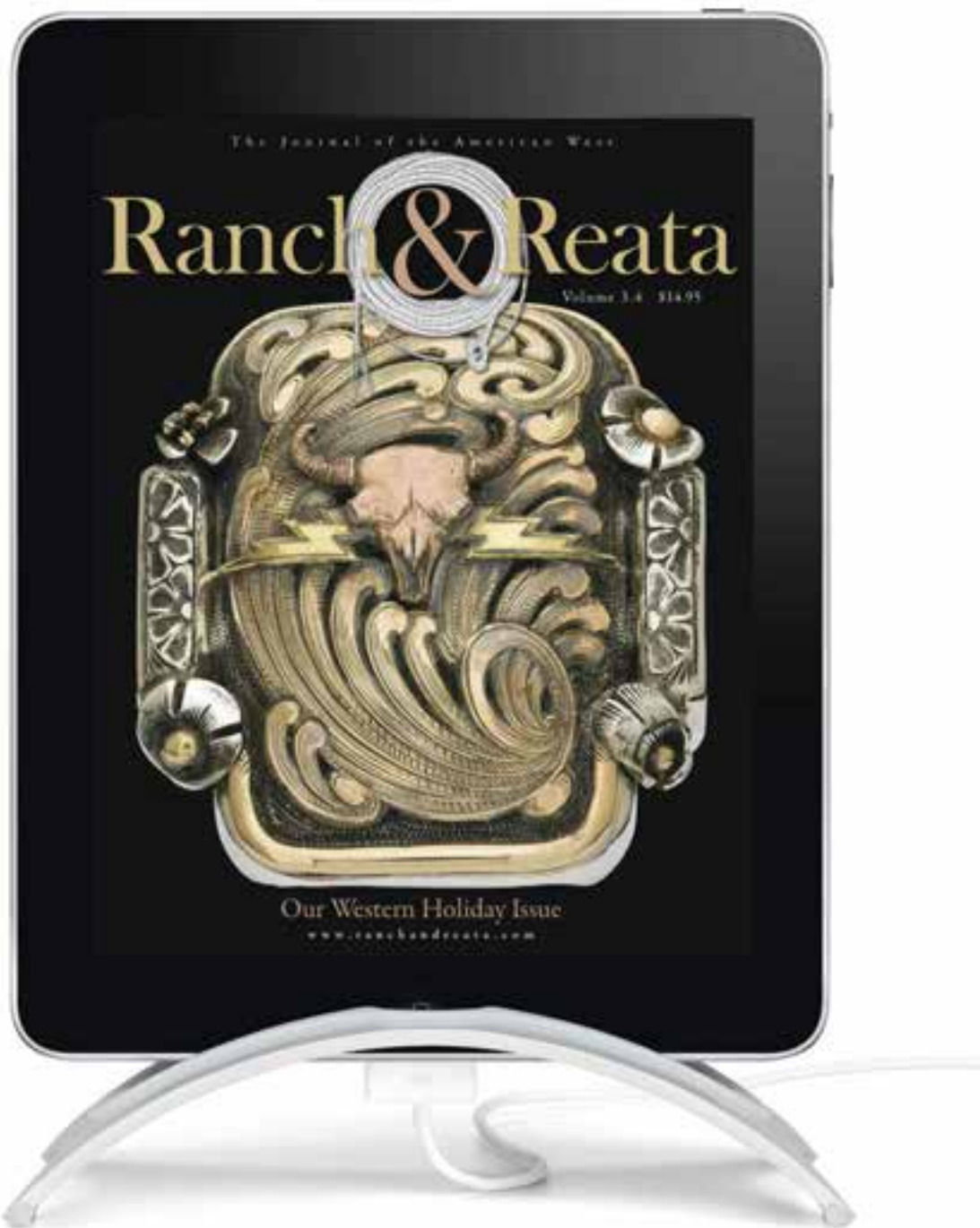
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THE HEN HOUSE

Hen House Life Hacks



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

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Going to college, is supposed to be where you earn an education...that's the rumor at least. But there's a lot of tips and tricks that aren't taught in a classroom that are often passed down from those who have paved the way before us, or our favorite....trial and error – heavy on the error. For many of you, these tips will be second nature, but for those of you who don't know, you can learn from our mistakes. We decided for this month's article, we would keep it simple and just talk about some of the things we think are important to know.

Since this is more aimed towards women, guys you should read this also so you know what girls don't know what to do! Or how to do!

Things for the Road

Changing a tire (effectively) – the holy grail of know-hows, don't expect to have a knight in shining armor show up to your rescue, odds are, it'll be nobody or someone you would have rather had not stop. Must haves:



photos courtesy The Hen House Archives



All hands on deck at the Brannaman Pro Am Roping, Santa Ynez 2013

a tire (no kidding?), star wrench, a jack (exception: wonder woman) and for those unfortunate trailer blowouts, a drive up jack is pretty handy.

Backing up a trailer – almost anybody can pull a trailer forward, but backing one up is an art in itself. Some of you may know the stress of having 5 people waiting, and watching you try to maneuver your way backwards into sometimes minuscule spaces (not to mention directions coming from everyone and their dog). Our advise to you,

ignore them, take your time, and use your mirrors! And when in doubt hooking up that pesky gooseneck, put a rock in line with your ball on your pickup, voila!

From the Saddle

How to work the ground – gender aside, this is one of those things that you will have to do at some point. If you don't know how to do it, there's no shame in asking someone to teach you. There are lots of little tricks that make it easy for even the smallest of gals to be efficient. When you're expected to do a full day's work, that includes every aspect of the task at hand, whether it's roping or



working the ground, you should be able to do both competently.

Counting critters – for those of you who can only count to ten, this is a handy trick. Counting though a gate is one of the most stressful jobs in ranching, the possibility of failure is looming over your head, so instead of crumbling to the stress, simply count to ten, pick up a coil in your hand, and repeat.

Shut the gate – maybe you didn't get yelled at for this as kids, but we sure did! If you open the gate, shut it! Unless told otherwise, and when in doubt – close it. Whenever happening upon an open gate as a kid, it was an internal conundrum, shut it or leave it and take the risk of being blamed for the escape of a few sneaky critters.



A Few Randoms

How to look presentable in a hurry – We've all been in those situations when we've been out working all day, covered in dust from head to toe, and a shower just isn't an option. How you may ask?



Dry Shampoo – this is a lifesaver! It even will take care of that darn hat hair that is usually unavoidable.

A good perfume – ladies, there's nothing wrong with working cows all day and getting a little dirty, but at the end of the day, smelling like a lady can make all the difference.

King Ropes Hat – this is literally our ultimate accessory! Bad hair day? Never fear...throwing a King Ropes Hat in the mix will make even the most awkward of hair days disappear!

Layering up – For these cold Montana winters, layering up is something you have to learn. Our dear Nevada is finally



starting to adjust. Learning the art of sweaters, scarves, long johns, and scotch caps and that no matter how fat the layers make you look...its worth it when you don't have to defrost for three hours when you get home. And when everyone is layered up, nobody really cares how "puffy" you look.

Accepting compliments – Several of our close guy friends here in Bozeman recently told us how frustrating it is when they sincerely offer a simple compliment and they either deny the compliment or try to give logic as to why they are being complimented. As to quote one of the guys "When someone says Congratulations on the win... we don't want to know how the game went."

Be classy – The words of our friend A. Barstow, "dress sharp (never be afraid to be overdressed), speak with confidence yet humbly, DO NOT curse around anyone who is not a close friend, maintain good posture, please, thank you, yes ma'am and no sir, guys... get the dang door for her, wearing work boots is plum fine but brush the crap off of 'em!"



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A Better Story to Tell

Twenty-five years ago, I took a hard look a world that was new to me. I could sense it was in the process of vanishing. And I knew I wanted to freeze some moments in time.

By Adam Jahiel

There is something final about photography. A photograph has the ability to capture a moment that is gone forever. Nothing exists that can make that moment come back. No other tool can capture these moments before they vanish.

The American West is a place where things vanish. Civilization passes through repeatedly, stops for a short time, and then mostly moves on. In between, the land and the people that remain slowly reassert themselves.

I'm still drifting around the American West, looking for the land that time forgot. It still exists, but is getting harder and harder to find. Twenty-five years ago, I took a hard look a world that was new to me. I could sense it was in the process of vanishing. And I knew I wanted to freeze some moments in time. Admittedly, the concept of the Vanishing West has become a cliché; but it is also by no means untrue.

The black-and-white photo documentation of the Dust Bowl days following the Great Depression is something I have always carried with me. The images were real, honest, human and respectful. They were created not necessarily by great artists, but by great craftsmen using light. There was no artifice, no gimmickry, and no pretension. The photographers observed, applied their skills, and let the subjects speak for themselves. The result was a body of powerful, iconic, authentic, and historically important imagery.

When I began this journey, I had no plan and no agenda. I had a desire to explore and share something that resonated, fascinated and excited me. I had no ulterior motive, just a burning curiosity and an intense like of what I saw and the people I met. I wanted to get closer to that which interested me. And I wanted to share my discoveries with others. I became aware of how our culture had been fed a steady diet of the mythic West, a creation that was fanciful, colorful, entertaining and romantic, in addition to being blatantly false. And now there was an even better story to tell.

I never intended to create a visual document of cowboy life in the Great Basin. I followed my emotional response to an aesthetic that I wanted to capture on film. On every trip to a ranch or cow camp, I found myself making original images that spoke to me more than most that I had seen. And little by little, I found I was telling somebody's story, including my own.

The similarities between ranch life and my photography abound. I work to pare down the elements in my images to that which is essential; the result mirrors a pared-down lifestyle. I like to think that less becomes more. Both endeavors involve passion, dedication, solitary pursuit, self-reliance, independence, and an appreciation of tradition. And both require



getting your hands dirty and enjoying it. Both share the reward of pushing yourself past the point of discomfort to achieve a goal. Both involve the acceptance of a reality in which we are at the mercy of things much greater than ourselves.

I do my best to be a fly-on-the wall photographer. I try to stay out of the way and keep my mouth shut. I observe, trust my gut, and not my head. I do whatever I can to make my pictures good, without crossing the line where I impose my personality on them. For me, most great pictures are made by photographers who have, at least for the moment, abandoned their own identities. All great photographs are free from arrogance. The viewer should see the subject, not a reflection of the photographer.

My reasons for photographing may have changed over the years, but some things have remained consistent. I have always felt connected to the land, the sky and the people I photograph. The logistics of making images can be quite an adventure, and sometimes the adventure is more meaningful than the pictures that come out of it. And so much just doesn't translate to words or pictures.



Roping a Cloud, IL Ranch, Nevada



Chase, Oregon



Fritz and Snooks, TS Ranch, Nevada



Woody Harney, IL Ranch, Nevada



Remuda #5, Spanish Ranch, Nevada



Jaybirds, IL Ranch, Nevada



Remuda, Spanish Ranch, Nevada



Remuda #1, Stateline Camp, YP Ranch, Nevada



Remuda #8, Nevada



Riley Cleaver, IL Ranch, Nevada



The Couch, Whitehorse Ranch, Nevada

See more of Adam Jahiel's work at www.adamjahiel.com.



California Pastorale

Bandidos, Vaqueros, Love and Law in Mid-19th Century California

“I have always been a *trabajador*, never a bandido. I have stolen cattle and horses but that is not dishonor, for everyone did it in the old days.”

– *What many old-timers told their children.*

“What else is there to enjoy in this life other than good horses?”

– *Vaquero Ramon Dominguez*

By Arnold Rojas
Illustrations by J.N. Swanson

When the gringos took possession of California, thousands of wild horses roamed the Great Valley.

The tame or domesticated horses in the herds belonging to the rancheros could be handled more easily and so were stolen by the gringos and driven into the prairie states. Many a Civil War mount had come from the ranches of California. But the wild horses were left to run on the plains until the Sonorans began catching them and driving them south of the border, where they brought a fair price. This, along with packing supplies by mule into the mining camps in the Sierra, brought Sonorans a living. These men were honest ranching people, not horse thieves: the wild horses had no owners.

The *rancheros* who owned the ranches along the western rim of the Great Valley often drove great bands of wild mustangs over cliffs to drown in the ocean, to preserve the grass for their cattle. Naturally, these same rancheros welcomed the wild horse hunters and even aided them in gathering the mustangs. Remember, the Sonorans who came in the gold rush were cousins or near relatives of those who had come with Portola, De Anza, Fages and Rivera, so there was no friction between established rancheros and the newcomers.

Only a person who has handled horses can visualize the heartbreaking toil of capturing and sufficiently taming broncos to drive them by the herd for a thousand miles across the most desolate, arid desert in North America. (It took 60 to 90 days, depending on





conditions.) The horses the vaqueros rode had to be broken on the trail, after being hog-tied so the men could put shoes on them. Water had to be carried across the Devil's Highroad in rawhide bags on a few horses broken in enough to carry a pack on the trail.

Among these hardy vaqueros were men – the Valenzuelas, Felizés, Duartes, Murietas – who were driven from their claims in the Mother Lode country. None but Joaquin Murieta stayed there. He stayed until he had killed all the gringos who had lynched his brother and raped his wife.


The rawhide *riata* was the best weapon of offense for unlike a gun, it made no noise. In the hands of an expert such as Joaquin, it was a simple matter to cast a loop of the riata around a man's body and drag him against a tree, thus breaking his neck. Joaquin managed to kill all his wife's ravishers but one, then escaped to Texas and eventually Sonora, where he died in Cucurpe.

Murieta's method of avenging himself struck such terror into the hearts of the gringos that the instant one saw a vaquero approaching, the gringo would take his rifle out of its scabbard and cover the vaquero until he was out of range, for it is well known that most men who commit atrocities in gangs at night are brave only when they are in gangs. When alone in broad daylight they are meek.

Even after his work of vengeance had been completed and Joaquin Murieta had gone to Cucurpe, his name inspired such dread that other men took advantage of it whenever they took something away from the gringos and, on riding away from the scene, would call out, "Yo soy Joaquin." At times there were as many as five Joaquins, all robberies were attributed to a "Joaquin" even if they were committed on the same day and 500 miles apart.


After the governor commissioned Harry Love to cut off some Mexican's head and swear it was Joaquin Murieta's, Love and his posse rode aimlessly over the

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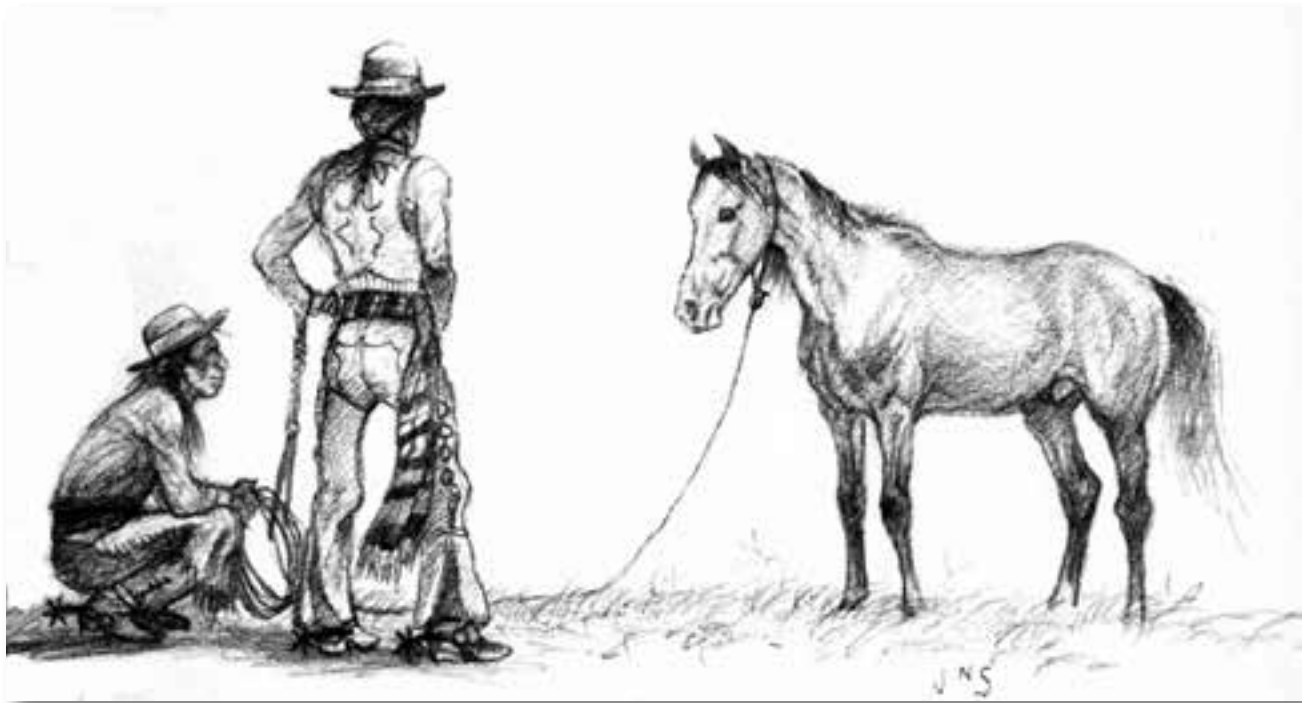
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state, supposedly looking for Murieta. When the time given to him to find his man was near to the end, Love returned to Los Angeles where a large number of Sonorans had settled. There he soon found a man among them who, not knowing Love's motives, gave the information that some of the Murietas were trapping mustangs in the vicinity of Tulare Lake.

Love rode to Cantua Creek and found a large group of vaqueros trapping wild horses. Among them were a number of *rancheros* of well-known families; men who could witness any atrocities Love or his posse would commit. He withdrew his posse until he learned that most of the horse hunters had left for Sonora with their captive bands. He returned to Cantua and found five unarmed men camped out at the creek, he and his men shot all five in the back, cut off the head of one and the hand of another and departed for San Francisco.

On the way Love captured a member of an old *ranchero* family, an unarmed man who rode up on the

posse unexpectedly while hunting strays. Love tied the man's feet under his horse's belly. While crossing a river the captive's horse fell and the man drowned; another needless murder on Love's part.

The many versions of the history of Joaquin Murieta all differ on many details. Those written by Joseph Gollomb, Walter Noble Burns, John Rollin Ridge, Frank Latta, two versions written in Spanish and one wherein Murieta is called the *Bandido Chileno*, the numerous campfire tales of my *compadres* of the Valenzuelas and Murieta clans in which Murieta was the main subject – if those tales I have heard from old men who rode in the latter part of the last century disagree with the versions I have read, I have this to say: “When it comes to campfire tales, one man's word is as good as another's. For legends are often accepted as truths and facts often accepted as legends, so that history, often not true, is accepted as fact.”

Of course, it is also true that if all the *paisanos* from



San Diego to Sonora who claimed to have know the California bandit Joaquin Murieta were telling the truth, the *bandido* must have spent all his time here in racing his mustang with the express purpose of introducing himself into every isolated ranch and pueblo in the state, or else have been a perpetual one-man parade with banners, for so many persons to have known him. (The majority of the people who made this claim were not born until after Murieta had gone back to Sonora to live to a ripe old age and die in a bed.)

Jim McFall and Tiburcio Vasquez. I have often wondered what storm of life cast the players of bagpipes, Angus McFall, into the red hills of Sonora, and whether he had ever matched his bagpipes with the Yaqui war drums by piping a charge into battle to the accompanying throb of tom-toms. Perhaps he had been shipwrecked on the west coast of Mexico, that graveyard of ships. He found a mate in a daughter of the country, and with her joined in the rush for gold across the desert to meet his death in the Colorado in flood stage. He left a 15-year-old widow with a babe in arms to cross the terrible sand dunes and begin life in a strange land without a protector.

Jim McFall, the babe, was my grandfather. When 12 years old ran he away from home after his stepfather whipped him, and joined a crew of men engaged in driving a band of horses into a middle-western state, probably mounts for Civil War cavalry. A taciturn, close-mouthed old man when I knew him, his ruddy complexion and

light brown hair gave him the appearance of a gringo until he swore in Spanish. His mother had been one of the blonde *sonorenas* quite common around Hermosillo, Altar and Alamos. I always had a great fear of him, for he seemed to be always in a bad humor.

One day, carrying the Sunday paper, I went to the shack he had built on the 40 acres that was his homestead, and sat down to share my treasure with him. I opened the magazine section to show him one of those stories concerning Vasquez that have been appearing in the newspaper for the last 100 years, and read to him an account of the bandit's capture. It made him angry; he said it was not true. In a few terse sentences, he told me that though the bandit's captors claimed to have planned his capture and found his hideout after much effort, Vasquez was betrayed into their hands, sold for silver by a female



Judas, the consort of Greek George the camel driver.

Vasquez, who through a strange twist of fate was to know the bitter irony of receiving bouquets from women while lying in jail waiting to be hanged through the treachery of one of them, who, as old people say, *cambio oro por plata* (exchanged gold for silver). But it brought her no joy, for as the old man said, “Did she not die shortly after screaming through the night of her last agony?” in fear or remorse for breaking faith.

Vasquez, like Murieta, had the sympathy of the *paisanos*: these men, from as far south as Sonora and as far north as where the last vestiges of Spain’s rule ends, knew many things regarding the bandit, but they lived through a lifetime and died without speaking of them.

All the *señoras* in California have fed Tiburcio Vasquez; every old-timer I’ve ever talked with claims that his mother, grandmother or some female relative cooked a meal for the bandit, who must have been always hunger or have made a career of being the man who came to dinner.

McFall alone, of all the old men who claimed to have known Vasquez, knew the woman’s name who betrayed him. It was Teresa Lopez.

The bandit met her the night she wore hoop skirts at a dance. The sheriff and his deputies, hunting the fugitive, surrounded the dance hall, barring all windows and doors. When the sheriff walked in to look over the dancers, Vasquez crawled under Teresa’s skirts, which hid him effectively. The sheriff, baffled, left empty handed. She was *muy lunatica* (under the influence of the moon). Having been born under an unfavorable phase, she had spells of madness, old *paisanos* say. A *lunar* (birth mark) under her jaw warned men of her disposition, but Vasquez feared no man, woman, superstition or devil.

There was a man who owned an old ranch some 10 miles south of Bakersfield; *paisanos* say he was so rich

that when approaching some ranch house, if the dogs ran out barking at him he would throw a 20 dollar gold piece at them and say, “Here, that your master may buy you meat, so that you need not eat the guest God sends him.” It was on this ranch that Vasquez started his career of banditry. Thus in little bits, up until Jim McFall died in 1916, I got a few facts and tales. The one of the locket and the 50 dollar slug was most interesting to me, since I know the woman who has the trinket in her possession today.

When Jim was a young man, gold, jewels, money, might be laid anywhere and be safe from thieves, for there were none. Only a *ratero* (petty thief) would stoop to such a theft. But to purloin cattle and horses was not only considered equitable, but an honorable profession, provided of course the owner was not around. Many times one has heard some saddle-warped old-timer say in giving counsel to his children, “I have always been a *trabajador* (worker), never a bandido. I have stolen cattle and horses but that is not dishonor, for everyone did it in the old days.”

Jim had made a foray into Southern California and had left hotly pursued by the vaqueros of the man he was trying to relieve of some horses. He at last arrived at the San Gabriel River and stood there trying to decide which death was preferable, hanging or drowning. (It was one of those rare years when the rains were plentiful in California and the river was flooded.)

At this moment a man on a grey horse rode up. His sardonic countenance, was enhanced by a long drooping mustache, side burns, a hooked nose with nervous flaring nostrils, and eyes which continually roved, as if his life depended on his being able to discern everything about him. He looked across the flood saying, “*Vamos*,” and rode into the surging water. Jim, finally deciding drowning was preferable to hanging plunged after him. They made it across, but lost their horses. One went down in the river, and other ran off when reaching the opposite bank, scared by the men hanging onto his tail.



After some walking Jim and the stranger came to a *ranchito* where a grey horse, its rope dragging, was feeding in a little pasture. Catching him, they rode double to a house in Cahuenga Pass where a woman, Teresa, lived. There Jim found his companion to be Tiburcio Vasquez, and learned that the bandit had been in such a hurry not because he was being pursued, like Jim, but because the woman had sent him a message saying she was lonely. Yet it had been Vasquez, not the man in danger of hanging who had led the way into the flood.

The next day, with a good horse between his knees, the Sierra Madre behind him and the refuge in the Tejon's La Trampa in sight, Jim opened a locket given to him before he's left and found a 50 dollar slug inside, a gift from the same man who'd swum torrents to reach a woman.

My grandfather was a boy then, and all through his life held in hero worship the man, and in his old age was

to say a word or two in his defense, little dreaming that the child I once was would grasp these few words and remember, when the time came years later to set them down in writing...

The old-timers say Vasquez always rode a grey horse with a black saddle and a number of them told me they kept one of his greys in a corral for the *bandido* to change to when he came by, escaping from some sheriff or posse. They say his greys were placed in ranches over most of California and he could be sure of a fresh horse at all times.

Vasquez attended dances in Kern county and was, like all bandits, *muy enamorado* (a great lover). The *tulares* served as a hiding place for him on more than one occasion. So say the old-timers.

Kern Country, in early days, was plagued with horse thieves and among the tales told of the wily desperadoes

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is the following *cuento de Vasquez*, illustrating the legendary cunning of the man.

A Bandit's Ruse. The bandit and his crew were in camp in the hills on the edge of Carriso plains and were planning a horse stealing expedition when a disagreement between men and their leader ended with only one remaining faithful to Tiburcio Vasquez, who was leaving camp in a huff. One of the mutineers assumed leadership. The bandits had built an enclosure up a secluded canyon and as they brought in the stolen animals a few at a time, they were held in this corral. Among the stolen horses were two old, gentle bell mares.

Vasquez, meanwhile, hovered, watching their moves from a distance. When all the horses in the surrounding country that could be stolen safely were about to move out with the stock to find a market for the animals, Vasquez and his followers rode down to the corral after dark.

Except for one man on guard who sat by the fire, the bandits all rolled in their blankets were asleep. Vasquez and his henchmen caught the two bell mares and took the bells off. After Vasquez drove the horses out, his aide tied a rope across one corner of the corral, then hung the bells to this rope. All through the night, at intervals, he gave the rope a shake to simulate the movements of the dozing mares.

The dozing bandit at the fire, hearing the occasional sound of the bells, thought the horses safe and never moved. The bell ringer left just before daylight to overtake his chief.

The mutineers on arising in the morning went to the corral to discover the trick played on them by their former leader who, with six hour's start, was miles away and had left them to walk many weary steps before finding more horses to ride.

The old-timer who told me this story said the bandits were afoot four days before they got mounts on which to leave the country.



Successful Banditry. Out of the plains below San Emidio there stood a long pepper tree close to the road from Maricopa to Bakersfield. Ramon Dominguez (Frank's father), with his wife and children, were living near this spot when Vasquez and his band, driving a herd of 300 mules that they had stolen on the coast, stopped and asked Ramon's wife to cook some food for them. After she had fed them they rode on with the stock, which they drove into Lower California, where they sold them.

Frank Dominguez was born in *Campo del Medio*, now Castro Lane, in 1871 and all the old men who knew him when he was a vaquero say that he was one of the best. Many of the old-timers have passed on over the great divide during the 10 or more years Mr. Dominguez has lingered on a bed of pain paralyzed, unable to move. The years he spent breaking horses on Santa Rosa have taken their toll. But the old vaquero, his eyes still bright, memory clear, is pleased when someone drops in to hear his stories of *vaqueros de nota*, bandits and *hechiseros* (magicians) who rode here in early days.

When Dominguez was a small boy his father Ramon told him this story: "I visited the jail in Los Angeles and saw Vasquez sitting with his shame,

thinking back over many varied scenes and incidents in his life as a fugitive. His memory went back to the time when he was pursued and he hid his panting horse and entered a dance hall, wondered what whim of the devil had caused him to do so.

"It is fated that one man is born to riches, the other to poverty, and he to be a herder of cattle. Women are loathe to smile on a poor vaquero, for life with him at best is fraught with labor, hardship and squalor. He had to steal the good grey horses and silvered black saddles he had gloried in riding. For what else is there to enjoy in this life other than good horses? Of course, there was the woman, but she had made the world drop out from under him when she betrayed him to the law in the shack hidden in the Cahuenga hills. There was no hope now; it had died the day she had hidden his guns to render him helpless. There remained only black despair, for it makes all the difference in life or even death if hope is left or left out.

"For of what value to a doomed man are love notes and flowers from women with the milk white skin that fascinates men when it was a black-haired traitress who had caused his world to drop out from under him?"



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

The Road Trip List

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

#26 – George Strait

The early 1980s saw some significant, ah-hah moments in our little, beloved western world. The music and photography of the West saw a shift to authentic and celebratory approaches that would change the way people thought about the region and its people forever. Two young photographers – Jay Dusard and Kurt Markus published photo books that treated the west as a serious place. A place where people lived, loved, worked and thrived. Gone was the yucks and shucks approach to the west, rather the subjects that appeared in Dusard’s *The North American Cowboy: A Portrait* and Markus’ *After Barbed Wire* depicted lives invested in the horse and cow culture of western America – respectful representations of real people doing real work.

Western music started regaining the respect it deserved with albums from both Canadian singer-songwriter Ian Tyson – *Old Corrals and Sagebrush* and our own UCSB, MFA alumnus, Tom Russell – *Cowboy Real*. These two originals went on to collaborate and continue to play and sing together today when schedules allow. Theirs was an examination of the culture of the west. Western – not country and western.

Country music was changing as well as country was reaching a much broader audience –the era of “Urban Cowboy” was upon us and into the spotlight stepped a talented young singer with a 1981, hit single titled “Unwound.” And with that, George Harvey Strait never looked back. Hit after hit started coming as the man from

Poteet, Texas seemed to know exactly what his Texas audience wanted – as well as the rest of the world. And as the “hat acts” of country music came and went, George Strait remained – and remains today – true to his style. It



Album art from George Strait: 22 More Hits

would be impossible to list all the awards and number one records George Strait has been a part of but he and his “Ace in the Hole” band have changed the look and style of country music forever. We put George Strait on the list with two of his classic rodeo songs. The first, “Amarillo By Morning,” which Strait covered in his 1982 album, *Strait from the Heart* – an ode to the sport of Rodeo that has been played on more radios and tape players than anyone could begin to count. Once Buddy Spicher’s first fiddle notes start the song, it’s a great three-minute ride.



Many folks that follow Rodeo are, shall we say, passionate – thinking of it as a disease for which there is no cure” and Strait’s 1996 hit, “I Can Still Make Cheyenne” considers both the up-side and down-side of matrimony while heading on down the rodeo-road.

George Strait is more than a country singer – he is an ambassador of the western way of life. The road can be long but it’s never lonely when GS is along in the pick-up.

See George Strait’s performances of these two classic songs by clicking on the links below in our online edition or at www.ranchandreata.com. We have added the lyrics to both songs so you can sing along.

Amarillo By Morning

By Paul Alexander Fraser and Terry Stafford
(George Strait version)

Amarillo by morning, up from San Antone.
Everything that I’ve got is just what I’ve got on.
When that sun is high in that Texas sky
I’ll be bucking at the county fair.
Amarillo by morning, Amarillo I’ll be there.

They took my saddle in Houston, broke my leg in
Santa Fe.
Lost my wife and a girlfriend somewhere along the
way.
Well I’ll be looking for eight when they pull that gate,
And I’m hoping that judge ain’t blind.
Amarillo by morning, Amarillo’s on my mind.

Amarillo by morning, up from San Antone.
Everything that I’ve got is just what I’ve got on.
I ain’t got a dime, but what I got is mine.
I ain’t rich, but lord I’m free.
Amarillo by morning, Amarillo’s where I’ll be.
Amarillo by morning, Amarillo’s where I’ll be.



Album art from Love is Everything

I Can Still Make Cheyenne

By Aaron Barker and Erv Woolsey)

Her telephone rang ‘bout a quarter to nine
She heard his voice on the other end of the line
She wondered what was wrong this time
She never knew what his calls might bring
With a cowboy like him it could be anything
And she always expected the worst in the back of her
mind.

He said, “It’s cold out here and I’m all alone,
I didn’t make the short go again and I’m coming home.
I know I’ve been away too long.
I never got a chance to write or call
And I know this rodeo has been hard on us all
But I’ll be home soon
And honey is there something wrong?”

She said, “Don’t bother comin’ home.
By the time you get here I’ll be long gone.
There’s somebody new and he sure ain’t no rodeo man.”
He said, “I’m sorry it’s come down to this.
There’s so much about you that I’m gonna miss.
But it’s alright baby, if I hurry I can still make Cheyenne.



Gotta go now baby, if I hurry I can still make
Cheyenne.

He left that phone danglin' off the hook
Then slowly turned around and gave it one last look
Then he just walked away
He aimed his truck toward that Wyoming line
With a little luck he could still get there in time
And in that Cheyenne wind he could still hear her say.

She said, "Don't bother comin' home.
By the time you get here I'll be long gone.
There's somebody new and he sure ain't no rodeo man."
He said, "I'm sorry it's come down to this.
There's so much about you that I'm gonna miss.
But it's alright baby, if I hurry I can still make
Cheyenne.

Gotta go now baby, if I hurry I can still make
Cheyenne.

PS: We had to add one additional GS song for your listening pleasure – "How 'Bout Them Cowgirls" – his 2007 homage to the women of the West. There are about a billion good George Strait songs, but we include this one as it's just way too cool to leave out.

Amarillo By Morning
http://youtu.be/kX_9Go0Z8e4

I Can Still Make Cheyenne
<http://youtu.be/aJFNEVd1ucc>

How 'Bout Them Cowgirls
<http://youtu.be/fgmmspLLleo>



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photo by William Reynolds

Enlightenment being practiced at Whiffle Tree Ranch, Carmel Valley, California.



TWO WRAPS AND A HOOEY

Crafting a Future

As a young man, I was drawn to craft and craftsmanship. Envisioning, designing, and fabricating a useful item that carried its own intrinsic beauty was – in my mind – a noble calling. I followed that calling and worked for years as a production potter, turning out countless sets of plates and bowls and cups. The satisfaction came in the repetition of the process, in the over and over creation of things with a useful purpose. Yet, each effort was unique and therefore a work of the moment, as disparate qualities of mood, random thoughts, or the time of day merged into the creative process, overshadowing the items' sameness. This “using beauty,” where form and use meet, is for many, the true nature of craft. This quality of “using beauty” is wonderfully present in America’s indigenous cowboy crafts. Bit and spur making, saddle making, rawhide braiding, and Western silver-smithing are all skills that have evolved from the needs and dreams of stockmen and those making a living on horseback.

Over the last 30 years, the West has been witness to a renaissance of quality in the cowboy crafts that has taken them out of the bunkhouse and into mainstream

galleries and museums. A fine example of this renaissance is the rise of a group of talented craftsmen who have worked to retool the concept of the craftsman’s guild. The Traditional Cowboy Arts Association (TCAA) started in 1998 as a small group of individual, recognized craftsmen who gathered in Idaho to discuss the nature of their craft and the universe they served. Most had come from the real deal – a horseback or ranching background and not only did they make the gear, but they used it on a daily basis. Theirs was an education of purpose and experience. They had used gear that worked – or didn’t, and they wanted to make it better. The founding members of the TCAA set a goal of helping to continue to promote and evolve the historic trades of the horse and cow culture – trades they feared could disappear – by creating awareness and broader public recognition of these indigenous Western skills. Make sure you read our editor, A.J. Mangum’s piece on page 48 titled “The Grand Experiment” about the new presentation of cowboy art and craft. See more at www.tcowboyarts.org

In our Books To Find section this issue we shared the wonderful new book by Tadd Myers – another



celebration of craftsmen and women continuing a singular passion in small scale “making.” Most of the folks Tadd photographed have nothing to do with the cowboy world but from bit maker to accordion maker the intent is the same – to continue a perspective of making things by hand. Of things to be used, and in their use, beauty is shown. Please support their efforts and buy the book. www.taddmyers.com

Soetsu Yanagi (1889-1961), philosopher and founder of the *mingei* (folk art) movement in Japan in the late 1920s, spoke of the nature of “using beauty” of indigenous crafts in his book *The Unknown Craftsman*.

“The special quality of beauty in crafts,” he wrote, “is that it is a beauty of intimacy. Since articles are to be

lived with every day, this quality of intimacy is a natural requirement. Such beauty establishes a world of grace and feeling...The beauty of such objects is not so much of the noble, the huge, or the lofty as a beauty of the warm and familiar. Here one may detect a striking difference between crafts and the arts. People hang their objects for everyday use close to them and take them in their hands.”

While referencing the crafts in his own region of the world, his words could easily apply to items shown in Tadd Myer’s fine book or in a fine bit or a set of handily braided reins, being used somewhere, every day, out in the West. BR



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