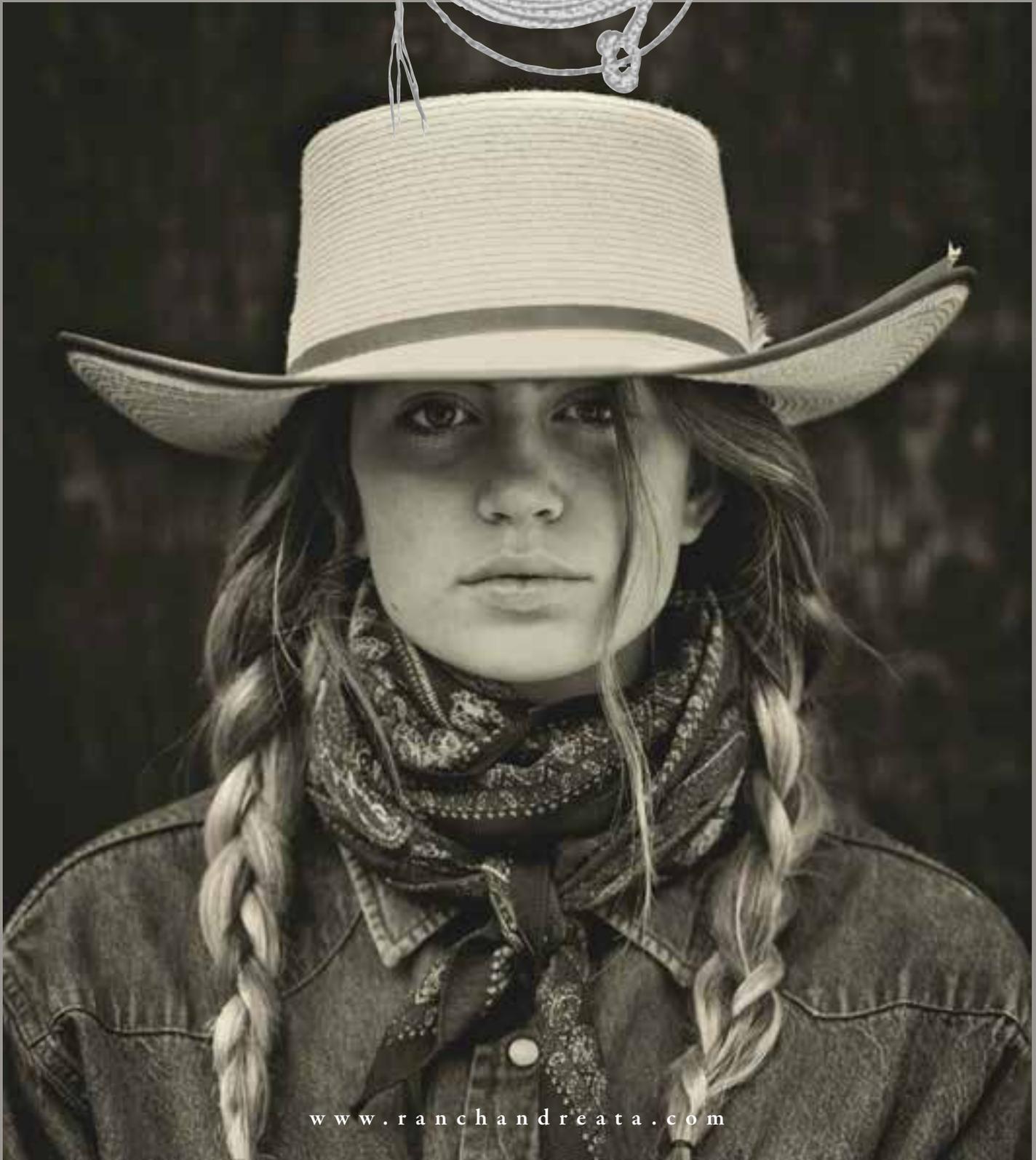


The Journal of the American West

Ranch & Reata

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FRONT GATE



photo by Jenny Coxon, www.tanaphotos.com

Tom Tanner and Trevor Fuhrman head down the road to the third Wrangler Brannaman Pro-Am Vaquero Roping in Santa Ynez, California, held this past October.

Lyle on Stringy Holding My Beau. This was a rare moment when I was out photographing Horseshoe Butte for neighbors and not working at the same time. I stopped to get a photograph of my first horse, Beau, and my ranching partner riding his horse, Stringy. Photo by Jean Laughton

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Cover image: Lily Baxter, photographed by her father,
Scott T. Baxter

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Off Script

By A.J. Mangum

A disclaimer: The events described below are depicted as I remember them. Other witnesses might recall minor details differently. What happened, though, happened.

4

It wasn't the rider's fault, nor was it the horse's fault, so I won't mention their names. It was, though, an unmitigated disaster, a PR stunt that went wrong in epic fashion. Nonetheless, it reminded me of some truths about horsemanship. And I had a better-than-front-row seat.

Years ago, I covered a retirement ceremony for a stallion that, within the culture of his breed, was a bona fide equine celebrity, a champion whose handlers had parlayed his stellar arena performances into a marketing phenomenon. The photogenic horse appeared frequently in equestrian magazines, and made goodwill appearances at all manner of events. At shows, kids lined up to have their photos taken with him, and to get his "autograph," signed on the horse's behalf by his owner, a gracious, matronly figure with a broad, contagious smile that seemed fueled by an unmistakable love for her horse.

One really couldn't help getting caught up in the hype.

By this point, the horse was in his late teens, and his owner and trainers had decided to retire him, marking the occasion with one final arena performance. The event drew a serious crowd, filling an 8,000-seat coliseum to capacity.

I was in the arena, camera in hand, strategically positioned along one wall, not far from where the stallion's owner stood. The performance began with the horse being ridden in hunt-seat tack, by a trainer with whom the horse had a long history. Performing under a spotlight, to anthemic music that rose and fell dramatically as they worked, the two earned wave after wave of applause, building to a series of jaw-dropping maneuvers performed without a bridle.

As the routine appeared to end and the coliseum lights came up, the stallion's owner stepped to the

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middle of the arena, took up a microphone, and asked the crowd if there were any cowboys in the audience who wanted to ride her horse.

Before the crowd could mistakenly interpret her offer as an actual open invitation, a cowboy-hatted figure shot up from the stands, proclaiming something on the order of, "I'll ride that horse!" The moment screamed *scripted*, but the thousands in attendance were hopelessly hooked. Spectators not only played along, but applauded wildly as the hunt seat tack was stripped from the horse and replaced with a western saddle.

The set-up, though, was nowhere near complete, as the cowboy explained to the crowd that he too would ride the horse without a bridle...while sitting backwards in the saddle.

Life is full of moments in which you see questionable events beginning to develop before your eyes and you think to yourself, *Is that really a good idea?* If you're purely an observer, though – like any of the thousands of people on hand that evening – it's easy to conclude that the active participants must surely have a plan.

I recall leaning against that arena wall, watching the cowboy position himself *backwards* in the saddle, and thinking, *What if this horse just runs off?* I must've been as caught up in the moment as any other spectator, though, and dismissed my misgivings.

Well, I recall thinking, they must know what they're doing.

The cowboy and the stallion launched into a run, making a precision-perfect oval around the arena perimeter. The two blasted past my position along the arena wall. If I'd been holding a lit match, it would've been extinguished by the breeze the horse generated.

Sitting backwards in the saddle seemed to pose no handicap for the cowboy. He sat relaxed, casually glancing over his shoulder to monitor the path ahead of

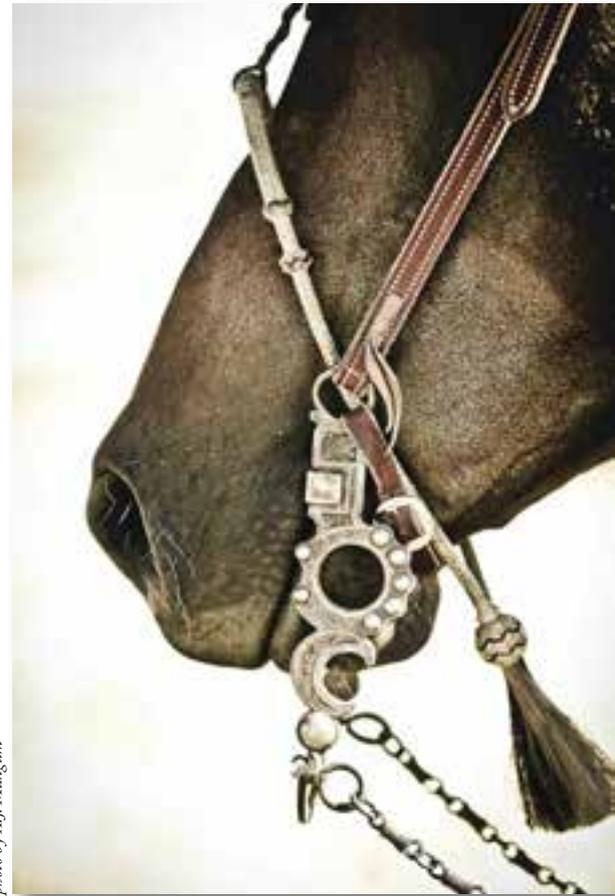


photo by A.J. Mangum

Don't leave home without it.

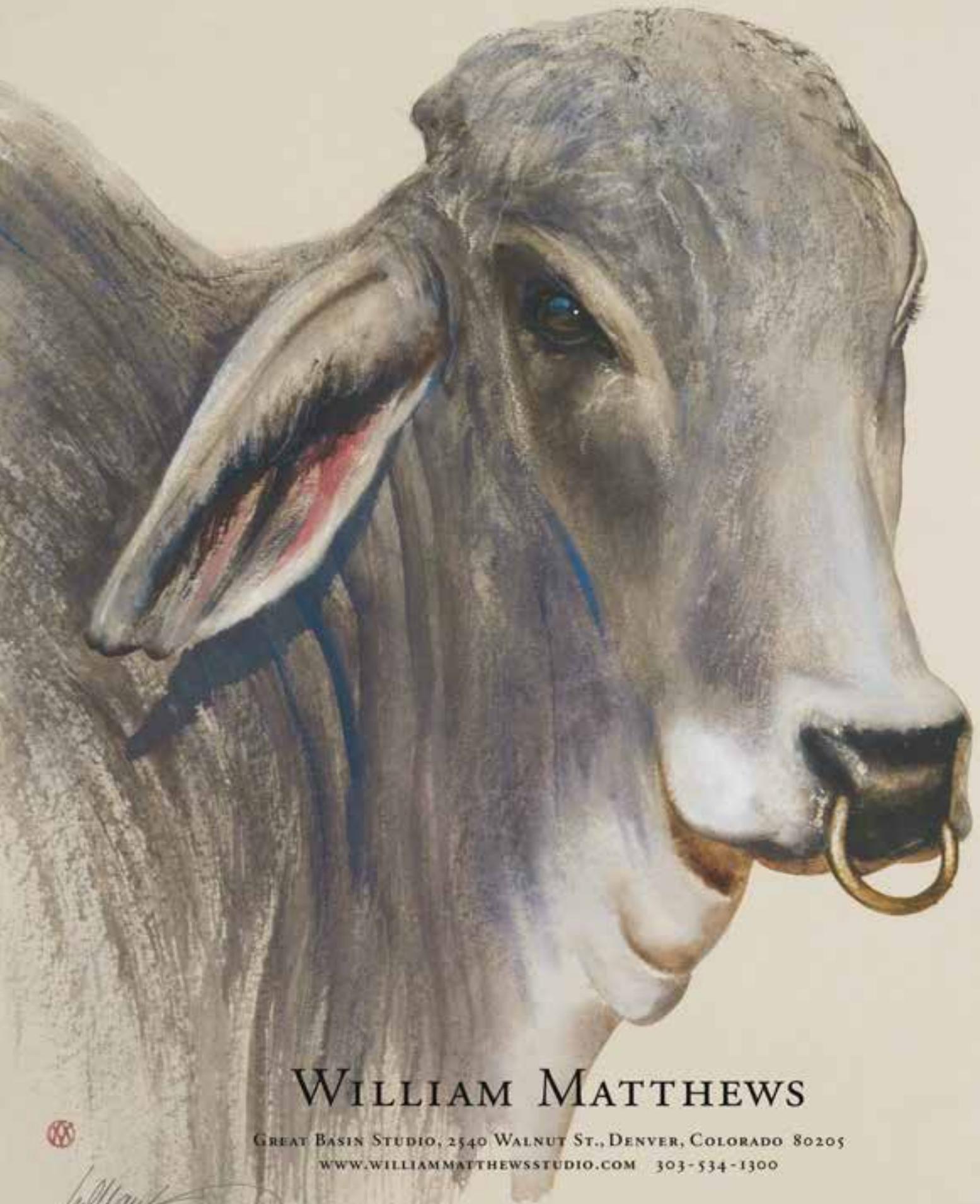
the horse. Watching as the rider exercised such control, the crowd went nuts, erupting into a deafening round of well-deserved cheers and applause.

The two raced past me once again. They rounded the north end of the arena, sped along the opposite wall, rounded the south end, and roared past me yet again. The crowd noise was constant – if anything, building in volume.

Their speed seemingly increasing, the pair made another circle around the arena.

Then another.

And another.



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William Matthews

At first, it just seemed excessive. (I could picture someone editing the script: “Should we cut out those last two circles?”) Then, the stallion made an awkward, corner-cutting turn that sent him on a diagonal path across the arena and it was clear the evening’s program – the plan calling for nothing to go wrong as a cowboy rode a bridleless horse, while seated backwards – was now irrelevant. The horse was no longer in the rider’s control. The crowd – those 8,000 spectators – quieted. As the stallion and his passenger raced past me yet again, the packed coliseum was nearly silent

The horse’s owner, through a smile that now seemed less than genuine, took a half-step forward as the horse, still traveling at breakneck speed, approached her position along the wall.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa,” she uttered through gritted

teeth. The stallion charged past her. He completed another circuit around the arena and, as the horse approached her again, his owner made another subtle attempt at slowing him down.

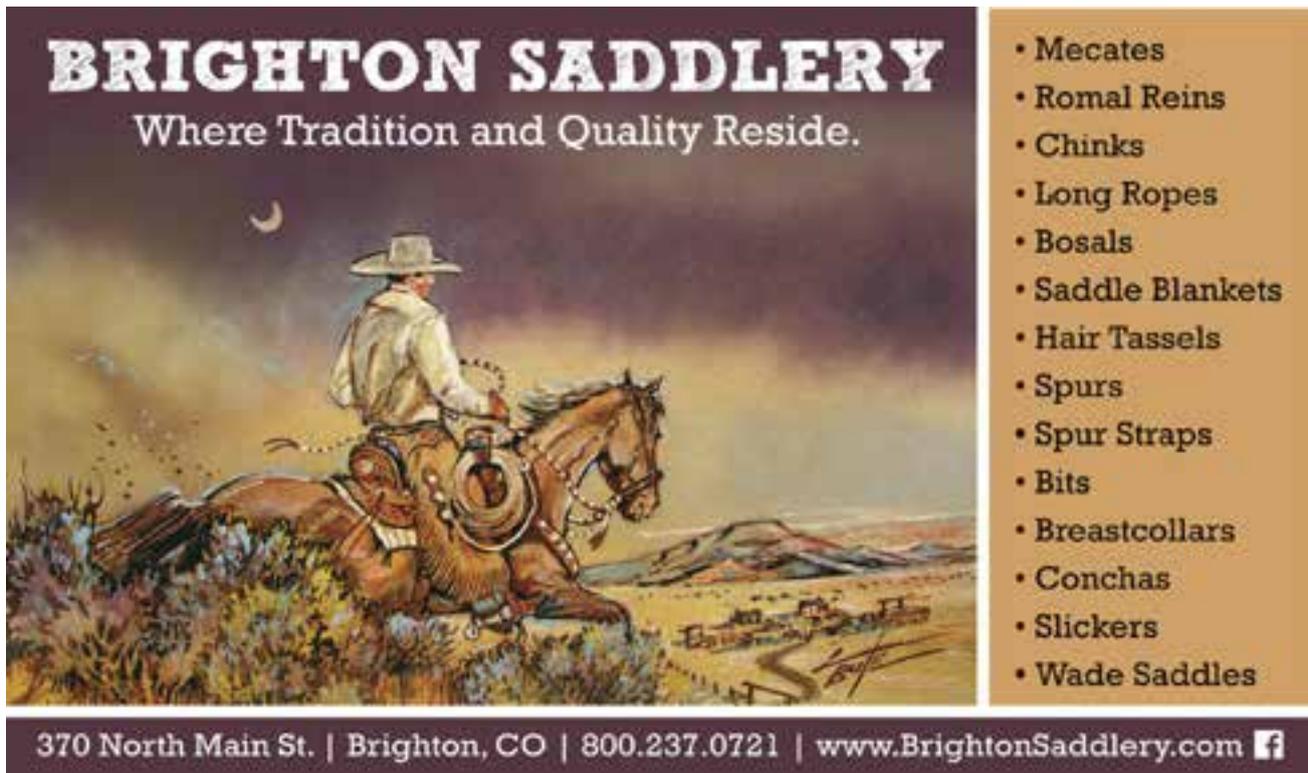
“Whoa, whoa, whoa,” she commanded quietly, again through gritted teeth.

She was invisible to the horse, and he ripped past, still at full speed.

Through all this, that cowboy held on, not only staying aboard the horse (and, seriously, imagine that challenge), but somehow keeping his cool, even making his situation look easy. It was as if he’d simply resolved to outlast the horse. What else was there to do?

The crowd, for its part, remained painfully hushed.

After what seemed like an eternity (in reality, probably less than a minute), the horse finally began to



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slow. He crossed the center of the arena at a speed that allowed the cowboy to make his departure from the horse's back. The rider landed in the dirt, and the horse loped on, captured without drama by handlers at the end of the arena.

It was all kinds of unfortunate. Many, it seemed were due a share of pity. The folks who had dreamed up the performance were likely making themselves scarce, wishing in vain for a witness-protection-style situation and reflecting on how pleasant their lives had been just minutes earlier.

As for the cowboy: what had been an orchestrated, if high-risk, effort to catapult a professional horseman – a relative newcomer to the big-league clinic scene – to celebrity status, had gone awry, and then some, in front of a crowd that could not have been larger without the event having been broadcast. It seemed disastrous, a debacle from which a mere mortal couldn't possibly recover.

The small-pond nature of the horse world, though, resulted in something of a media conspiracy. Correspondents were reluctant, or outright forbidden by their editors, to report fully on the incident. Magazine coverage generally amounted to vague, partial paragraphs that likely went unread. (Who really reads print coverage of a horse show a couple of months after the fact?) This meant that, unless you were there in

person, the evening's spectacle simply never happened. The rider suffered no career setback – nor did he deserve to – and within months, as I recall, was one of the most prominent clinicians on the horse scene, a position he still holds.

Then, there was the horse. At first, I felt awful for him, and for his legacy. No extrasensory ability was required to read the minds of everyone present that evening: "The horse deserved better, had earned an untarnished farewell." It didn't take much reflection, though, to return to reality: the horse didn't need anyone's pity. He couldn't have cared less.

Competitions, championships, celebrity status, marketing? These are human constructs, concepts for which a horse has no use or understanding. The more I contemplated how closely this horse had been managed (possibly since his birth), the more I wondered how many moments of pure, *unbridled* freedom he'd experienced in his lifetime. Those last few minutes of his farewell ceremony might've been his happiest inside any arena. Arguably, I had a better view of the stallion's runaway performance than anyone, including his rider. From my spot along the arena wall, it actually looked like the horse was having fun.

My pity for the horse faded quickly. As I watched his handlers lead him from the arena, three words came to mind: *Good for him.*



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Interesting Things and Stories from Out West

100 YEARS, 100 RANCHERS

Photography by Scott T. Baxter

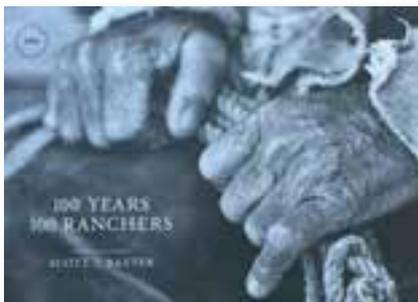
In fall 2004, Scott Baxter began documenting one-hundred ranchers whose families have been ranching in Arizona since 1912 or earlier. And since spring 2011, Scott's images have comprised an exhibit titled, "100 Years 100 Ranchers" and shown throughout Arizona from Terminal Four at Sky Harbor to Wickenburg's Desert Caballeros Western Art Museum and the Tucson Museum of Art. Of his work, Scott says, "Ranchers love what they do, and cherish the land and tradition that has been passed down to them through their families. My goal is to recognize these families that have struggled to survive and persevere in these difficult times. As ranches are lost to developers and poor economic conditions, I hope to be able to preserve, with this project, an integral part of Arizona's traditions." His book, celebrating that work is available and includes the images we show here. The project was an official Legacy Project of the Arizona Centennial 2012.



Hands & Honda – Jim O'Haco, Coconino County, AZ

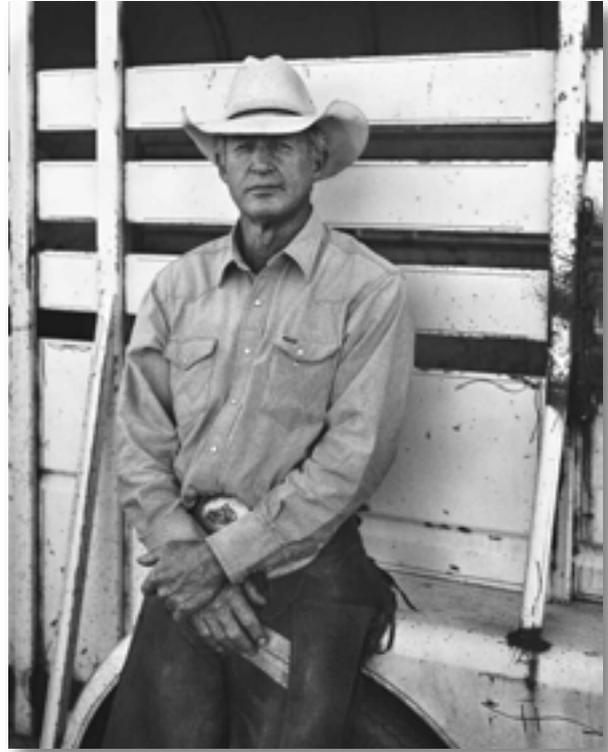
Regarding his craft, Scott says, "The choice of

black and white large format film is simple. I believe that a monochromatic study can effectively bring to life the spirit of this unique group of Arizonans. Working in large format allows me to slow down the process and engage my subjects in a more personal, less detached manner." This is a superbly crafted and heartfelt achievement. To buy the book and learn more about Scott's work, visit www.scottbaxterphotography.com

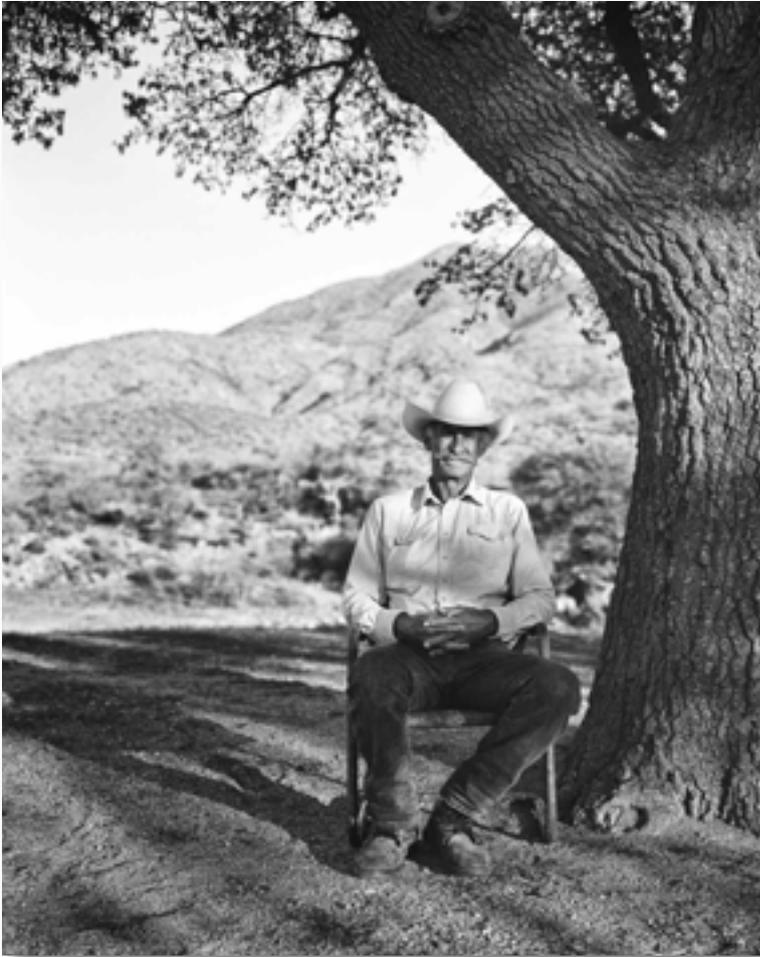




Sam Udall
Y Cross Ranch
1999



Shannon Marie Nicholson Bales
Corporal Stripe Ranch
2011



Wayne Klump
Klump Ranch
2004

Sitting under the tree where
his daughter was married.



Jerry Vojnic
Dave Perkin Ranch
2011



Kathryn Maye Orme with her sisters, Lauren Virginia Orme (L), and Mallory Royce Orme (R)
Orme Ranch, 2011



Splittin' Em Up, Tom Browning, 25 x 60 oil



The Tularosa Cavy, Teal Blake, 30 x 40 watercolor



Wisdom from an Elder
Howard Terpning, 30 x 22 oil



Saddle – Cary Schwarz



Gold Buckle – Mark Drain



Wrist Cuffs – John Willemsa

COWBOY CROSSINGS 2015

CAA and TCAA Exhibition and Sale

Featuring the Cowboy Artists of America 51st Annual Sale and Exhibition and the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association 19th Annual Exhibition and Sale, Cowboy Crossings is one of the most significant happenings to hit the world of western art and craft each year, the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum hosts the event and sale for these 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. www.nationalcowboymuseum.org



2015 TCAA Emerging Artist Competition winner Darcy Kabatoff – Saddler



2015 TCAA Emerging Artist Competition winner Braidie Butters – Silversmith



TCAA 2015 Fellowship and Emerging Artist Winners: Beau Compton, Conley Walker, Braidie Butters, Darcy Kabatof, Whit Olseon, and Jean-Luc Parisot



THE WISDOM OF RACHEL LARSEN

We printed this piece back in issue #3.4 and so many people have asked about it over the last couple of years, here it is again. It is written by Rachel Lohof Larsen – a fifth-generation rancher, mom, wife, cowgirl, and blogger. Originally from Montana, Rachel has a BA in Environmental Science from Colorado College. She and her husband, Guy, bring a sense of integrity and a strong interest in sustainability to all their pursuits. Rachel, her husband and children, practice their stockmanship skills in Southwestern Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana – and anyone who wishes to visit her website at www.thesagebrushsea.com will find some glorious writing and this gem consisting of a list of things she wanted her ranch kids to know. It is wonderful and deserving of being stuck on the fridge in every home around – whether you're a rancher or not. Everything on the list is something every kid should read. Thanks again, Rachel.

25 Things I Want My Ranch Kids to Know

1. **You have chores, because we love you.** They seem tedious, but they are the building blocks for your future. Responsibility, accountability, and basic life skills begin with sweeping the floor, scrubbing the toilet, and feeding pets and livestock. We love you, we want you to find success in life. Success comes from preparation, so we give you chores.
2. **Boredom is a choice.** Don't let me hear you say you are bored. Boredom is a choice, when your backyard is the whole outdoors, there are chores to be done, and books to be read. If you can't entertain yourself with a stick and a bucket full of calf nuts, we're doing something wrong.
3. **There is magic in watching the sunrise.** Early mornings are hard, we don't rise as early and as easily as Dad. Do it anyway. The beauty you will witness with the awakening of the world is worth sleepy eyes and cold fingers.
4. **A pet is more than a companion.** Your cats, dogs, calves, and ponies are more than friends and playmates. They are lessons in empathy, responsibility, love, and letting go.
5. **Grow your own food.** Our world is increasingly rife with poor food choices; the easiest response to unhealthy options is to grow your own food. I don't care it's a single tomato plant or a garden large enough to feed 10 families, cultivate an appreciation for fresh, whole food.
6. **Be open to learning.** In horsemanship and life, you will never know it all, never assume that you do. A humble open, attitude towards learning will lead to new skills and experiences.
7. **Dress appropriately for the occasion.** A cowboy's uniform, hat, long-sleeved shirt, jeans, and boots, evolved out of necessity. Protect yourself from the sun, wind and weather with the proper clothing. I nag and question your clothing choices, because you are precious to me.
8. **There is a time and a place for bad language.** Sometimes you just need to cuss; spew anger and frustration in one grand verbal barrage. Smash your thumb with your shoeing hammer/fencing pliers, massive runback at the gate, ringy heifer won't take her calf? Yes. At the dinner table, the classroom, in front of your grandmother? No.
9. **Feed your help.** Neighbors, friends, or hired men? It doesn't matter, sometimes the best way to show your gratitude for a long day of hard work is a lovingly prepared hot meal and cold drink.
10. **Don't judge, but if you do, judge them by their abilities, attitudes, actions not appearances.** Buckaroo or cowboy, flat or taco, slick or rubber? In some circles these comparisons can lead to heated debates, more often than not based

strongly in personal opinion, rather than rooted in truth. This is true outside of the ranching world, as well. Words have power to create divisiveness, do not use them to speak against yourself or gossip about others.

11. **Stewardship.** Dad and I choose to be responsible for landscapes and livestock, this lifestyle defines who we are. Sometimes that means ballgames are trumped by pasture rotations and dinnertime is delayed by cesarean sections, it does not mean we love you any less. I hope you approach the world with a sense of respect and connectedness.
12. **Fake it 'til you make it.** You don't have to be confident in everything you do, but taking a deep breath and acting like you are helps you get through it. This can be applied in the arena, the sorting alley, to horses or people, and life as a whole. Stand up straight and look the challenge in the eye, as you gain experience confidence will catch up with you.
13. **That said, don't mistake arrogance for confidence.** No one likes a swaggering braggart, even if he is a competent swaggering braggart. There is honor in being unheralded, if you enjoy your work.
14. **Low-stress is best...for you and for livestock.** Don't let it defeat your spirit and energy. Don't let it impact your livestock health.
15. **The only dumb question is the unasked question.** Where is the gate? Which calf? Can you help me? Ask questions, no one will think less of you. Clear communication helps prevent misunderstandings.
16. **Always do your best.** There are days when your best is better than others, recognize that. Avoid self-judgment, abuse, and regret and enjoy the process.
17. **"There comes a time when you're gonna get bucked and you're gonna need to know what to do so you don't get stepped on."** – Betsy Swain, 1875. Do not let fear of pain or disappointment stand in the way of new experiences. What I regret most in my life are opportunities missed out of fear. Pain and disappointment are a part of living, learn to take them in stride and keep moving forward.
18. **Be polite and kind.** Enough said.
19. **But, don't be a pushover.** Stand up for yourself.
20. **Develop a sense of place.** Wherever you may live, learn the names of plants, rocks, and animals, visit old homesteads (or neighborhoods) and educate yourself about Indigenous cultures. In doing so, you gain roots, a sense of belonging that will lend you stability in all that you do.
21. **Break a sweat everyday.** Pound a steel post or take a jog, whatever you do, break a sweat daily. Your mind and body will thank you for it.
22. **Be present.** If you are mindful of the moment, it is easier to catch a mistake before it happens, redirect a broncy horse before wreck, and have better relationships. It might surprise you, what you observe and what you achieve when you are fully in the moment.
23. **Unplug.** Go to cow camp. Leave the computer screen, TV, and cell phones behind. Watch the chipmunks and rock dogs, read a book, or share a conversation with your family.
24. **Sometimes the hard decisions are the right ones.** We cannot rationalize suffering and pain to animals. Sometimes the best decision is the hardest one to make, know when to let them go.
25. **You do not have to maintain this lifestyle, but please appreciate it.** I don't expect you to grow up and follow in our footsteps; the long hours and low pay aren't for everyone. Carry these early horseback mornings in your heart.



WRANGLER BRANNAMAN PRO-AM ROPING

This year's Pro-Am is in the record books and was a grand success. One hundred plus teams roped solid for three days' prize money and cool stuff. We have complete visual and written reports later in the issue in both Buck Brannaman's and the Hen House's articles.

Here is a shot of the winning team – grasping their winnings, bits by John Wright of J.M. Capriola and their very cool – literally – coolers, sponsored by YETI.

Incidentally, YETI has a wonderful video, created by Farm League



2015 Winners and their plunder!

From left: John Wright, J.M. Capriola; Bill Reynolds, *Ranch & Reata Magazine*; Buck Brannaman; and winning team of Sterling Grosskopf, Brett Heggie, and Dwight Hill.



(www.farmleague.com) about our friend Graham Goodfield and Los Padres Outfitters. If you are looking at the digital edition, here is the film link: <http://yeticoolers.com/yeti-videos/los-padres/>. Or visit www.YETIcoolers.com and see it there. Next year's roping is October 21, 22, and 23, 2016. Be there!

PENDLETON MIDNIGHT MAKES THE CUT

The nice folks at Pendleton Whisky sent us a bottle of their new Pendleton Midnight – it was described as a “super premium whisky, accentuated by the intense and floral nuances absorbed from the American brandy barrels. It’s a unique addition to the Canadian whisky category, and provides a more premium offering that’s smooth and complex.”

They're right, it didn't even make it through the photo shoot. www.pendletonwhisky.com



WESTERN STYLE WITH ASHLEY RIGGS

Silver and Turquoise – a Western Tradition

Mix the green of grass and the blue of the sky and you get one of the prettiest colors of the spectrum, turquoise. My home state of Nevada is the second largest producer of turquoise in North America. As a girl growing up, my Dad would find large, raw chunks of rocks laced with copper threads, a distant cousin of turquoise. A treasure from the hills that was carefully brought home in the back of the pickup truck to show Mom. It's name, a derivative of "Turques" or Turkey, was donned by the French in the 17th century. Turquoise has for centuries been prized, admired and adorning since the days of the Egyptian Pharaohs. In recent years there has been a plethora of "turquoise," much of it being faux stones dyed to emulate it.

The Navajo people were introduced to metalsmithing from Mexico. Heavy silver jewelry was a sign of wealth and used in trading. The addition of turquoise in jewelry came along later, in 1880s or so. These "Old Pawn" pieces are far heavier in silver weight and display more raw forms of the stone. Fewer were made and are rare and expensive to collect today. One of the biggest collectors was Millicent Rogers, a Standard Oil heiress and socialite who collected over 1,200 pieces of early Navajo and Pueblo jewelry. A museum housing her expansive collections is in Taos, New Mexico.



Millicent Rogers at her home in Taos, NM Wearing a fantastic concho belt.

With the advent of the Santa Fe railroad, Route 66, and Fred Harvey hotels, thousands of tourists streamed through the American Southwest. Souvenir items that hearkened the authenticity of the "Old West" were sold in trading posts along the routes (See also volume 5.3 on Navajo Rugs!) The result is the "Fred Harvey Era" of Navajo and Zuni turquoise jewelry. Made from thinner sheet silver and more consistent pieces of stone, they often feature the more Anglo appealing motifs, though still traditional in origin. Crossed arrows, thunderbirds, lightning zig-zags, horse-dogs, etc. Their charm is still popular today and highly collected (especially by yours truly!). They make great entry pieces to begin a collection.

The 1970s brought a new era of appreciation of Native American jewelry. Many stars and celebrities began to wear large concho belts and squash blossom necklaces along with fringe and other "folk" wear. The Boho-Hippy look had arrived and is a big trend today. Unfortunately, many of the jewelry pieces are incorrectly labeled as "Native American" jewelry or just badly reproduced. But like the Cowboy artisans of today, there are still many talented Navajo silversmiths carrying on their Western tradition.

For more inspiration, follow my board "Navajos and Turquoise" on Pinterest at [Ashley_e_Riggs](#) and on Tumblr at [nynv-ashleyriggs.tumblr.com](#).

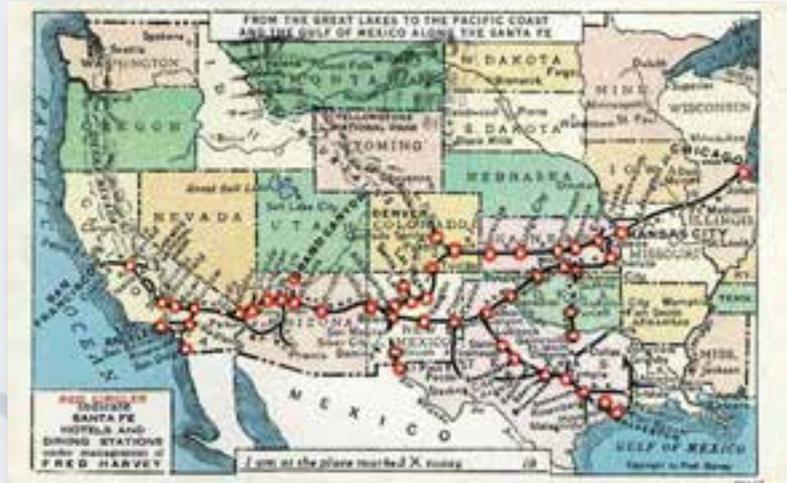


photo by Fryd Fryden Dahl

Some favorites...



Cher rocking a wonderful Squash Blossom Necklace in the '70s



Fred Harvey stop locations from a vintage postcard



Fred Harvey Era Cuff from my collection



Millicent Rogers in Taos, NM



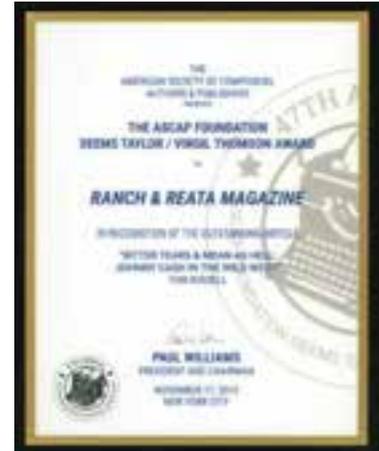
Early "Old Pawn" Bracelets – from the Millicent Rogers museum



Zuni Cross and Fred Harvey era crossed arrows brooch

AND THE WINNER IS...

Our own intrepid reporter, Tom Russell was awarded, along with *Ranch & Reata*, the coveted ASCAP Foundation Deems Taylor/Virgil Thompson Award for Excellence in Music Journalism for his story, “Bitter Tears and Mean as Hell: Johnny Cash in the West” that appeared in issue #3.5. We are honored.



Tom Russell, just after he received his ASACP Foundation Award – a bit of relaxing back stage, from left, Silvia Von Daeniken (Nadine

Russell’s Mom), Nadine Russell, Tom Russell, David Massengill, Larry “Ratso” Sloman, and Michael Simmons. David Massengill is a NYC based songwriter who wrote “Rider on An Orphan Train,” and “On the Road to Fairfax County,” both of which Tom recorded. Larry “Ratso” Sloman is a New York-based author best known for his collaboration with Howard Stern on the radio personality’s two best-selling books, *Private Parts* and *Miss America*. He also appears in all of Kinky Friedman’s mystery novels as the Dr. Watson to Kinky’s Sherlock. Sloman wrote an account of Bob Dylan’s 1975 *Rolling Thunder Revue* tour, *On the Road with Bob Dylan*. Michael Simmons won an award for his liner notes on guitarist Michael Bloomfield’s box set. Michael Simmons is a longtime and superb journalist...many credits.

Tom will be touring soon with his cool new medal. www.tomrussell.com

RANDOM COMMENT FROM TOM RUSSELL FROM THE FRONT LINES OF TRUTH.

“What God calls a bar...the Three Pigeons, Guildford UK...a pint tastes like a pint...where men go to weep and escape...” TR





RUSTY SPUR EXPANDS

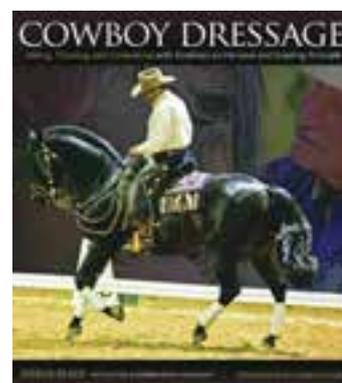
The Rusty Spur is one of the oldest western wear websites on the web and they have expanded their brands and offerings on their nifty new website at rustyspur.com. In addition, free shipping to the lower 48 states and flat rate shipping for international orders. Their brands include Ryan Michael, Barn Fly, Scully, Old Gringo Boots, Twisted X Boots, DD Ranchwear, Tin Haul, Stetson, Roper, Moda of Pella, American West, Vaquero Silk Wild Rags, Two Martini Jewelry, and much more. Their brands are expanding daily and they do take requests for items you may have a hard time finding. Please visit www.rustyspur.com or call them at 800-575-3514.

NEW IN WESTERN MEDIA

Cowboy Dressage: Riding, Training, and Competing with Kindness as the Goal and Guiding Principle

By Jessica Black with Eitan and Debbie Beth-Halachmy

The equestrian pursuit known as Cowboy Dressage was borne of a desire to meld the best of Western riding traditions and classical dressage in the pursuit of a harmonious relationship with a horse. Intended to be accessible to all, Cowboy Dressage is open to all breeds and all levels of riders; there isn't a set frame for overall look, head carriage, or action. The singular goal is to consider the horse's potential at all times as one strives to achieve a subtle and relaxed flow of information between horse and rider.



In this superbly written book, lifelong horsewoman Jessica Black traces the evolution of Cowboy Dressage back to its roots, sharing the story of Eitan and Debbie Beth-Halachmy and their Morgan horses that have served as the movement's ambassadors. She then provides an engaging and articulate explanation of the philosophy of Cowboy Dressage; expectations of the rider; what a participant needs in terms of equipment; and how the most important element—the horse—should be prepared. A wonderful and thorough section on groundwork, as well as specific training advice for achieving engagement, regulating the gaits, smoothing transitions, and balancing bend and straightness, get the reader started with a solid foundation. A fascinating read published by Trafalgar Square. www.horseandriderbooks.com



Great Rides of Today's Wild West

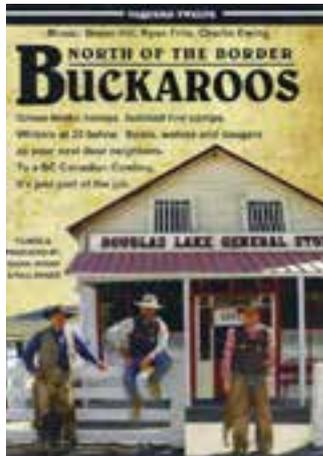
A Horseman's Photographic Journey Across the American West

By Mark Bedor

A stunning look at the best rides and ranches across the United States. Intrepid travel writer, photographer and horseman Mark Bedor offers a breathtaking adventure across the American West. This gorgeous photographic collection showcases twenty-six horseback rides across the United States (with one trip abroad to the great Australian outback). For each, Bedor offers firsthand descriptions of the people and places, whether they're

tagging along on a cattle drive, taking part in a re-creation of Custer’s Last Stand, or just soaking in the natural vistas.

Take part in the Great American Horse Drive in Colorado; ride through the spectacular Sierra Nevada at Inyo National Forest; and step back in time to the Old West at Tombstone Monument Ranch. Whether the locations are working dude ranches, historic national parks, or world-famous travel destinations, *Great Rides of Today’s Wild West* shows them in full splendor through more than three hundred spectacular photographs by the author. The beauty, romance, and history of the West and magnificent natural landscapes attract people from all over the world. This book lets you saddle up and ride across the country and beyond on some of the finest trails of today’s Wild West. Published by Skyhorse Publishing, www.todayswildwest.com



BUCKAROOS North of the Border

Vaquero Twelve

#12 in the Vaquero Series from veteran filmmakers, Susan Jensen and Paul Singer, their film on the buckaroos of Canada is a fascinating look into the culture. The Northern Buckaroos inherited the Californio Vaquero traditions back in the 1850s. Gold was discovered and miners needed beef. Cattle from California and Oregon Territory, were driven by up to the Gold Fields by Vaqueros and Buckaroos. And they introduced the Buckaroo traditions to Canada. When Northern Buckaroos drove cattle and horses to Alberta, they met up with Punchers bringing cattle from Texas. Over time Buckaroos took the best of the Texas traditions and blended them with their own Buckaroo style. Today, you see a mixture of the two. Order this or all twelve

videos for those wintery snowed-in evenings of vaquero binging at www.vaqueroseries.com

Watch the trailer at <https://youtu.be/Meqg-41obw8>

A COLLECTOR’S LEGACY

A Beading Heart, The Bob and Lora Sandroni Collection
by their friend and publisher, Linda Kohn Sherwood.

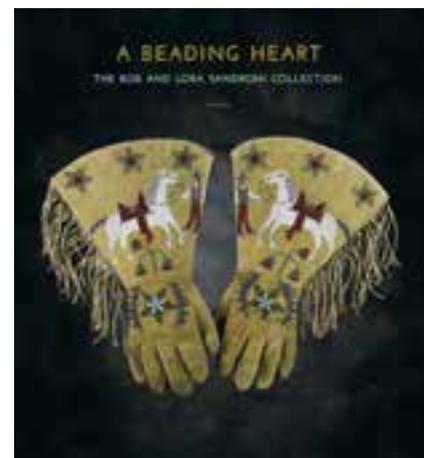
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Open



Once an avid collector has amassed treasures over his lifetime, then what? If the time is right to limit new acquisitions or even stop altogether, how do you fill that void? Every precious piece had a story to tell, a history, which had been a topic of numerous conversations. Does the collector go silent? Has his audience left the building?

Private collector Bob Sandroni (along with his wife Lora) wanted to keep the memories intact and spotlight historical nuances, so he decided to have it memorialized and asked me if I was up to the challenge. Always





ready for an adventure (but of course!) I decided to wade into the world of publishing, world in which I had experience but not with a project this exciting. I brought along some pros to help in James Nottage (VP and Chief Curatorial Office, Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art), Angela Swedberg (beadwork specialist), and graphic designer and dear friend Robin Ireland (who art directs this journal).

A Beading Heart, The Bob and Lora Collection seals the Sandroni collection in paper and ink. The 228-page volume mirrors his decades-long passion of hunting, acquiring and displaying their many pieces of Native American beadwork, from vast corners of the collecting world.

Two years in the making, *A Beading Heart* was a labor of love, for all of us. The book is available at www.highnoon.com/hnbooks.htm

MAIDA’S BELTS AND BUCKLE CELEBRATES SILVER (AND 25 YEARS)

It’s ironic that Maida’s Belts and Buckles is celebrating its silver anniversary this year, given the fact that it may have the largest selection of silver buckles found anywhere in the country. The iconic storefront and workshop is in the heart of Houston’s Galleria neighborhood and has been a staple for customers worldwide for over 25 years.

Jason Maida is a proud third generation Houstonian and fourth generation craftsman who launched his first store in 1990. It would appear that leather working was sewn into Maida’s genes; he hails from a long line of craftsmen starting with his great grandfather John Laureto Maida. Mr. Maida was a master cobbler and launched Maida & Cuccia Shoe Repair in Houston in the early 1900s. That store evolved over time to the widely known company Houston Shoe Hospital. Learning the art of leatherworking as a child next to his father, his interests expanded over time to include belt buckles. With deep admiration for the artistry of silversmithing, Jason soon began collecting antique buckles, which quickly blossomed into the idea of opening his own belt and buckle store. In 1990 Maida’s Belts and Buckles was born.

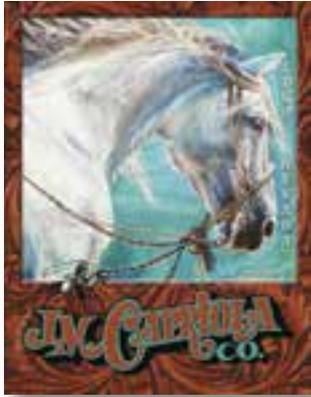


Jason Maida

Handcrafted sterling belt buckles, both new and vintage, can be found at Maida’s. The buckles also come with a history lesson from Jason Maida himself – his knowledge of American buckles and their makers is simply staggering. But the store doesn’t stop there, his onsite belt shop has any size, color or skin you could ever dream of to design your own custom belt. Beautiful exotic skin wallets, cufflinks, knives and money clips round out the mix alongside an extensive collection of handpicked women’s jewelry from an array of talented artisans.

Starting off 25 years ago with just a handful of buckles and belts, it’s grown into a store not to be missed. Maida’s Belts and

Buckles is located at 5727 Westheimer Road (at Chimney Rock), in Houston Texas. For more information, please visit www.Maidasbelts.com. DS



NEW CAPRIOLA CATALOG

The venerable western emporium and Elko, Nevada icon – J.M. Capriola – has published its 16th catalog since 1929 and this one is like no other, celebrating the third generation of Wrights as owners. John and Susan Wright along with John’s father Doug maintain the legacy of Capriola’s mission of offering fine using gear – of great quality – at a fair price. Get yours at www.capriolas.com.

BRANNAMAN WINE

At Sheridan, Wyoming’s Weston Wineries they are proud of their “American Grown, Wyoming Cellared” wines! The secret? They purchase, premium, high-end wine juices that can also be found in many popular higher priced reserve bottles of wine on the market today. The difference is most of these west coast grapes and juices only need to travel a minimum of 11 miles to reach their new home winery, whereas ours travel 1,100 miles in climate controlled trucks across the Rocky Mountains to Sheridan, Wyoming.

So they are proud to promote their home state of Wyoming and



307 Brannaman Pinot Grigio

the western heritage it represents across

the country! Labeling and branding are not about them, but rather, are about the legends, people, places and events that help keep the western lifestyle and fine horsemanship alive. Here’s where the name Brannaman comes in. Weston feels, as many do, that within the horse world, the name Buck Brannaman represents a legacy of not only competency and skilled horsemanship but also a genuine concern for the horse’s well

being. With that in mind, the folks at Weston Wineries have created “307 Brannaman” wines, 307 being the area code for Sheridan, Wyoming, in fact for all off Wyoming. Buck’s home state – is one of very few with a single telephone area code – encompassing over 97,814 square miles.)

There are currently two 307 Brannaman offerings – an Old Vine Zinfandel – sourced from 80-year-old vines from Northern California and a Pinot Grigio from California as well. A major portion of the proceeds from the sale of these fine wines are being given to charities close to Buck’s heart – especially those working in Foster care. Learn more about Brannaman Wines and other labels including Chris LeDoux and Longmire at www.westonwineries.com and www.brannamanwines.com.

The folks at Weston Wineries hope you enjoy their fun, unique wines and that they give you a true feel of Wyoming, “Where the pavement ends and the West begins!”



307 Brannaman Old Vine Zinfandel





OLD COWDOGS TO RE-RELEASE “COWBOY NECK TIES.”

Exactly what we need, another tie, right? Do people wear ties anymore? Well, the folks at Old Cowdogs think so and they are re-releasing their western themed neckties that featured a drawing of a hat by Will James along with a new one featuring artwork by Joe DeYong. Their was a time when gentlemen only would rope in a necktie – an era of civility and fine deportment to be sure. Visit their site to find out about the release date www.oldcowdogs.com



DESTINATIONS Sweet Spot: Part One.

By Donna Stegman

It's that time of the year again, the Christmas decorations have been (or are starting to be) stowed away, the hustle and bustle of the holiday season has passed and I'm getting antsy to get outta Dodge to search for warmer weather. After New Year's I grab my calendar to start the complicated process of planning both our business trips and vacation destinations. Timing and finances are point and plotted to accommodate where we *want* to go and where we *need* to go in the upcoming year. I'm usually primed with a handful of ideas already simmering on the back burner of my mind, but this year I must admit I find myself a bit, adrift.

Last fall we all took a road trip to Oregon that not only changed how we travel, but very possibly changed our lives forever.

We packed our car using every available square inch of space – cramming in suitcases, comforter sets, pillows, laptops, a printer and two bags of office supplies, and set out to take our youngest daughter off to college. Some people have a hard time seeing the parenthood chapter of their lives come to an end, but I feel it's not what happened in the past, but how you move on that truly defines you. My husband and I are now officially Empty Nesters and we've chosen to fully celebrate the next chapter of our lives together as a well-deserved reward.

It's the little things that get you at first, like the house is so quiet and *clean*. I left to go to into work and when I returned, nothing was messed up, dirty dishes weren't piled in the sink and the kitchen trash wasn't overflowing onto the floor. Then you notice that the milk has expired with half a gallon still left and I realize that I may die before I ever need to buy a new bottle of maple syrup. There'll be no more planning around school breaks and dealing with the impossible task of pleasing both parent and offspring.

Please don't get me wrong here, we love our children with all our hearts and at least once a day I get a pang of missing them banging around the house blasting their headphones all while texting as they dump their shoes *directly* in front of the door. We've just chosen to rejoice in the success of having raised our children to be self-sufficient young adults and patting ourselves on the back for a job well done. There is something to be said for the feeling of utter accomplishment in watching your children fly the coop and know that they're on their way to becoming amazing adults.

We've crossed the finish line and spiked the ball of parenthood and now we have entered into what I like to call *The Sweet Spot*. This is a chapter of our lives nestled between the kids leaving home and becoming too old to travel with ease. We realized we had so many things on our to-do list that would have been far more complicated and out of our price range with kids in tow. We had traveled extensively with our children; there are just some places that I think we'd enjoy more on our own. It's more of a state of mind, not being at a constant state of awareness for someone else's whereabouts and well being, real or perceived.

I'd like to walk the streets of Rome while holding my husband's hand and tour the Vatican Museum. I want to stroll through the Met in New York at a slow leisurely pace then get to enjoy a quiet dinner together talking about everything we discovered, without the feeling of being rushed. Traveling as a couple has some major benefits, now it's 2 instead of 4, so it's far more affordable. We're also able to travel during off-season to take advantage of significantly less expensive prices. So many things we want to do, and I want to do them before we need to do it in Hover Chairs, pack separate suitcases for prescriptions, feel unable to sleep in any bed besides our own and announce to the world that we don't answer the phone after dark. I'm already uncomfortable with the fact that eating dinner at 5 doesn't seem that crazy to me anymore.

Remember that time together, before kids, when the two of you would sit around and dream what the future would bring you? Remember the exciting conversations you had about where you wanted to go and the places you wanted to see? The world was wide open to you then, the sky was the limit. Well now we get to do that again, only now we have the benefit of hard earned wisdom and a little more money. So we have a "go bag" packed and ready at all times for when an opportunity presents itself, we can be out the door and on another adventure together in this, our new beginning.



The Go Bags at the ready.

Part Two: OK, Let's Go!

My top travel picks for the abruptly mature:



Napa Valley – Why do people go to Napa? Mainly for the 400 plus wineries. That means days filled with sampling the Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Merlot – which doesn't exactly scream "kid-friendly." Those tastings are best accompanied with the other local bounty. Share a picnic of artisanal treats from

Oxbow Public Market during the day, have dinner at Thomas Keller's Bouchon Bistro at night. If money's no object, indulge at the world famous French Laundry, just be sure to make reservations months in advance.

New Orleans – This is a completely different experience without children in tow. Now that you're traveling without kids you won't be a wreck trying to dodge streets filled with strip clubs. (Because social services tends to frown on that). And since you're only paying for two, step it up and stay





in the Garden District. During the day, enjoy tours of antebellum homes and visit creole art sites, perhaps take an airboat swamp tour. At night skirt the seedy and check out the bar scene on Magazine Street, find a stool and sip Bourbon while listening to some great NOLA jazz in a gritty smoke-filled room. Oh, and did I mention they have great food?



Santa Fe – If you can go around the holidays, you’ll see a whole different side of Santa Fe. The famed Canyon Road is adorned with thousands of glittering farolitos and luminarias turning the heart of this adobe city into a magical wonderland that’s found no where else in the world. During the day tour the unique shops and artist studios and indulge in a local favorite, the green-chili burger. For the full enchanted experience be sure to book your accommodations in the square – it’s worth every penny.

New York City – All roads lead to Rome. In a city that is home to some of the world’s greatest museums, art, theater, shopping and restaurants, you can stay a week and not even scratch the surface. It’s great to have dinner at a place you’ve only read about and be able to enjoy it at a leisurely pace. And now you have the advantage to visit when the



hordes of tourists have gone home, because their kids are in school.



Europe – The rules are the same for Europe as they are for New York – avoid the crowds and the expense of the summer months so you can enjoy the sites. With accommodations and airfare for only two, you’re able to afford far nicer digs. Cash in your hard-earned miles and go first class, there’s nothing like it. And any parent will admit 13 hours of air travel in coach with kids has to be the 7th circle in hell.

and our least. But now we can indulge ourselves by booking one of the famed itineraries of the repositioning cruise. Twice a year cruise lines move ships around the world to accommodate the changing seasons. Alaskan ships are moved to the Caribbean for the winter and the excess Caribbean ships are moved to the Mediterranean. If you plan ahead you can grab great cruises not offered at any other time of the year and at even better prices. Last fall one of the high-end ships had a repositioning cruise online for under \$2,000 a couple for an upgraded balcony room that departed from Miami and after a 17 day cruise, 3 continents and 10 exotic ports, you arrive in London. This is a perk only available to people able to travel on the fly and that aren’t held back by school schedules or the never-ending extra curricular activities that once ruled our calendars.





Denver – This is a great city, full of great restaurants and great shopping. Wander the lovely historic street of Larimer Square all lit up with millions of twinkle lights overhead and shop the one-of-a-kind stores that lines its streets. Treat yourself with lunchtime cocktails and lamb lollypops at Corridor 44 then wander into The Tattered Cover to peruse collectable books. One of my favorite hotels is in this city – the fabulously unique Hotel Teatro. This boutique hotel has been meticulously remodeled and is mere steps from the Buell Theater that offers up the finest of shows west of the Mississippi. Dine at the sexy Edge Restaurant in the Four Seasons across the street for a full night of fun.

Las Vegas – Now that I’m more mature, I find that luxury can make any destination magical. If you think Vegas is nothing more than just cheap buffets and tacky hotels, you haven’t stayed at the right places. The Wynn and Bellagio Resorts will rival anything in Paris or New York. The best designers, chefs and hotel rooms can be found under their roofs. You can have a 5 star weekend full of all the right things without even walking outside of your chosen hotel. Try it once and you’ll be back.



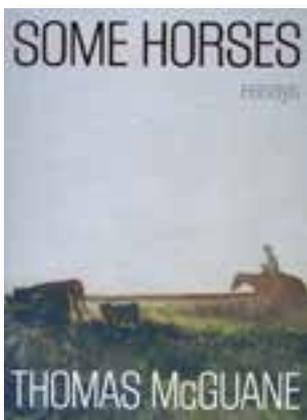
SOME WESTERN BOOKS: THE NIGHTSTAND COLLECTION

We love those tid-bit pieces in magazines where people are asked what they are reading or what’s on their nightstand. So we figured we’d start with the Publisher, “What’s on your Nightstand?” we asked. “You know, books.” He gave us this list. Big nightstand.

Next time: The Editor, A.J.

Some Horses

Thomas McGuane



“There is simply no one I would rather read on the subject of horses than Tom McGuane.”
– Verlyn Klinkenborg

Where The Rivers Change

Direction

Mark Spragg

The Faraway Horses

Buck Brannaman and Bill Reynolds

51

Paul Zarzyski

The Solace of Open Spaces

Gretel Ehrlich

We Pointed Them North

E.C. Abbott

Hole In The Sky

William Kittredge

Life in the Saddle

Frank Collinson

Log of a Cowboy

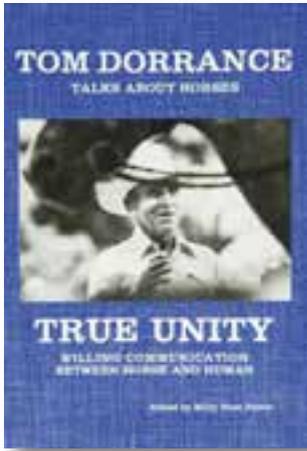
Andy Adams

These Were The Vaqueros

Arnold Rojas

Charles M. Russell

John Taliaferro



True Unity
Tom Dorrance

The Life of Maynard Dixon
Dan Haggerty

Riding the White Horse Home
Teresa Jordan

The Brave
Nicholas Evans

Testimonios
Rose Marie Beebe and
Robert M. Senkewicz

Rancho Deluxe
Alan Hess and Alan Weintraub

Think Harmony With Horses
Ray Hunt

*Portrait of an Artist: A Biography of
Georgia O'Keefe*
Laurie Lisle

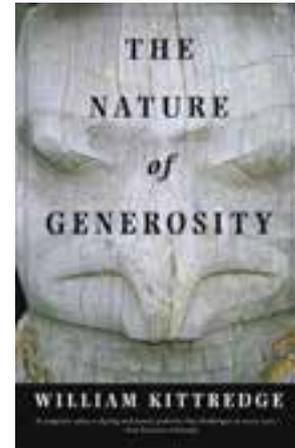
The Ashley Book of Knots
Clifford Ashley

Angle of Repose
Wallace Stegner

Cowboys Who Rode Proudly
Compiled by Evetts Haley Jr.

The Days The Cowboys Quit
Elmer Kelton

The Last Buckaroo
Mac Hedges



The Nature of Generosity
William Kittredge



photo by Anita "Neets" Crane, www.photographybyneets.zenfolio.com

ERRATA:

A number of photos in Rod Miller's story "Hear Me Sing" in issue 5.3 carried incorrect credits, such as the image of the Kaye sisters. They were taken by Anita "Neets" Crane, www.photographybyneets.zenfolio.com. Our sincere apologies.



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BY HAND AND HEART

The Want to Do It

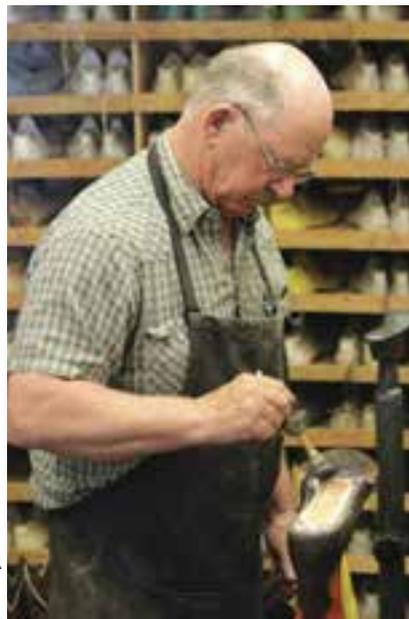
Bootmaker Mike Ryan perseveres in an increasingly challenged craft.



By Brian D'Ambrosio

Defiant self-sufficiency is as much a part of a craftsman's longevity as flair and skill. Helena, Montana, bootmaker Mike Ryan has never been one to put his fate in the hands of others; his fate stays in his own hands.

Those hands – resembling the stubby, muscular claws of a bear – turn, twist and shape boots on his one-man assembly line. Those sawdust-discolored, rock-solid paws peg the soles rather than nail them, with beeswax-covered wooden pegs. Stumpy and jam-packed with



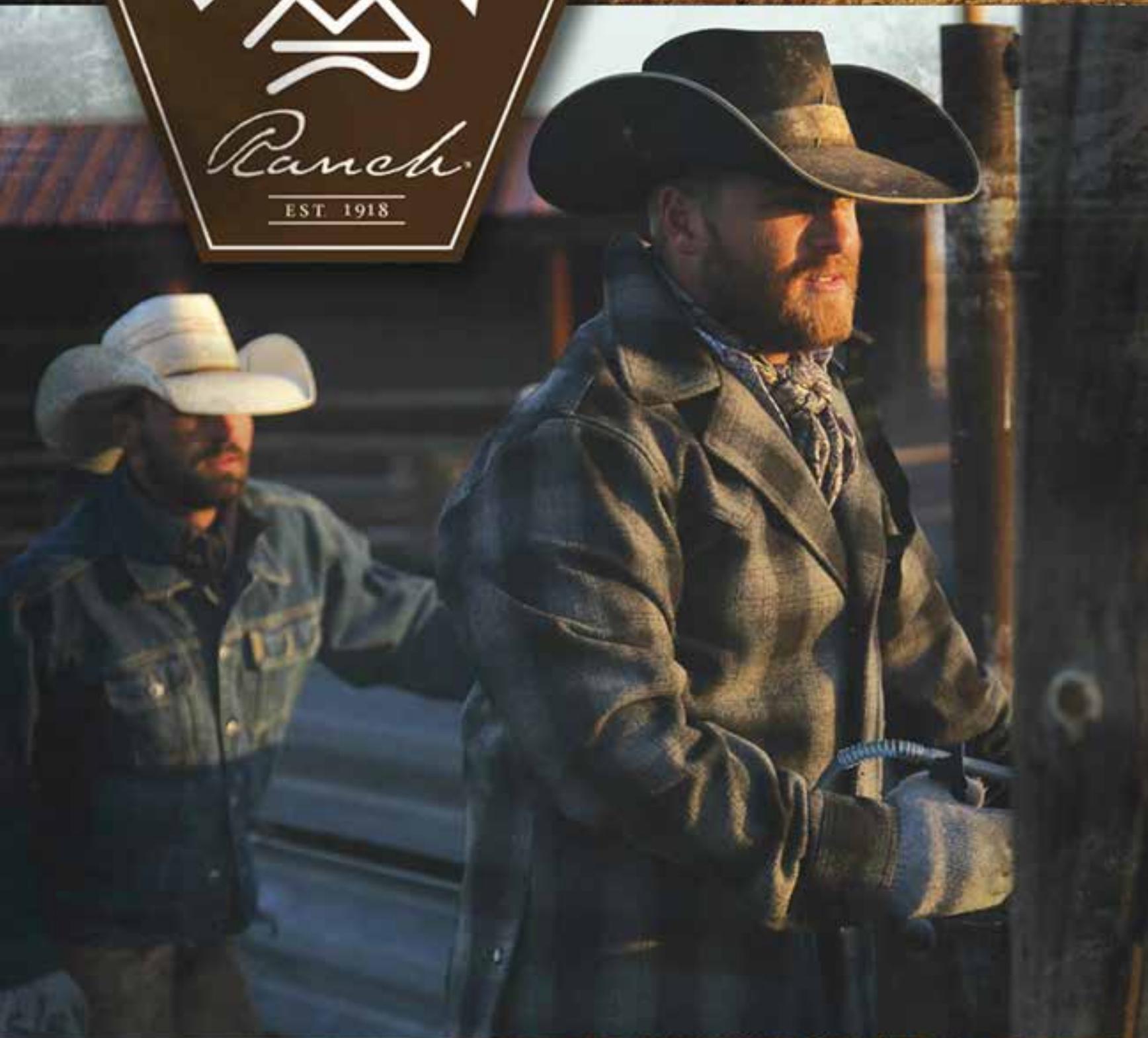
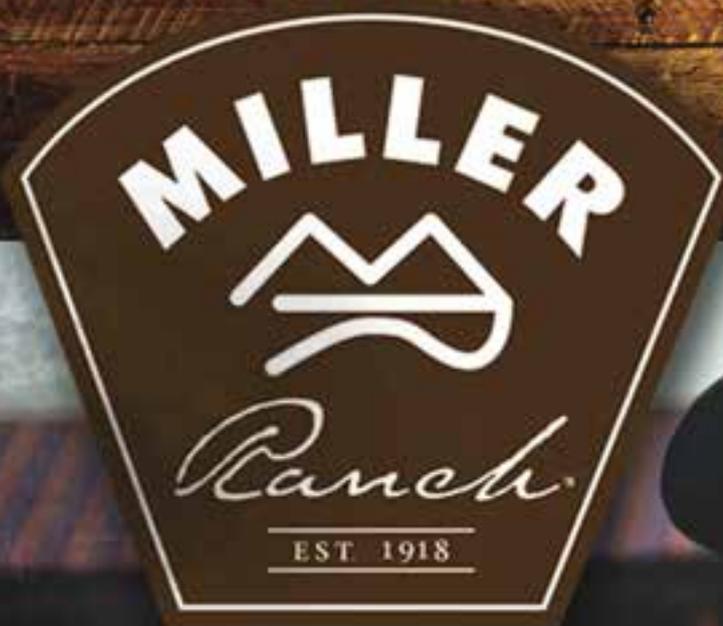
photos by Brian D'Ambrosio

Montana bootmaker Mike Ryan.

muscles, those hands look incapable of tiredness.

“I look forward to work here every morning, and that's something most people don't do,” Ryan says. “You've got to have your freedom, your independence. I know what I'm facing every day, and that's why I like working here. I don't do it for the money. It's the freedom. It's a cool deal.”

Ryan's shop on Euclid Avenue is a bit of a joyride: there is the momentum of concentrated work in a setting of blackened tables and



MILLERRANCH1918.COM



“I can make seven pair of lace-ups in two weeks, easy,” Ryan says.
“Eight pairs of cowboy boots takes me about a month, or close to it.”

vintage heavy machinery. And there is laughter, there are visitors, there is the sustained banter with his daughter and assistant, Chris.

More momentum, more laughter, more delight.

When locked in his work, however, Ryan is never scattered or fragmented. He stands alert against the backdrop of rows and rows of boots, stacks of old-fashioned lasts (shoe and boot molds), and vintage industrial-strength tools and machines. On his homemade workbench, there are seven pairs of boots in varying stages of concurrent assembly – one requires the attention of the sole-stitchery, then a pause, and then another is worked on with a stretcher. Then Ryan is on

to the next boot.

Lining the shop wall, there are approximately 1,200 pairs of lasts, including ropers and pointed-toe, narrow- and round-toe, square-toe, narrow square-toe, wide square-toe, as well as loggers and packers.

“Most people don’t know the difference,” Ryan says, pointing to a pair of steel-toed boots he is resoling for a local trucker who works in the North Dakota oil fields.

Ryan’s philosophy is simple: when fate hands you a hammer and some pegs, you make cowboy boots. He is a throwback to the days of finger-dialed phones and face-to-face conversations.

“I’m a mechanic, a marriage counselor, all the things

the **BOLD** and
Beautiful.

TRAILBLAZING WOMEN OF
THE AMERICAN QUARTER HORSE



JANUARY 25 - JULY 30, 2016

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you need to be qualified for shoemaking,” he says. “People come in and bring up that this happened and that happened. You need to step aside and listen.”

Something about the sawdust on Ryan’s plaid shirt makes one think of the days when consumers took their toaster or waffle iron to the repair shop.

“Now you just throw everything away,” he says. “It’s all disposable. Microwaves and appliances go to the dump because it costs less to buy them than to repair them. Shoes are the same way.”

Boots made in Ryan’s shop are the antithesis of disposable, the enemy of temporary. Their exacting detail is impressive enough, but their longevity makes them ultra-valuable.

“They will outlast a boot made in a mass-produced factory by seven times,” Ryan asserts, “if taken care of.”

Born and raised in Brusett, Montana, on the south shore of the Missouri Breaks, Ryan, 62, remembers receiving an Acme boot catalog in the mail in 1962. That catalog laid down the seed of later exploration. He served in Vietnam from 1969 to 1973, and used military funds and veteran’s assistance programs to help subsidize bootmaking courses in trade school. In 1985, he apprenticed under Mike “King of the Bootmakers” Ives of Lockwood, Montana. From Ives, he learned how to individualize the personality of each boot.

“He was an old guy when he taught me,” Ryan recalls. “In the 1930s, he had to support his family as a cabinetmaker, and then he took up bootmaking, because people had to have shoes. I guess what I learned from him was that you’ve got to have the want – the want to do it.”

Ryan moved to Helena in 1986 and relocated to Euclid Avenue a few years ago. There were five bootmakers in Helena then, and Ryan has outlasted them all.



Ryan uses few nails in his boots, instead pegging the arches and heels.

“The one thing that hasn’t changed with my boots since then is the lack of nails,” he explains. “I peg the arches, sew the soles. These are all wooden-pegged. Peg the arch, peg the heel on. The only steel that’s in these boots is the steel arch and the nails that hold on the heel cap. I put in about 24 man-hours in a pair of boots, about 16 hours in a pair of lace-ups. I can make seven pair of lace-ups in two weeks, easy. Eight pairs of cowboy boots takes me about a month, or close to it. I’m not making very good wages, but it’s kind of fun.”

At times, Ryan works more with his brain than with his hands. His mind takes over as other



appendages default to their comfort zones. When asked about the intellect of his craft, Ryan said he would provide his knowledge to anyone who is up for the challenge. He concedes, though, that such craftsmanship is more or less outmoded.

“Bootmaking is gone,” Ryan admits. “People in Europe make shoes. I don’t know of anyone overseas that makes boots. It’s gone. It’s over. There are just a few people.”

As soon as he completes this sentence, though, another thought springs into his head.

“I would like the governor of the state of Montana to look at his Chinese shoes while he is putting them on in the morning,” Ryan says. “I want him to look down at them, and wonder why he has a pair of Chinese shoes, when he could have a pair made right here. Why is he wearing Chinese shoes when he could come down here and have them made?”

For the evaporating art of bootmaking to survive, Ryan doesn’t necessarily need a successor, only willing hands to accept the torch for a new generation. Perhaps someone like his daughter, Chris?

“I’m never going to take over,” Chris says. “I like being here with him. I like spending time with my dad, but I don’t foresee taking over. But then again, I could never see myself working here at all.”

At 62, Mike Ryan is thick-skinned, opinionated, genial, and full of know-how. And he is still learning: just a few years ago, he went to a school to learn how to



The work environment in Ryan’s Helena shop.

make men’s dress shoes.

At midday, energized by endless pots of coffee, Ryan stands in the center of his arena, the cobbler piecing together his next well-structured creation. He shifts his attention to a set of sharkskin boots with green variegated stitching.

“That stitching shows every type of mistake you can make in them,” he laments. “But, that’s going to be a pretty pair of boots there.”

Something in the project seems to motivate him. It’s not familiarity or nostalgia or his love of the materials, but another stimulus at work keeping the chisel and measurer in Ryan’s hands.

“People that retire, they quit doing stuff and they die,” Ryan asserts. “When I retire, I’m going to make boots.”



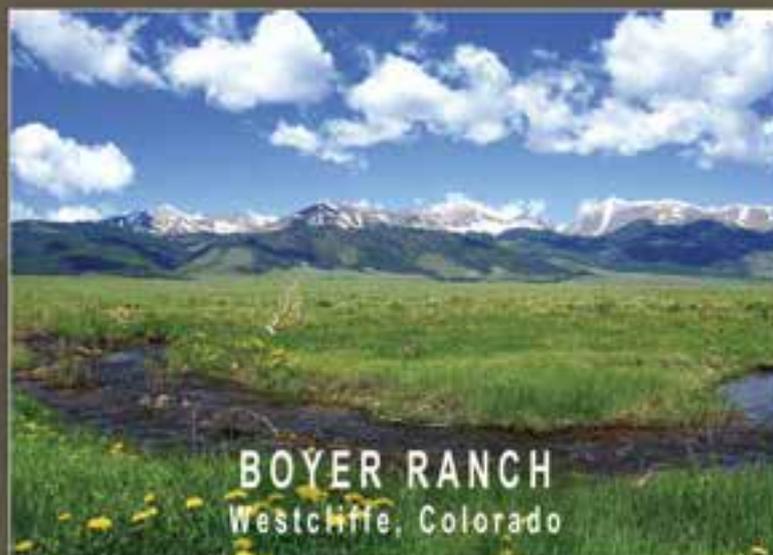
Brian D’Ambrosio is a writer living in Montana.



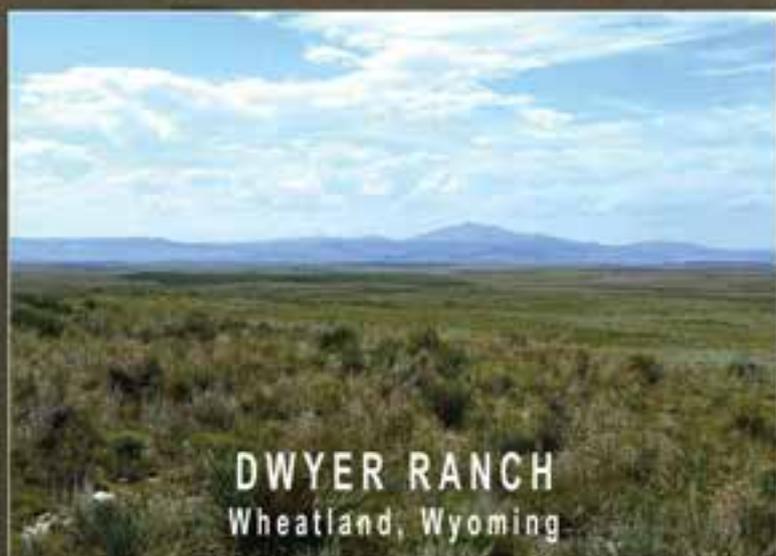
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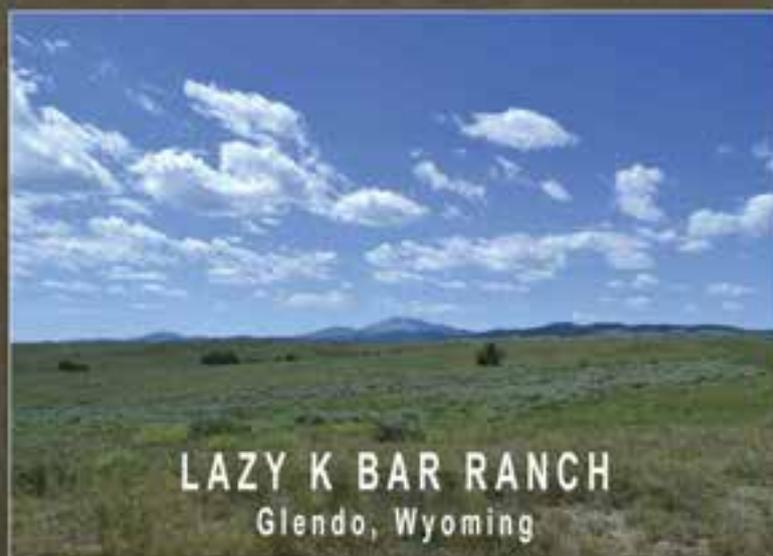
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This 12,505 total acre cattle and hay production ranch is rimmed by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and located just 1.5 hours from Colorado Springs. Well watered with over 18 CFS of water rights, streams, ponds and wells irrigating 700 acres putting up 1,200 tons of premium hay. Runs 900-1,000 yearling cattle. \$8,500,000. Ron Morris, 970.535.0881



7,101 total acres with an older home with a 25 GPM well and set of corrals. Two center pivots irrigate 320 acres from two wells that produce 825 to 850 GPM, along with three stock water wells. The pivots are capable of producing 4 tons to the acre. Dwyer Ranch has been owner operated running 300 cow/calf pair or 500 yearlings. \$3,300,000. Ron Morris, 970.535.0881

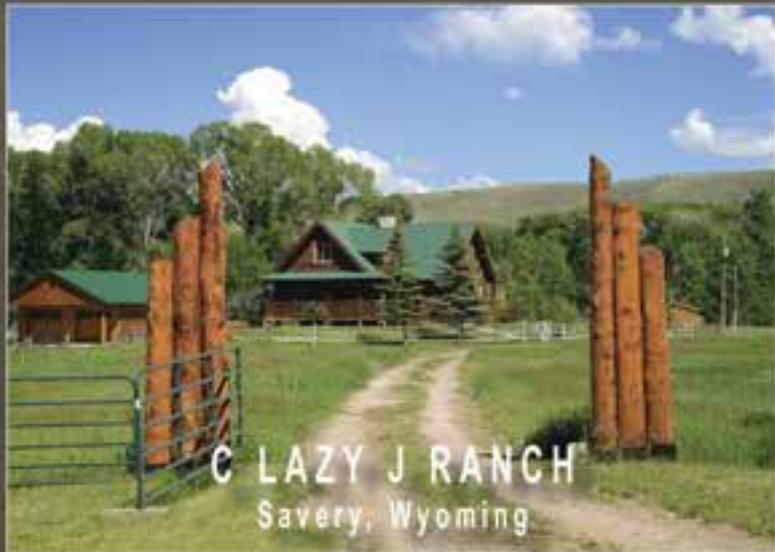


Located along the historic Oregon Trail, the ranch has 14,181 total acres, excellent water rights irrigating over 350 acres with a rated carrying capacity of 400 cow/calf pair or 600 yearlings. Improvements include three homes, several barns, equipment sheds, shop and complete set of steel pipe corrals with certified scale. Significant wildlife populations. \$10,000,000. Ron Morris, 970.535.0881 or Amy Smith with #1 Properties, 307.214.5583



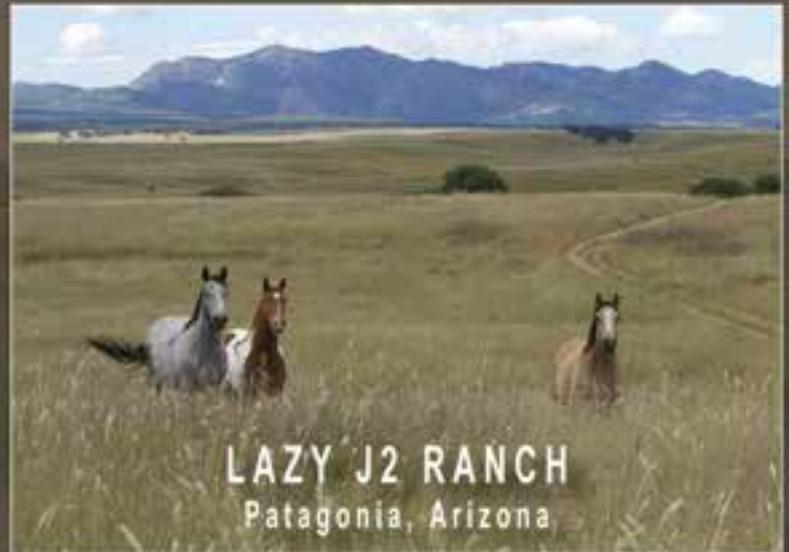
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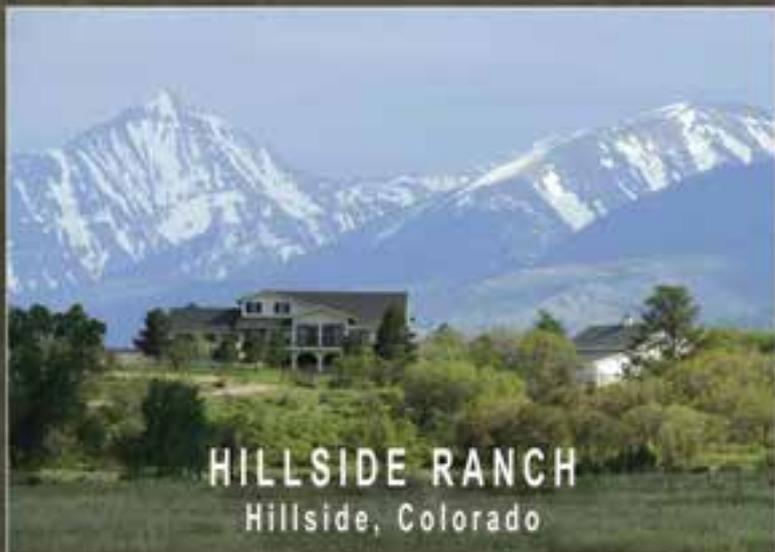
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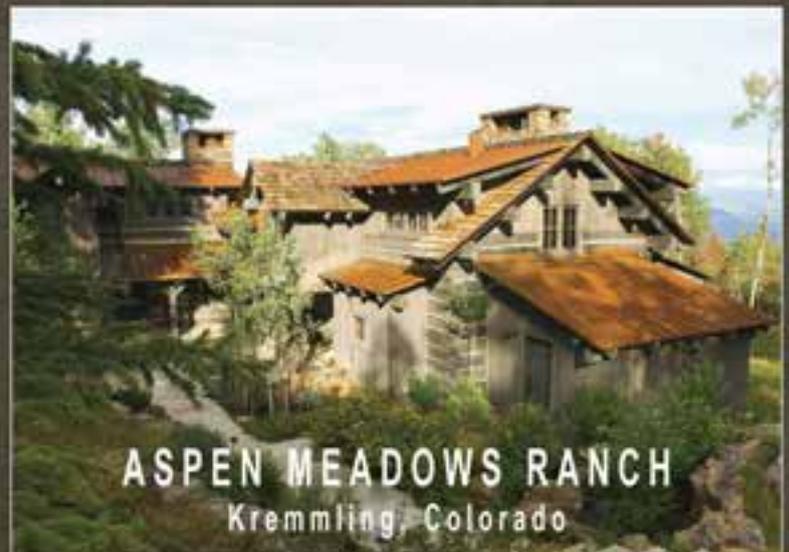
LAZY J2 RANCH
Patagonia, Arizona

Situated in the center of a beautiful, unobstructed valley, the 952 deeded acre plus over 5,000 acres USFS permit production ranch is rated at 200 animal units. A mature, landscaped headquarters area has a home, shop, hay storage, corrals and two building sites in a location that is one of Arizona's best kept secrets. **\$6,900,000. Ron Morris, 970.535.0881**



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

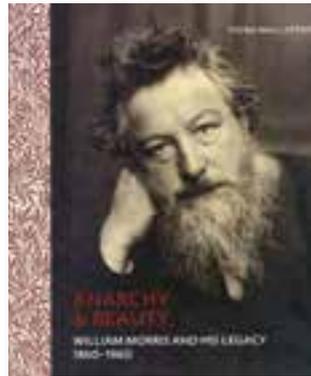
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BOOKS TO FIND

William Morris, the Arts and Crafts Movement and the California.

**Anarchy & Beauty:
William Morris and
His Legacy**
Fiona MacCarthy
Yale University Press



42

The Arts and Crafts Movement was one of the most influential and far-reaching design movements of modern times. It began in Great Britain around 1880 and spread to America and Europe before emerging finally as the Mingei (Folk Crafts) movement in Japan. (See last issue's Books To Find about Soetsu Yangai, father of the Mingei movement.)

It was a movement born of ideals. It grew out of a concern for the effects of industrialization: on design, on traditional skills and on the lives of ordinary people. In response, it established a new set of principles for living and working. It advocated the reform of art at

every level and across a social spectrum, and it turned the home into a work of art.

The Movement took its name from the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, founded in 1887, but it encompassed a very wide range of like-minded societies, workshops and manufacturers. Other countries adapted Arts and Crafts philosophies according to their own needs. While the work may be visually very different, it is united by the ideals that lie behind it.

This was a movement unlike any that had gone before. Its pioneering spirit of reform, and the value it placed on the quality of materials and design, as well as life, shaped the world we live in today. Its effects on the cowboy crafts were equally far-reaching and why we are suggesting



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these to volumes on writer and activist, William Morris. His writings examine the relationship between art, society and labor. He put great value on work, the joy of craftsmanship and the natural beauty of materials.

Fiona MacCarthy’s book, *Anarchy and Beauty, William Morris and his Legacy 1960 – 1960* takes the reader through Morris’s fascinating career, from the establishment of his decorative arts shop (later Morris & Co.), to his radical sexual politics and libertarianism, and the publication in 1890 of his novel *News from Nowhere*, which envisions a utopian socialist society. (We talk about that one next) MacCarthy then looks at the numerous artists and movements that bear the influence of Morris’s ideas: Arts and Crafts and the



“Adam and Eve” garden roller designed by Eric Gill and carved by his apprentice David Kindersley, c. 1933.

Garden City, which took hold in both Europe and the United States; artists’ communities that sprung up during the interwar years; and the 1951 Festival of Britain, whose mission was to bring the highest standards of design within the reach of everyone. The



“Daisy” wallpaper design by William Morris, 1862

key here is that art was meant to be enjoyed and participated in by the masses. The Books To Find we spoke of in the last issue regarding the WPA spoke of the value it brought to a society crawling back from the Great Depression.

Its seeds were in the work of Morris and his viewpoint about art, design and beauty. As we as a society continue to allow arts programs in our schools to crumble away, it is fitting to remind ourselves that art is everyone’s legacy and the creative spirit that lives in each and every one of us is as valuable as writing code for some new app.

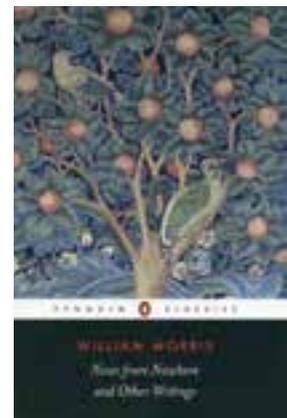
This book is especially wonderful as it has a truly glorious listing of further reading on Morris as well as images and bios of important Morris followers and adjacent movements through the late 1950s.

News From Nowhere

William Morris

Penguin

Originally published in 1890, Morris’ *News from Nowhere* would fit in with today’s popular movement in dystopian novels – especially with its mild socialist overtones. The book is a





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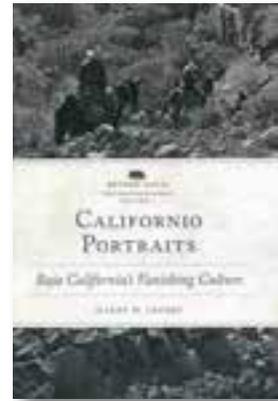
classic and is in the public domain as free PDF versions available on the web. It combines a classic utopian socialist view on social make-up combined with some mild Sci-Fi. The main character and narrator, William Guest has returned home from a meeting of the local Socialist League and falls asleep. Upon awakening he finds himself in a futurist society based on “common ownership and common, shared efforts. In this society there is no private property, no big cities, no authority, no monetary system, no divorce, no courts, no prisons, and no class systems. This agrarian society functions simply because the people find pleasure in nature, and therefore they find pleasure in their work.

In the novel, Morris tackles one of the most common criticisms of socialist values; the supposed lack of incentive to work in a communistic society. Morris’ response is that all work should be creative and pleasurable. This differs from the majority of Socialist thinkers at the time, who tended to assume that while work is a necessary evil, a well-planned equal society can reduce the amount of work needed to be done by each worker – sort of a lazy man’s approach to communal living. Morris’ take was that all work could be reduced to creative efforts and therefore enjoyable on many levels. The book is a fascinating look back at thoughts of work, creativity and social values. Without knowing history, as they say, one is destined to repeat it. This version of the novel also includes additional Morris writings and critiques.

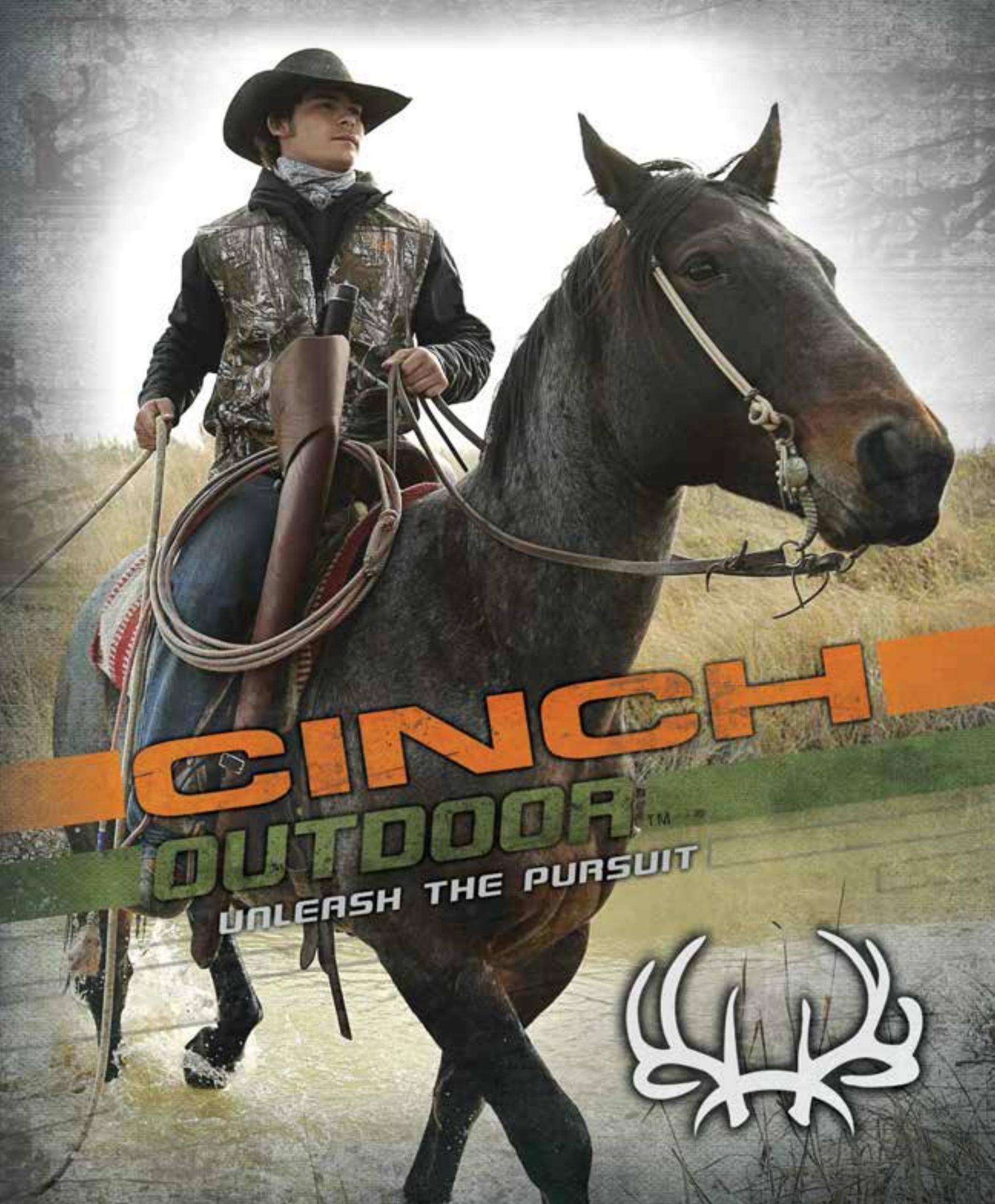
Californio Portraits: Baja California’s Vanishing Culture (Before Gold: California Under Spain and Mexico)

Harry W. Crosby
University of Oklahoma Press

First published in 1981, Harry W. Crosby’s *Last of the Californios* captured the history of the mountain people of Baja California during a critical moment of transition, when the 1974 completion of the trans-peninsular highway increased the Californios’ contact with the outside world and profoundly affected their traditional way of life. This updated and expanded version of that now-classic work incorporates the fruits of further investigation into the Californios’ lives and history by Crosby and others. The result is the most thorough and extensive account of the people of Baja California from the time of the peninsula’s occupation by the Spaniards in the seventeenth century to the present. *Californio Portraits* combines history and



A “Fandango” of the era.



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sociology to provide an in-depth view of a culture that has managed to survive dramatic changes.

Having ridden hundreds of miles by mule to visit with various Californio families and gain their confidence, Crosby provides an unparalleled view of their unique lifestyle. Beginning with the story of the first Californios – the eighteenth-century presidio soldiers who accompanied Jesuit missionaries, followed by miners and independent ranchers – Crosby provides personal accounts of their modern-day descendants and the ways they build their homes, prepare their food, find their water, and tan their cowhides. Augmenting his previous work with significant new sources, material, and photographs, he draws a richly textured portrait of a people unlike any other – families cultivating skills from

an earlier century, living in semi-isolation for decades and, even after completion of the trans peninsular highway, reachable only by mule and horseback.

Combining a revised and updated text with a new foreword, introduction, and updated bibliography, *Californio Portraits* offers the clearest and most detailed portrait possible of a fascinating, unique, and inaccessible people and culture who lived not at the end of the world, but one could certainly see it from there. This book truly offers the reader interested in the vaquero culture and its movement exactly what is described – a window on a people and a way life tied to the land, the sky and the offerings of nature – sometimes bountiful, sometimes not.



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Kurt Markus

Images from Quien Sabe Ranch, Channing, Texas. 1981



The second-in-command cook—the “hood”—Ernie Vigil handles the cleanup between meals.

When I began my obsession with photography in the late 1970s, I never felt a need to look beyond the horizon. All I thought I needed to know about the future was represented in the moment: I had my mentors (dead and alive), and my future was tied to theirs. I would be loading film into a variety of cameras, doing my best to expose and develop with consistency, and print expressively, in a darkroom. There was no shortcut I sought,



Cow boss Calvin Peters handles the lines, Ken James rides shotgun. Steve Lewis is the outrider. The wagon is the late Dick Sheperd's, pictured separately. Dick was one of those classic, old-time punchers who, when they were physically "retired" kept a hand in the game by running a wagon.

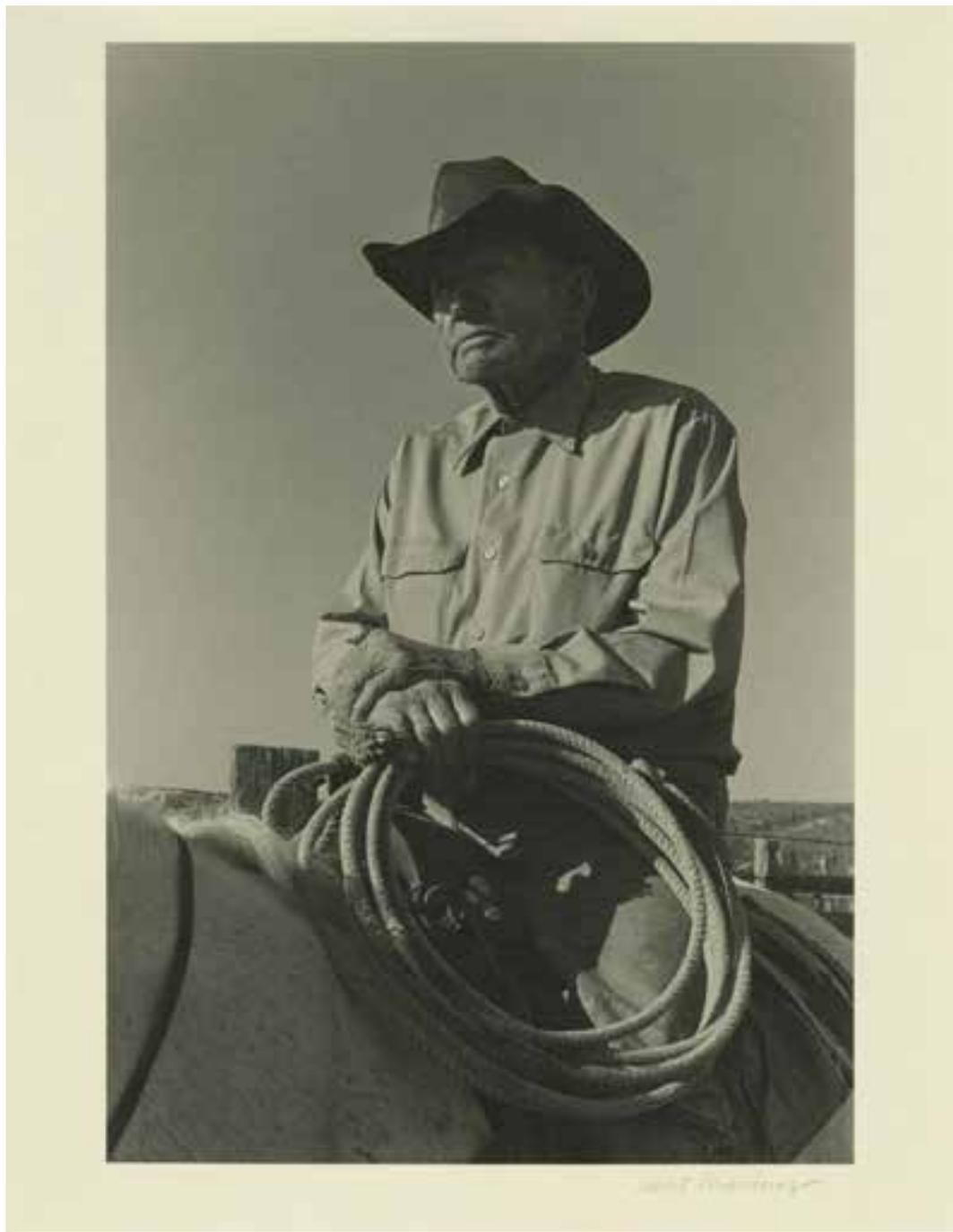
I bought into the entire process, beginning to end, the time it took to make a satisfying print was the time it took – it not only made sense it made my life richer for the discipline it required. I believed the tools I had been given were more than sufficient, I wanted nothing more.

By the time the digital wave had flooded the earth, and had been embraced by all but a few, it was too late for me to catch that wave. And I am now blissfully bobbing about in the calm waters left in the wake of the digital tsunami, doing what I do, content, picking through the digital flotsam to see if any of it can be useful.

Sort of like Tom Hanks in *Castaway*.

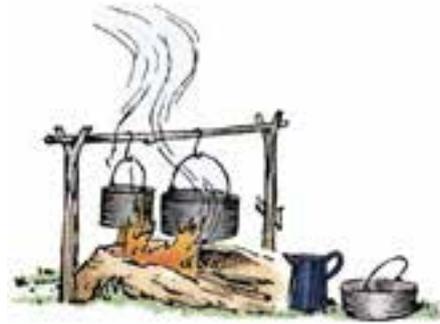


Steve Lewis (left) and Gary Morton size up the country below. Gary, a former Bell Ranch cow boss, took a few days off to day work, and live the dream of cowboyin' on a wagon outfit. Some things in this life never die.



Dick Sheperd taking a break from building heel loops and draggin' 'em to the fire.





THE COOK HOUSE

Sourdough Flapjacks



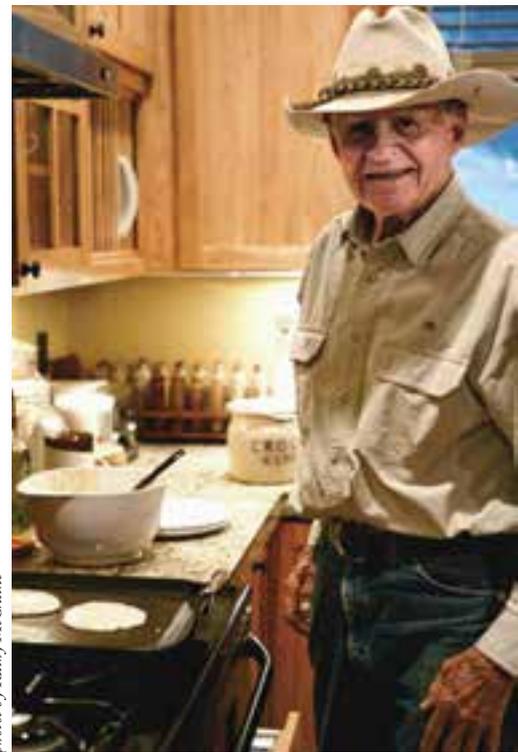
By Kathy McCraine

Roger Tilkemeier of Eagle, Colorado, has led a full and enviable life, horseback riding, skiing, and marketing million-dollar ranches all over the West. At 86, he's still a striking figure, tall and trim, his snowy hair crowned by a stylish, sweat-stained O'Farrell hat.

Roger's early career path, after serving four years as a naval officer in the Korean War, included banking in San Francisco, 14 years with Kaiser Aluminum, including work on the development of the aluminum can, and pioneering development in Vail, Colorado, in the 1960s. Moving to the beautiful mountain country around Vail, it was only natural that he and his late wife, Jeanne, would take up trail riding as a summer activity.

In 1955, both were heavy smokers wanting to quit, so after Roger was discharged from the navy that year, they made a pact. For every day that each of them didn't light up a cigarette, they would deposit 50 cents in a coffee can and save it to buy horses. Soon they were investing that money in bonds, and by the time they moved to Colorado in 1961, they had enough to buy the horses.

While trail riding in the Eagle River Valley one day, the Tilkemeiers met Randy Campbell and Julie Hansmire, who ran a large sheep and



photos by Kathy McCraine

Colorado's Roger Tilkemeier.

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cattle operation there. From then on, they spent every spare moment helping the couple on the ranch and packing their sheep camps into remote areas by mule. Meanwhile, Roger also met local rancher Perry Olsen, who fostered his lifelong interest in ranching.

“During all this time, I read everything I could about ranching and kept myself up to date,” Roger says. “I’ve never been a rancher, but I’m pretty knowledgeable about what’s going on in the industry because it’s my passion.”

That knowledge paid off when he helped market a local ranch, and it was so much fun he set up his own company, eventually putting together a deal on two Oregon ranches totaling 1.5 million acres. With his experience and gregarious personality, the small business grew into a successful enterprise.

“I was having so much fun, I wound up working until I was 75,” he says. “It was like being on vacation for 25 years because I got to go to all these big ranches and talk to people and learn. In the wintertime I skied a lot, and in the summertime I was either horseback or traveling with the business.”

Roger had the opportunity in 1977 to lease 3,000 acres, where he and Jeanne set up a livery stable, which they ran for five years. They restored an old chuckwagon and, in addition to renting horses, they put on chuckwagon dinners and picnics. Jeanne, already an accomplished cook, handled breakfast and lunch, while Roger cooked the dinners. He taught himself to cook in Dutch ovens, by trial and error, and with the help of a little book (now out of print) called *Forty Years Behind the Lid*. This 40-page booklet, considered a classic, was written in 1974 by longtime chuckwagon cook Richard Bolt.

Bolt learned to cook on a chuckwagon from his father, who came to west Texas in 1886 to cook for the big outfits. After his dad’s death, Bolt went to work for the Moon Ranch, cooking for their wagon. He spent more than 40 years in that trade, cooking for such

outfits as the Matador Ranch, the Four Sixes Ranch and the Pitchfork.

In the book, Bolt recalls cooking for as many as 20 to 30 working cowboys, sometimes more in branding season, when the ranch would hire young boys who worked only as calf flankers.

“I have cooked many times when it was raining and we had no protection from the weather,” Bolt wrote. “When this happened, I would have to pour grease over the wet wood to keep it burning long enough for me to cook a meal. We cooked, ate and slept with only the sky above us.”

In those days, the wagon was pulled by mules, and many times Bolt would cook breakfast for 40 men, then load the cooking equipment and bedrolls, and travel 15 miles, where he had to make camp for the night and cook for the same number of men.

These cowboys “had chosen this way of life because they loved living in the great outdoors, so they accepted the hardships as they came,” he wrote.

Just like the old-time wagon cooks, Roger has a crock of sourdough starter, which he has nurtured for 40 years. One of his favorite recipes from Bolt’s book is for sourdough flapjacks, which the old cook credited with having magical properties.

“If you do not believe these (flapjacks) help cowboys work better, ask Tony ‘Flapjack’ Sparks,” Bolt wrote. “He failed to eat his usual six flapjacks for breakfast one morning and had trouble all day trying to flank calves. He was very upset about his many fumbles on the job and I told him it was purely a dietary problem. The next day, Tony indulged in his usual number of flapjacks and was able to flank calves like a good cowboy is supposed to.”

All I can say is, after having sampled Roger’s delicious flapjacks, slathered in butter and syrup and topped with fresh Colorado fruit, Tony must have been one moose of a kid to get six of them down. Here is the recipe as Bolt wrote it.



Sourdough Flapjacks

- 4½ cups sourdough starter
- 1½ cups milk
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1½ tablespoons melted shortening
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- Dash of cinnamon

Beat eggs slightly, then mix other ingredients well. Add sufficient flour to make batter the desired thickness. Some like their hotcake batter thicker than others. I use about 2 cups of flour myself. Cook on a very lightly greased griddle or pan. Turn flapjacks *one* time only. Turning more than once will make the flapjack tough.



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


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Cultural Exchange

Sculptor Sunti Pichetchaiyakul brings a Southeast Asian influence to western sculpture.

By Brian D'Ambrosio

A certain power of merit and grace radiates from the face of one of Sunti Pichetchaiyakul's sculptures, producing an effect likely different from that exuded by any other work of art. Examine the fine tranquility of the figure's eyes, or the dignified, awakened spirit of its chin, nose and mouth.

Sunti will tell you that his art is the source of his life force. Listening to the murmur of his artistic impulses, he says, has always put him at ease. Born in Thailand in 1972, Sunti grew up outside a tiny village, on a small farm where he lived with his parents and five siblings. His mother worked as a seamstress, while his father taught Thai language. As early as age four, Sunti contributed to the family's earnings, by picking and selling fruit, vegetables and sugar cane, and by recycling bottles and cans. He also began making figures out of river clay.

"I was enthralled by the soft, supple earth," he says. "My imagination took hold at the first touch of clay oozing between my fingers."

The boy would sneak charcoal into his bedroom, and draw shapes and faces on the walls, making sure to wipe off the pictures before his father returned home from work. By the time he was seven, Sunti was confidently competing in elementary school art competitions.

At age 11, determined to build a realistic figure, Sunti packed a dummy full of hay and positioned it in the center of a road. He recalls laughing as he watched an ice cream truck stop, and its driver exit the vehicle to chastise the dummy.

As a teenager, hoping to learn the precision of anatomy, Sunti attended autopsies and surgeries in Bangkok hospitals. He worked at a brass foundry that molded miniature Buddhist monuments. In the swelter and sizzle, he absorbed the knowledge of wax casting, brass pouring and mold making. His assignments not only encompassed boiling and shaping wax, but also sweeping the floors. He arrived early and left late, earning three dollars a day. Over time, though, Sunti's hard-fought pursuit of his medium earned him a reputation as an artist, a designation not taken lightly in the East, where sculpture can be seen as an act of cultural exchange, an effort in which ancient echoes pull the strings.

Today, Sunti is an artist living in Bigfork, Montana, a town of 4,200 in the state's northwest corner. His gallery, in Whitefish, fuses his native Southeast Asia and the West he now calls home. His sculptures are known for their hyperrealism, tribal themes, and a shared dreamlike quality.

"I want my sculptures to look as if they can talk," Sunti says. "I feel like I know the subject on a deeper level, or I myself am meeting the subject face to face. People sometimes cry when they look at a sculpture, and that makes me proud. They can see the spirit in the eyes."



photos courtesy Sinti Pichechajakul

Chief Joseph



Chief Crowfoot

Sunti views bronze sculpture as a method of preserving history, and as a means of devoting himself to a spiritual practice – honoring his ancestors and relatives. The “karmic ties,” he says, connect thousands of people.

“In Thailand, we have more of a tribal family,” the artist says. “We feel a connection – a village connection – where people look after each other. People work together. People love the land. Spiritual beliefs and traditions cause people to commission sculptures in Thailand. There is a deep reason behind the sculpture.”

Sunti says that, when he is working on a piece, he is restless, wakeful, “visioning that sculpture in my sleep.” When an idea or theme solidifies, he adds, it’s as if he’s been bathed in a luminous energy giving him renewed strength. He wants to *know* the as-yet-unmade sculpture, wants to converse with it, wants to feel the energy of its life. Once a work is



“I want my sculptures to look as if they can talk.”

complete, he contends, that energy is palpable.

“I’ll have an accelerated heartbeat, and goosebumps,” Sunti says. “The work is alive. Every piece of it is alive.”

Sunti is particularly inspired by Native American chiefs.

“I see the Indian culture in Montana as similar to our culture in Thailand,” Sunti says. “There is respect for elders, like respect for monks. When sculpting leaders of tribes, it’s my way of paying tribute and honoring their stories. I use clay to commemorate celebrated figures in history. I aspire to not only duplicate a physical likeness, but for the sculpture to emanate spirit and bring peace to those in its presence.” Viewers, he adds, “learn about knowing your elders, spending time with them. They learn that we can’t forget where we come from.”



Crazy Horse



Crazy Horse Rides...



Sunti sees connections between Indian cultures and the tribal culture of his native Thailand.



Sunti's Whitefish gallery merges Asian and western themes.



Sculptor Sunti Pichetchaiyakul.



https://youtu.be/tEBi_kDYhQQ
Watch Sunti Pichetchaiyakul at work in this video.

Brian D'Ambrosio is a writer living in Montana.



The Best of the West

The Western Writers Hall of Fame inducts living members for the first time.

By Stuart Rosebrook and Rod Miller

The American West, in some sense, defines our nation to the world. Iconic cowboys and Indians, mountain men and miners, pioneers and gunfighters are known the world over. Over the years, writers have recorded, amplified, perpetuated and, in many ways, invented the reality and the mythology that surround the West.

To honor writers whose bodies of work significantly contributes to the literature of the West, Western Writers of America established the Western Writers Hall of Fame in the 1970s; it's now operated through the auspices of the organization's Homestead Foundation.

Historically, through a process of nomination by WWA members, vetting by an executive committee, and election by the membership, one or two writers were inducted into the Hall each year. Writers did not become eligible for induction until 10 years after their deaths.

All that changed in 2015.

"The Board felt that by continuing to recognize only writers who had been dead for at least 10 years, we were saying none of today's writers rose to the stature of being worthy, and nothing could be farther from the truth," says Candy Moulton, WWA's executive director.

Now, along with writers who are deceased, living writers will be inducted.

The process for selecting living inductees is tied to another WWA honor. "Each year, WWA selects a writer to receive the Owen Wister Award for lifetime contributions to western literature. Going forward, the Wister Award winner will automatically be inducted into the Western Writers Hall of Fame," Moulton says. "The winner is selected based on nominations made by any WWA member to a Wister Award committee, which considers all nominees and makes a recommendation to the WWA board of directors for the final decision. The deceased inductee will continue to be selected by vote of the membership."

The addition of the Wister Award (previously known as the Saddleman Award) winners to the Hall of Fame created a backlog of inductees, prompting a gala celebration and ceremony at the 2015 WWA convention, held in Lubbock, Texas. An overflow crowd attended the event, hosted by the National Ranching Heritage Center at Texas Tech University. The induction of this year's deceased inductee, Edward Abbey, was celebrated along with 25 deceased Wister Award winners and 16 living recipients, many of whom were on hand to accept the honor.

Posthumous Inductees

With the exception of Edward Abbey, inducted by vote of Western Writers of America members, each of these writers has been honored with WWA's Owen Wister Award, or its predecessor, the Saddleman Award, recognizing lifetime contributions to the literature of the West.

Edward Abbey (1927-1989):

Outspoken author of over 20 books, including *The Brave Cowboy*, *Desert Solitaire* and *The Monkey Wrench Gang*.

S. Omar Barker (1894-1985):

This cowboy poet, short story, and magazine writer was a founding member and president of WWA.

Dee A. Brown (1908-2002):

Internationally acclaimed for his 1971 bestseller *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, Brown published 33 books, including 10 novels.

Benjamin Capps (1922-2002):

Heralded for his literary style and best known for his novels *Hanging at Comanche Wells* and *The Trail to Ogallala*.

José Cisneros (1910-2009):

Recognized for contributions to western and Hispanic culture, his illustrated books *Riders of the Border*, *Faces of the Borderlands* and *Riders Across the Centuries* remain classics.

The Western Writers Hall of Fame is located in the McCracken Research Library at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyoming. "We have just begun the process of enhancing the exhibit in Cody and are working closely with the McCracken Research Library board to expand the experience for visitors," Moulton says. "We have plans to develop materials that will highlight not only current and future Hall of Fame members, but also to provide information about our current members in Western Writers of America."

Living Inductees

Judy Alter: This Chicago girl moved to Texas and developed "an early fascination with the works of Remington and Russell," which "led to a doctoral dissertation on the ways art and literature went together to create the myth of the American West." A past WWA president, Alter's short stories and novels have won two Spur Awards, two Wrangler Awards, and recognition from the Texas Institute of Letters.

"Writing gives me a focus and purpose in life," she says. "I always feel I'm like a mathematician, but I work my problems out in words." It adds up to fine writing.

Win Blevins: Why does the 2015 Owen Wister Award winner write? "To tell a story that delves deeply into the human experience, with its fundamental tension between a marvel of opportunities and ultimate mortality, not to think about these things, but to experience them pulse-beat by pulse-beat with the characters," Blevins says. "To me, the

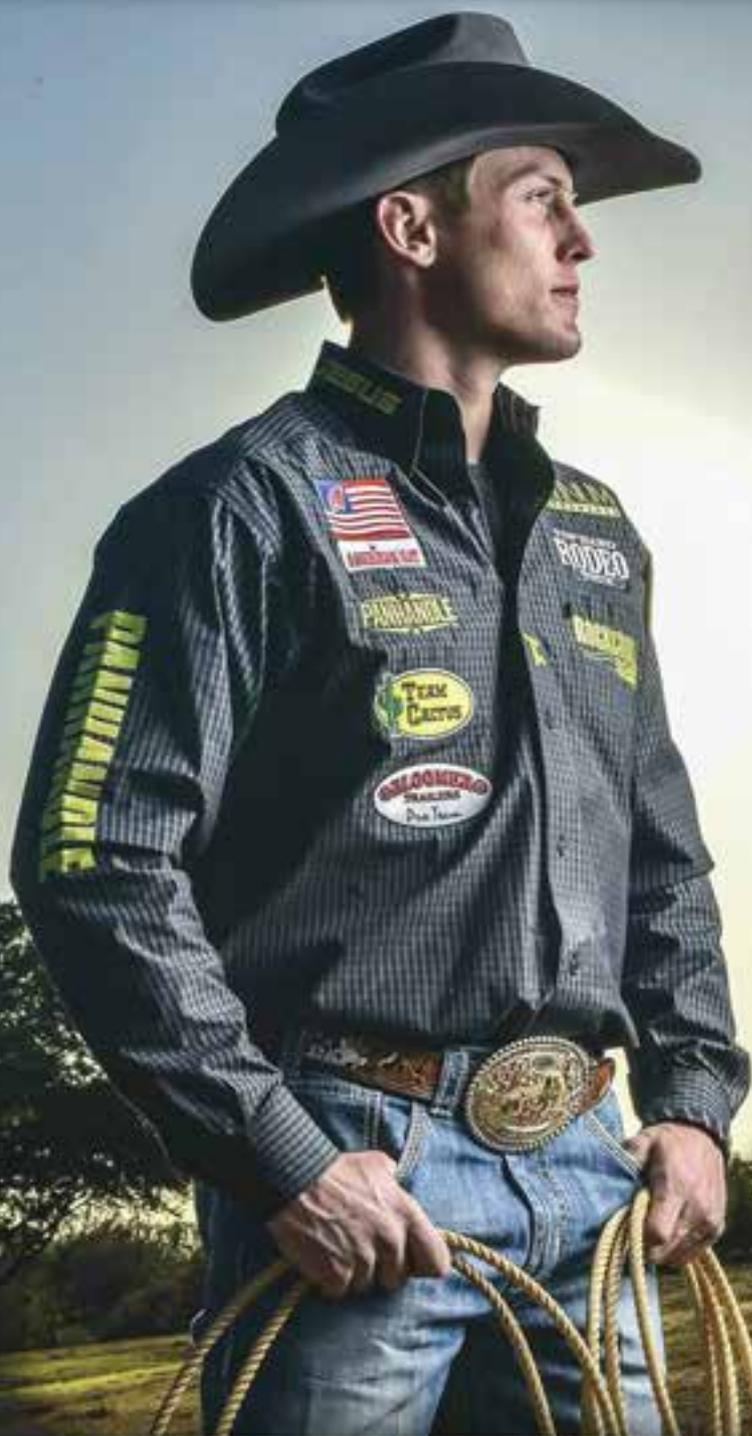


photos courtesy WWA

Judy Alter's short stories and novels have won two Spur Awards and two Wrangler Awards.

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Don Coldsmith (1926-2009):

A doctor, novelist and former WWA president best known for his “Spanish Bit” series, written from the perspective of the Plains Indians.

Robert Conley (1940 – 2014):

First American Indian to serve as WWA president, the revered Cherokee author won the Spur Award three times.

John Ford (1894-1973):

This Academy Award-winning director redefined western cinema, including what many consider the greatest western of all time, *The Searchers*.

Fred Grove (1913-2008):

Son of a Lakota-Osage mother, this five-time Spur winner wrote over 30 westerns, including *Comanche Captives*.

Bill Gulick (1916-2013):

Author of screenplays, children’s books, western fiction and non-fiction, his books include *Chief Joseph Country: Land of the Nez Perce*.

W. Foster-Harris (1903-1978):

This prolific author of western short stories for magazines and pulps published two classic books: *The Look of the Old West* and *The Basic Formulas of Fiction*.

Tony Hillerman (1925-2008):

This two-time Spur winner and Mystery Writers of America Grand Master redefined western mysteries with his Joe Leaphorn and Jim Chee series.

value is not information about the historical or contemporary West. It’s swilling down life along with my characters, tasting every human emotion.” Author of 31 books, including two Spur Award winners, Blevins’s career launched with the historical novel, *Give My Heart to the Hawks*, continuously in print since 1973.

Matt Braun: The Connecticut resident has 40 million copies of his 56 novels and books in print, including in 14 foreign countries. Winner of WWA Spur Awards for *The Kincaids* and *Dakota*, Braun is also the recipient of the National Festival of the West Cowboy Spirit Award. The late Western Writers Hall of Fame author Elmer Kelton gave Braun the highest praise when he wrote, “[He] brings back the flavor of early Oklahoma and the grit of the men who brought law to an outlaw territory. He is a master storyteller of frontier history.”

James A Crutchfield: Winner of a Spur Award as well as three WWA Stirrup Awards for magazine writing, Crutchfield has written and edited numerous works on the West and its settlement, including 10 volumes in the *It Happened In...* series and a two-volume encyclopedia. “I’ve always attempted to write with no desire to impress, but only to tell a story in as simple a manner as possible,” he says. “The story is the end product, not my attempting to impress anyone with big words and complex structure. Crutchfield served as WWA’s secretary-treasurer for a decade and was the organization’s first executive director.

David Dary: “Stories of life in the late 19th century told by many great aunts and uncles gave me an early interest in the West and its history,” Dary says. That interest led to nine critically acclaimed books on the Old West. Dary’s Spur Award-winning *Cowboy Culture* is a standard work for readers and writers interested in knowing the history of the hired man on horseback. *Seeking Pleasure in the Old West* also won a Spur Award. The author polished his writing skills as journalist and teacher of journalism. “Clarity,” he says, “comes from writing, editing, rewriting, more editing and more rewriting.”

Clint Eastwood: Sixty years after appearing in his first film, the actor, director and producer of over 50 films is a Hollywood icon. Eastwood



first earned fame as Rowdy Yates in TV's *Rawhide* (1959-66) and became an international sensation in Sergio Leone's *The Man With No Name* trilogy in the 1960s. In 1992, Eastwood was awarded Oscars for best director and best picture, and nominated for best actor for *Unforgiven*. Biographer Patrick McGilligan says in *Clint: The Life and Legend* that the multitalented Eastwood is "still a monument in progress."

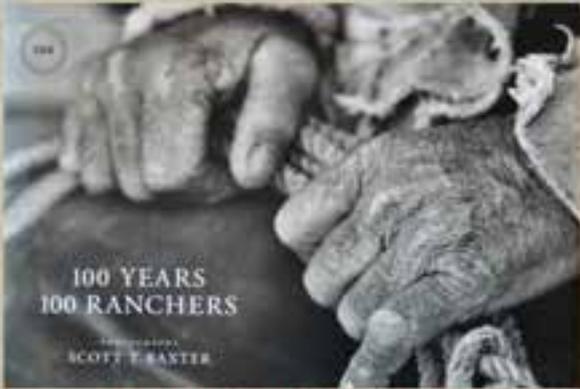
Loren D. Estleman: "He was dying faster than usual that morning, striping the sides of the dry sink with bloody sputum and shreds of shattered lung." So opens Estleman's *Bloody Season*, a novel about the gunfight at the OK Corral and its aftermath. Such eloquence is not unusual, nor is recognition of his skill; Estleman has earned six Spur Awards and two Wrangler Awards. For



Loren Estleman, the author of *Bloody Season*.

inspiration, rather than "erecting a myth on top of a far more fascinating reality," Estleman says he can "open any reliable book on the frontier, and find a hundred fascinating stories that have never been used in fiction."

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Sam Udall, Y Crisis Ranch, 1999

**Douglas C. Jones (1924-1998):**

A prolific career as a western writer included his best-selling 1976 alternative-history novel, *The Court-Martial of George Armstrong Custer*.

Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. (1915-2005):

Book author, magazine writer and editor, and first chairman of the National Museum of the American Indian at the Smithsonian Institution.

Elmer Kelton (1926-2009):

Kelton received seven Spur Awards, more than any other writer, and was named Best Western Writer of All Time by WWA members. His more than 50 novels include *The Good Old Boys*, *The Day the Cowboys Quit* and *The Time it Never Rained*.

David Lavender (1910-2003):

Awarded the first Spur for non-fiction in 1954 for *Bent's Fort*, his *The Fist in the Wilderness* is one of the best books on the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery.

Tom Lea (1907-2001):

Author and artist Lea is best known for his self-illustrated books *The Brave Bulls*, *The Wonderful Country* and *The Hands of Cantú*.

Elmore Leonard (1925-2013):

Western, mystery and crime novelist and screenwriter, his works adapted for the screen include *3:10 to Yuma*, *Hombre* and the modern western, *Justified*.

Max Evans: “The cow lifted her muzzle from the muddy water of the tank. She must go now. Her time was at hand.” Those opening words to *One-Eyed Sky* still resonate with the gritty realism that has defined the author’s writing in more than 30 books. After returning from serving in Europe during WWII, Evans gained attention in Hollywood with his true-to-life novels such as *Hi-Lo Country* and *The Rounders*, both of which became films. New Mexico honored Evans with the Rounders Award, named for his novel and given to residents who “live, promote, and articulate the western way of life.”



In his seventh decade of writing, Andrew Fenady’s latest novel is *Black Noon*.

Andrew J. Fenady: A multi-talented novelist, screenwriter, director, song lyricist and producer, Fenady broke into Hollywood in 1955 as a writer on the television series *Confidential File*. He produced the TV series *The Rebel*, wrote the series theme song “The Ballad of Johnny Yuma,” and numerous episodes. Other work includes adapting the John Wayne film *Hondo* into a TV series, and writing the screenplay for *Chisum*. Fenady is entering his

seventh decade of writing and his latest novel is *Black Noon*, published by Pinnacle.

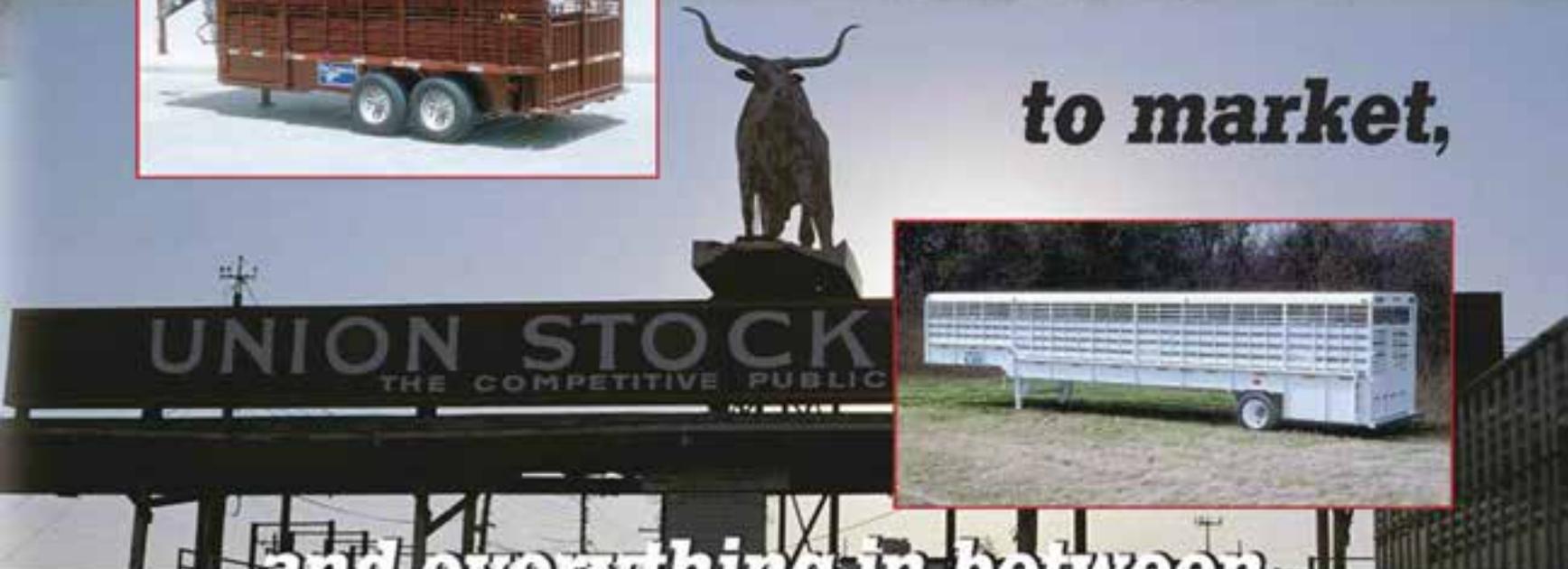
John Jakes: The best-selling author sold his first western novel, *Wear a Fast Gun*, in 1956. Jakes wrote advertising for many years, supplementing his income writing short stories, western novels, historical fiction, science fiction and fantasies. His major break came in 1974 with *The Bastard*, the first novel in the eight-volume “Kent Family Chronicles,” which sold over 55 million copies. Never one to forget his western roots, Jakes’ short story “Manitow and Ironhand” earned the National Cowboy Hall of Fame’s Western Heritage Literary Award in 1995.



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Nelson Nye (1907-1997):

A co-founder of WWA, its first president, and first editor of *Roundup*, he wrote nearly 125 books from 1936 to 1971.

Lewis B. Patten (1915-1981):

Pulp magazine writer and author of more than 90 novels, including Spur winners *Red Sabbath* and *A Killing in Kiowa*.

Jory Sherman (1932-2014):

Author of more than 500 books, including Spur winner *Medicine Horn*, Sherman was also a publishing entrepreneur.

Gordon Shirreffs (1914-1996):

A prolific author of westerns and children's novels, Shirreffs published his first book in 1956 and his last in 1995.

Glenn Vernam (1896-1980):

Author of western fiction and non-fiction, his definitive work is *Man on Horseback*, which he also illustrated.

John Wayne (1907-1979):

Awarded the Oscar for Best Actor for the film adaptation of *True Grit*, he is among the most influential westerners of all time.

Norman Zollinger (1921-2000):

This author of eight novels published his first, *Riders to Cibola*, when he was 57 years old.

Leon C. Metz: In *John Wesley Hardin: Dark Angel of Texas*, Metz wrote of his subject's attempt at autobiography: "Awkward constructions, bad spellings, unclear meanings and details left dangling or missing altogether..." The same cannot be said of Metz's writing. His historical works, through 17 books and numerous articles, columns and lectures, are widely admired for clarity and craft informed by careful research. While widely conversant in the history of the Southwest, Metz is best known for his fascination with, and chronicling of, Old West gunslingers, including his *Encyclopedia of Lawmen, Outlaws, and Gunfighters*.

Navaree Scott Momaday:

"A single knoll rises out of the plain in Oklahoma, north and west of the Wichita Range. For my people, the Kiowa, it is an old landmark, and they gave it the name Rainy Mountain." So begins Momaday's 1969 essay, included in *The Best American Essays of the Century*, that became the introduction to *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. His 1968 novel, *House Made of Dawn*, won the Pulitzer Prize. In 2007, Momaday was awarded the National Medal of Arts by President George W. Bush "for his writings and his work that celebrate and preserve Native American art and oral tradition."



Navaree Scott Momaday's introduction to his *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, was included in *The Best American Essays of the Century*.

Robert M. Utley: Recognized as one of the West's premier historians, Utley's writing has garnered three Spur Awards, three Wrangler Awards, and numerous other honors and recognition. A career National Park Service historian, he was a founder of the Western



Robert Utley is recognized as one of the West's premier historians.

History Association and served the organization in several capacities. He owes it all, he says, to a movie. "As a very young kid, I became entranced with General Custer, inspired by Errol Flynn in *They Died with Their Boots On*," he says.

"Over the years, one topic led to another, all in the West. So I credit Errol Flynn with leading me into western history."

Dale L. Walker: Fresh out of the navy, Walker visited Texas in 1959 and never left. "I liked El Paso, where I landed, married and stayed," he says. "Writing about the West was a natural thing." Natural, but not easy. "Writing for me is hard work: research, reading, thinking, note-taking." That hard work resulted in 17 books of history and biography and many magazine articles, four of which won Spur Awards. Walker has also worked as a newspaper editor, director of a university press, magazine editor, columnist and book editor. He is a recognized expert on the life and literary works of Jack London. (*Editor's Note: Dale L. Walker passed away at the age of 80 on December 8, 2015.*)

Richard S. Wheeler: Author of over 70 books, the six-time WWA Spur Award winner published his first

novel, *Bushwack*, in 1978 after a multi-decade career as a newspaperman and book editor. Originally from Wisconsin, the Livingston, Montana, author is well known for his "Barnaby Skye" series, and the use of historical events and characters in novels such as *Fool's Coach*, *Masterson* and *Sierra*. After suffering a stroke in 2014, Wheeler is retired from writing, but his books remain in print. His last western is *Anything Goes*, published in 2015 by Forge.

Jeanne Williams: Growing up in Oklahoma's "No Man's Land," Williams says she listened to her "father and uncles, all once cowboys, singing 'Strawberry Roan' and 'Streets of Laredo.'" That upbringing spawned numerous books about the West for adults as well as children, including four Spur Award winners. Many of her novels focus on "the western experience as it affected women,"



Many of Jeanne Williams' works focus on "the western experience as it affected women."

she says. Beyond the West, Williams has written books set in Wales, England, Ireland, Norway, Russia, Mexico and Brazil. She says, "I love the way a writer can be any age, any gender, anywhere." Williams served as WWA president.



Stuart Rosebrook, author of *At Work in Arizona: The First 100 Years*, is the senior editor at *True West* magazine. Rod Miller's latest nonfiction book is *The Lost Frontier: Momentous Moments in the Old West You May Have Missed*.

The Poacher's Daughter

Chapter One of Michael Zimmer's Western Heritage Award-winning novel.

Rose Edwards spotted the horses as soon as they rounded the bend along the Yellowstone River, about a mile away. She paused in her work to watch, easing back from the edge of the bluff where she wouldn't be as easily seen.

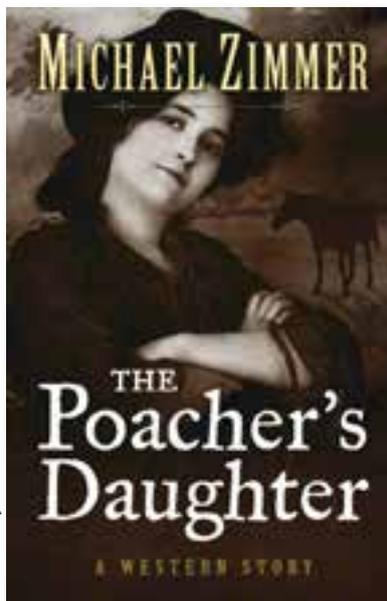
The horses were a motley bunch – paints, bays, buckskins, sorrels and blacks. They were being driven upstream at a rapid trot by four wranglers. Three of the horsemen stayed with the herd. The fourth rode about fifty yards in advance, a rifle balanced across the pommel of his saddle. Rose watched until they turned the horses away from the river, toward the mouth of a side canyon where a trail led up through the bluffs to the short-grass country above, then returned to her shoveling.

It was a warm day, but she was shaded by an old, lightning-scarred pine, and a gentle breeze kept the sweat across her brow to a minimum. The pine stood on a knoll above the broken, yellow-gray bluffs that flanked the river and gave it its name, and commanded a spectacular vista of rolling plains, jutting buttes, and distant, snow-capped mountain peaks. It was just yesterday that she'd come up here with a cup of tea to sit and gaze out across the windswept miles and

daydream, but it seemed longer. It seemed like a lifetime ago. Behind her, down the long, easy slope to the meadow where the Edwards' homestead had stood, the charred walls of her cabin still smoldered. The barn – a small picket shed with a sod roof – had also been set ablaze, although without hay to fuel the burning brand tossed inside, the fire had soon smothered in the thick dust of the dirt floor.

The mob had been more thorough in setting the house afire. After tearing the interior of the cabin apart in their search for Muggy's gold, they'd shoved what furniture the Edwards owned into the center of the dwelling's single room and doused it with coal oil. Then they'd trooped outside, where one of the masked vigilantes had tossed a sputtering torch through the door. Within minutes flames were soaring sixty feet

into the night sky, embers darting like fireflies. Some of the tiny cinders fell into the dry grass surrounding the cabin, and soon a prairie fire was racing toward the open county to the east, where it might have burned all the way to Junction City if a thunderstorm hadn't blown up shortly before dawn and extinguished it. The rain had been too late to save the cabin, though.



photos courtesy Michael Zimmer

The Poacher's Daughter earned the 2015 Western Heritage Award.



Rose kept her back to the tilted walls and collapsed roof of her home as she shoveled the final spadefuls of dirt over Muggy's grave. She knew she ought to cover the site with stones, but she was exhausted after last night's ordeal, her shoulders aching from digging in the rocky soil. Nor was she feeling overly charitable toward the body she'd just interred. Muggy had been a poor husband in her estimation, and she blamed him not only for his own death at the hands of a lynch mob, but also for bringing the mob to her door.

Muggy's christened name was Robert Thomas, but Rose doubted half a dozen people in all of Montana Territory knew that. He'd been called Muggy for as long as she'd known him, and even signed their marriage certificate that way. Not that theirs had ever been a traditional marriage. Muggy had spent the last eight months up in Helena, gambling and drinking all night, then shacking up through the day with a jane-about-town called Daisy LaFee. In all that time he hadn't sent a single dime, not even a letter, down the trail to his wife. Rose had been contemplating a divorce for months – they'd been married a little over four years and he'd been away for all but a few weeks of that – but she'd been afraid he might sell the homestead out from under her if she attempted it.

The place wasn't much, Rose supposed, but she was fond of it. She'd worked hard to make it a home, and even cultivated a fair-sized garden along the creek, raising enough truck to haul a wagonload of corn and squash into Billings every fall, which she traded for

staples to see her through the winter. It had been a good life, though spartan and lonely.

She was still debating how to finish the grave when she heard the clatter of hooves on the trail leading up

from the river and remembered the horses. Although alone, she wasn't particularly worried. A Sharps rifle leaned against the trunk of the ancient pine, and Muggy's Smith and Wesson revolver, wrapped in its holster and cartridge belt, lay close by. She could handle both proficiently.

Rose cinched the Smith and Wesson around her waist, then went over to stand beside the Sharps. It wasn't long before a cowboy on a lathered pinto hove into sight. He acted surprised when he spied the smoking hull of the cabin. Butting a lever gun to his thigh, he came forward at a walk, but hauled up when he spotted Rose. Then he grinned and lowered

the rifle. Under the sprawling limbs of the old pine, Rose also relaxed. Leaving the Sharps behind, she walked out to meet him.

The rider pulled up at the foot of the knoll. "Ye be all right, Rosie?" he called.

"Hello, Wiley. Yeah, I'm still kickin'."

Wiley Collins laughed, then lifted his gaze. His expression sobered when he saw the grave. "Muggy?" he asked.

"Uh-huh."

"How'd it happen?"

"Vigilantes. They followed him down from Helena."

Wiley's expression darkened. "I'd heard he'd been



Michael Zimmer grew up on a Colorado horse ranch, and lives in the Great Basin.

up to the Last Chance,” he said, referring to Helena’s old moniker from its days as a tented mining community. “I sure never expected this.”

“I doubt if he did, either,” Rose replied with unexpected bluntness, sweeping a strand of blond hair from her eyes. She was tall for a woman, but not overly so; stout without being fat. Sturdy, Muggy used to call her when he was feeling charitable. She had an old gray dress hanging over the tailgate of a small wagon beside the barn, but was wearing the heavy duck trousers, faded blue shirt, and mule-ear boots she normally donned for gardening. A sweat-stained hat lay on the ground beside the Sharps. She’d washed the clothes yesterday and hung them on the line to dry, which was why they’d escaped the fire. The Sharps and the Smith and Wesson had belonged to Muggy, one of the vigilantes having tossed both out of the cabin’s rear window soon after the mob broke in. The rest of her clothing and household articles had perished in the flames.

“Did they say why they hung him?” Wiley asked.

“They weren’t specific. There was some mention of missing gold, but...” She shrugged, letting the words trail off. She felt baffled by her lack of emotion, the absence of grief. There were shades of anger that came and went, but they were never overpowering. It was as if she’d found a squirrel lying dead under the old pine that morning, rather than her husband. “I reckon it was bound to happen sooner or later,” she finished lamely.

They were distracted from their conversation by dust billowing above the lip of the coulee that was the head of the trail. Soon, horses were spilling out of the gulch as if from the earth itself. Rose counted twenty-seven head, but could have missed a few in the powdery confusion. The wranglers turned the herd east, away from the cabin, and let it spread out to graze. While two of the men stayed with the horses, a third loped his

mount toward Rose and Wiley.

“Why, ain’t that Shorty Tibbs?” Rose asked, glancing at Wiley with a trace of amusement in her light blue eyes. “Last I’d heard, you’d sworn to have his liver on a stick.”

“Aw, ye know how it is. Fellas get in a row from time to time, but they patch things up. Besides, I’d feel terrible if I shot him. His mother’s an awful sweet person. I met her down in Texas once, several years ago.”

Reining up alongside Wiley, Shorty said, “Hello, Rose.”

“How, Shorty.”

He glanced at the cabin. “Was it lightning? I saw some over this way about dawn.”

“It wasn’t lightning, ye dolt,” Wiley Collins said. He pointed out the grave with his chin. “The vigilantes got Muggy last night. Rosie’s buryin’ him.”

Shorty looked genuinely distressed as he removed his hat, revealing a forehead that was as white as a fish’s belly and a bald, freckled pate where only a few wispy strands of curly brown hair remained. “Rose, I am truly sorry. Muggy was a fine man.”

With a flash of irritation, she said, “Shorty, you’re a dang liar. You know as well as me Muggy was a scoundrel.”

“That may be, but he was your husband and you’ve always treated me kindly. I had a wife myself when I was younger. She died giving birth. The boy died with her.”

“Aw, hell.” Rose looked away. “I didn’t mean to be so snappy, and I’m sorry about your wife. I didn’t know you’d ever had one.”

“She’s been gone almost fifteen years.” He returned the hat to his head. “What’ll you do now, if you don’t mind my asking? If you’re thinking of rebuilding, I’d be proud to help.”

“Hold on, hoss,” Wiley said quickly. “We’ve got



these ponies to deliver, lest ye've forgot?"

"I ain't forgot, but I won't leave a woman in a bad fix, either. Especially Rose."

"That's all right, Shorty," Rose interjected. "To tell you the truth, I ain't decided yet what I'm gonna do."

"Why don't you ride along with us?" Shorty offered. "We could use an extra hand, and I've seen you ride. You're as good as any man."

"Naw, you boys go on." She grinned to take any sting out of her refusal. "Likely you're needin' to jingle your spurs some, anyway."

"Now, Rosie, I know what ye're thinkin', but it ain't so," Wiley protested. "It ain't like that at all."

"Aw, the hell it ain't," Shorty said, winking at Rose. "Wiley's right, we can't tarry, but you're still welcome to ride along with us. You know me'n Wiley, and those

two," he inclined his head toward the horsemen still with the herd, "they're good men. That short, skinny fella with the sombrero is Garcia. The other one is Jimmy Frakes, from the Sheridan range. They'll give you no trouble. But if you're set on rebuilding, why, I'd be glad to help with that, too. We've gotta run these horses down the Musselshell to Two-Hats' place, but I could be back inside a week."

Rose eyed the two men thoughtfully as she contemplated Shorty's offer. Wiley Collins was the taller of the pair. He had an unruly mop of sandy hair that curled out from under his hat, and eyes as blue as a mountain lake. He was broad through the shoulders, lean in the hips, clean-shaven when time permitted.

Shorty Tibbs stood about five foot seven which was only a shade under average, but he was of slight build,

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which gave him a smallish appearance. He was quick and sure in action, and had a forward roll to his shoulders that made him look as if he was always traveling just a little faster than his bowed legs could keep up with. He had dark eyes, a black mustache, and a face weathered to a deep, walnut hue.

Although the idea of traveling with them was intriguing, Rose was leery. She knew Wiley as a randy sort and suspected not too many evenings would pass before he'd try to slip into her blankets, Muggy's recent death notwithstanding. Nor would it be the first time, if she allowed it. It had been lonely with Muggy gone so much, and Wiley had passed through on numerous occasions.

Still, as much as she loved this place, this little homestead above the Yellowstone, it occurred to her that it might be time to move on. A yearning for something different had been building inside of her for some time now. She knew she could raise another cabin, with or without Shorty's assistance, she just wasn't sure she wanted to.

"What do you say, Rose?" Shorty asked, leaning forward in his saddle.

She glanced at the corral, where her strawberry roan gelding, Albert, was watching the horses across the trail with high-headed interest. Yesterday there'd been a pair of mules in the corral, and Muggy's bay last night, but the vigilantes had taken everything except the roan, leaving Rose with a warning to clear out before the end of autumn.

"All right," she said impulsively. "I'll come ride the Owlhoot with you two roosters. Why not?"

"That's a girl," Shorty said, grinning.

And despite some misgivings, Rose couldn't help a smile of her own. It was about time, she thought, that she sought some adventures of her own, instead of always listening to the tales of others, told to her as they passed

by her door. About damn time Rose Edwards found some tall tales of her own to tell around the hearth.

Her was a pretty sorry outfit upon which to go see the elephant, Rose reflected, backing off for a broader view.

Albert stood hipshot beside the corral, his graying muzzle drooped toward the ground. On his back was a Mother Hubbard saddle with a high, flat horn. Although solid and well-made, the rig had seen hard use over the years; web-like cracks that no amount of oiling would ever close tracked the heavy leather mochila, and the stitching was frayed.

The rifle scabbard under the right stirrup strap was patterned for the lever-action carbine she'd lost to the vigilantes, and was a poor fit for the long-barreled Sharps, but it would have to do. She'd folded the gray dress she'd worn last night, a chunk of lye soap, and a couple of rags for washing – all that had escaped the fire – into her saddlebags, then dug up a tin money box from the northeast corner of the cabin, having to burrow through a section of collapsed roof to reach it. The box, buried under several inches of loose soil and a twenty-gallon water keg, had survived the blaze but yielded only six dollars and some change, the deed to the land, and her marriage certificate. Wrapping the money and legal documents in a rag, Rose stowed them in her saddlebags.

Her bedroll was an old Hudson's Bay blanket she'd cinched over Albert's back and hips on cold winter nights. It was worn and mouse-chewed but, as with the rifle scabbard, it would suffice.

The larger hand tools – spade, axe, hoe, bucksaw – would be left in the barn. She'd backed the wagon inside, too, where it would be sheltered from the elements. She could return later with a team and haul everything into Billings to sell if she didn't rebuild.



She still needed a heavier bedroll, a slicker to shed the rain, a good knife to replace the one she'd lost in the fire, but what she wanted most was ammunition for the big, single-shot Sharps. All she had was the cartridge Muggy had kept chambered – a .44-90. The Smith and Wesson revolver held a full wheel of .38 caliber rounds, plus another twenty or so in the loops of her cartridge belt, but even with that, she'd be handicapped if they ran into trouble. And Rose had little doubt that, sooner or later, they would. Neither Wiley nor Shorty would tell her where the horses they were running up to Two-Hats' trading post had come from, but she figured they were Crow ponies, stolen off the reservation south of the Yellowstone.

The Crows, who had always been on more or less friendly terms with whites and had scouted for the

cavalry during the late Sioux hostilities, ran sizable herds. It had become fairly profitable for horse thieves to slip onto the reservation and steal a few head whenever the fancy struck them. Rose had seen Indian ponies selling openly on the streets of Billings, Bozeman, and Miles City, and even though everyone knew where they came from, no one except the military seemed to care.

It took thirty minutes to ready her outfit. While she was doing that, Wiley and Shorty returned to the herd to switch mounts. By the time Rose got there, Wiley was chomping at the bit. "Let's go," he barked. "By God, if this is what it's like to travel with a woman, I'm regretting it already." He jerked his horse around and rode off at a gallop.

Reining alongside, Shorty said, "That's just Wiley. Don't pay him any heed."

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"I didn't hear nothing from him I ain't already heard twice from Muggy," Rose replied. "I never paid him no mind, neither."

Shorty smiled. "Slip in there between Jimmy and Garcia and bring up the rear. I'm going to ride point awhile. Keep your eyes peeled, and if you see anything, even dust on the horizon, you fog it on up and let me know."

Jimmy and Garcia were already hazing the herd northward. Guiding Albert into the drag position, Rose was immediately engulfed in dust. In less than fifty yards she could feel it in her eyes and on her tongue, tickling her nostrils. She pulled one of the rags out of her saddlebags and tied it around her nose like a bandana. She only looked back once, just as the herd dropped behind a swell of land that she knew would take them out of sight of the cabin's remains. It wasn't the cabin she found herself gazing at, though, it was the old, gnarled pine and the rocky ground under it, where Muggy's grave was already too far away to see.

"Well, that's it then," she said softly, the bandana puffing in and out like a beating heart. Turning away, she knuckled impatiently at her eyes, which had teared up in the dust. "Serves you right, dangit," she added, although for the life of her, she couldn't have said whether she was speaking to Muggy or herself.

They made good time, despite the woolliness of the country. Although the cavvy had been pushed hard the night before, it had enough spunk left to keep things lively that first day. It had been close to noon when they left the bluffs above the Yellowstone. By dusk they were well into the foothills of the Bull Mountains, that low range dividing the drainages of the Yellowstone and Musselshell rivers. Wiley led them to a shallow box canyon where a dilapidated jack-leg fence made from

juniper poles closed off the mouth. They drove the horses inside, and while Jimmy and Garcia rigged a gate from loose poles left lying nearby and Shorty started cutting boughs to patch gaps elsewhere, Wiley ordered Rose to gather some wood and start a fire.

"New hand does the cooking," he informed her. Then he was gone, riding back the way they'd come to look for signs of pursuit.

Rose chafed at the assignment. She couldn't help thinking it was on account of her being a woman, rather than the new hand. Still, she knew the Owlhoot well enough to know that partnerships along it dissolved faster than a spring snow. It wouldn't be long before someone quit and someone else joined up. Then they'd see who did the cooking.

By the time she'd gathered enough wood to last the evening, the men were just finishing their repairs to the fence. Shorty came over, slapping the dust from his chaps. "Build your fire over there," he said, nodding toward a sandy coulee with tall banks. "Keep it small and we'll put it out before full dark. Up this high, even dying coals can be seen for miles."

"Who's chasing us, Shorty?"

"Why, I don't know that anyone's chasing us. We're just being cautious."

Jimmy Frakes jogged his horse over, leaving Garcia with the herd. Jimmy was a lanky kid of eighteen or so, the only one in the bunch who didn't sport a sidearm, although he carried an old model Henry repeater on his saddle. Rose had known Jimmy's daddy in the old days, when the Sioux still ran wild and buffalo covered the plains. The Frakes had homesteaded a small ranch some miles from her pap's place west of Bozeman, before moving on to a larger spread near where Sheridan, Wyoming Territory, now stood. Rose had been fourteen and Jimmy only eight or nine when the Frakes left the



Gallatin Valley; although she remembered the family well, she couldn't tell if Jimmy recognized her.

Before Jimmy could dismount, Shorty tossed him a collapsible canvas bucket. "There's a spring about three hundred yards east of here. Fetch some water. Rose, there's bacon and flour in my warbag. Use what you need. I'll bring in some more wood."

It didn't take long to fry up the bacon and make some biscuits, although even Rose had to admit it was a wanting meal – the meat too crispy, the biscuits black on the bottom, and only water to wash it down. Afterward, Jimmy took a plate to Garcia, then stayed with him to smoke. Wiley hadn't returned, but Shorty set aside some food for when he did. Then he also settled back to smoke.

Rose lay against her saddle, her feet stretched toward the dying embers of the fire. In the west, above the rimrock and rolling hills crowned with scattered pines, the sky had turned a soft, deep purple, the higher clouds edged in gold. Although still light, the evening's chill was creeping through the hills. Rose folded her arms under her breasts and wished for a good coat. Shorty had already slipped into his sheepskin jacket, turning its broad collar up to cover the back of his neck.

"Dang weather," Rose complained, just to make conversation. "Montana is the only place I know where the sweat on the tip of your nose can freeze into an icicle at sundown."

Shorty chuckled. "You ever been anywhere besides Montana, Rose?"

"Not really. Pap says I was born in Tennessee, but my earliest recollection is of Bannock, over on Grasshopper Creek."

"I've never been that far west, although I've heard it's a pretty country. I was born in Georgia, but my folks moved to Texas after the war. I went with 'em."

"Did you fight in the war, Shorty?"

"Some, near the end, though I was young to be toting a musket. It was in Texas that I started to drift. Ended up clerking in a hardware store in Fort Worth. That's where I met Katy, working in her father's store next door. After she died I went to Colorado, but danged if my rope didn't keep getting tangled up on other people's beeves. Hell, maybe I was looking for trouble. On the prod, you know? Anyway, the law was watching me pretty close, so when Crazy Horse surrendered and Sitting Bull ran off to Canada, I came up here. Did a little prospecting in the Black Hills, but never had much heart for that kind of work. Then I met Wiley in Deadwood." He let the story end there, as if figuring anyone who knew Wiley Collins could fill in the rest on their own.

"I didn't know you'd led such a varied life," Rose said. "How long was you married?"

"Not long enough," he replied in a tone that invited no further intrusion.

They grew silent as the light drained out of the sky and the coyotes tuned up in the hills. Far off, a wolf howled at the stars. It made Rose sad to listen to the baying of the wolf and think about Shorty and his wife, whose death still haunted him. It reminded her of Muggy and the hopes she'd pinned on marrying him. She knew now that she'd only done it to escape her pap, the irony of the endeavor being that it hadn't been much of a swap. They'd been about the same, Muggy and her pap, although Muggy had been a more accomplished liar.

Her pap's name was Daniel Ames and he lived in Billings now, not thirty miles from the cabin where Rose had settled after marrying Muggy. She didn't see him more than once or twice a year, though, and then only when she made the trip into Billings. Whenever anyone asked, Rose would say her pap was a market hunter, but



the truth was he'd fallen into a bottle so many years ago she could barely remember his sober times.

It hadn't always been that way. In Bannock, her pap had been a respected businessman, but he'd changed after Rose's mam passed away. He'd gone on a year-long drunk, and by the time he came out of it he'd lost both his butcher shop and his good name.

With everything gone to hell in Bannock, they'd come over to the plains, where he'd gone to work for a robe trader out of Fort Benton, but that hadn't panned out, either. He'd tried going into business for himself, hunting buffalo in the winter for hides and meat, then trading among the Indians for robes during the summer, but the isolation finally wore him down. That was when they'd moved back into the mountains near Bozeman to try homesteading.

It was in Bozeman that Rose met Muggy Edwards. She'd been nineteen at the time, a big, gangling country girl, slope-shouldered and large-breasted and lucky, she figured, that someone with Muggy's flash would even consider a woman as dull as her. They were wed in her pap's cabin with nobody to attend the ceremony but a traveling Methodist minister, her pap, and some of the Jenkins' clan, who lived down the Gallatin River and ran sheep. Rose's brothers were already long gone by then, scattered across the Northwest. The wedding had been fitting enough, although she'd cried afterward when Muggy, her pap, the minister, and old man Jenkins got drunk on sour mash whiskey behind the barn.

It was Muggy who bartered four spans of mules and two large Mitchell freight wagons – the whole shebang won off a freighter in a poker game – for the cabin above the Yellowstone and a quit-claim deed to the spring, creek, and a 640-acre section of rangeland that ran from the pines west of the cabin to a shallow canyon that led down to the Yellowstone on the east; the southern boundary was the edge of the bluffs; a pair of stone cairns marked the northern line. Six hundred and forty acres was a rough estimate since the land had never been surveyed. Nor was Rose certain how legal the deed might actually be, Montana's political arena being somewhat tempestuous in its earliest days, but for four good years the place had been her home and she'd come to know every inch of it by heart, and a good deal of the surrounding country, too.

It was full dark when Wiley returned. Dismounting at the corral, he tossed his reins to Garcia, then came into the coulee. He jerked to a stop when he saw Shorty loosening the drawstring on a tobacco sack. "Sitting here comfortable as a lord in his manor, are ye?" he asked sarcastically.

"Pert near," Shorty agreed, grinning broadly without looking up. "No point in both of us foaming at the bit."

Wiley's voice turned harsh. "Nope, none a'tall, though ye might want to save that smoke for tomorrow. We're bein' followed."



The Poacher's Daughter, published by Five Star, is available from Amazon and other booksellers. Learn more



THE WESTERN HORSE

Complete Finish

Alberta's Richard Brooks explains how to gauge the quality of a bridle bit.



By A.J. Mangum

Alberta bit and spur maker Richard Brooks got his start as a custom craftsman by working in the shop at his grandfather's ranch. That background led to a business building and engraving jewelry and, later, to a partnership in a buckle manufacturer. Today, working from his family ranch south of Calgary, he specializes in building one-of-a-kind, handmade bits and spurs, which he's sold to clients throughout North America, Europe, Australia and the Middle East.

Brooks contends that judging a



photos by Richard Brooks

Hearth-themed spade bit by Richard Brooks.

bit's quality or utility isn't necessarily a complicated process, assuming a viewer understands the factors that contribute to effective bit design. Here, Brooks offers insight on the ways in which riders can gauge a bit's quality based on its strength, architecture and aesthetics.

Strength

In judging a bit, Brooks first takes note of its functionality.

"Has function taken a back seat to form?" he asks. "For example, is the cheek design strong enough?"



A well-made cricket, Brooks says, should have a steel core to keep it from wearing as quickly as a solid copper cricket might.

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How bad a wreck would it take before that cheek bent? If it would take a *bad* wreck, that's one thing. But if the cheek might bend when a rope is pulled against it, or if the horse bumped a cow, or if the rider took hold of his horse"

If a bit fails a rider's "worst case scenario" test, Brooks contends, it likely merits no further consideration.

Architecture

Next, Brooks suggest studying the pairing of the bit and cheekpieces. Some combinations, he asserts, simply don't work.

"I've seen lots of Santa Barbara cheeks with mouths – snaffles, low ports – that have no business being paired

with California-style cheeks, from standpoints of both tradition and function," Brooks says. "There's nothing *wrong* with these mouths – with suitable cheeks – but those combinations would be like putting a spade bit in a short, grazer-style cheek. Some guys might use it, but they'd only be able to 'get along' with it."

Brooks adds that the 'smoothness' of a bit – for example, the freedom of movement of a spade's braces – is an important trait. He's careful to point out that the correct *amount* of movement might be a matter of opinion.

The insides of a bit's cheekpieces, he continues, should be radiused or beveled to allow for proper movement against the horse's face. If a cheekpiece has squared-off edges on the inside, it's effective only if a rider lifts straight back on the reins; sideways force will cause the cheekpiece to dig into the horse's face.

"I've seen some cheekpieces sharp enough to sore a horse," Brooks says, "but at minimum such cheeks will affect a horse's movement and interfere with a rider's signals. I like to see that metal has been removed or forged out on the insides of cheeks – for example, on the bell of a Santa Barbara cheek. That shows the maker has some knowledge of how to use this excess material to aid in balancing the bit."

Brooks points out other common design flaws: a tight radius – such as inside the crescent at the bottom of a Santa Barbara cheek – that can catch a rope; and bridle rings that are too small.

"I can't figure out how you can get a headstall or bit hanger, as well as a chin or curb strap through a 3/4-inch hole," he says, "and not have it all bound up, leaving nothing moving freely. In my opinion, you need one inch, or close to it, as a minimum inside-hole diameter."

Of course, a bit's mouthpiece, Brooks shares, should be clean and smooth, with no grinder or hammer marks,



Brooks' work can be found in the tack rooms of horsemen and collectors around the world.

especially where the bit will make contact with the horse's mouth. And, the bit should be made from a suitable weight of metal, ideally a mild steel that will offer the added benefit of taking on a desirable patina.

Other observations he offers concerning mouthpieces: the mouth should be square with the cheekpieces or, with open-port bits, level from side to side. And, a well-made cricket should have a steel core to keep it from wearing as quickly as a solid copper or brass cricket might.

Aesthetics

"I'm sure I could start a real war by offering opinions on 'good' silver work," Brooks says. "I think the important details about function remain relevant. [A bit's decoration] should be clean, and done in a tasteful way that enhances the look of the bit. As I was told years ago, "It's great if a bit looks *handmade*, but don't make it look *homemade*."

Costs of Compromise

Flaws in a bit's design, Brooks says, can often be attributed to oversights on the bitmaker's part, or perhaps a rushed creative or construction process, leading to compromised utility or an incomplete finish. Consumers expecting superior work, he reminds us, should be willing to pay for the time a craftsman requires to execute an effective design and give a bit a quality finish.

"Time is money to a bit maker," Brooks says. "So be prepared to pay for a good one."





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YOUR HORSE'S FEET, A SERIES

Keeping it Simple

By Pete Healey, APF

We all like simple; simple and easy. What about simple and fast? That's even better. This philosophy flops over into the foot care industry big time.

I was talking to a prominent equine podiatry vet and I was explaining to him how I find with precision the placement of the coffin bone in the hoof capsule. His response was "who cares, just shoe to the widest part of the foot and get the heels back to the widest part of the frog." The way he said it was very condescending, like I was an idiot for making it too exact.

Veterinarian prescriptions for feet are usually very simple. If a horse is lame and has shoes: take the shoes off. If the horse is lame and barefoot: put shoes on. If a horse is lame and has shoes but very little foot: put a pad on. If the toes are too long: bring them back. It's so simple I wonder why a horse would go lame at all. The deal is – it isn't the outside of the foot that hurts, it's the inside. The inside of the foot is made up of blood, bone, nerves, tendons and ligaments. The lamina that suspend the bone are so complicated that researchers all over the world are working on how it works.

Just recently a veterinarian and I worked on a horse that had a severely foundered hind foot in which the tip of the bone had penetrated the bottom of the foot. After detailed diagnostics we did a complicated restructuring of the foot with plastic and a shoe with a mechanical treatment plate to protect and stabilize the bone. In the meantime, the owner was convinced by a friend of hers that this was the wrong way to go and needed to consult with a self-proclaimed laminitis farrier from the south. With all the information presented to him he convinced the owner that all that was needed was to simply rasp the toe back and lower the heels.

So they took the horse back and undid what we did and did what this farrier advised. Well within a week it was back but now the whole front of the bone had collapsed through the bottom of the foot. Now things are really complicated. This owner is now spending thousands of dollars to try and save a horse that has a poor prognosis of surviving this.

Why are we so set on trying to keep things simple? Farriers and veterinarians are not stupid people. Why can't we accept that the foot is a complex organ? The schools and universities need to quit dumbing down the industry but they don't know. Owners need to understand that the farrier and vet industries are just a product of what they are taught and there are no requirements for farriers in the United States.

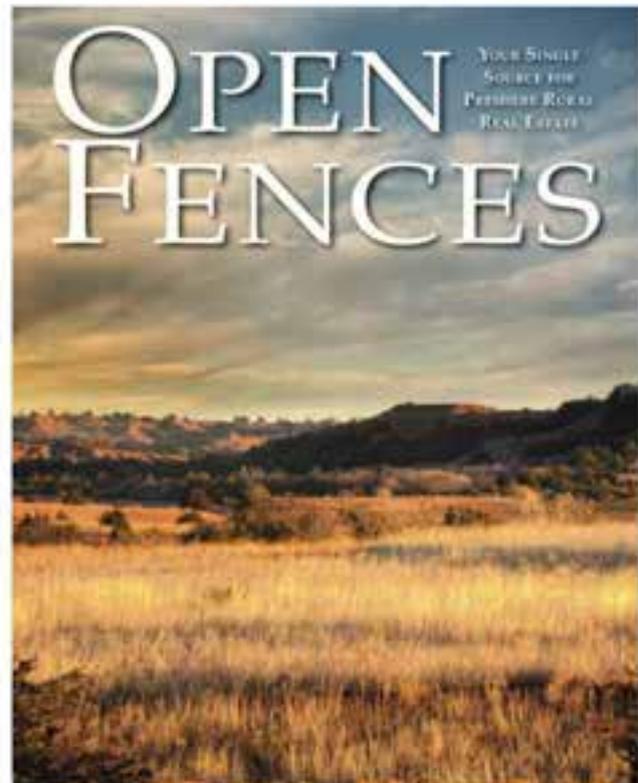
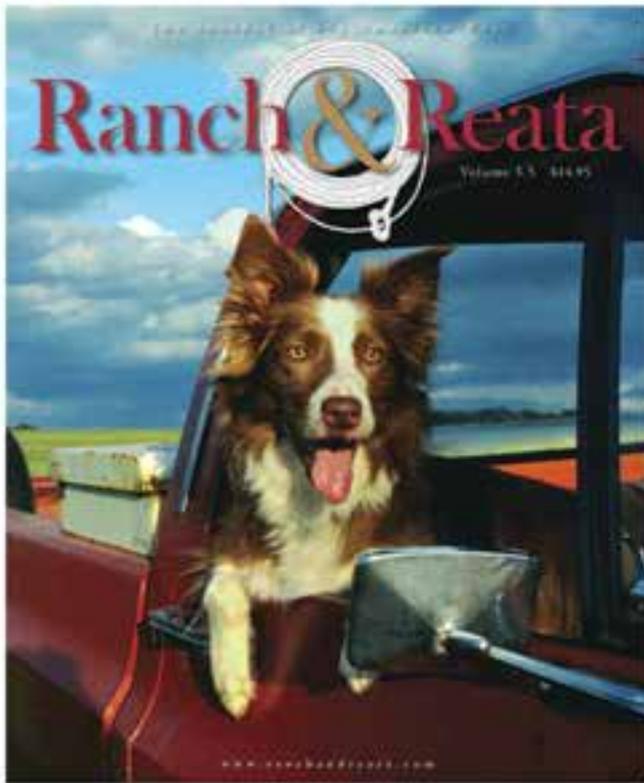
There is a group of veterinarians trying to establish a college of veterinary equine podiatry. This would create a board certified specialist; currently there are 22 specialty organizations with 40 distinct specialties including surgery, toxicology and pathology. This would be a good thing as it would create some standards that hopefully would trickle down to the farrier profession.

Once we start learning this thing from the inside-out then it will be simple. Bud Williams said "easier isn't always better, but better is always easier." www.balancedbreakover.com



“We goes together like
peas & carrots.”

- Forrest Gump



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Margaritas With Monte Hellman, The Modernist Western, and A Nod to Jack Nicholson, Warren Oates, and Harry Dean Stanton.

By Tom Russell

Hellman was effectively reinventing the western...All told it's a visionary strategy...The Shooting and Ride in the Whirlwind could both be set on a post Armageddon plain, and their characters could be the last people on earth. But they're westerns.

Michael Atkinson

I like to work on a film where it's continually opening up its secrets to me. I think any work of art, not just a film, is a mystery. I think it was Jean Cocteau who said it should reveal its secrets slowly.

Monte Hellman

Harry Dean Stanton, approaching ninety years of age, is sitting on his back porch above Hollywood. Cigarette in hand. The presumed drink is off camera. Across from him is renowned film director Monte Hellman – interviewing Harry Dean as a follow-up to a new Criterion DVD re-release of Hellman's *visionary* Westerns from the 1960s: *The Shooting and Ride in the Whirlwind*. Harry Dean

played the outlaw “Blind Dick” in the *Whirlwind* film.

The movie opens on long shot of Blind Dick, with eye patch and crushed fedora hat, sliding down a steep hillside on foot, ready to mount up and rob a stagecoach. Next shot – Blind Dick slips behind a sagebrush to relieve himself. Welcome to the modernist western. His sidekick is complaining of *carbuncles* and Blind Dick states: *you ought to attend to that.*



Harry Dean Stanton

In the recent back porch interview Harry Dean surmises that he learned the secret to natural acting in this early Hellman western. Jack Nicholson told him: *Let your wardrobe do the character.* Harry and Nicholson were once housemates. You can imagine the parties.

Then Harry Dean pauses, pulls on his cigarette, and squints. Trying to recall something lodged in the deep, cowboy past.

“Didn’t I go to jail one night out there in Utah? For resisting arrest or something?” He scowls and can’t remember. “Might have been another movie.”

The interview fades on that note.

A few years ago I got a call from Monte Hellman’s office. Mr. Hellman was looking for me. I was hiding, under the radar, dug deep into the trenches across the river from Juarez, dreaming up a *frontier musical*. Painting blue cows. Pondering the death of literature and song. I’d never had the honor of meeting the esteemed director.

I was aware Monte had worked with Roger Corman on early Jack Nicholson horror flicks and Westerns, and that Hellman’s *The Shooting*, and *Ride in the Whirlwind* were groundbreakers – considered the first *modernist* or *acid* Westerns.

Those two were followed by *China 9, Liberty 37*, starring Warren Oates – this third western was considered

more traditional, but it vanished from view. Copies are extremely rare. Monte also directed Charles Willeford’s adapted novel *Cockfighter* – again, starring Oates.

I hadn’t heard of Monte Hellman since his classic 1971 film: *Two Lane Blacktop*. That’s the one where James Taylor, singer-songwriter, and Dennis Wilson, original drummer for The Beach Boys, drive a hopped-up vintage Chevy across the USA, racing a cranked-up goon in a leisure suit named *GTO*, played by Warren Oates. The boys were racing for pink slips.

You might wonder if James Taylor and Dennis Wilson could act. They didn’t have to. Not with Warren Oates in the film. Warren always commanded total screen attention. Because he was real. He tore it up – whether a sidekick in a TV series, a lead in a Monte Hellman film, or a half-dozen roles for Sam Peckinpah. Warren Oates leaped over the edge, whilst spouting humorously appropriate lines.



Warren Oates, Dennis Wilson and James Taylor on the set of *Two Lane Blacktop*

I’d recommend Monte Hellman’s *Two Lane Blacktop*, or Sam Peckinpah’s *Bring Me The Head of Alfredo Garcia*, for a savage dose of Warren Oates. In

Garcia Warren drives around Mexico, drunk on tequila, talking to the severed head of a Mexican *bandito*. The head is rotting in a bag (flies attached) on the car seat beside Warren. I'm a big fan of Warren Oates.

Warren Oates was Monte Hellman's best friend.

I did a little research and learned Monte had since produced Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs*, and taught for eleven years at California Institute of the Arts, in the graduate film-directing program.

I finally got ahold of Monte. He had all my records – wanted me to write songs for his new project, a baffling noir film full of ghosts, airplane wrecks, and gunfire. *A film within a film*. No horses. I picked up my guitar and hit the A minor chord.

I was hoping to meet up with Monte in person so I could chat with him about his early Western films, and get the lowdown on Jack Nicholson, Warren Oates, and Harry Dean Stanton, a trio of classic actors who owe much to Monte Hellman's first films. Mr. Hellman was a vital part of Western film history. But first I had to write the song.

I The Road to Nowhere

*Well the ditches are on fire
And there ain't no higher ground
You were a prince in the City of Angels, kid
Now you're pawning your clothes in a railroad town
Well, forgiveness is the killer of snakes, amigo
In the gardens of anger and despair*

Keep your mind in the middle, little brother

Out on the road to nowhere

The Road to Nowhere

Tom Russell

Fast forward. Slow motion. Our film essay comes into focus on a mountain road somewhere above

Hollywood and Vine. The radio is blasting a Warren Zevon song: *I saw a Werewolf drinking a Pina Colada at Trader Vic's...and his hair was perfect!* We're climbing backwater canyons which sucked the creative blood out of Faulkner and Fitzgerald. Screenwriters on the dole. Whiskey in the bottom drawer. *No literary art, please, boys.* I can hear Norma Desmond in *Sunset Boulevard*: *I AM big. It's the pictures that got small...*

My wife and I on our way to the top of the canyon to visit Monte Hellman. Monte's invited

us up for drinks and dinner, and he's offered to screen the film – the film I wrote songs for over the last year. Monte's first feature in twenty-one years.

I was thinking a German houseboy might open the door and Monte would be lounging by the pool, sucking on a cigarette holder. He'd call us over to him with an arrogant wave of the hand. He'll trash my song and offer my wife a bit part. I was wrong. Monte opens the door. His hair is combed straight back, then curves up around his skull in wild arcs. The Einstein look. He's not even trying to be eccentric. This cat is real.

Any twisted notion I harbored that Monte might be bullshit or *Hollywood* vanished. He pulls us into the kitchen overlooking the requisite empty swimming pool



Monte Hellman



(It's being refurbished. The goldfish are dead and the mortgage is due.) Nathaniel West couldn't have made this up. The struggle never ends. *The Day of the Locusts*.

He begins mixing three classic *Monte Hellman Margaritas*. *Healthy margaritas*. He uses Xylitol to sweeten them. No sugar additives. We feel better for that. Fresh limes. And 100% agave tequila. Just what the doc ordered. Naturally, being Monte Hellman, there would be no additives. He's of the Samuel Beckett school, and carves all nature down to its core. I was pleasantly amused at the stark presumption of the drinks (to steal from James Thurber.)

Spinning with good tequila, we're aimed towards the screening room. Which is also Monte's bedroom. Three director's chairs propped in front of his bed and a wide screen in front of us. There's no escape. What if we don't dig the film? No way out.

Two hours later we came out of the bedroom, *reeling*. I'm still trying to figure out this movie. A filmmaker falls in love with his lead actress, who in turn, seems to be melting back into the woman whose part she's playing.

Many months later we're invited to the premier on Hollywood Boulevard. More Xylitol Margaritas were served. Monte introduced us to everyone. Bit actors, screenwriters, and semi-stars. We sit through the film again, on the big screen this time, and the beauty and mystery revealed a few more secrets. I'm proud to have written the theme song.

The film would go on to gain prestige notices in Europe, and Quentin Tarantino awarded Monte a *Palm D'Or* Lifetime Achievement Award at the Venice Film Festival. Thus began my friendship with Monte Hellman, the man who, along with Sam Peckinpah, has been hailed as the visionary who brought the cowboy film into modern times.



Monte Hellman

II *The Shooting and Ride in the Whirlwind*

Heavies are closer to life than leading men. The heavy is everyman – everyman when he faces a tough moment in life. It's the heavy that has to do with the meat of life.

Warren Oates

There were forty Western TV series, and I went from one to the other. I started out playing the third bad guy on a horse and worked my way up to the No. 1 bad guy.

I have a face like two miles of country road that you're never gonna get to the end of...

Warren Oates

In 1962 Roger Corman, the 50s and 60s king of low budget exploitation films, invited Monte Hellman to lunch at the old Brown Derby in Hollywood. Corman told Monte he wanted him to direct a Western themed film, and while he was at it he might as well knock out two – two on the same location might prove cheaper in the long run.

Both films were eventually made for under \$75,000 each. Twenty per cent of the budget was spent on the horse wranglers, who were members of the Teamsters Union. Their boss was a legendary cowboy named Calvin Johnson, who provided the livestock and scouted the Utah locations.

Monte directed both films, and Jack Nicholson co-produced, wrote and acted in *Ride in the Whirlwind*. Carole Eastman wrote *The Shooting*. The films were shot around Kanab, and many of the locations later



Warren Oates

disappeared under water after the government created Glenn Canyon Dam.

Let's think of Monte Hellman as a man, on one level, who filmed parts of our American landscape which don't exist anymore – the terrain flooded by that giant dam, and the picturesque roadhouses and gas stops along Old Route 66 in *Two Lane Blacktop*. Inside those lost terrains Monte Hellman re-imagined the West.

Monte learned an editing trick or two from Corman about cutting frames out on each side of a scene – which saved money and tightened up the film. Monte also cut out unneeded dialogue in order to tell the stories visually. Samuel Beckett rides again.

Samuel Beckett's literature of minimalism and absurdity was a reaction to James Joyce's florid, *throw the kitchen sink in*, approach to literature. To summon up Beckett in his own words:

I realized that Joyce had gone as far as one could in the direction of knowing more, [being] in control of one's material. He was always adding to it – you only have to look at his proofs to see that. I realized that my own way was in impoverishment, in lack of knowledge and in taking away, in subtracting rather than in adding.

Monte Hellman's penchant for Beckett-like Westerns might have been a partial reaction to the John Ford school of full-on plot, sensible dialogue, lush landscapes, and predictable endings. The first Hellman westerns were termed, by critics, *modernist westerns* that express a bleak, minimalist, quality that didn't sentimentalize the Wild West.

Jack Nicholson and Monte rented an office to polish the scripts in the Writer's Building in Beverly Hills, next door to Fred Astaire's office. Monte skipped up the stairs and Fred Astaire danced down. In *Ride in the Whirlwind* (a phrase taken loosely from the Old Testament) Nicholson based his story on a book of bandit histories he'd found in the L.A. County library. Nicholson loved the films. He carried the finished reels around in a cardboard box as he travelled to foreign film fests.



The Shooting

Recently Monte had Criterion send me the new DVD editions of *The Shooting* and *Ride in the*



Whirlwind – with updated commentaries by Monte, and actors Harry Dean Stanton and Millie Perkins.

There's a great chat with the horse wrangler who found the locations, Calvin Johnson. There's plenty of horse yarns.

I jammed the first film – *The Shooting* – into the machine and sat back on a Mexican blanket. I tried to resist reading the comments on the back of the package about the *gritty, dreamlike* nature of the films, and Monte's penchant for *deconstructing genre*. I didn't want to think of terms such as *acid western, existential, or modernist*. I didn't have a real clue anyway. I flunked college philosophy, and Sartre bored the hell out of me. I just wanted to watch the film.

Both films involve a hunt. In *The Shooting*, Jack Nicholson plays a hired gun and Warren Oates is a bounty hunter. The men are working for a woman who's tracking someone. You're along for the mystery ride into the wild sandstone terrain, as the characters sling heated half sentences back and forth.

It unfolds with a collage of odd camera shots of tired horses and red-bluffed desert, and with a sonic landscape of horses hooves, wind, bird calls, whistles, gunfire, and odd orchestral fragments. And the

fractured cowboy dialogue.

From memory – here's a string of dialogue samples:



Just tell me what yer tellin' me...be calm and tell me.

His face all spittered out, spilling into his coffee...

I'm so hungry I could chaw off my own lung..

Your brain's gonna fry out here, you know that?

Why you shoot him for (the horse) there ain't an unsound bone in his body?



At least I *think* that's what I heard. Cranky half-conversations by folks who seem to draw questionable conclusions, and shoot before they think. Or maybe they think too much before they shoot. Or maybe they don't think at all. I've hit on the partial formula of the *modernist Western*.



Images from the film, *Ride in the Whirlwind*

It's like walking into a bar and catching scraps of disoriented, angry dialogue from an isolate oddball at the end of the bar. You wonder why this human is so pissed off, but if you engage them in conversation you've made a grave mistake.

You've bit into a ragged, poison chunk of humankind. That's why Monte's films make sense when they don't make sense.

Ride in the Whirlwind also involves a hunt – a group of lawmen tracking down a trio of cowboys mistakenly thought to have robbed a stagecoach. The original gang leader is the above-mentioned *Blind Dick*, played by Harry Dean Stanton. They hang *Blind Dick* early on. He has no final words. Nobody does. They die. They stare into the abyss. And spit.

In these 1960s Monte Hellman westerns, we're treated to actors Jack Nicholson, Warren Oates, and Harry Dean Stanton, working on their craft in the early years. Jack Nicholson and Warren Oates are messing around with character sketches, acting chops, and facial ticks they'll use successfully in later films. Harry Dean Stanton seems to have had his persona down for the duration.



Here is Harry Dean again from the extended Criterion Collection, fifty years after the filming:

This film (Ride in the Whirlwind) solidified my approach to acting. If you're playing an authority figure you don't have to do anything – just be yourself. You can be indecisive or gay or anything...just be yourself and it's real.

I asked Monte recently about his perceptions of Jack Nicholson and Warren Oates, in the early part of their careers.

Monte:

Warren Oates was the closest I found in an actor to represent me in my relationship with the audience. I guess I see myself as an antihero, and he embodied that. He also conveyed the classic western traits of honor, quiet strength, few words, and a softness beneath the hard exterior.

Monte on Jack Nicholson:

I was lucky to catch Jack before he discovered which of his personal mannerisms audiences were attracted to. He was always able to force the character to become him, but the "him" was multi-colored and multi-shaped. Even though he played more varied characters later in his career, the variations were more pronounced in these early films.

Jack said:

All I could see in the early films, before "Easy Rider," was this desperate young actor trying to vault out of the screen and create a movie career.

A note from Warren Oates:

Hopalong Cassidy and Ben Johnson have rubbed off on my life. That's about all I have to say...I don't intentionally set out to be a villain. I do what is given me to do and from there I evolve my attitude and comment.

Jack Nicholson went on to stardom. Warren Oates and Harry Dean Stanton were never fully able to shed the over-the-top, *bull-goose-loony*, sidekick personas



which kept them from big time starring roles. They were deep characters with real ticks and grins. But we loved them all the more.

III Peckinpah and Hellman and A Quick-Draw, Rough Guide to Western Film

All right, I'm coming out. Any man I see out there, I'm gonna shoot him. Any sumbitch takes a shot at me, I'm not only gonna kill him, but I'm gonna kill his wife, all his friends... and burn his damn house down.

Will Munny
(Clint Eastwood),
The Unforgiven

Ah, the consideration the Western film. The funded "scholars" blather on about *the solitude of the lone rider, the loyalty of his horse, and the unspoken code of the West* ...scholars living high off their grant money, as they chortle and foment footnoted lists of crap in scholarly journals about *investigating subjects of nature, ethics, identity, gender, environmentalism, and animal rights...* they concoct this in cluttered offices of East Coast Universities. Mostly. They get paid for this.

Meanwhile directors like Hellman and Peckinpah defied the system, the scholars, the expectations of the masses, threw back the agave juice, and shot

from their gut. That's the way art is created in the cultural wasteland. The *genre inventions* and arch terminologies are constructed, after the fact, by those who overthink everything that should be digested and experienced by the individual. Pay your money at the box office and come up with your own conclusions. Critics be damned.

A wise man once declared that there are only two real story lines in the history of literature. *One*: A man goes on a journey – see *The New Testament* or Homer's *The Odyssey*. *Two*: A stranger rides into town – see almost every Western film, book, or song ever created. Consider *Shane*.

Cogitate on the classic movie *The Oxbow Incident*, directed by William A. Wellman, based on the Walter

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Image from the film *The Hired Hand*

Van Tilburg novel. The film was made in 1943 and starred Peter Fonda. Monte Hellman was deeply influenced by this one.

Fonda and a partner ride into a desolate town. As Fonda gets down from his horse he declares: *This place is as deader than a Paiute's grave*. Minutes later the barkeep pours the whiskey and tells Fonda that the only available woman is *an 82 year old blind Paiute woman*. The boys decline the offer and join up with a posse that eventually hangs an innocent man.

All the elements are here that Hellman will later pare down into his own vision of the raw West. Monte strips away the obvious and never overplays the emotional element or easy love angle.

The modernist approach often doesn't fly well in Middle America. Lots of viewers crave an obvious plot and structure, and a happy love story, cause they ain't gettin' any at home.

European audiences are not so demanding. They welcome the intangible. Tough-talking cowboys who ride into town and bark out quatrains of hard-assed, confrontational cowboy slang. Armed to the teeth.

Black hat, white hat, no matter. Bang, bang. Ride away.

If you're an electrician in Munich this is the stuff of daydreams and dime novels. And then there's the Italians and French, who invented futurism and cubism. They see matters at odd angles, in cracked poetics. They also drink more per capita wine than we do.

Europeans are forever enchanted by the Western landscape. They're obsessed with old Route 66, The Grand Canyon, Mesa Verde...all of it. If you visit a National Park in summer you're gonna run into more Germans than Americans. The foreign tourists want to see the Cowboy and Indian terrains of their childhood daydreams.

Monte Hellman fits into their picture. He thinks globally and was never afraid to buck the odds, the stock formulas, and the studio moguls. He loved the music of horse hooves and wind. The *Palm de Ore* from the Venice film fest d'or sits on his mantle. The director's chairs are in the screening room, next to his bed. Margaritas await you in the blender. The swimming pool is filling.

But what about the history? What can we sum up about the Western, and Hellman and Peckinpah – without sounding like an obtuse academic?

My Texas friend, and authority on film, W.K. "Kip" Stratton, has authored books on film, rodeo, boxing (Floyd Patterson), and is also a fine poet. He's now immersed in a book on Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch*, a movie that usually makes everyone's "ten best cowboy films" list.

I asked Kip about Monte Hellman and Sam Peckinpah, and the evolution of Western film. I wondered if he could do it in four sentences. It ran a little over four, but it's concise and as enlightening as a mini-course in Western film. And you don't have to sit in class and snore.



In Kip's words:

Okay you had John Ford and also Howard Hawks. Next came a group of directors who upped the "art" ante in the Western movie: George Stevens and "Shane" – there was more realism, particular in how violence is portrayed. Then came Anthony Mann and the psychologically driven Western, The Naked Spur, Winchester 73, also Fred Zinnemann, High Noon.

And Delmer Daves – Westerns simple on their face, yet symbolically rich, particularly his use of nature and natural settings as symbols. Then Budd Boetticher, especially "branding" his "Ranown" Westerns with an auteur's touch, also presenting bad men as characters we feel some sympathy for.

Those guys were transitional. They made the Revisionist Westerns of Monte Hellman, Sam Peckinpah, and Sergio Leone, possible.

My four sentences (or so): Monte and Sam did their best work free of the studio system, so they didn't have to adhere to the story conventions that Ford, and others, had to... such as the mandatory love story, which sunk so many Westerns.

They were free of the conventions of the Western mythology itself. They were able to, and did, deal with existential themes (Ford would have thrown-up upon hearing the word existential).

*They were able to portray a West that was dirty and unethical, where nice guys often finished last, where flies crawled on horses, where women had **boobs** and **fornicated**, where dying wasn't pretty. One final thing: they both steered clear of the stereotyped portrayal of Indians within the cowboy/cavalry vs. Indians context.*

(* The above words *in bold* were substituted by this essayist to protect sensitive readers.)

It's best to remember one thing I learned from painter Wayne Thiebaud. Art (ditto film, literature, song) doesn't evolve along straight, progressive lines. Technology be damned, films are not necessarily better or more artful than forty or fifty years ago. And no one's writing better songs than Bob Dylan, or those traditional cowboy songs like "Old Paint." All the great classic novels were written before 1970. Art erupts in individual, out of time, Van Gogh giggles. Visionaries are well-needed.

IV A Final 10 Questions at Twenty Paces (or eight Hundred Miles) with Monte Hellman

I have nothing against happy endings, even though my movies rarely turn out that way.

Monte Hellman

I haven't seen many films for a while.

The last year and a half, the only thing I've had time for was my own dailies. I did catch (Monte Hellman's) Two-Lane Blacktop, and loved it. I thought The Last Picture Show was a piece of shit, except for Ben Johnson. Apparently, I'm in a minority on both opinions...

Sam Peckinpah

1. Monte, what's your intellectual aim, as the critics might ask?

My aim always is to move the audience. Jack (Nicholson) is possibly more intellectual than I am, so in Ride in the Whirlwind I remember a conscious awareness of trying to break with audience expectations: not having a character

read a letter from mom, hopefully to make us care about him...no taking the girl to the barn to inject a little sex. We tried to blur the colors of the white hat and the black hat.

I tried to make the images engaging, so it didn't matter what the characters were saying.

2. In your words...what's the Beckett connection?

I directed the first L.A. (and fifth in the world) production of Waiting For Godot. It was a life-changing experience. I'm sure it had an effect on all my subsequent work.

3. There's plenty of mention of the oft-misused term existentialism in critical regard of your work.

I was interested in Sartre's writings on the subject, and never understood what critics meant by applying the term to me or others. Sartre made it very clear that his philosophy when applied to drama meant that although his characters were free to make choices that could alter the course of their lives, more often than not they would do what their heredity and environment had conditioned them to do.

So that, although "existence precedes essence," the characters we have become at any given point in our lives will dictate the choices we make 90% of the time. The critics seem to be referring to harsh reality, and confusing existentialism with naturalism, a la Steinbeck.

4. Filmic Influences?

I think my westerns owe more to previous movies The Oxbow Incident and perhaps Greed, than they do to any literary category or philosophy. I think the biggest influences were The Virginian (c. 1930), Stagecoach, My



Darling Clementine, and Shane. As to why, I think these were the ones we admired most. And they also represented some clichés we were trying uncliche. I have nothing against happy endings, even though my movies rarely turn out that way.

5. Jack Nicholson loved those films, eh?

Jack took both pictures to Cannes, and in cardboard boxes. The usual metal cases were too heavy to cart around that way. He still looked like Willy Loman, with one box held by its rope wrapping in each hand.

6. Final thoughts on Harry Dean Stanton, Warren Oates, Sam Peckinpah, and Jack Nicholson?

Harry frequently expressed resentment at my casting him as second banana to Warren. In Ride he appears without Warren, and he's top banana in his band. On his (Criterion) interview he tells he learned from Jack how to let the wardrobe do the acting, so he claims this movie was a turning point for him.

Warren was a sane version of Sam Peckinpah. Warren wasn't afraid of his soft side, the poet inside. Sam was constantly trying to hide it. You were never in danger of getting shot if you went to visit Warren. Warren and I played chess, invented new cocktails, and he even got me



to eat the rich Southern food that eventually killed him. He had a lot of charm, but nothing like the magic that took over him when the cameras were turned on.

I was lucky to get Jack before he became JACK. He was always a movie star, because he always knew he was inside. But he hadn't yet learned the tricks he relied on once he found what it was the audience liked. He'll always be one of the greats, but he could have been so much greater.

7. Why, in these westerns, did you pick that particular area of Utah to film?

Because we were doing two movies, with radically different requirements, we scouted all the traditional western locations. Kanab was the only one that worked for both pics. Each location becomes a character in its scene, and landscape is second only to casting in importance. The trick for me is making the landscape, as with all other elements, invisible. If you notice it, it's bad.

8. I've heard Antonioni mentioned a few times as an influence. In the 60s I loved his movie *Blowup*.

Antonioni had a huge effect on Jack and me when we did the westerns. He was much more groundbreaking to my generation than Orson Welles was. Orson was just doing what I had grown up with on

radio. Antonioni shook us up. I loved Blow Up. Now I'm a little critical of his dealing with British youth, disco clubs, etc. But all the core of the movie still holds up.

9. What changes have you seen in Hollywood and the film world?

I sometimes stay locked in my castle for a few days at a time. Then, when I go back down to the Strip, everything has changed. Buildings have disappeared. New ones have sprouted up. The kids have begun hanging out at some new place.

As for Hollywood, the big change is the corporate ownership. There were once moguls, who, for good or bad, could make decisions on their own. You could actually meet with a person





and make or break a deal. Now there's no such person. There's no human touch. A reader who's paid fifty bucks to read a script becomes the basis for decisions made by a group of ten fearful people. It's always safer to say "no."

I just filled the pool, but didn't have the plumbing ready for a couple weeks. So the algae grew fast. Now I'm waiting for fish, animal and plant-friendly stuff to make it clear again. No more chlorine, back to eco-balance. Yes, please mention the B & B. We have no business protecting people from the realities of life.

10. Last question – is your swimming pool still empty? Is it okay to mention that you now operate a B & B in your house to makes ends meet? So you can make more films!

Thank you, Monte Hellman. Good night.



Tom Russell's double album "Horse Opera" on the West, *The Rose of Roscrae*, is available, along with his full catalogue, from www.fronterarecords.com His art is available at: www.tomrussellart.com
Monte Hellman is an *Airbnb innkeeper*, he is working on additional financing for his next movie, *Love or Die*.

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Boot-Scootin' Good Times

Inside Jackson Hole's western dancing scene.

By Jayme Feary

Photos by Megan Peterson

Silver Dollar Bar, Wort Hotel, Tuesday Night

"Let's burn it down, burn it down," sings the lead singer for One Ton Pig, an outlaw Americana band that has packed the tiny dance floor with ranch hands, catalog cowboys, hikers, dudes, granola heads, hippies and money ranchers. The booty shakers and swing dancers in tennis shoes, flips-flops and penny loafers wag their tails in the center of the floor while couples in boots three-step around the perimeter in a swirling mass.

The neon stripe around the top of the S-shaped bar tints it the color of a pink sunset. Spotlights illuminate the cedar walls and the original Ray McCarty paintings of cowboys and saloon girls. On this best night of the week to dance at the Silver Dollar, everybody is here: locals, seasonals and tourists.

Local chiropractor and horse-man Cowboy Chris, wearing boots, baggy Wranglers, suspenders and a cream-colored felt hat, grabs Dancing Deb, one of the best female dancers in town, and rocks and spins her in his trademark hoedown style. Deb's skirt twirls like a spinning plate, and Cowboy

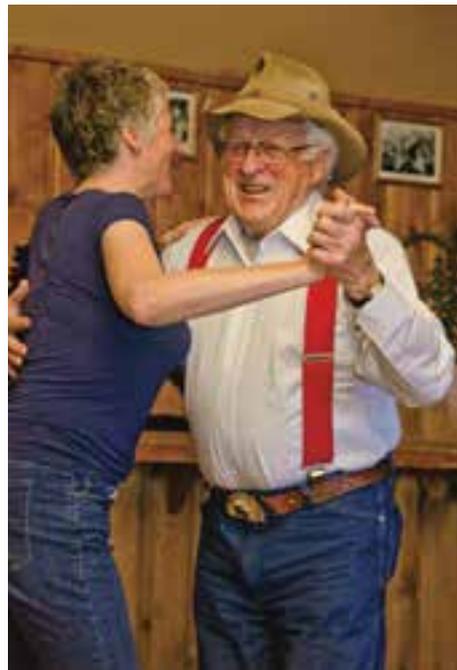
Chris's white Fu Manchu mustache, surrounding his mouth like a doorframe, widens into a smile.

In comes Ralph the Dipper, a TSA agent at the airport, sporting his goatee, potbelly, and a black hat covering his bald head. In seconds he has identified

every danceable hottie in the saloon. He grabs the hand of a tall one, a well-endowed 20-ish brunette with a newscaster hairstyle, Daisy Dukes and western boots, and triple-steps her around. The closer he draws her, the more strained her smile becomes; but he's Fred Astaire in boots, so she squelches her objections and enjoys the ride. As the song ends, Ralph spins her one last time and extends his leg. Every local knows what is about to happen. Using his thigh as a fulcrum, he dips the girl, tilting her legs upward and dusting the floor with her hair. Before she can exit the dance floor, he whisks her off for another dance. Six more songs

pass before she breaks free.

It goes on like this until late. Food and libations flow, and the music blares. The whole joint pitches and rolls.



"One after another, tourists work up the nerve to dance. Once on the floor, they stay."

Dancing in Jackson Hole An Insider's Guide

Silver Dollar Bar

Best night to go: Tuesday
(Bluegrass Night)
Location: In the Wort Hotel, one block west of the Town Square
Music starts: 7:30 p.m.
Must-see/do: See the 2,032 1921 Morgan silver dollars embedded in the bar
Crowd: Many locals and lots of tourists

Million Dollar Cowboy Bar

Best night to go: Friday or Saturday
(more locals on Friday)
Location: Town Square
Music starts: 9 p.m.
Must-see/do: Sip a drink while sitting on a saddle barstool
Crowd: Mostly tourists

Stagecoach Bar

Best night to go: Sunday
Location: Town of Wilson
Music starts: 6 p.m.
Must see/do: Dance to the famous "Roll Down the Line" song
Crowd: Mostly locals

Million Dollar Cowboy Bar, Saturday Night

The whatchamacallit band at the Million Dollar Cowboy Bar sounds like a house act at a Ramada Inn lounge, but the drummer, bassist and lead guitarist get on the same beat long enough for dancers



"Every type of person in Jackson Hole is here: real and fake cowboys, hippies, fly fishers, paddlers, hikers, venture capitalists. The crowd's age averages about 55."

to make a turn or two around the floor. Tourists sit on saddle barstools, shoot pool, watch people or stare around the room at miles of knotty pine, western murals, and a full-mount grizzly standing on its back feet with its paws forward like Muhammad Ali.

Most of the tourists must have missed the free Thursday-night dance lessons, for at first they only observe. The seven locals have their choice of partners. Dressed in jeans, boots and western hat, one elderly Saturday night cowboy, Herky Jerky, plays the role of teacher dancing with every girl he can. Without rhythm, he twitches around the floor as if having an epileptic seizure. Each of his partners acts as if she is dancing with someone else. A tourist, a 70-ish geezer in polyester pants, tortoiseshell glasses and a newsboy hat, throws down his make-love-not-war dance movements, thinking he is impressing the equivalent of his granddaughter, who dances three feet from him and avoids eye contact.

Dancing Deb is whirling her skirt again tonight. Eighty-something Claire is here, too. In Wranglers, a western shirt and ball cap, he thrills every woman he dances with, for he looks like everybody's grandpa and can keep the beat.



One after another, tourists work up the nerve to dance. Once on the floor, they stay. And wouldn't you know it, here comes Ralph the Dipper. As usual, he targets the young and beautiful, drawing them close and dipping them at the end of every song.

The big surprise tonight is an appearance from Ted, 51, maybe the most-loved male western dancer in Jackson. Cancer nearly killed Ted. It ripped him away from dancing until a bone-marrow transplant gave him a fighter's chance. After each song, he wipes his forehead and leans against the railing. His presence makes the Cowboy Bar feel whole again. Off he goes, a bowling ball of a man on two stumpy bowlegs, gliding as if balancing a basket on his head. Tourists ask him to dance, and he obliges them all. But Ted doesn't last long.

The clock ticks on, and the band shifts from

country music to rock. The locals abdicate the bar to the visitors, who stream onto the dance floor, gyrating and twerking. The music and alcohol lubricate the party until closing time.

Stagecoach Bar, Sunday Night

Derrick the Dynamo wails on his Fendercaster while Phil Round sings, "The road goes on forever, and the party never ends!" Having played every Sunday night since 1969, the Stagecoach Band is overheating this concrete-floored box. The dancers are dripping sweat.

Every type of person in Jackson Hole is here: real and fake cowboys, hippies, fly fishers, paddlers, hikers, venture capitalists. The crowd's age averages about 55. Some middle-aged guy wearing head-to-toe khakis like

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Jungle Jack Hanna dances with a Janis Joplin lookalike. Too mature to care what people think, Jungle Jack flails like an octopus on speed.

Onto the stage steps silver-haired Hort, decked out in a silk scarf and a pinched felt hat with a hole worn in the crown. The locals, 80 percent of the crowd, know the routine. To the polka "Airplane Yodel," Hort yowls



Just another rockin' Sunday night in Jackson, Wyoming.

like a coyote in heat. When the song is nearly over, everybody cheers. The last drumbeat sounds, the signal for Hort to throw his hat onto the floor.

Good ole Barb perches on her usual stool at the end of the bar. A few years back, she nearly died in a car

crash. No one minds that she dances a little slower now. Having her here is enough. After dancing with the same men for years, she knows their every move but doesn't complain about the repetition. She simply holds on tight, bobbles her head, and grins.

A few songs later, everybody but the onlookers grabs the first available partner. The dancers form two long lines and hold their partners' hands in the air as if playing "London Bridge." The bridge soon stretches almost to the pool tables where the couple on the end peels off, dances around, and ducks back through the bridge. Under raised arms spins Dancing Deb. Mr. Epileptic Seizure almost throws out a hip, and Ralph the Dipper hugs up some sweet young thing and then dips her over his knee.

The music builds until the band starts in on the customary final tune. Everybody scurries to find a partner. The band sings, "Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side. Keep on the sunny side of life." This moment embodies everything these nights are about, and the dancers and onlookers clap and cheer.

The crowd rotates like a hurricane, dancers kicking up their heels smiling at any friend or stranger whirling by. "It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way, if we keep on the sunny side of life."



Jayne Feary is a writer living in Wyoming.



WESTERN CULTURE

50 Years Ago

In December 1965, a moment in pop music occurred that changed the game forever.

The Beatles' *Rubber Soul* landed and changed the ball game. The album was full of fun and feelings and we agree with *Rolling Stone's* Rob Sheffield, who wrote about the image of George Harrison wearing a cowboy hat on the back cover, "No rock star has ever looked less stupid in a cowboy hat than George on the back cover." Amen.



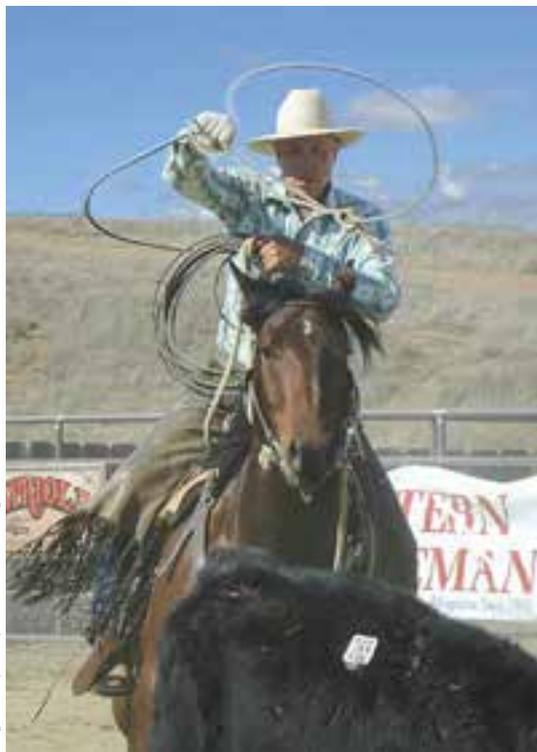
If you haven't listened to it in a while – find your vinyl copy and listen to "Norwegian Wood" in all its analog glory.



A VISIT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN

2015 Wrangler Brannaman Pro-Am

The 2015 Wrangler Brannaman Pro-Am is in the record books. We had fun. I want to thank all the sponsors, the vendors and all the folks who came out to watch and enjoy seeing an important western tradition continue. You can read more about the event in the Hen House story in this issue. Here's a glimpse of just some of the action and we hope to see you in October in 2016. Find out more at www.proamroping.com



All photos by Jenny Coxon. www.unaphoto805.com

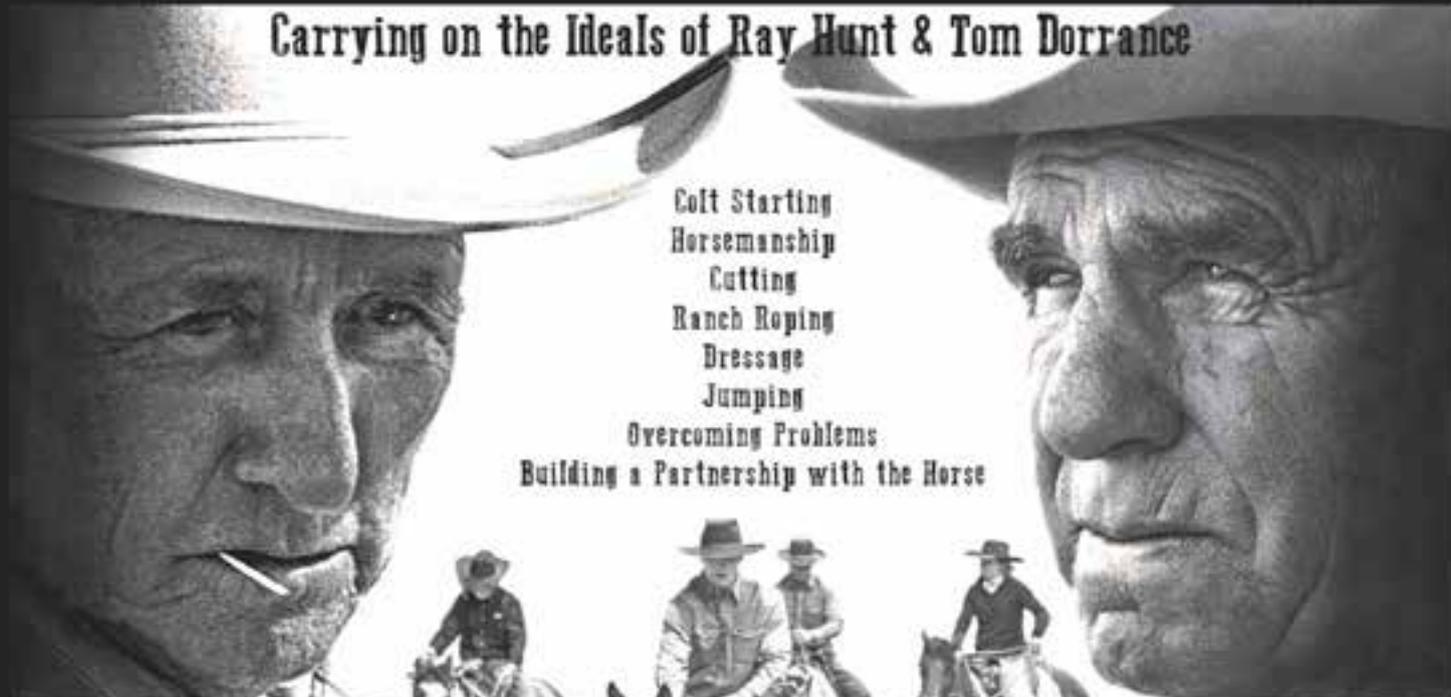
This year marked the third Wrangler Brannaman Pro-Am Vaquero Roping to be held in Santa Ynez, CA. Folks came from far and wide to enjoy the fine weather and a grand time. Buck Brannaman roping.

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Great horses and great gear were everywhere.



John Rianda



Ricky Quinn



Scott Grosskopf and Kip Fladland



Kip Fladland



Sterling Grosskopf and Dwight Hill



The view was great.



Isaac Johnson and Jak Christianson





THE HEN HOUSE

The Pro-Am Roping: Summarized*



By Hannah Ballantyne, Reata Brannaman and Nevada Watt

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The art of project planning is far from a mastered skill. Nothing compares to the feeling of finishing an event and having everyone leave

happy. Not saying that it went off without a hitch, but we managed to make all the “hitches” part of the adventure. If you never take on something new, you’ll never find success. That has been our motto for the past 3 years of putting on the Wrangler Brannaman Pro-Am Vaquero Roping.

For those of you who haven’t been to the event –

Every third weekend in October in Santa Ynez, California, the Brannaman Pro-Am Vaquero Roping draws hundreds of people from across the world who

are interested in the traditional vaquero roping style as well as a more modern approach to the traditional ways. The event has roping all day, a live band and dance every night as well as a bunch of vendors selling cool stuff.

This is where the idea of “Fusion” first came about – combining old traditions with a modern twist. In



Mollie Dorrance

All roping photos by Jenny Coxon. www.unaphoto805.com



Staci Grosskopf

conjunction with the three-day roping event, we also hosted a Silver Show called Fusion. This show focused on creativity within constraints through the fabricating of functional headstalls with unique silver. 18 silversmiths were tasked with collaborating with their leather crafter of choice on either a browband or single ear headstall. The silversmiths had free reign for design and were encouraged to be as expressive as they wished. All the headstalls were displayed on handmade copper industrial displays...we would like to point out that 'handmade' means countless hours stumbling around in the garage with power tools and friends that unluckily got "roped" into helping construct these monstrosities. Shout out to Home Depot plumbing department for the copper pipe! The quaint hall in which Fusion was held was in the process of renovation so we embraced that and really made all the displays industrial and vintage looking. There were long strips of burnt-edged canvas hanging behind the headstalls, which the public was free

to write comments on for the makers. Some of the makers had been craftsmen for 25 plus years while others were just starting. The headstalls ranged in price from \$650 to \$18,585. Because of the amazing supporters of Fusion we sold 8 during the show and 2 since. For all of Santa's elves out there, the remaining headstalls are up and ready for a new home at fusionsilvershow.com.

A huge thanks goes to all the sponsors and supporters, we had a great roping. We gave away almost \$50,000 in prize

money, 12 YETI Coolers and 3 beautiful bridle bits from JM Capriola. In our efforts to keep things new and exciting, we decided to add a "pregame" Muley Team Roping on Thursday for all the competitors already entered in the Pro-Am. We had 150 teams enter and we gave away \$8,000 in winnings for the top 3 teams in the Muley. Something we've heard before is, "team roping



Buck Brannaman



Caleb French (L) and Derek Chappelle (R).

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isn't traditional." But, people seem to forget that a lot of the time ropers need to be fast and efficient out in the pasture as much as things need to be slow and methodical in a controlled environment. In our opinion, that's what makes a cowboy; someone who can rope fast and smooth or slow and controlled and be dang good at both. So for next year, we will have the Muley roping again, and we encourage all the competitors to show up early and enter.

Another thing we have planned for next year's 2016 roping is to add 50 more teams to the already 100 teams. One of the only complaints that we've had is that people want MORE! We love to hear that, and we want to keep the people happy, so we talked the boss (Buck) into

adding a few more teams. We have such a great facility, great crew, and fabulous livestock. As well as a great group of vendors, sponsors and spectators that make the event possible. Our main goal is to create a roping that is profitable for competitors, fun, fair and a darn good time. We're working to make next year even better!

For more information about sponsors, entering up to rope, and general shenanigans, go to ProAmRoping.com.

**We tried to think up a better title but it was a Monday and the struggle was real.*

The Hens.



My Ranching Life

The photography of Jean Laughton

The photographs from the series *My Ranching Life* represent the timelessness of cowboying as it's still done on the ranches south of Belvidere, South Dakota. With the click of a shutter, the lens on my panorama camera scans the cinematic scenes playing out in front of me. With the assistance of black-and-white film and a crew of traditionally dressed horseback cowboys, the present transforms into the West of the past.

In 2003, I stepped “inside the photograph,” changing roles from spectator to cowboy, and transitioning from portraiture against painted backdrops to documentation from horseback. I was lucky to have old-time cowboy Lyle O'Bryan provide me the opportunity to learn and ride alongside him.

As I started riding with the crew and helping neighboring ranchers, I felt this time must be preserved and documented. These photographs – excerpts from *My Ranching Life*, and comprising a daily diary – are a personal view of the West I inhabit. They are quick shots captured from horseback while working on the Quarter Circle XL Ranch and 10 other ranches we neighbor.

When I am riding along and look up at a cowboy silhouetted on a ridge above me, or at a crew holding and sorting a herd of 600 head of cattle, I am transported back in time. I am thrilled to be able to take present-day photographs with subject matter and action similar to that found in an L.A. Huffman, C.D. Kirkland or Charles Belden photograph from the late 1800s or early 1900s.

The photographs are of the West that's home to the working family ranchers in this area. The subject matter that has been romanticized in Hollywood movies, illustrations and literature throughout the decades exists in its true, gritty form on this endless “set,” with a cast of characters perfectly playing their parts.

I am proud to be a part of it all, and have been fortunate to work with Lyle and this crew of cowboys over the years. I continue to ranch and document. I am happy to share this series of photographs, and to show that this way of life continues, and that western heritage is alive and well on the Great Plains.

Long live the American cowboy and rancher.

— Jean Laughton



Branding Day on the Willard Ranch. It was a misty morning, with most of the crew in yellow slickers. The crew works cows off calves in preparation for branding. Faron Willard, grandson of Chuck and Mary Willard, is in the foreground, with Horseshoe Butte in the background.



Putting Pairs Back Out to Pasture on the Old Double X Ranch. Lyle O'Bryan, on the buckskin and 70 at the time, worked on this historic Double X Ranch in his early twenties. Here, he helps pair out cattle in the days when Chris and Diana Elwood managed the ranch. Riding on the Double X with a crew of cowboys is like riding within an old western movie.



Sorting the Cows Off the Calves. This was the spring after a massive wildfire took out most of the Willard Ranch's pasture and branding corrals. Neighboring ranchers and the volunteer fire department showed up to fight fire together. Here, we work with makeshift corrals at branding time. Wade Fox is in the foreground.



Trailing Fortune's Yearlings Twenty Miles to Town. It was a chilly morning as we pushed over 300 head of yearlings across the White River and then across many a pasture as we made our way 12 miles to town. I rode a fresh horse that day and, right before I got this shot, I had jammed a roll of film into my panorama camera and hurriedly jerked it out. It made a whizzing sound, and I could feel my horse tremble from his nose to the tip of his tail. Luckily, he didn't hump up and buck, and I was able to reload and get this shot before crossing the boggy river.



Bringing Our Cattle Across the White River on the Quarter Circle XL Ranch. Lyle O’Bryan, my ranching partner, and my cattle trailing down several miles from the north pasture, closer to the shipping corrals. This was one of four White River crossings. The crew consists of our neighboring ranchers. We help each other in the spring and fall, when ranching is at its best.



Bringing Cattle in on the Old Seven Cross Ranch. At sunrise, a crew of 25 cowboys spread out across a beautiful 5,000-plus-acre Cemetery Butte pasture to gather pairs. We converged in the middle, riders coming from miles apart, trailing the herd of several hundred cattle through beautiful Badlands and to the corrals.



Lyle O'Bryan Working My Colt Henry. A true cowboy and horseman, Lyle, 72 at the time, warms up Henry before he gets on him for the first time. Henry was one of the last horses Lyle (now 81) started from scratch. Lyle has started many a horse in his time, and stayed in the saddle for most of it. A calm horse that can work cattle, drag calves, be roped off of, work in heavy winds and snow, cover many miles, cross rivers and more is a major asset.



Riding Drag on the Brunsch Ranch. This day, we were neighboring on the Brunsch family ranch and working with a crew of about 20 other neighboring ranchers. Just at sunrise, we gathered over 400 pairs and trailed them a few miles to the corrals at the ranch headquarters for shipping day. This was when I first started cowboying, so I was appropriately riding drag, in the back.



Stanton Anderson Riding in the Fog. We gathered in a beautiful, thick fog before sunrise, hearing but not seeing the cows until we were right on top of them. It was an easy day to get lost in the large pasture. Old-time cowboy Stanton Anderson has been at it all his life. Here, he helps out his brother-in-law, Jack Brunsch, on shipping day.



Branding on the Badure Ranch. Charlie Fortune drags a calf to the fire. The crew south of Belvidere takes pride in cowboying traditionally, making for timeless photographs. Brandings in this area are done with a wood fire and by roping and “wrassling” the calves.



A Foggy Shipping Day on the Brunsch Ranch. Scott Bauman, in the foreground, as the crew cuts cows off calves before loading calves to go to the sale barn. The Baumans go back generations in the area, as do many neighboring ranchers who grew up together.



Trailing Pairs to the Corral at the Pines. Neighboring ranchers make up the crew south of Belvidere, South Dakota, as we gather several hundred pairs on the old Double X Ranch. We are trailing them to the Pines corral for branding day.



Wrangling Horses with Lyle. There is nothing like watching a cowboy wrangling horses – or, better yet, riding along. It was early morning and we were wrangling horses on the bottom on the Quarter Circle XL Ranch, taking them through a couple river crossings and to the corral to switch out horses. My ranching partner, Lyle O’Bryan, was about 70 at the time.

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<https://youtu.be/dlsF0QZs5rs>
View more of Jean Laughton’s work
in this YouTube video.



Learn more about Jean Laughton and *My Ranching Life*, now a traveling exhibition, at
www.jeanlaughton.com.

To the Desert, to Find an Answer

Discovering the poetry of one of the West's most gifted painters.

By Hal Cannon

Maynard Dixon was one of America's greatest western artists, but few know he was also a serious poet. His paintings of desert landscapes and portrayals of American Indian life are

the signature of his art. Reading his poetry reveals he also was on the search to understand the essence of these subjects in words. It's a rare thing to be able to explore an artist's paintings through his poetry. Being an art school graduate, I understand how verbally challenged many visual people are.

When I started meeting cowboys who wrote and recited poetry in the 1970s, I also started looking for written works, books and ephemera. It didn't seem like anyone else wanted the stuff, so I'd go into used bookstores and find first editions of Bruce Kiskaddon, Curly Fletcher, S. Omar Barker or H.H. Knibbs for a few dollars each. In finding those gems, I had to wade through scores of poetry books about the West that were not only doggerel, but also seemed to describe the West through a fog of generalities. When I found books by those great old cowboy versifiers, I was thrilled. Here's an example of the stuff I had to wade through:



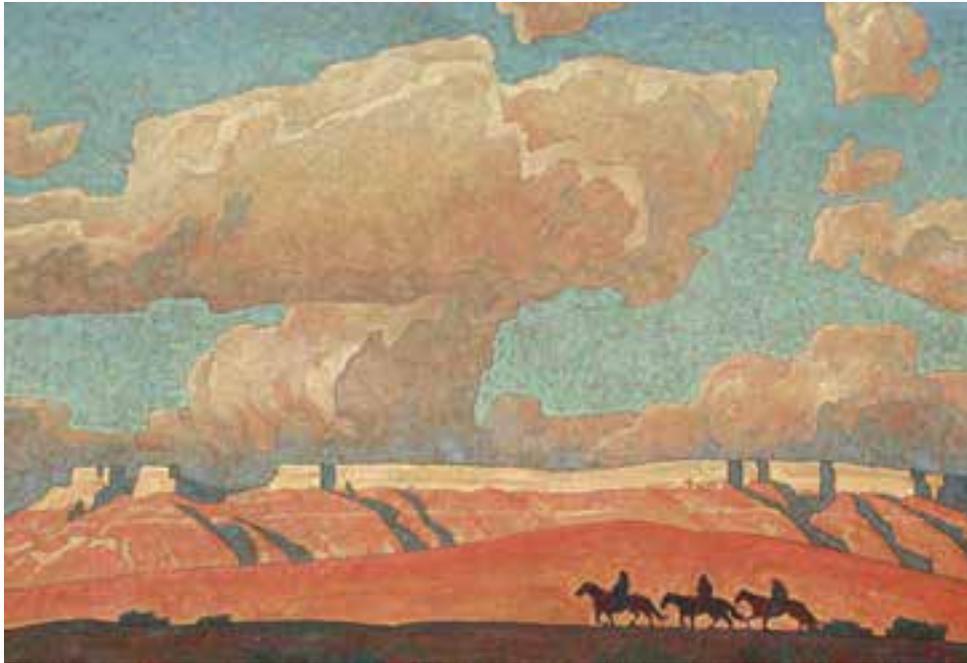
photos courtesy Thunderbird Foundation

Maynard Dixon

There's a trail I love to follow
In a western desert land,
On the shining hills it leads me
Through the rocks and through the sand,
Rocks and sand a gleam with color
Like a crimson sunset glow

To a place of wondrous beauty
 Where the sego lilies grow.
 From "Where the Segó Lilies Grow,"
 by Lydia Hall

They both loved and painted the West, but Maynard Dixon worked more at getting the clouds right, where Russell concentrated on the saddle, horse and garb. I wasn't looking for the clouds in my poetry quest.



Navajo Land, by Maynard Dixon

This past summer, Paul Bingham contacted me. Paul and his wife, Susan, run the Thunderbird Foundation, across the mountain from me in Mount Carmel, Utah. Years ago they purchased Maynard Dixon's last home and have restored it along with building a gallery. Each year, they host activities to honor Maynard Dixon's legacy of western plein-air painting. This year they asked me to join them for a summer event called, "Maynard Dixon Country."

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I remember trying to figure out what the difference was between this kind of poetry and the poetry I was looking for. I concluded that most cowboy poetry was based on stories. Cowboy poems could be philosophical, but they came to it through example rather than direct philosophical examination. They described the natural world, but usually through the context of the human condition. Of course, there were exceptions, but my folklorist brain had to sort through these piles of poetics somehow.

For years I passed over poetry that painted pictures of the West. Perhaps, in painting terms, it's the difference between Charlie Russell and Maynard Dixon.

Held on the grounds of the Dixon home, the event brings in some of the West's finest landscape painters to show and sell their art. Paul asked if I knew anything about Maynard Dixon as a poet. He was involved in a PBS documentary on Dixon produced at Utah's KUED and called *To the Desert Again*. I had co-written and narrated that show.

Years before, I had become acquainted with Dixon's granddaughter, Hollywood screenwriter Leslie Dixon. Through Leslie, I met her father, Daniel, who was the son of Maynard Dixon and Dorothea Lange, the great WPA era photographer. Daniel was also a crackerjack ukulele player and was married to Dixie Dixon, a

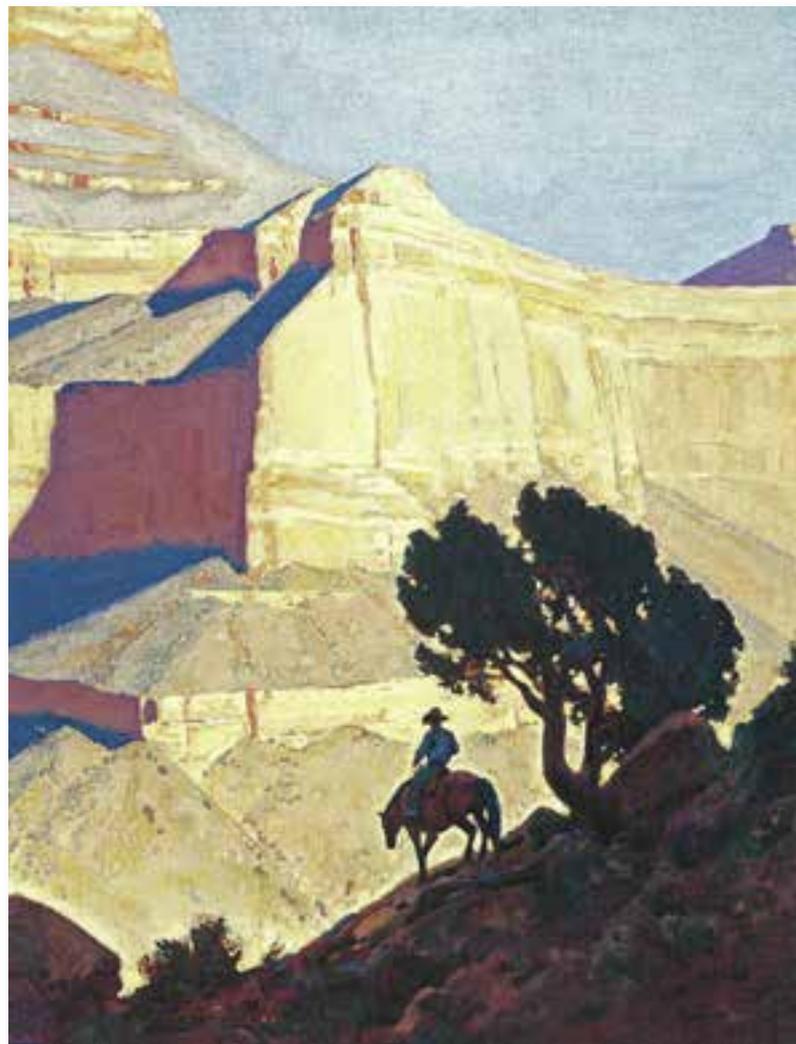


western-swing aficionado. Daniel was not a big fan of cowboy poetry and we had fun sparring about poetry and art. He's gone now, but I wish I could tell him how I came to fall in love with his father's poetry. I've always been a big fan of his father's art and even had a chance to buy a original drawing in college for \$500, but just could not swing it. I'd frankly categorized Dixon's poetry along with all the other poetry I dismissed as written by western *enthusiasts* rather than people who lived the West.

Paul Bingham asked me to give a presentation about my experiences with the western arts, with a particular emphasis in Maynard Dixon as a poet. I resisted the second part of the assignment but, as time went on, Paul's family put pressure on me to delve into this poetry, with specific requests to read some of it aloud in my talk. As I began looking at the poetry, surprisingly, it started growing on me. I soon realized I shared some of Dixon's quest to understand the truth of the West. I loved what he told *Sunset Magazine*:

"My object has always been to get as close to the real thing as possible – people, animals, country. The melodramatic Wild West is not for me the big possibility. The more lasting qualities are in the quiet and more broadly human aspects of western life. I am to interpret for the most part the poetry and pathos of life of western people seen amid the grandeur, sternness, and loneliness of their country."

Here's a portion of a poem Dixon wrote in 1900 called "La Cancion Mexicana."



Sunset 1934, by Maynard Dixon

Soft breath of the south in the starry night,
And the rustle of cottonwoods overhead;
A far-flashed meteor's stream of light;
A guitar's low throbbing just out of sight;
A soft brown hand, and kind word said.
A pause. The impetuous Spanish tongue
Sends forth its rippling southern songs.
Though the hand be weary or heart unstrung
The words are of love and the voice is young

With the kindness and courage that keep
us strong.

Dixon was born in Fresno in 1875. He came from an aristocracy of Virginia Confederates displaced by the Civil War. Like many exceptional artists and thinkers, he was sickly in his youth and had a lot of time to think about life after illness. Dixon was artistic and was duly sent off to San Francisco to art school. He liked the art, but rebelled against the rest. (Somehow, the story of Willy Matthews parallels Dixon in that regard.) At the age of 26, Dixon went off on a horseback trip around the West with Edward Borein. That was the start of a lifelong love of exploring the open West.

Even before this first exploration, Dixon was writing poems about the demise of the West. Consider this excerpt from “The Death of Man,” written in 1917 or 1918.

The old ways pass:
The prairie is plowed –
The forest is felled –
The city is burnt –
And the strong free men
Who moved the solid hills
Building their roads to the ocean
None now remain.
(what names of men are these with plump hands?
What babble and clamor of trade
Insults the slow wind from the mountains?)

Dixon didn’t have much truck with the city art scene, even though he thrived most of his life in San Francisco. Here is a bit from his 1935 poem, “Springtime Meditation”:

You must have Self-expression –
Some formless fornication of the soul.
Your little dogma is so plainly nine-tenths ego,
and that ego – poop!

In contrast to the urban arts scene, he had a strong attraction to Native American art and culture. He once commented, “No white man can equal the authentic work of the primitive artist. No less than in his drawings, his pottery, weaving and sand paintings, the Indian displays a marvelous sense of color and composition. And it is his sincere self-expression, not a copy.” He wrote many poems about the romance of Indian life, none better than “Chief’s Answer”:

Strong in the strength of the day I rode on
my pony,
opping the long worlds’ rim I rode in the wind;
And fronting me there, far across, was the
hollow sky,
And it said to me there
This is all

Then I looked back, down the long-climbing trail
of my days;
Then I looked at the feather fluttering free,
Black and white, two and two, from my lance;
Felt under my knees the warm breathing strength
of my pony;
And saw on my shield the mark that shall pass to
my kinsmen.
To the hollow sky then I made answer:
No, this is not all.

Maynard Dixon’s poetry was assembled in a limited-edition collection published by the California



Historical Society in 1977. *Rim-Rock and Sage* is long out of print and has become quite collectable. In Kevin Starr's introduction he maintains "Maynard Dixon was a practicing poet well before he was a practicing painter." Starr also explained that "Maynard Dixon's expressive life was so full of love, wonder, exploration, that the intension makes his work timeless, always pertinent even through change and whims of fashion." I agree.

The past few years I've become obsessed with the American desert. My musical life is all about trying to express the landscape where I live. I'm no cowboy, never could rope worth a damn, though we've dabbled in livestock all along. I'm a fifth-generation westerner who, like Dixon, finds power in this land where we live.

I relate strongly to Dixon's quest, which he articulated so clearly: "As often before, I went again to the desert to find an answer – and it was not far to seek.... You cannot argue with the silence. It returns your questionings to you, to your own inner silence, which becomes aware – a mystical something that is neither reason nor intelligence nor intuition, a recognition of some nameless truth that may not be denied. So my choice was made; I must find in the visible world the forms, the colors, the relationships that for me are the most true of it, and find a way to state them clearly so that the painting may pass on something of my vision."

You can see what he's talking about if you examine the long view of his paintings – sky and land. An added benefit: you can read this attitude, this quest, in his poetry. Here is the epitaph he chose from one of his last poems, "At Last," written in 1935, a decade before his death:

I shall give myself to the desert again,
That I in its golden dust,
may be blown from a barren peak
broadcast over the sun-lands.
If you should desire some news of me,
go ask the little horned toad
whose home is dust,
or seek it among the fragrant sage,
or question the mountain junipers,
and, by their silence,
They will truly inform you



<https://youtu.be/nINzNasmOl4>
Maynard Dixon's son, Daniel, discusses his father's work in this video.

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

Road Trip List

New Stuff

The King Comes Home

Cold Beer Conversation

George Strait

MCA



George Strait, aka, “The King of Country Music”

gave us two surprises recently – first he announced concerts for next spring and summer in Las Vegas – a friendly, easy home run for GS along with the release of his new album of

13 songs that take the listener all over the map, emotion-wise, but only GS could do it so subtly. The exception is the title track – a break-up song with more guitar than many will remember from previous studio albums.

There is a sense of a more mature focus – songs of life and death and what happens in between but if you love George Strait because he writes like George Strait; this album will not disappoint you. Lots of Texas stuff in there such as “Take Me to Texas:”

It's heaven there, and so my prayer

Is that you'll take me anywhere in Texas

The only home I know

I'm a child of the Alamo

And the yellow rose/

So when I go

Take me to Texas

As for the title, he stated recently on country radio that the title describes some of the best talks he's had in his life. We're just glad to have him back. That “Cowboy Rides Away” stuff...we weren't ready to let him go yet.

Fly Like an Eagle

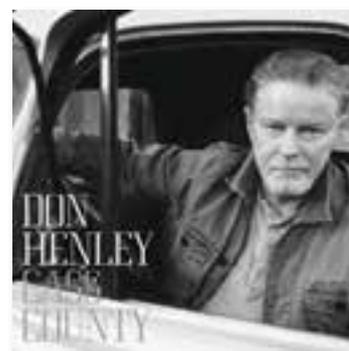
Cass County

Don Henley

Capitol

Another Texan has released a country album long after he checked out of Hotel California.

Don Henley has released a thoughtful album that someone with the career he has had can release when they are 68. The album is a personal journey through lost love, blue-collar celebrations and an eye on the trail heading up over the mountain.



He includes 11 new songs but the covers of back-door classics are showstoppers – especially “The Brand New Tennessee Waltz” by Jesse Winchester first released in 1970.



The new songs are just that – new. But with no current internet slang or throw-backs to times past – except the glorious steel guitars that sweep deep into your heart. There is some remembering back, especially in Henley’s thoughtful “Where Am I Now:”

*I've done some foolish things
And I've been downright stupid.
I made it through somehow
And I like where I am now.*

There is a sense of remembrance of that group he often plays with as he comes from the center of the California singer/songwriter universe – and it shows. This is a multi-lane album – it really shines in open country. And let’s face it, Henley is a pro.

Talk the Talk

Southern Drawl
Alabama
BMG

The band Alabama owned the eighties and nineties. And when you think about it, they really started the flannel-shirt-on-stage look while they pretty much opened the gate on the entire concept of a contemporary country band. So here, almost fifteen



years since they stopped recording and heavy touring, the band – Randy Owen, Jeff Cook and Teddy Gentry – all cousins, are back with a new album straight out

of Nashville that is at once charming and stand-your-ground tough. For many, the band was the archetype for Bro-Country, so as you can imagine, it’s southern country – as in the title track’s chorus:

*We drive trucks, we drink beer
We shoot whiskey and hunt deer.*

The band has a mission as they are supporting the American farmer and rancher as band member Owen speaks of their intent, “We need to make it cool to become a rancher or a farmer.”

No-Bro

Start Here
Maddie and Tae
Dot Records/
Republic Nashville



This duo blew onto the scene about the time Kacey Musgraves was changing things around for female artists in Country. M&T’s “Girl in a Country Song” shook up the Bro-Country seamlessness going on in Nashville. Many felt the duo was the next step down a path first cleared by the Dixie Chicks. These are smart women and their writing – mostly Maddie Marlow along with other writing partners – have filled the eleven songs with “big listen” qualities. While fun and accessible, the songs continue the journey of equalizing the creative playing field. The album is not a swing for the bleachers but rather an earnest attempt to create a base of listeners who will come back and support these two, who by all accounts, are destined for stardom. Not bad for a duo who started out by themselves on YouTube.



A Western Moment

I took up photography several years after I took up punchin' cows. In the fall of 1965, in Tucson, I set about trying to teach myself photography. A couple of new friends were helping me with my blunderings. One in particular, James Jordan "Dan" Jones, a physics major at the University of Arizona, was quite accomplished and took me under his wing. Dan talked me into attending the two-week-long 1966 Ansel Adams photography workshop in Yosemite National Park. We loaded our gear into his VW bug and headed for the Park's no-frills campground. It was time for me to start applying what I had learned from my study of Ansel's celebrated Basic Photo Series.

Toward the end of the workshop our group of 64 participants was at Tuolumne Meadows. One of Ansel's close friends, photographer Milton Halberstadt, was up there assisting. I was complaining to Milton about the lack of clouds. He said, "Keep your eye on Ansel. If he reaches for a tripod clouds will form." Within minutes the maestro started setting up his tripod, and, sure enough, a few small clouds appeared. By the time he was looking through his Hasselblad a full-blown cumulonimbus extravaganza was under way.

As I was conversing with Ansel in front of his iconic Cadillac-with-roof-rack, Dan eased around and bagged us with his 5x7 Linhof.

My favorite Ansel story:

At Happy Isles, down below in Yosemite Valley, our group was seated at the feet of the master for the Sermon on the Zone System. A small brown bird landed on the ground between Ansel and those in the front row. A woman participant raised her hand. "Excuse me, Mister Adams. I hate to interrupt, but can you tell me what kind of bird that is?" Ansel looked at the bird with great seriousness. "That, madam, I believe is an extramarital lark."

Throughout virtually all of my half-century of photography I have worked in black-and-white with film, using large-and medium-format cameras on tripods. The Zone System has always been a factor in my decisions concerning exposure and development. Ansel's example has always been an inspiration to me.

—Jay Dusard



Tuolumne Meadows, Yosemite National Park, 1966

As I was talking to Ansel, my fellow photographer Dan Jones shot this with his 5x7 camera. We were in the 1966 Ansel Adams Yosemite workshop. That's Ansel's Caddie.



TWO WRAPS AND A HOOEY

By Hand

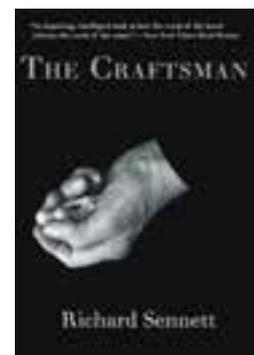
In the last issue we had a little story on a hat maker from Bend, Oregon. The story was as much about her journey as it was about what she does. Cate Havstad didn't really start out to be a hat maker, she simply wanted to fix her own hat, and it opened the door.



Cate's unique story came out of a story from Issue 5.2 by our editor A.J. Mangum on a film celebrating the culture of craftsmanship. Elliot Lindsey is a filmmaker based in Bozeman, Montana creating a series of films under the moniker of *The Makers*. He is also the principal behind The Handmade Movement, a collaborative effort between artisans and creative professionals to document and celebrate handcrafted work. The first four installments of *The Makers* feature Montana blacksmith, Eric Dewey, Montana saddle

maker Brian Esslinger, Oregon hatmaker Cate Havstad, and Montana knifemaker Thomas McGuane. You can see the trailer at <https://vimeo.com/112881618> or click the link if you are reading this in our digital issue.

The culture of the West is constantly being accused by media types of being inhabited by people sitting around organizing their Medicare cards. Possibly because the western genre media honors the seasoned and the Viejo – the old ones – more it seems than other parts of our general, throwaway culture. These older ones help pass on the wisdom as well as the traditions of this root-based, western way of life. One will notice while watching the trailer for *The Makers* and each of the four films produced to date – that they are inhabited by young people who care about the idea of working through a project – by themselves. Most of the stories, like Cate Havstad's, involve personal journeys, kick-started by a civilian society that appears to be





offering little career satisfaction beyond being a cog in someone else’s wheel. The hands-on entrepreneurial aspects displayed in Elliot Lindsey’s filmmaking speak volumes. These young people are no different than those who have answered entrepreneurial sirens’ calls to tech except they see the personal value in doing something, by hand, by themselves. What Lindsey has done is give each of his subjects a leg up through online exposure and social media support while celebrating the fact that crafted making is going on stronger than ever.



The craft movement’s return – and I am not talking macramé plant holders – seems to have been growing along with the resurgence of the singer/songwriter/



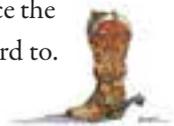
wooden music growth online. There is no question the web has leveled the field a bit while, admittedly, making it a much more crowded place to be.

For most craftsman and women, the work – and the process of the work, is the journey and ultimately the reward. Crafts people by nature are inquisitive, problem solvers and are blessed with boundless curiosity. But as author Richard Sennet, professor of Sociology at New York University and at the London School of

Economics, stated in his 2008 book, *The Craftsman*, “Craftsmanship is poorly understood when it is equated only with manual skills of the carpenter’s sort. German employs the word, *handwerk*, French the word *artisanal* to better evoke the craftsman’s labor. English can be more inclusive as in the term, *statecraft*; Anton Chekov applied the Russian word *mastersvo* equally to his craft as a doctor and as a writer. All craftsmanship is founded on skill developed to a high degree.”

Skill takes time. Time and focused commitment. And all of that takes patience. I hear constantly that “kids today have no patience.” I remind people I heard that when I was 25 as well. It may be true that media today can create such time-sensitive presentations – content that lasts nano-seconds; but the truth is the desire to create, to dream and to solve personally posed problems have been with us forever. The new breed of craftsman/artisan/maker – call them what you like – should give us great solace to know there are those young people among us who will help continue the culture in its best forms and thereby enhance the human spirit. We have much to look forward to.

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