The Journal of the American West

Ranch & Reata

Volume 1.5 $14.95

Just LeDoux It: Remembering Chris LeDoux

Cowboy Musician Corb Lund

A Conversation with William Kittredge

Winter in the West: A Pictorial by Will Brewster

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FRONT GATE

Mel Running Horses. Photography by Will Brewster

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Ranch & Reata

Volume 1, Number 5 • December/January 2012
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Ranch & Reata
PO Box 637, Santa Ynez, CA 93460
www.rangeradio.com

For advertising information contact Buddy Purel at 949.234.1281 or bpurel@gmail.com

Ranch & Reata is a bimonthly digital journal of RangeWorks, Inc.
PO Box 637, Santa Ynez, CA 93460
805.637.6205

View issue at www.rangeradio.com
Limited Edition print journals published six-times a year. Subscriptions available at website. Individual Limited Edition copies (limited to 1,000) are available for $14.95 and are sold in US dollars plus appropriate postage for destination. Order information at www.rangeradio.com..

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Journalism in Song

By A.J. Mangum

The best cowboy songs are, at heart, folk songs, chronicling a culture's hardships, desires, triumphs and failures. Via the work of practitioners such as Ian Tyson and Don Edwards, listeners can learn a good deal about life in the West and, perhaps more importantly, grasp a certain context through a singer-narrator's point of view. It's a unique brand of journalism, one in which the classic formula of who-what-where-when-and-why is supplemented by the emotions a performer can convey through his or her delivery. Our folklore, seasoned by angst and joy, heartache and hope, should mirror our reality.

Musician Corb Lund pens and performs cowboy tunes with an edge that comes courtesy of his college days spent fronting an indie rock band. A fourth-generation Canadian cowboy, Lund constructs songs that evoke both a respect for tradition and an unrepressed, youthful energy. Appropriately, his concerts draw crowds so diverse their demographics can't be summed up succinctly.

The 42-year-old, though, writes from the unmistakable perspective of a young westerner, one for whom changes in his landscape are unsurprising, but nonetheless heartbreaking. For Lund's generation and those that have followed, making a living strictly from the land is less common, and staying connected to one's cowboy roots requires effort. It's a perspective the musician ably documents.

In Lund's "Long Gone to Saskatchewan," his narrator laments the changing economics of ranching in Alberta's evolving economy and eyes a move east:

Well it's a hell of a battle to try and raise cattle
In the prettiest place on the hoof
Oil refiners and lot subdividers
Got land prices right through the roof

photo courtesy Corb Lund

They got values distorted and my brow's all contorted
With the words that the banker just wrote
Me and the missus, we love the cow business
Took jobs just to keep us afloat

The old lady's a waitress in three different places
And still can't afford her own car
I've been drivin' grader, I'm a smooth operator
Wonderin' where all the gravel roads are

I like Alberta, but dang ain't ya hearda
How much it can cost to buy oats?
I'll always love her and think kindly of her
But I got no money left over for smokes

Remove the specific geographic references and Lund's lyrics could represent a sense of loss felt by youth throughout the West. It's a unique point of view reflected too infrequently in our culture's art or journalism, a mindset built upon the young westerner's need to balance a longing for the mythical ideal promised by earlier generations against a genetic predisposition to seek new territory.

True, some cowboy songs – arguably, some of the best – are just about horses, or Saturday nights in town. Others, though, offer more. Between toe taps on the floor or the drumbeats of fingertips on a steering wheel, listeners can find poignant reflections of contemporary life behind the facade of an infectious guitar riff or just beneath the surface of a well-turned phrase.

Contributor Wendy Dudley profiles Corb Lund in this issue's "Urban Grit and Trail Dust."

CLASSICS

Ortega Rawhide

In his introduction to *Luis Ortega's Rawhide Artistry*, by Chuck Stormes and Don Reeves, sculptor and rawhide braider Mehl Lawson writes, "I am often asked who I think was the most influential braider of the last century, and it has to be Luis B. Ortega, hands down. He took rawhide braiding to an artistic level that no one had seen before."

A California vaquero born in 1897, Ortega spent his youth working on West Coast ranches, where he fell under the tutelage of obscure masters in the tradition of braiding rawhide horse gear – reins, romals, hobbles and reatas. While convalescing from a wrist injury suffered in a horse wreck, Ortega showed some of his braiding to artist Edward Borein, who encouraged the young cowboy to create artistic pieces that would appeal to both working hands and collectors.

The budding craftsman took Borein's advice to heart and, as the California stock-horse culture matured, spawning major competitions and a thriving show-horse industry, the region's leading competitive horsemen came to favor Ortega's work over that of all other braiders. Even as Ortega's work became highly collectable, and therefore valuable, his die-hard fans continued to use his rawhide gear on a daily basis, unwilling to settle for the efforts of lesser braiders.

Ortega's legacy as the horse culture's most revered rawhide braider was well established decades before his death in 1995. He received a 1986 National Heritage Fellowship and, to this day, the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum maintains a collection of the craftsman's work. Needless to say, Ortega rawhide is treasured by horsemen and collectors fortunate enough to possess it.

Rawhide aficionados credit Ortega for elevating his medium to the level of fine art without sacrificing its utility, an ethos that's understandable given his firsthand knowledge of how the work would be put to use on ranches. Western craftsmen in numerous disciplines, from saddlemaking to bit and spur making, cite Ortega's lasting influence when discussing the importance of creating work that is both functional and pleasing to the eye.

While Ortega was not known to freely share the secrets behind his techniques, he often volunteered information to fellow braiders who had become close to him and had proven their worthiness. Still, several generations of braiders, most of whom never met Ortega, claim him as a guiding force in their careers, regarding his work as the standard of excellence by which to measure their own.

photo courtesy National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

Made by Ortega in 1950, this 62-foot reata is of half four-strand and half eight-strand construction. Its California-style honda has a woodburned marking reading "Luis B. Ortega." James and Yvonne Ranger gifted the work to the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.

photo courtesy National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

This 16-strand quirt, built by Ortega in 1956, has a 16-strand body, red and black interweaves, and a black popper decorated with fringe. Luis and Rose Ortega gifted the piece to the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum.

photo courtesy Bill Goble Family/National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

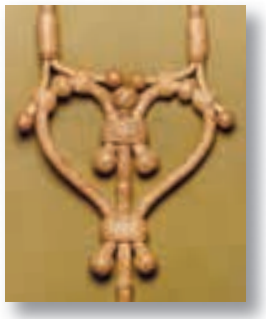
Ortega made this quirt around 1955, giving it a 16-strand body and red and black interweaves.

photo courtesy National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

These Luis Ortega hackamores each feature a 16-strand body and brown and red interweaves. Ortega built the top hackamore around 1916, the bottom hackamore around 1960. Both were gifted to the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum by James and Yvonne Ranger.

photos courtesy the Museum of the Cowboy

Rose and Luis Ortega



Learn more by reading Luis Ortega's *Rawhide Artistry: Braiding in the California Tradition*, available at www.oupress.com or via the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum's online store, accessible at store.nationalcowboymuseum.org.

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February 24
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April 19 – 21
Western Heritage Awards Weekend

May 26 – 27
Chuck Wagon Gathering & Children's Cowboy Festival

June 8 – August 5
Prix de West Invitational Art Exhibition & Sale

July 28
Celebrating the National Day of the American Cowboy

September 21 – 22
Rodeo Weekend
Including Rodeo Hall of Fame Inductions

October 12 – 13
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The Buckaroo's Saddlemaker

Utah's Jeff Hanson has built his reputation on making saddles tough enough for the Great Basin's ranch country.

By Jameson Parker

Jeff Hanson served his apprenticeship with the legendary saddlemaker Eddie Brooks, winner of both the Nevada Governor's Arts Award and the Academy of Western Artists Saddlemaker of the Year Award. Clinician Bryan Neubert and his sons ride Hanson's saddles. Buck Brannaman is one of Hanson's teammates at the Californios Ranch Roping and Stock Horse Contest where they (and fellow team member Frank Dominguez) won the Master's Calf Branding for the second time this year.

Three living legends seemed like a good place to start asking questions about Jeff Hanson. When Jeff is informed of this, there is a brief pause on the line and then he asks cautiously, "What did they say about me?"

"Buck Brannaman said you drink like a fish," I tell him. "Bryan Neubert said he was stunned you were ever allowed out on parole. And Eddie Brooks said he knew the first moment he laid eyes on you that you were born to be hanged."

There is a burst of delighted laughter. "Hell," Jeff says. "I thought they might say derogatory things about me. You be sure to put all that stuff in your story. All of it."

Jeff has been making saddles, off and on, for most of his life.

"I was always making stuff for my dad and me," he says. "My dad was a fantastically good cowboy, good to his horses, good to his cows, good to his men. He knew how to get the best out of everybody, and he was

Saddlemaker Jeff Hanson works from his shop in Monticello, Utah.

Jeff's work has been exhibited in some of the West's top trappings shows. He also builds trophy saddles for events such as the Californios and the Jordan Valley Big Loop Horse Roping.

loved and respected by everybody who ever knew or met him."

It was, as is often the case with cowboys, an itinerant life. Jeff was raised on the Padlock Ranch ("The north end, the Crow reservation, out of Hardin, Montana.") one of the Simplot Ranches in Idaho, and finally the 400,000 acre Maggie Creek Ranch near Elko, Nevada.

"I ended up as cowboss on Maggie Creek for three years, with my dad working for me," Jeff says. "Not too many guys get to cowboss their own father. I'd cowboy all day and then make saddles at night until I fell asleep. I got lucky right out of high school when I wrecked my truck near Elko. Eddie Brooks had just left Capriola's and I worked for him for over a year and a half. He built for strength and function first, pretty second, and that's what I learned from him. Eddie's a good and honorable man, a great saddlemaker, but an even better man."

Then it was back to the Maggie Creek, and from there on to other ranches: the JD Ranch, a thousand miles from nowhere in Eureka County, Nevada, and the even more remote Kings River Ranch, in Humboldt County, Nevada.

"We were 85 miles from Winnemuca, so we homeschooled our kids," Jeff says. "I built quite a few saddles while I was at Kings River, but then Pam [Jeff's wife], her folks got sick, so we moved down here to Monticello, Utah, where they live, about six years ago to help them out. I decided then to go into saddlemaking full time.

"See, I've put more of my life into being a cowboy than anything else. I've seen it and lived it all my life, and I love it. I miss it. I miss the work and I miss the people. But I've seen the other side too. Guys glorify the cowboy life, but there's no retirement plan. There are times when I'd rather be branding cows with my friends, but I'd be a damn fool to go back to working for someone else, 'cause I know how that cowboy life ends up. I'm one of the lucky ones. I had all the benefit of the cowboy lifestyle, growing up on those ranches, and that complements what I'm doing now, but I was lucky enough to have a way out. I know how to build a saddle."

Eddie Brooks agrees with that statement.

"Jeff had just done a little leather work and some braiding when he came to me, but he had talent,"

Eddie says. "He had natural ability. We both strive to make a real using saddle that can be ridden all day, but Jeff's picked up a lot things from other saddlemakers too."

Bryan and Jim Neubert both emphasized how good Jeff's workmanship and tooling are, and Buck Brannaman, who knows a thing or two about fine saddles and cowboying, was even more effusive.

"Jeff is one of the top saddlemakers out there at a time when there are more gifted makers than ever before," Buck says. "He makes a work of art, but a lot of guys can make a work of art. The real test comes after you ride the new off. Does it still fit your horse and is it still comfortable to ride? The proof of how good his saddles are is that all the buckaroos in the Great Basin buy them, guys who ride and rope all day long. A lot of that Nevada land is very sandy, and the sand comes off the rope and runs down between your leg and the saddle, so those saddles get more wear than most."

Jeff uses only two tree makers for his saddles, Rick Reed and Keith Gertsch. ("His last name is spelled like the bottom line on an eye chart," Jeff advises.) Then he builds a saddle that will stand up to the rigors of actual ranch work regardless of whether the rigging is flat plate or in-skirt.

"About 90 percent of what I build is for working cowboys," he says. "Working cowboys are my niche. At the Californios a while back, out of 45 competitors, I counted 11 of my saddles in the arena at one time. And one year, three guys were roping bulls on one of my in-skirts."

Typically, Jeff is very low-key when asked to describe his tooling style.

"It's called *mediocre-at-best*," he says. "I don't have a name for it. I just always tried to be original 'cause I can't carve like the good boys. It's sort of a mix of Texas, Sheridan and California, but every saddlemaker always develops his own style. A lot of talented carvers make my work look like it was done in Braille, but my seat and rigging and tree are the best that can be done. I know where to put my rigging."

Self-deprecating by nature, Jeff describes his tooling style as "mediocre at best." Critics as tough as horsemen Buck Brannaman and Bryan Neubert consider his work among the best on the custom-saddle market.

When asked what tooling he would do if given free rein and unlimited funds to pay for it, he laughs.

"You mean after I've cashed your check and it's cleared the bank?" he says. "I guess I'd do a mixed bag

of all my flowers, pretty dang small. But see, my tooling is always evolving and changing, always improving. Sometimes I use a dyed background with an antique finish to create three separate tones. Sometimes on a half-breed I'll continue the flow of carving from the skirt onto the roughout. But beauty is all subjective. Some people like Monet better than Van Gogh. Make sure you put that in your story. Someone might think I'm educated, and boy we'll fool that dumb bastard."

photos by Reayzors Edge Photography

"About 90 percent of what I build is for working cowboys," Jeff says. "Working cowboys are my niche."

"But my saddles have improved by leaps and bounds the last two years. They improve all the time. When I put somebody on my list, I tell them they'll get a better saddle than what they've seen. I'm not getting worse at it. I put a lot of effort into my work. I've got a two-year waiting list, maybe two-and-a-half, but I don't take a down payment, and I don't even want to know what you want until time comes to order the tree. And then, if the time comes, your circumstances have changed, and you don't have the money or whatever, there's no harm done. You haven't lost a dime."

Jeff Hanson's "mediocre-at-best, Braille saddles" are good enough to have been exhibited at Trappings of the American West in Flagstaff, the Great Basin Cowboy Gear Show and Sale in Elko, and at the Western Folklife Center, also in Elko. He has been asked to build trophy saddles for the Jordan Valley Big Loop Horse Roping, and for the Californios for the past four years, and he has done well enough to put a daughter through college, with a son about to start this year. He takes pride in those accomplishments, and he takes pride in his roping and in his horses, but he says the biggest compliment he ever got was from Eddie Brooks.

"He came up to me at the Elko Poetry Gathering and told me there was one thing he didn't like about my saddles and that he didn't ever want to see again," Jeff says, "and that was that my saddle was $2,500 too cheap. Then he told me when he finally tips over, he'd like me to take over his list. You can't get a bigger compliment than that."

Jameson Parker is the author of the memoir *An Accidental Cowboy*. He lives in California.
Learn more about Jeff Hanson at www.jeffhansonsaddles.com.

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The Whole Earth Catalog

Whole Cowboy Catalog

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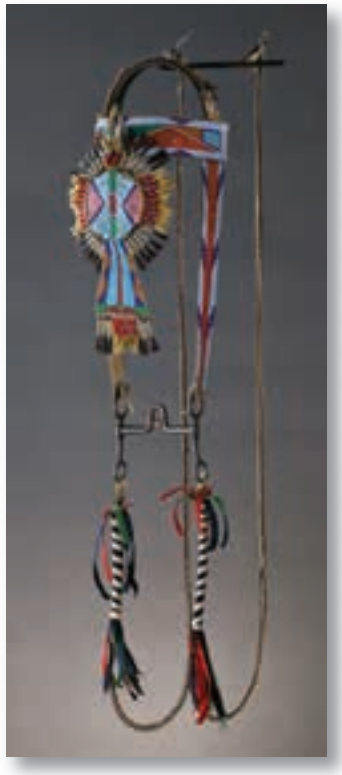

Writers and publishers Ned and Jody Martin have traveled the West for over 15 years gathering data for their books on horse gear that they publish through their imprint, Hawk Hill Press in Nicasio, California.

Their books range from historically retracing the paths and work of historic vaquero bit and spur makers to the unique horse trappings of Native American tribes. Their current book, available mid-December is the second volume on Native American horse gear, *Horses and Bridles of the American Indians, Volume 2: Bridles of the Americas.*

Here is the historical docu-

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mentation of when and from where the first horses reached more than 125 tribes in America. It is an incredibly elegant presentation with full-color maps, showing this "equine parade" across the continent as the introduction of the horse changed Indian culture and caused a true revolution in their lives – now mobile.

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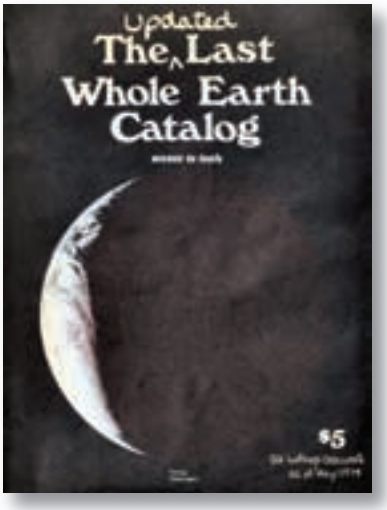
Stay Hungry, Stay Foolish – *The Whole Earth Catalog*

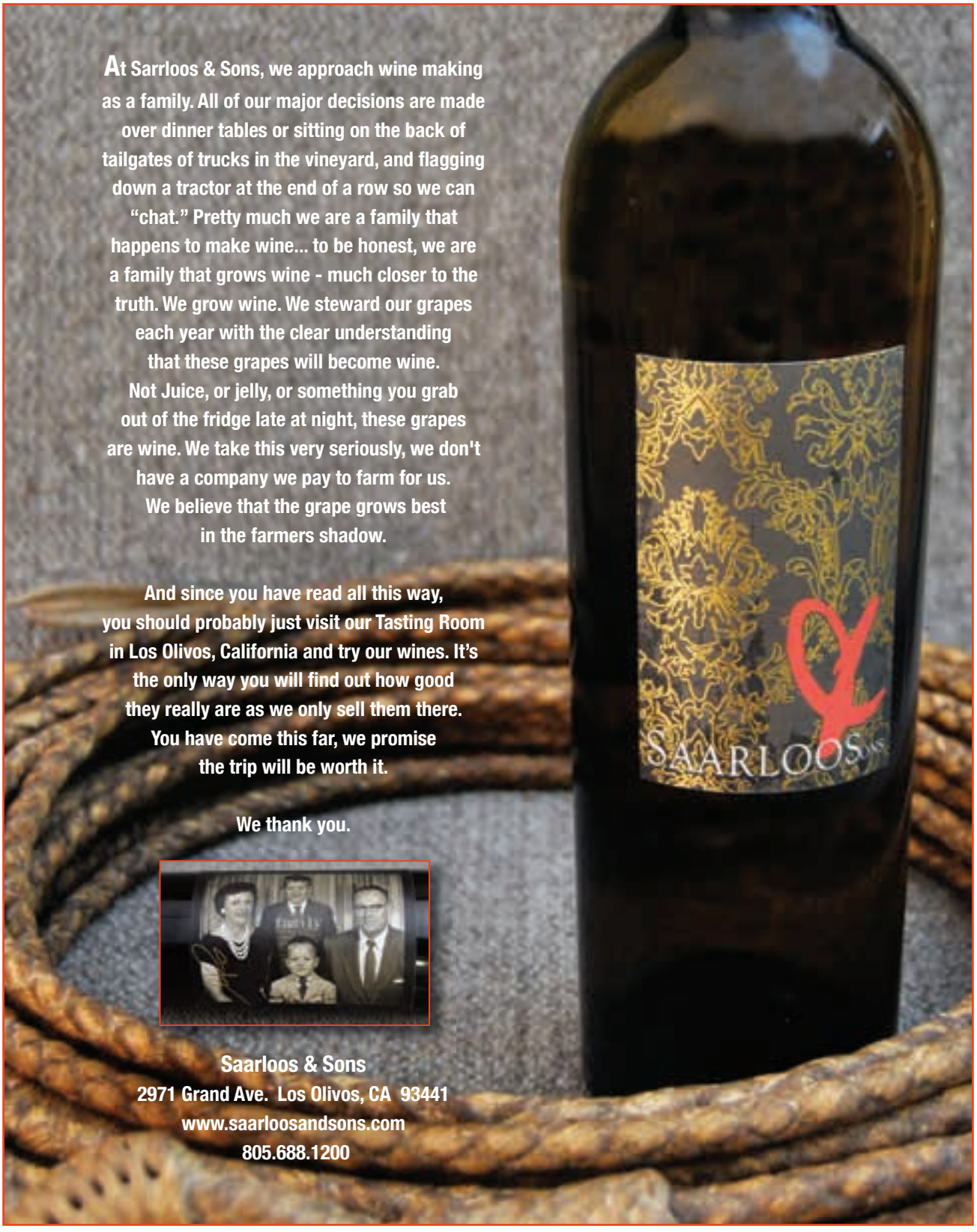
Publishing is an evolving skill and is filled with trial and error efforts to find what folks want to read and learn about. Every once in a while, lightening strikes and one hits the proverbial home run. Many times successful books come along with social actions or societal/cultural events. This occurred with *The Whole Earth Catalog*.

The Whole Earth Catalog was published regularly from 1968 to 1972, but only intermittently thereafter. During its four years of regular publication, the Catalog earned a reputation, a following, and a National Book Award, the only time a catalog has been so honored.



Standing with one foot firmly in the rugged individualism and back-to-the-land movements of the Sixties counter-

The grape grows best in the farmer's shadow.



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culture and the other in the nascent global community made possible by the Internet, *The Whole Earth Catalog* offered an integrated, complex, challenging, thought-provoking, and comprehensive worldview of just what one could get done on one's own if one had the right tools.

Founder Stewart Brand wrote, "At a time when the New Left was calling for grass-roots political (i.e., referred) power, *The Whole Earth Catalog* eschewed politics and pushed grassroots direct power – tools and skills. At a time when New Age hippies were deploring the intellectual world of abstractions, *TWEC* pushed science, intellectual endeavor, and new technology as well as old – nothing like a great Stanley hammer. As a result, when the most empowering tool of the last century came along – the personal computer (resisted by the New Left and despised by the New Age) – *Whole Earth* was in the thick of the development from the beginning."

Brand attempted to cease publication numerous times, only to see a new catalog, book, or magazine pop up from somewhere. The ctalogs are available today as PDFs and digital flipbooks from www.wholeearth.com

Whole Cowboy Catalog

In 1995 writers Rod McQueary and Sue Wallis made the jump to attempt – along with friend-of-the-West publisher Gibbs Smith – to organize the cowboy culture and its indigenous craft into a similar, newsprint-based volume titled, *Whole Cowboy Catalog*. It featured music and books and everything from horsehair hitchers to one-off t-shirt makers. Remember the "Manure Movers of America" union t-shirts? It was a grand little book that did more to celebrate a specific era in the West rather than ongoing activities. It is a difficult volume to find – we had to borrow this one – yet if you can find one, it gives an enthusiastic picture of the mid-1990s western culture.

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THE WESTERN WEB

A look at all things cowboy on the information superhighway.

In the early days of widespread Internet access, we all marveled at the way in which technology made the experiences and wisdom of one individual accessible to the rest of the world. As an entire generation has come of age with no memories of a time in which such immediate connectivity wasn't the norm, it's become easy to take for granted the power of the medium. On rare occasion, though, the Internet's most fundamental strength – the ability it offers to share a unique perspective with a global audience – still shines through.

Since its launch in 2010, the online magazine *High Minded Horseman* has educated and entertained horse enthusiasts of all stripes, from working cowboys to hunt-seat riders. One of the digital publication's most popular columnists is Jackson Wald, a high-school senior from a Lodge Grass, Montana, ranching family. In the most genuine of voices, Jackson – Jake to his friends – chronicles his experiences cowboying in the Northern Rockies, offering insights on starting colts, branding, horsemanship, tack and the neverending challenges of ranch work, from making saddle horses to calving in the depths of winter.

In his online column, *Jake's Take*, writer Jackson Wald chronicles his experiences as a young Montana cowboy.

Jake's firsthand accounts offer readers outside the West an opportunity to experience vicariously the life of a young cowboy. For veteran hands, his plainspoken missives offer a treasured sense of nostalgia, a chance to re-imagine one's younger cowboying days, when it seemed all you needed in life was a good horse beneath you and horseback job that needed doing.

Weaning Colts and Winter Work
By Jake Wald

High Minded Horseman columnist Jake Wald.

There's a small period of time in-between the fall works and the middle of winter when you're feeding cows twenty-four-seven, when you don't have a whole lot to do on the place. The calves have been shipped and the cows are turned out. Well we are now past that time and our cows got brought home a little early this year.

We keep our cows in relatively small creek-bottom pastures, where they'll have plenty of trees and brush for cover during calving season. Every day they get a certain number of round hay bales depending on how many cows are in the lot and how much they're eating at this time of the year. We don't ride nearly as much as usual this time of year cause there's not a whole lot to be done horseback or otherwise until calving season starts but we do get some rides put on some colts occasionally, if we get the chance.

Another common occurrence this time of year is weaning our baby colts from the brood mares... which we did the other day. We've been keeping the mare bunch turned out on our cut hay meadows until the day we got them into the corrals by the barn and worked on sorting the babies off their mothers. With the whole bunch run into a big pen inside the barn, Dad worked two or more at a time towards me (running the gate) and soon we had a clean sort, with only a few mix-ups that eventually got worked out.

With the mares sorted, we turned them into a lot across the fence from the babies so they could still touch noses if they needed to. The babies are still in the corrals getting fed and more gentle everyday, while the mares have pretty much realized life is much easier without an obnoxious colt constantly bugging you! So in short, winter life isn't especially exciting for a few more months but we'll get to that soon enough!

Read all of Jake's work for *High Minded Horseman* at www.highmindedhorseman.com/jakes-take.

Doctoring Cowboys

Nurse practitioner and horsewoman Marcia Hefker serves the healthcare needs of northern New Mexico ranch communities.

By Tim Keller

Down in the deep woods of Trinchera Canyon, Marcia Hefker is bringing up the rear, helping Kyle Bell and his family push 50 pairs of Texas Longhorns from their lush summer pasture along the Colorado border, up and out of the canyon, then down to Bell's ranch outside Folsom, New Mexico. This is the famed Goodnight-Loving Trail, which once saw countless cattle drives from Texas to Denver and on to Wyoming, but Bell is moving his herd backward along the trail, south.

photographs by Tim Keller

Nurse practitioner Marcia Hefker grew up on a family ranch and spent her youth rodeoing and working cattle. Her background helps her relate to her patients in northern New Mexico ranch country.

The Longhorns have enjoyed their summer in the tall grass along Trinchera Creek, so Hefker shouldn't have been surprised when a stub-born pair at the rear

Outside of her Raton, New Mexico, clinic, Marcia can often be found on horseback.

Pushing a herd of Longhorns, Marcia and friends top a ridgeline before dropping into New Mexico's Dry Cimarron Valley.

broke free, barreling down the canyon through the thick trees and back along the creek to home. As fast as she can chase through the trees on Goose, her gray Hindi Arabian, she's after the errant pair, which has made its way through a fence. Hefker and Goose find a gate. By now Bell has returned along the narrow dirt road; together they coax the pair back up the road to join the herd.

Bell's operation is too small to be hiring hands. He gets help where he can find it. In this case, Marcia Hefker happens to be his family's doctor.

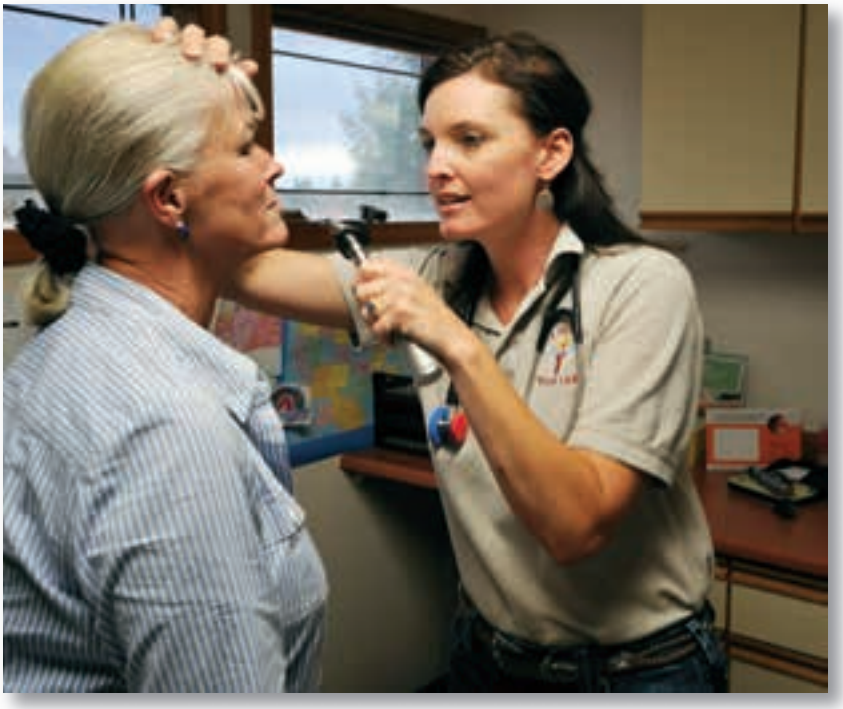
The Ag program at Carrizozo High School got her started as a medical caregiver. Ag teacher Mike Gaines brought in an EMT to teach a first aid class. Both he and Marcia, a freshman, liked it enough that they continued and became EMTs. The state had to make an exception to license Marcia: at 15, she was the youngest EMT in New Mexico.

When she wasn't busy with school or volleyball or EMS or earning a barrel racing scholarship to NMSU at Las Cruces, Marcia moved cattle with her family.

"I had a wonderful childhood, but I wasn't one of these wonderfully privileged people who was born and raised on a huge family ranch," she says. "My parents lived a few miles outside Carrizozo and my dad worked a civil service job in communications at White Sands Missile Range. He wanted to ranch. He started with 200 acres and 10 cows, and in 30 years built that to 18 sections (11,520 acres) and 200 cow-calf pairs. He was an evening and weekend rancher

because he had a full-time job to support the family. He retired at 52 and a couple years later had his land paid off."

Jack Hefker made sure his kids always had horses. "We started out doing little gymkhanas, then the rodeo club," Marcia recalls. "But as much as I loved rodeoing, my favorite memories are of working cattle. We worked cattle in tough places. At one point we had a headquarters separated from the pastures by two miles of malpais lava. When we had to brand or ship, we had to gather all the cattle and push them two miles across this lava flow. We'd brand them, work them, and then push them back."



Marcia entered the health-care field at 15, when she became New Mexico's youngest EMT.

After her 1989 high school graduation, Marcia studied nursing at NMSU but spent weekends driving all over New Mexico and Arizona pulling her trailer and competing in NIRA Grand Canyon Region barrel races to support her rodeo scholarship. After two years, she quit rodeo to focus on her studies, graduating and becoming an ER nurse. "But I quickly realized two things," she says. "One, I didn't like being in the city, and two, I didn't like being in hospitals."

So she returned to school, entering the University of New Mexico School of Nursing's Nurse Practitioner program, which specializes in rural medicine. New Mexico was one of the early states to prepare and license nurse practitioners to practice independently, a move designed to increase healthcare services in underserved and far-flung rural corners. In primary care and each nurse's respective specialties, nurse practitioners provide care equal to that of a physician, by New Mexico law.

Marcia began her practice in Raton in 1999 and is now a partner in La Familia Primary Care, the region's largest practice. She serves 3,000 patients who come from a hundred-mile radius across several counties and a state line.

"I love it. Growing up ranching, there's just a different breed of people. I understand where they're coming from," Marcia says. "My biggest challenge with my ranching patients is that denial and stubbornness seems to be worse than your average person, because they're so independent. These men, and these women, their livelihood depends on their being out there all the time. I have to treat my ranching patients with a 'loose rein.' I usually build a relationship based on an accident or another

immediate need. I spend more time than usual educating them about dangerous signs and symptoms because I know I won't see them for a while.

"The most common injuries are cuts and lacerations, rope burns, falls, and oddly, pellet and BB wounds. I try to accommodate ranchers, whether it's coming in early or staying late, although actually most of them want to see me around noon. They've taken care of feeding in the morning, they're running into town to do their errands, and they have to get back to do the evening chores."

Watching the National Finals Rodeo or Professional Bull Riding on television, Marcia enjoys seeing the Justin Sports Medicine Program in action. "I look at the doctors and sports medicine guys that are working on professional cowboys and I think, I do that all the time, on a day-to-day basis. They're treating the professional cowboy, but I'm treating the everyday cowboy."

Working one morning at small rural clinic in Des Moines, New Mexico, she glanced out the window and saw a semi truck and two pickups, all with stock trailers full of cattle. She went to the waiting room and asked, "Who's shipping today?" She explains, "I got them right in. Those cattle didn't need to be sitting out there in those trailers any longer than necessary. The men were not working together, or even from the same ranch, but when a doctor comes through just one day a week, you go when you need to. People come in dusty in their boots, and they're running right back out to work on their ranches, which is where I'd like to be, too. Take me away!"

Marcia invokes *Lonesome Dove*: "Gus says, 'There's nothing better than riding a fine horse through new country.' These days I couldn't agree more. I ride for pure pleasure, every chance I get. Whether it's team-roping practice in the evenings with my Colorado friend Roy Sanders, checking cattle on the mesa with my friend Mary Lou Kern, trotting a 20-mile training ride with my three best girlfriends, or galloping across the finish line behind my 12-year-old son at the end of a hundred-mile endurance race, I am truly happy whenever I'm with horses."

So she's pushing Texas Longhorns up the Goodnight-Loving Trail. It is Sunday – her weekend but not Kyle Bell's. He's got cattle to move. Marcia says, "I have patients who invite me to rope or work cattle with them. I get the luxury of being a guest on these ranches." A perfect day off is spent on horseback. As the herd tops out along the verdant ridgeline before dropping into the Dry Cimarron Valley, Marcia rides beside Kyle's young kids, Ben and Melissa, relaxed and content bringing up the rear.

Kyle takes advantage of some pens to rest cattle, horses and riders. Taking in the panoramic view of hillsides and pastures green from late-summer monsoon rains, Marcia savors the moment from her saddle. There's no place she'd rather be, and nothing she'd rather be doing.

Tim Keller is a writer and photographer living in northern New Mexico.
Learn more about his work at www.timkellerarts.com.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The Evolution of Ricky Quinn

A young horseman represents the next generation in the Dorrance-Hunt-Brannaman lineage.

By Jayme Feary

Boys are like colts: their potential begins with their genes.

Lineage is crucial. A foal by Peptoboonsmall out of a High Brow Cat daughter has a much higher likelihood of becoming a performance champion than the offspring of a mustang stallion out of a dude mare. The son of a stable and loving father has a better chance at life than the son of an abuser or drunk.

Similarly, a pupil's potential is linked to his teacher. So what would you surmise about Ricky Quinn Jr., a 30-year-old horse clinician with this ancestry: the father of natural horsemanship Tom Dorrance begat Ray Hunt who begat Buck Brannaman who begat Ricky Quinn Jr. To know Ricky, you must first consider his "sire," Buck Brannaman, the subject of the documentary film *Buck* and the horse expert in Robert Redford's movie *The Horse Whisperer*. Brannaman has long been considered one of the most authentic and effective horse clinicians.

Not to say that Ricky Quinn is Buck Brannaman incarnate, but observe him and the similarities will bowl you over: the buckaroo-style hat with a telescope crease and a bunkhouse roll on the back of the brim, the stately vaquero manner in which he sits his horse, the pragmatism, the candor, and the absence of ego. A man cannot escape his "genes."

But Ricky's actual paternal genes come from his father, an intelligent and multi-talented man raised in Ten Sleep, Wyoming, a people-person with a kind heart and a dark side. His emotional volatility and alcoholism likely stemmed from his own father, an alcoholic and

photos by Nancy Lee

Quinn admits to being tough on his students at times. When it comes to working with riders, he contends, bluntness is sometimes necessary.

abuser who landed his wife in the hospital and knocked his son out cold.

Ricky's father was always looking for the next best thing. New jobs passed by underneath his wife and two children like lines on a highway. Ricky says, "Just when things would go his way, he'd get bored with it. He was never satisfied."

When Ricky was 15, his mother, Bea Webster, divorced his father. She says, "He was an amazing individual. He could do almost anything but had a hard time following through." But "Ricky hung around his dad a lot. Everywhere he went, Ricky went."

After his parents divorced, Ricky lived with his father in Ten Sleep. Webster says, "Age 17 was the turning point for Ricky." His life had come to a critical juncture. Ricky's father had quit another job, and Ricky would have to fend for himself until his dad could land on his feet. "He didn't have any stick-to-itiveness," Ricky says. "I just knew in my heart and gut that I didn't want to turn out that way." Ricky decided to make his own path.

Ten Sleep was not an affluent town, but most people had enough money to live on. "There were people out there who owned houses and who weren't trying to figure out how they were going to get gas the next day. I wanted to be that," Ricky says. "I wasn't going to be the norm of what my family was." Determined to finish high school, he lived with a friend for a couple of months, afterwards living for a year and a half in a 7-by-10 RV camper parked in the alley next to the Bighorn Bar.

During this time, Ricky broke colts for a local rancher, who paid for Ricky to attend a Buck Brannaman horsemanship clinic. Brannaman was working with a big three-year-old bay, such a striker that he had to bridle him from the fence. Watching Brannaman work, something came over Ricky. *Look at that man work a horse*, he thought. *I've never seen anything like this. There's something about this guy.* That very moment, Ricky decided he wanted what Brannaman had. Intensely Ricky analyzed Brannaman's every gesture, technique and word. "I absolutely dedicated my life to keeping this style of horsemanship alive," Ricky says.

Ricky wrote to Brannaman, offering to work for only room and board, but Brannaman referred him to Shayne Jackson,

owner of McGinnis Meadows Ranch in Montana. Jackson himself was a Brannaman student. After high school graduation, Ricky arrived at McGinnis Meadows in his '72 Ford pickup, his worldly belongings packed in two Tupperware containers. "He was very idealistic," Jackson says. "And he was very passionate about wanting to ride like Buck." Jackson discovered that Ricky had the same knack as his father for doing most things well. "Ricky was real handy," Jackson says.

Buck Brannaman protege Ricky Quinn has been described as a "man on a mission" when it comes to horsemanship education in the Dorrance tradition.

Randy Bock, manager of McGinnis Meadows, observed that Ricky was mature for his age, that he was "on a mission" to learn the style of horsemanship that Brannaman taught. Young and intense, with an analytical style that cared more about results than people's feelings, Ricky "was almost a zealot," Bock says. Early on "he alienated some people."

Over the nine years Ricky worked at McGinnis Meadows, he rode in more than 27 Brannaman clinics, emulating him so closely that at times he took on Brannaman's manner, including his trademark limp. A former McGinnis Meadows cowboy, Dan Lorenz, believes this knack for imitation, this way of learning from others, is one of Ricky's best skills. "Whatever he liked in that guy, he did it exactly like him," Lorenz says.

Over time, staff at McGinnis Meadows ranch began noticing that Ricky's thought process and speech patterns were similar to that of manager Bock. Also, they saw hints of some of Ricky's father's traits. On one occasion owner Jackson remarked to Ricky how much he sounded like his dad. Ricky wheeled and faced him. "Don't ever talk about my dad like that." Jackson says, "I knew Ricky had fought some of the same demons as his father." Jackson knew he had gone too far, and he never mentioned Ricky's father again.

Three years after Ricky began working at McGinnis Meadows, his father killed himself. At first Ricky "got down on his dad," Bock says. But Bock explained that Ricky had nothing to do with his father's problems, that his dad had given him much. Ricky should go forward building on what he had.

Eventually Ricky's horsemanship advanced enough for him to begin conducting his own clinics. The Next Buck, some called him. He tended to attract the same type of horseperson as Ray Hunt and Buck Brannaman. Ricky is the "closet thing to a Buck Brannaman protégé that I've seen," says Kristi Fredrickson, a clinic host from California. Most everyone who has ever ridden in a Ricky Quinn clinic agrees that he is an expert horseman who can read a horse from the inside out and get it to perform at its highest ability.

However, many of Quinn's students believe his people skills need improvement. Laura Lillie, a clinic participant from Oregon, says that early on Ricky could be "kind of a jerk. But his horsemanship was right on." He "can be a little rough," says Dottie Davis from North Carolina.

Ricky himself agrees. "I've made a lot of people cry," he admits with a pinch of regret and a spoonful of deal-with-it. He believes that blunt, CEO-type personalities are necessary to get things done. Perhaps he does not realize that most CEOs make lousy teachers.

Many of Ricky's students, including Lillie, believe his people skills are improving. In fairness to him, this terseness and straight talk is partly a product of his horsemanship lineage. Brannaman's teacher, Ray Hunt, was known for his honest, brusque style. Even the gentler Brannaman can be terse, his directness sometimes a necessity. Ricky explains it this way: It is not his job to worry about people's feelings, to get them to understand. The teacher's job is simply to present the information. The responsibility for learning rests with the student.

These days, Ricky has moved on from McGinnis Meadows, but he looks back on his time there with thankfulness. "Buck has always been the mental focus for me," he says, "but McGinnis Meadows is, in a lot of ways, the place that shaped me." He continues to conduct clinics all across the country. Participation is increasing steadily as word of his ability spreads.

Ricky is engaged to a beautiful, personable young woman, Sarah Sandusky, and the two of them are building a life on their new place in North Platte, Nebraska. As usual, Ricky is doing much of the work himself. Sarah and he plan to build a sizeable herd of stocker cattle and to continue teaching, traveling and conducting clinics. The Dorrance/Hunt/Brannaman style of horsemanship "will not die in my generation," he says.

So what has been the key factor in Ricky Quinn Jr.'s evolution? He takes the good from both his parents and moves past the bad. Whatever qualities he lacks, he learns from his role models. Ask Ricky his personal motto and the words come out quickly: "You are who you hang out with."

Every chance he gets, he rides with Buck.

Upcoming Clinics

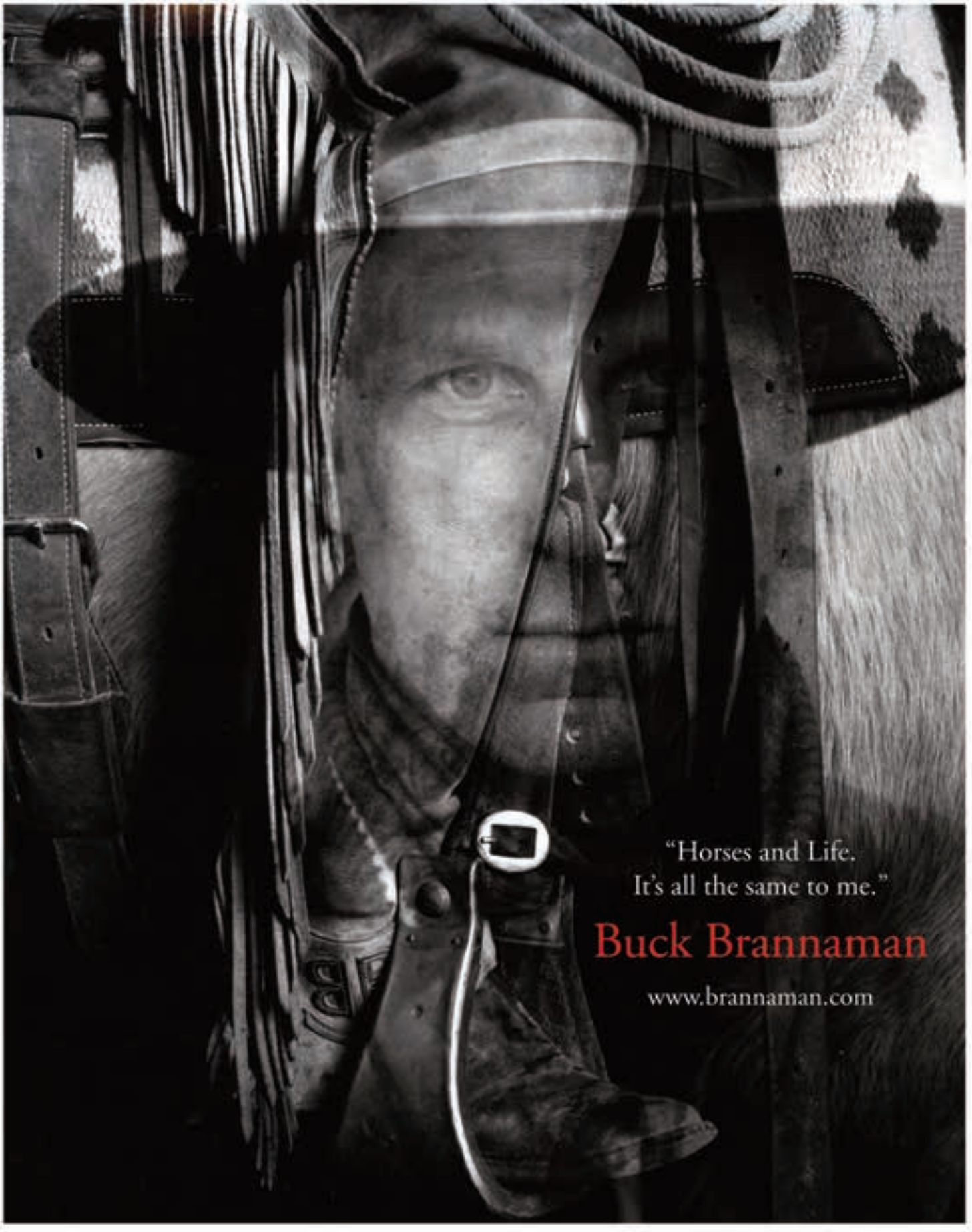
Buck Brannaman
www.brannaman.com
Jan 7-9, South Island, New Zealand;
horsemanshipnz@xtra.co.nz
Jan 14-16, New South Wales, Australia;
wayneanderson59@hotmail.com
Jan 21-23, North Island, New Zealand;
horsemanshipnz@xtra.co.nz

Peter Campbell
www.petercampbellhorsemanship.com
Dec 19-23, Wheatland, Wyoming; trc@wildblue.net

Tom Curtin
www.tomcurtin.net
Dec 2-4, Newnan, Georgia; (770) 241-8440

Dave & Gwynn Weaver
www.thecalifornios.com
Jan 7-8, Oakland, California; (510) 569-4428
Jan 11-15, Ramona, California; (760) 789-4875

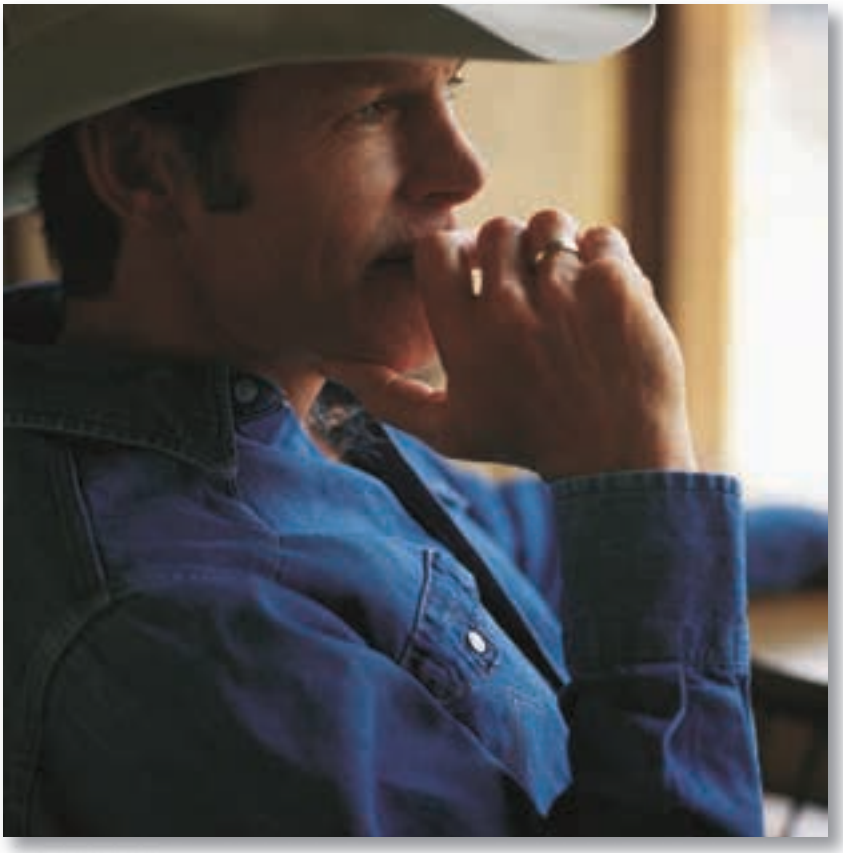
Jayme Feary is a writer living in Wyoming. Learn more about him at www.jaymefeary.com.


"Horses and Life.
It's all the same to me."
Buck Brannaman
www.brannaman.com

Enjoy The Ride

Mark Sissel, a member of Western Underground, Chris LeDoux's touring band, remembers the late cowboy singer/songwriter whose fan base continues to grow.

By Mark Bedor



photos by Butch Adams courtesy of Capitol Records

Before his concert at the 2001 Reno Rodeo, I'd never heard of Chris LeDoux. Lee Ann Womack was the opening act, and had that year's big summer hit with "I Hope You Dance." But it was Chris LeDoux who blew the crowd – and me – away. I remember this fit-looking cowboy with his acoustic guitar saying he was back after some recent health problems. Then he and his band lit up the stage with their Rodeo Rock-n-Roll. Today I own every record he ever made.

Mark Sissel had never heard of Chris LeDoux before the day they met in 1989. Mark was playing lead guitar in a club band outside Salt Lake City. A mutual friend introduced LeDoux. The largely unknown cowboy singer needed a full time touring band. His rodeo career was over and his Wyoming ranch was struggling. He'd released 22 self-produced records, but with no record company, promotion or even a manager, times were tough.

"He'd invested all this time and had all these records," Sissel told me. "I think he felt like he needed to make a real run at it to see if he could get it to pay off."

Sissel and his band were hired, then renamed Western Underground. Before they hit the stage, they hit the studio, recording LeDoux's album *Powder River*. It was a unique session. "He didn't really know anything about music, music theory...anything like that," says Sissel. "But he explained what he wanted in pictures...And I always remember him sayin', 'Now this song...if you think of it, it's like the sky's kind of all purpley and a little gold in there...And then the wind's blowin' the sand through that windmill...and then the fly's buzzin' around...and it lands on your lip...You know what that sounds like?"

"And we're just like...lookin' at him," Sissel laughs. "And I said, 'Well...kinda!'"

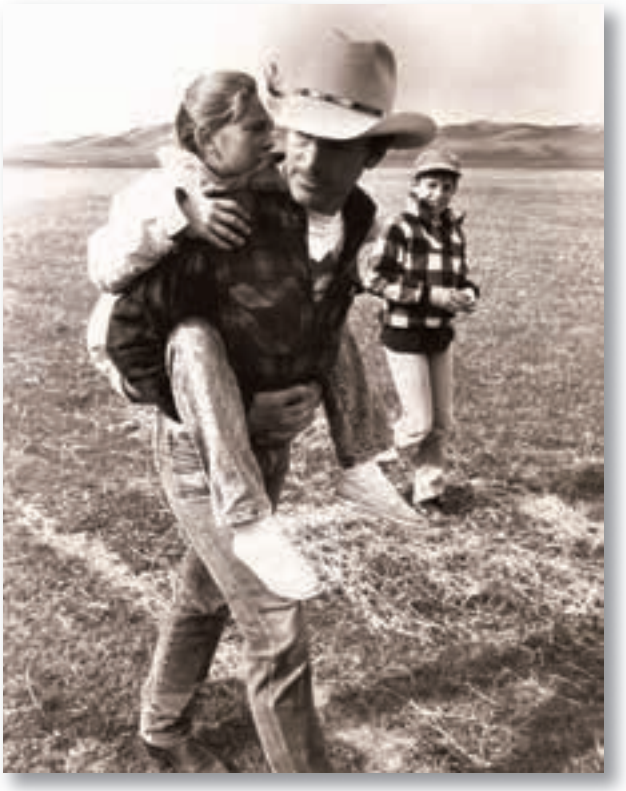
"Because that's what music's supposed to be! You're tryin' to paint a picture. And when it's about real life... Things the writer knows...Then it really becomes a story."

They made the record and the journey began. "We had no idea what was gonna happen," says the guitarist. "But this was a pretty cool guy to run with. I knew *that* right from the start. This guy's somebody special...in just a very natural cowboy kind of way."

Sissel got a taste of what was to come at an early show in Salt Lake City. "Maybe," he began, "you could fit 1800 people in this place...but there was probably 2500 mashed in there shoulder to shoulder, screaming as loud as they could! We hadn't done many shows... And I remember standing on that stage behind him, and I'm thinkin', 'Who the hell is this guy?! Where did these people come from?! He's like the cowboy Bon Jovi! It was impressive!'"

Then lightening struck as Garth Brooks' mammoth hit song hit the radio. "Much Too Young (To Feel This Damn Old)" – a song about a road weary rodeo rider – that contained the now famous line that would change everything. *"The worn-out tape of Chris LeDoux / lonely women and bad booze / seem to be the only friends I've left at all."*

"Chris knew nothing about it." Sissel reveals. "He



always said, 'I was driving from Casper back to the ranch with (his wife) Peggy and all of a sudden I heard my name on this Garth Brooks song. So I pulled over and asked her if she just heard that too!' It was a complete surprise."

That line captured the cult like following LeDoux's music had developed. He'd won the World Bareback Riding Championship in 1976. And while chasing those gold buckle dreams on the rodeo circuit, he became even better known for the songs he wrote about the cowboy life, and the albums he sold after his concerts. "'*The worn out tape of Chris LeDoux*,' is I mean, a fact," explains Sissel. "All of his old fans will tell you that they got his music from somebody else that got it from somebody else that recorded it off of a cassette tape until it wore out and he'd try to find another one at a feed store or somewhere. So his music kind of grew outside of mainstream. But his music grew exponentially."

That sleeping giant of a fan base woke up when Garth's label, Capitol Records, signed Chris. It all happened just as Country Music was exploding on the charts in the early 1990s. LeDoux went from obscurity to the biggest concert stages in the country. "All of a sudden we're thrown in with Garth Brooks and Alan Jackson, Clint Black...We're rockin!," beams Mark Sissel. "But we were doin' it with a guy who was such a cool guy...everybody respected him."

Chris seemed just as amazed as anyone else. "He'd say, 'Why do you suppose all these people follow this raggedy old cowboy around?'" Mark reveals. "I said, 'Because they believe in you. I believe in you. We all believe in you.'"

"But he was also that kid at heart," Sissel continues. "He liked to have fun."

Going on stage was all about fun, especially the pyrotechnics that were always a staple of his rock-n-roll

style show. Summertime, LeDoux rented a second bus so his wife Peggy and their five kids could join the tour. "They'd say, 'Dad was kinda like Clark Griswold (from the National Lampoon *Vacation* movies). He's gonna go forty miles out of the way to see the world's second largest ball of twine! He was all about fun. The pyrotechnics...they were like toys. Jumpin' and runnin' around the stage...fallin' down...he didn't care.'"

But he did care deeply about his family, and especially Peggy. "We'd get ready to do 'meet and greets' with the fans...And I'd have to walk in before hand and let all the girls know that there's no hugging...no kisses, any of that kinda jazz...and they'd all boo," remembers Mark. "I'd say, 'Just so you know, that's all for his wife.' And then they'd just melt.. and they'd realize, 'Oh it's not bull. It's real. He cares that much.'"

"Chris always told me, 'I don't ever want to see a picture in a country weekly magazine with some woman hangin' on me...It's not fair to my wife,'" Mark remembers. "An incredible character. Never met anyone like him. Probably never will."

"A pretty amazing guy to sit and talk to," Mark adds

thoughtfully. "Truly like a real John Wayne kind of guy... Says what he thinks...And in 16 years, never once was he ever different from that. Every day he came out smiling."

Then the infamous day came. LeDoux was just 56 when he died of a rare form of cancer in 2005. Today Western Underground carries on his legacy. They do about two-dozen shows a year, including last summer's First Annual Chris LeDoux Days in the singer's hometown of Kaycee, Wyoming. Kaycee is also home to *Good Ride Cowboy,* a monumental sculpture of LeDoux by D. Michael Thomas. Unveiled in 2010, it celebrates Chris' 1976 World Championship ride on the bronc Stormy Weather.

Sissel, who still handles LeDoux's business affairs, says his music remains a strong seller, and has even inspired a new musical. *One Ride* (oneridetheshow.com) was staged last year at a New York City theater, with Western Underground providing the live sound track.

It's the creation of World Champion Country Dancer and choreographer Robert Royston, who grew up listening to LeDoux. Told through LeDoux's music, dance, and scenes from the American West that Chris loved, *One Ride* is the story of a cowboy's quest to become a rodeo champion.

Producing a full-blown Broadway quality traveling musical takes big money and work behind the scenes continues.

Ned LeDoux, who started drumming for his Dad in 1998, remembers the chord the music struck with that New York crowd, most of whom had never heard of Chris LeDoux. "The New Yorkers ate it up. They loved it!" he says. "They were asking, 'Where can we buy this guy's music?'"

"Probably cause it's real and it's true," Ned says of the universal appeal of his father's compositions. "There's nothin' fake about it. Paints a pretty good picture."

And there may be no better example than the lines from a great song off the last album Chris made. "Sit tall in the saddle, hold your head up high. Keep your eyes fixed where the trail meets the sky," he sings on "The Ride." "And live like you ain't afraid to die. And don't be scared, just enjoy your ride."

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Range Radio

Chris LeDoux

The Music and The Words

By Bruce Pollock

photos by Butch Adams courtesy of Capitol Records

"Sit tall in the saddle; hold your head up high.
Keep your eyes fixed where the trail meets the sky, and live like you
ain't afraid to die. And don't be scared, just enjoy your ride."

—Chris LeDoux

Those are magical words from a man who is revered daily by so many people around the world not only for his music, but as often quoted by his fans, "he was a gentleman and family man and he was the real deal."

At Range Radio, we have had the privilege to play more Chris LeDoux songs than any other radio station as well as read the comments and emotions from our listeners. They still adore and worship his music and lyrics. The first person to ever be inducted in two categories into the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame, one for his bareback riding and the second for his musical contribution to the sport, Chris LeDoux is a constant inspiration to us at Range Radio and a reminder that truth and doing the right thing, is the authentic spirit that we wish to represent to our readers and listeners. There is no question that Chris LeDoux is one of the most listened to artists we play as the comments we receive on a regular basis prove that out. Here's just a sampling of the many comments we receive on a daily basis:

"He was an excellent musician that never tried to fit into the mainstream music, but rather stay with music that had a deep rooted, personal meaning."

"God Bless Chris LeDoux! Riding in the big Rodeo in the sky!"

"He was a good man and a great father and husband,, and he had the talent.. RIP Chris you are truly missed. Good ride cowboy, good ride."

"Sit Tall In The Saddle" (The Ride) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cT0NjGMDYhE

These comments come from listeners who love his music and the message of his lyrics.

In "Life is a Highway" Chris said it best... ***"there's no road I can't hold so rough...this I know I'll be there when the lights come in...tell 'em we're survivors."*** Chris was truly a family man was married for 33 years to his wife Peggy.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OF-pyWeMLZs

In "Look At You Girl" Chris sings... ***"Cause you mean everythin' to me and I'd do anythin' to have you stay forever...I'm an ordinary man...But I feel I could do Anythin' in the world...When I Look At You, Girl."*** You know every woman wants a man to feel this way about her and this song was a huge hit as a result.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSBH6bTZPro

In his song "Not For Heroes" Chris sings... ***"He's never been a hero and he probably never be one...But in his heart he knows he gave his all...My hat goes off to you my friend and to the champ you might have been...If Lady Luck had smiled on you at all."*** Humble lyrics for every Cowboy who failed, yet got back up in the saddle to ride and try again. What Chris did for rodeo and music was deliver words of faith, hope and pride to every cowboy.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wv4H9fAw3Z4

Chris and his family chose to live in Wyoming and not Nashville and another reason that his songs and lyrics were measured and inspired through his heart. In "Western Skies," Chris let's Nashville know... ***"The Nashville friends, they think I'm strange...to make my home out on the range...And if you, ever held your woman on a summer's evening... while the prairie moon was blazin' in her eyes...Then you'd know why I live beneath these western skies."***
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZG6ELD-TiC4

Chris LeDoux wrote lyrics and songs about family and rodeo and the connection that bonded them all. In "Fathers And Sons" Chris sings about all the things his Father wanted to tell him; ***"My father had so much to tell me...Things he said I should know...Now that I look at my own sons...I see what my father went through... There's only so much you can do...You're proud when they walk, scared when they run...That's how it has always been, between father's and sons."***

The thread that runs though most of the comments we see about Chris LeDoux is "Miss Ya" and "Gone Too Early" and the that song sums up for us at Range Radio what Chris LeDoux means can be heard in the lyrics from the song "You Can't See Him From The Road."

"You can't see him from the road. But he's out there ridin' fences ... Still makes his livin' with his rope...As long as there is a sunset, he'll keep ridin' for the Brand...well he's a knight in leather armor still livin' by the code...but he's still out there ridin' fences, but you just can't see him from the road."
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddIkaiJpuRQm

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A VISIT WITH BUCK BRANNAMAN

Making the Right Things Easy

By Buck Brannaman

I'm often asked, "How smart are horses?" I tell them that it's usually folks who are a bit insecure about their own level of intellect who ask that question. The truth is, I've never found it useful to spend any time worrying about how smart a horse is, how smart a dog is, or for that matter, how smart a pig is, because the things I teach my students about interacting with their horses are the same rules that apply to interacting with humans. I often say that you should treat a human the way you'd like him to be, rather than the way he is. That's true with horses too. I treat the horse the way I'd like him to be, not the way he is. There may be a lot of undesirable things happening, and there may be a lot of reasons why, so if you encourage the right behavior and don't respond to the wrong behavior, eventually the right behavior is what you'll end up with.

Ray Hunt once said, "A horse is multitudes of actions and reactions, separate and inseparable, all at the same time." I didn't make that up, but it really does define a horse. Since we humans made up the term "intelligence," obviously humans are going to come out on top in that contest. But because horses really are multitudes of actions and reactions, separate and inseparable, all at the same time, you're going to have to be pretty smart to deal with such a complicated creature. Often, when people ask me how smart or how dumb a horse might be, I think back to what one of my teachers said; "Well, I don't know how smart he is, but he's smart enough to outfox you." That usually slows them up a bit as well.

It's important when working with horses to make the wrong thing difficult and the right thing easy. That's a philosophy I grew up hearing, and it really works. But be careful not to make the wrong thing completely impossible, because the horse has to have the opportunity to make the mistake in order to learn the lesson. You have to allow horses to search for answers and make their own decisions, and if they make a bad decision, you make corrections. However, it's important not to punish a horse for making a bad decision – we

photo by Mary Brannaman

have a big responsibility to guide our horses to the right actions, and to correct the wrong ones with respect and kindness. We also have to be ahead of our horses at all times, to shape things up so they can make the right decision without difficulty or fear.

This philosophy doesn't just apply to working with horses. You could just as easily switch the word "horse" with "human" or "child," and it's all the same to me. Someone asked me awhile back how best to get a horse light, how best to help him respond quickly and easily to your commands, and I offered this advice, "Observe, remember, and compare." That's pretty much the standard I use for learning just about whatever it is I'm interested in.

I counsel my students to observe what is taking place right now, remember what took place in the past, and compare the two. Let's say you're trying to get your horse to learn some specific lesson. You approach the lesson the same way 10 or 15 times in a row. If the results each time are not the results you're looking for, you must adjust your actions to get your horse to respond differently, to get him to respond the way you want him to. So it's important to observe what the results are in what you've done and remember which actions prompted which results. When you compare the results you obtain, you're better able to hone in on exactly the right thing that will get the point across to your horse, always being careful to allow the horse to define the solution that works best for him.

This process works teaching even the smallest of

lessons. Perhaps you have to fight with your horse to get a bridle on him. Using this technique will help both of you find the best way to get the job done, with the least amount of stress or upset for both parties. Does your horse flinch each time you pull the bridle over his ears? Does he resist taking the bit? Observe what makes him react negatively and work around it to achieve the results you want.

To help my students achieve their training goals, I'll often advise them to "Do less than what you think it's going to take to get the job done." And I mean that just the way it sounds. Do less than what you think it's going to take to get the job done. Then if you don't get the job done, build up to the point that you're doing ONLY as much as it takes and nothing more.

This idea is kind of confusing to some folks when they first hear it. Here's the philosophy behind it: sometimes, people will do a little more than what it takes to actually get a job done, and they'll end up causing the horse to resent them or be cranky or disrespectful. You don't want to push the horse into something; you want him to go willingly. You're trying to offer the horse a good deal, and it should be offered with a happy heart. If he doesn't respond properly with minimal guidance; then it's time to become a bit firmer, and see if he responds to that. You slowly inch your way up the "success ladder" until you reach the point that the horse responds properly, and that's where you and your horse get to celebrate a victory. Always remember that this success is the horse's, not yours. You get to share in the horse's victory because you're on his back, but if you let it all be for him, you'll be amazed at what he'll offer you in return.

> YOU SHOULD TREAT A HUMAN THE WAY YOU'D LIKE HIM TO BE

Blood on the Saddle

The Long Shadow of Tex Ritter

By Tom Russell

Black horses and sinister people
Travel the deep roads of the guitar

Malaguena
—Federico Garcia Lorca

High Noon struck me as a strange film. Dark. *Ponderous*. It wasn't your typical western. Back *then*. There were grey variations on the *bad guy* verses *good guy* routine. Many characters wore the gray hat. It was made in 1952, featuring the lovely Grace Kelley and the fine, understated acting of Gary Cooper who played the town marshal. The town folk were portrayed as cowards who wouldn't back up the Marshal when the chips were down. Still, the film won four academy awards, one of them for best song, and it was that song and the singer that stick deepest in my memory.

The movie opens with cowboy loping his horse across a stony ridge while the theme "High Noon" is sung by Tex Ritter. Tex sets a dark, foreboding tone. Something *bad* is gonna happen. An outlaw gang is up in the hills. The marshal's freshly married. He's turning in his badge in order to farm. A man he sent to prison was just released, and he's on his way to seek revenge. The bad guy is coming in on the noon train. His gunsel-outlaw buddies are waiting to join him. The marshal's wife, a pacifist Quaker (Grace Kelly), is pleading with the marshal to leave town. Gary Cooper, our hero, is torn between "love and duty." He won't run. *Roll the film*. The chickens are all hiding 'neath the coop, as a train whistle blows in the distance. *Noir* western.

Tex sings: "*I'm not afraid of death, but oh...what will I do if* you *leave me? Do not forsake me, oh my darlin'...on this our wedding day...*"

I could never wrench that *voice* out of my mind. I remember its first effect, even today, long after the plot of the movie has faded away in memory. It was that haunting voice of Tex Ritter which first attracted me to cowboy music. His voice stands out in my mind like the western movie voices of Ben Johnson and Slim Pickens. *Wise*. *Down in the dirt*. *Rawhiders and bronc-twisters*. Not so much *heroic* voices with beautiful tone, but gritty, western instruments. Watch their faces when they sing or act or speak. These folks *squinted* a lot, and in their squinting they saw *through* people.

Tex Ritter was my idea of a singing cowboy. Never pretty. *That voice*. It could be a *sinister* thing that held warning, like the hissing of a pit viper crawling near your leg. That voice was a sign on the door of a cheap hotel that said, *Go Away*. At times Tex sounded downright *creepy*, even when he was singing love songs or children's ballads. He sang "Froggy Went a Courtin'" with a cocked-sneer that would scare the hell out of any four year old kid. He meant every word. I never trusted frogs after I heard that one. At least frogs that *talk* and carried *swords and pistols* by their side.

"Rye Whiskey" was one of Tex's definitive performances. He slurred out the song as if he were God's Own Drunk. Like an alcoholic duck he was fixin' to dive to the bottom of a whiskey ocean and *never come up*. Tex Ritter's singing voice had the capability of scraping the frosting off of the American folk song, and cutting down to the bone of the lyric. It was not pretty, folks, but it was real. He *understood*. He'd studied folklore in college, didn't he?

Tex's scariest reading might be embodied in "Blood on the Saddle," the goriest cowboy song of all time.

There was blood on the saddle,
And blood all around
And a great big puddle
Of blood on the ground.

A cowboy lay in it,
All bloody and red
Cause a bronco fell on him
And mashed in his head.

Yes, *mashed*. One helluva' verb. You don't hear that word employed at your cowboy poetry get-togethers. Folklorists trace the origins of this ballad back to a description of hell written during the middle ages by a monk named Mathew Paris. That verse inspired the Scottish Ballad, *Halbert the Grim*, about the bloody death, in the saddle, of a medieval tyrant.

Later versions of the song made their way to America in the form of a long cowboy ballad simply titled "Blood." Reference books state the song was: "*taken from the singing of a fifteen-year-old Negro boy in a detention home in Detroit, Michigan in the early 1930s.*"

Songs travel their own gothic, winding trails. They make their mark and are passed along, altered by the *folk* who interpret and sing them. Tex nailed his version to the wall. *Horsemen pass by, there's blood in the street.*

I found a 78 rpm version of *Blood on the Saddle* and set the needle down on the scratched grooves. A low-tuned baritone guitar opens, like a coffin, and out steps Tex, who slurs "*blood*" into a three syllable word. "*There was buu-la-ud on the say-dull.*" *Frightening.* Then I dug up the original LP album version of the full record, *Blood on the Saddle*. Turns out I have three copies. It was released in 1960. There're twelve songs on the album, all about: death, hangings, bronc-stompings, heartbreak, funerals, stampedes, boll weevil plagues, outlaws, and drink.

Eleven people die by the end of side one, and dozens are slaughtered and lying in the street on side two. This record left its mark on my young mind back in 1960.

Twenty years ago Ian Tyson declared me the *master* of the *whore and knife* ballad, because I'd written dark cowboy songs such as: "Gallo del Cielo," "The Sky Above and the Mud Below," "Tonight We Ride," and also co-wrote, with Ian, "Claude Dallas" and "The

Banks of The Musselshell," as well as the hit, "Navajo Rug." I blame my folk-western roots for any dark leanings. *And Tex Ritter*. You take a kid and raise him on *Grimm's Fairytales*, *The Lives of the Saints and Martyrs*, Catholic fear, *Pinocchio,* and *Blood on the Saddle,* and that kid might end up writing *whore and knife ballads*. For a spell. I've mellowed a touch.

I credit my older brother Pat with informing me about Tex Ritter. Pat ran off to the high Sierra at age sixteen to become a mule packer. I stole his Tijuana gut-string guitar and learned a few chords and folk songs. When my brother came down from the mountains, three months later, he was *different*. His teeth were brown from chewing *Red Man Tobacco* and he could recite every song on *Blood on the Saddle*, including the long and classic narration of *The Face on the Barroom Floor*. He imitated Tex Ritter and scared the hell out of all the kids in the neighborhood. The old packers in the high mountains had sung and recited these ditties as they led their mules and the tourists over the trail and up through the giant redwoods.

Let's take a closer look at the list of songs collected on the album *Blood on the Saddle*. There are twelve: "Blood on the Saddle," "Barbra Allen" (a take on the ancient folk song – *western style*), "Samuel Hall," "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie," "Little Joe the Wrangler," "When the Works all Done this Fall," "The Face on the Barroom Floor," "Boll Weevil," "Billy the Kid," "Streets of Laredo," "Sam Bass," and "Rye Whiskey." A classic collection.

Many of these are sung from the lyrical perspective of a cowboy about to die from hanging, heartache, or gunshot wounds. Once he's bound for boot hill, our dying cowboy is unusually worried about the details of his burial, and where to send his belongings and love letters. Either that or he doesn't give a damn, like Sam Hall: "*I hate you one and all, blast your eyes!"*

These types of songs were Tex's forte. Whiskey and blood. Gunplay and alcohol. Roses growing out of dead bodies, and mashed-in heads. Why not? This was cowboy-folk music and Tex Ritter *sounded* like the marshal of Tombstone. Or the undertaker. Tex's style was the opposite end of the sonic/operatic spectrum from Marty Robbins. Marty was a crooner compared to Tex. Tex was a growler. He had the gun in your back and he was whispering in your ear. Stick 'em up. *Manos arriba*. Your money or your life.

I believed every word he sang. Still do.

I The Kid from Panola County

> *Tex Ritter is no drugstore cowboy. The pride of Panola County Texas grew up on a ranch, helped his parents raise cattle and hogs, attended university and arrived in Hollywood...indeed one of the most popular starsin the history of motion pictures.*
> **Liner Notes: 78 RPM Album of Tex Ritter's Children Songs**

My interest in Tex Ritter lies embedded in his voice and those early cowboy songs, particularly the record *Blood on the Saddle*. I consider *Blood on the Saddle*, along with Marty Robbins' *Gunfighter Ballads and Trail Songs,* and Ian Tyson's *Cowboyography,* to be the cornerstones of western music. I want to share with you a few personal tales linking Tex with his great impact on a wider, stranger world; showing the grand influence of western music as it sweeps through our history. First let's scan over a few biographical facts. *For the record*. There's too much of Tex's historic and full life to include here, but I'll shout out a few highlights.

Woodward Maurice Ritter was born in 1905 Murvaul, Texas, and grew up on a farm in Panola county. He died in 1972 in Nashville. In between he

made his mark as a lecturer, actor, cowboy singer and champion of western folklore. He even took a Wild West show to Europe. As a teenager Tex yearned to be a

lawyer, and he eventually entered the University of Texas. The law path didn't work out and Tex became focused on cowboy and western lore. J. Frank Dobie and John Lomax encouraged Tex to pursue a career in singing cowboy songs.

Tex began in radio and then moved to New York City in 1928, where he appeared in Broadway in musicals like *Green Grow the Lilacs*. That musical would later become the basis of Roger's and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma*.

This was a time when western music, cowboy songs and western sing music were entering their prime in the popular market place. In the early part of the last century the cowboy became an icon which permeated the culture, from Broadway to Hollywood. Tin Pan Alley writers were re-writing old cowboy songs and inventing new twists. Cole Porter wrote *Don't Fence Me In*, and Johnny Mercer chimed in with *I'm an Old Cowhand from the Rio Grande*. Bing Crosby released several full collections of cowboy songs on 78 rpm. Bing wore a white hat, of course.

I'm sitting here leafing through my collection of old cowboy song folios from the 1920s through the 1950s, the hay-day of cowboy publishing. There's the *Ballads of the Badlands* by Curley Fletcher, Gene Autry's *Cowboy Songs and Mountain Ballads*, *The World Greatest Collection of Hill Billy and Western Songs, The Arkansas Woodchopper's Cowboy Songs with Yodel Arrangements*, and *Powder River Jack Lee's Cowboy Wails and Cattle Trails of the Wild West*. Also a beautiful folio of *Tex Ritter's Mountain Ballads and Cowboy Songs*.

Many of these books came with the music and chords for guitar, banjo, ukulele, piano and Hawaiian guitar. Some of the folios were filled with bad re-writes of cowboy folk songs. The writers changed the odd lyric, altered the melody a twist, and claimed the copyright. Many of the key themes and melodies had, in fact, first evolved from Scots-Irish folk ballads. Tex Ritter knew the history.

In 1936 Tex moved to Hollywood, and for the next twenty years stared in dozens of grade B hay-burner westerns as a singing cowboy. In 1942 he was signed to Capitol records, after a stint with two minor labels. He was the Capitol's first western singer. He registered seven consecutive hits including: "There's a New Moon Over My Shoulder," "Jingle Jangle Jingle," "Rye Whiskey" and "The Deck of Cards."

In 1952 he recorded "High Noon," for the movie of the same name, and sang it on the academy awards

when it won best song. Tex Ritter had arrived. As had the *western* part of country-western. Tex was the first cowboy singer to be inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame, and was a longtime member of the Grand Old Opry.

On the 2nd day of January, 1974, Tex was on his way to the Nashville jail to bail out one of his band members. Tex suffered a massive heart attack at the jail, and died on the way to the hospital. He had just recorded his last hit, the recitation titled "The Americans." Tex's bronze star now sits embedded in the Hollywood Walk of Fame. He is one of the heroes of western music and cowboy culture.

Stuffed inside an old Tex Ritter collection of LPs, I found a copy of the form Tex completed for the publicity department at Capitol records in 1942. Tex filled in the blanks with personal information: his first job was on a "bull gang" of a construction crew; *homemade vegetable soup* was his favorite food; "The Last Roundup" was his favorite song; his pet hate was *song sharks*; his horse was named *White Flash;* and his dog was named *Dittybo*. His favorite books were *The Bible, the Dictionary and the Encyclopedia.* In case you were wondering.

Let's leave behind the facts and the high water marks of his tremendously rich life and follow the long shadow into far reaching cultural terrain.

II Cowboy Melts into Rock and Roll

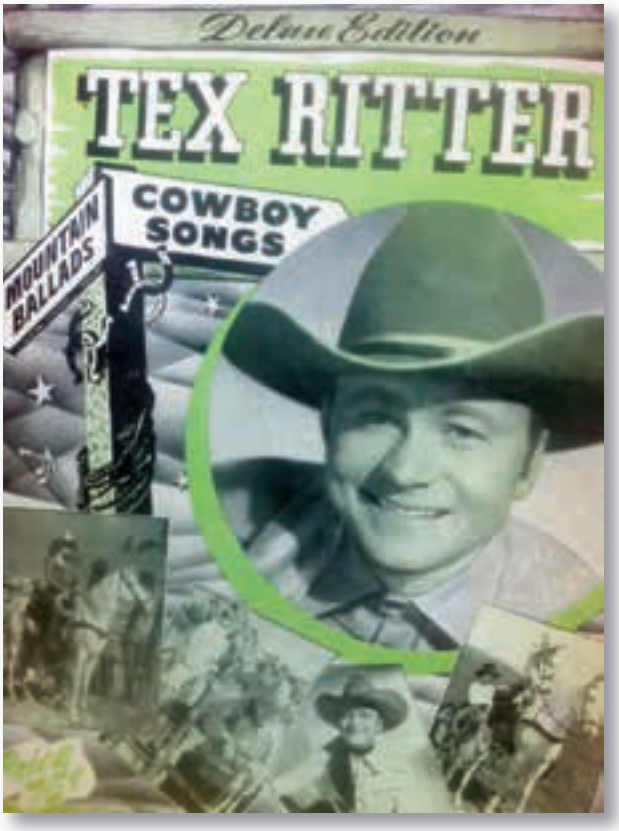
Well a bless a my soul, what's a wrong with me?
I'm itchin' like a man on a fuzzy tree!
My friends say I'm actin' wild as a pup,
I'm in love, yeah, I'm all shook up!
Otis Blackwell, ***All Shook Up***

In 1985 the rock and roll songwriter, Otis Blackwell, shared wonderful songwriting anecdotes with me about the 1950s in the Brill building in New York. Otis had pumped out songs from nine to five, six days a week. One day a producer walked in and shook up a *coca cola* bottle near Otis's face and challenged him to write a song about it in one hour. Otis wrote *All Shook Up* in ten minutes. They sent it to Elvis Presley's manager, and the rest is Rock 'n Roll history.

After hearing Otis's self-made demos and records I had no doubt where Presley's vocal style came from. Otis invented sort of a percussive, hic-up, rocking-swing style on medium-tempo songs. Elvis copied that style on early hits, imitating Otis' approach. Otis affirmed this fact, but said it didn't bother him. Otis was also informed, by Elvis' manager, that Otis would be sharing the publishing credits with Elvis, even though Elvis didn't write any of the songs. That's the way deals went down back then. *Take it or leave it*.

Otis went on to write more of Presley's early songs, including "Don't Be Cruel," and "Return to Sender." He also wrote Jerry Lee Lewis hits like "Great Balls of Fire," and penned Peggy Lee's "Fever," with Little Willie John. What's this got to do with cowboy music and Tex Ritter? Hang with me, partners.

Otis was a half-blind African American gentleman from Bed-Stuy Brooklyn. Bedford Stuyvesant is an area you wouldn't wish to loiter in, even at high noon. In '85 I was working on a rock and roll essay about the roots of the genre and I went in search of Otis Blackwell. I found Malcolm X Boulevard and five thousand boarded-over storefronts, and the odd Chinese takeout joint. All of it near Otis' home. It was tough country. A battle ground. Otis and I eventually connected and several afternoons I entertained him in my little *bunker* writing studio in Park Slope, Brooklyn. This was the same little garret where Ian Tyson and I began the song "Navajo Rug" in 1986, before I moved back out to the Southwest.



Otis told me of his early days growing up in the Brooklyn ghetto, learning the dry cleaning trade. Years of being around cleaning solution had cost him most of his eyesight. Here's the heart of the matter. As a kid, Otis said he used to go to Saturday matinee movies in Brooklyn and loved the singing cowboy movies. He was always the first in line and he told me they gave a souvenir cowboy plate and drinking cup to the first twenty kids in line. Otis had the full collection. His favorite cowboy?

> *Tex Ritter was always my favorite singer. I loved that voice of his! Man, it was authentic. He didn't try to pretty things up. He told it like it was. Man I loved that. It was a deep influence on me and my music writing. Oh yeah, Tex Ritter!*

Otis told me he built his rock and roll hits out of little things he'd learned from Tex Ritter songs, and also cartoons and cowboy comic books. He would take a phrase or an idea or a story from here and there, turn it upside down, and add a melody. He would imitate Tex's attitude. That *cowboy thing* that appealed to this black kid from Brooklyn. *Bang Bang*. Rock was born. Tex, Otis, and Elvis.

Otis Blackwell is considered one of the greatest American songwriters of our time, and a man who left his mark on popular music. A black dry cleaner from Brooklyn and a singing cowboy from Murvaul, Texas. The long shadow of Tex Ritter.

III Whatever Happened to Country-Western?

> *The cowboy is not to be lamented as a character now lost to American life. Cowboy songs tell us the cowboy is still with us...a colorful, hard riding*, hard *living denizen of the still existent Wild West.*
> ***Singing in the Saddle Songbook***, 1944

Let's pause a moment before I lead you to a final Tex Ritter expedition into the high Alps of Switzerland. Do you remember when country music was actually called *Country and Western*? I still have older folks come up to me and ask if I'm a *Country-Western* singer. That category was shelved thirty years ago. Whatever happened to the *western* part?

Western was dropped from the chart designation in a very conscious move by Nashville in the 1980s. FM radio expanded its docket and added FM stations in rural and suburban areas, and the business folks wished to hip up and expand the image of country. Prior to this move country music was usually heard on AM radio. The wider availability of country music led Nashville to aim their product at a more "sophisticated" urban and suburban audience. Enter the *pop, fast food* era of country.

Voices such as Johnny Cash, George Jones, Buck Owens and Merle Haggard were politely *honored*, but deemed a little *too real* and *rural* for major airplay in the growing new market. The old boys were closeted as *classic country*. They were pioneers, but their image no longer fit.

The audience wasn't blue collar any more, it was everybody who liked their disposable pop music served up with a homogenized, country feel, and a touch of artificial twang. Country music became a musical soap opera, and the song writing suffered for it. I was fortunate enough to have worked a few times with Johnny Cash and later Merle Haggard, as they stuck to their guns in spite of the turning of the screw. Their work will last forever. Haggard is still out there, *firing away*.

And the cowboy singers on radio? The *western* part of the deal? The cowboy connection seemed far too *hillbilly* or deep-rural for Music Row and the new image of the pop-country charts. Bye-bye *country western*. The cowboy-song movement eventually re-surfaced at western festivals and folk-life gatherings across the country. The cowboy song didn't die, it was pushed into the margins. It survives.

But there was a time, folks. And 1959 and '60 were the prime years. Tex Ritter's *Blood on the Saddle,* The Sons of the Pioneers' *Cool Water,* and Marty Robbins' *Gunfighter Ballads and Trail Songs* were high water marks. Marty's album included the song "El Paso" an epic seven minute gunfighter ballad which topped both the country and pop charts for over a year. If you haven't heard "El Paso" for awhile I challenge you to dust it off. It sounds as fresh, dynamic and wonderful as it ever did. A masterpiece of writing and singing. I may be prejudiced, because I live down the road from Rosas' Cantina. Listening to "El Paso" is like hearing Pavarotti sing "O Sole Mio."

Let's get back to Tex. Put on your hiking boots.

IV Long Trail into the High Alps

> *...the brave cowboy, his six-gun always at his side, often brought into tragic conflict with a spirit as heedless and daring as his own – he died as he had lived, quickly and violently.*
> *Liner Notes:* ***Blood on the Saddle***

I'm a Sunday painter and have a collection of art books. I like to read about painters, and view pictures of their studios. Picasso. Matisse. Francis Bacon. Giacometti. Charlie Russell. Maynard Dixon. Ed Borein. Fritz Scholder. I like to see where they lived and worked and where they spilled their paint. There was a painter named Balthus *(Count Balthus, he called himself)* who was a contemporary of Picasso. In fact he outlived Picasso and Matisse, and died a few decades ago in a weird old chalet in the high Alps of Switzerland.

I was leafing through a large book on his life one day and I kept staring at that Chalet; all that ancient dark wood and high eaves and plunging rooftops. The book said it was the largest private chalet in Switzerland. And the *oldest*. It looked Medieval. *Draculian*. In the book there was a photo of Balthus with his beautiful Japanese wife, *Countess Setsuko*, and their daughter. Quite a family. Quite a dwelling.

I showed the photos to my wife, who's Swiss. I told her I'd like to see this place sometime. The chalet held this bizarre magnetism for me. An old art palace. My wife looked over the pictures and said: "That's in *Rossiniere*, just up the valley from where my parents have an apartment. It's a fifteen minute train ride."

And, so, that Christmas, in the middle of a gentle snowstorm, we climbed aboard a local Swiss train and chugged up the valley towards Rossiniere. I had made inquiries, via mail, to Countess Setsuko, Balthus' widow. I didn't expect a response, but one afternoon she'd left

a message on my phone machine in Texas.

"You are invited to tea at Christmas time. This is Setsuko."

Then she hung up. There you have it. There we were on the toy train chugging up the dark valley. Are we far enough away from Texas and the West for you yet? Is Tex scratching his chin in *Hillbilly Heaven*?

We arrived at a little deserted station. The snow was coming down in shimmering flat leaves, and there was no coach-and-four to meet us. There was only that huge, dark chalet half way up the mountain, with one light on the top floor. *Ominous*. I was thinking *Frankenstein* or *Dracula*. Or *both*.

We began our trek up through the snow and finally arrived at the front entrance; there was a ten foot oak door and a medieval iron bell hanging from a chain. I pulled the chain and the bell rang out across the valley, and we stood there shaking from the cold; half-assuming the door would be opened by a hunch-backed dwarf who assisted the Countess.

Well, *almost*. A little Mongolian-looking man peeked out and asked us what we wanted. In *French* I believe. He looked like Genghis Kahn with a migraine. I told him Setsuko had invited us to tea. He wasn't buying that one, but he let us into the waiting room and hobbled off to find the Countess. I began to think we'd made a terrible mistake. We'd end up chained in the cellar. Or thrown to the wolves. Then I noticed the paintings on the candle-lit wall. There were six or seven original *Balthus* paintings and one Picasso. A *real Picasso*. We'd stumbled into a castle of lost treasures, and stood there for a good ten minutes, until we heard the clicking of wooden shoes coming down the hallway.

And there she was, *Countess Setsuko*, resplendent in a full ceremonial kimono, with her hair stacked upon her head, and her hands folded in front. She wore Chinese wooden shoes. She bowed slightly and introduced herself, *in English*, and held out a small, porcelain hand. She led us into the tea room and clapped her hands for the tea-boy (the Mongolian again *in a different jacket*). She instructed us to sit in certain places, to her right and left, and then, very stiffly began to interrogate us about what we were *pursuing* in life. We were a long way from El Paso.

The Mongolian brought the tea tray with Italian biscuits. He bowed and left. Setsuko told us about her work with charities and all the celebrities that showed up at the chalet, and her menagerie of birds that she kept on one of the upper floors. An entire floor filled with free-flying canaries. You could hear them twittering and singing up there. *Odd.*

My wife and I were feeling uncomfortable with the strange formality of it all, and the whiny noise from the *Hitchcock* birds above us. I'd forgotten why we'd wanted to come up here, and I didn't like the way the little Mongolian stared at us. I've already established here that I have a dark sensibility and I was playing out all the possible scenarios in my head. *King of the whore and knife ballads attacked by Dracula in the high Alps. Sordid end of the trail for cowboy songwriter*. They'd be talking about it around the campfire back in El Paso or Elko. *Russell lost his mind up there. He was never the same. Why in hell was he up there?*

Finally the Countess turned toward me. She was getting tired, and perhaps irritated with our intrusion.

I think she'd forgotten about her invitation. The chips were down. The birds were screaming.

"And what sort of *music* do you *do*?" she asked.

I ran down the usual *folk* and *sorta country* hob gob that I spit out when someone asks; when I'm trying and to decide what sort of music I write. People want quick categorization. I had to be gentle with her, and the conversation was a might rigid. I thought maybe I should say *classical*. Or *modern jazz*. Or French *bal musette*. Maybe that would save us. Then she opened a bizarre door on our chat.

"Do you ever sing *cowboy songs*?"

Her eyebrows were raised. It was like she was asking if I had any opium hidden on me. Maybe a *trick question*. The Mongolian dwarf was standing in the corner. *At the ready*.

"Well, *yes*," I said.

"What do you *mean*?" she asked.

"Well, uh, I've written cowboy songs." I was guarded.

"Ah!" she exclaimed. Her eyebrows arched and she clapped her tiny white hands together. "I like the *dark* cowboy songs!"

"You mean," I said hesitantly, "You mean, uh, like *Tex Ritter*?"

"Yes!" Her eyebrows arched even higher, and a high giggle emerged from her fragile mouth. "Yes! Yes! Tex Ritter! Yes! I love Tex Ritter! Tex Ritter! Tex Ritter! Tex Ritter!"

She was pounding the table with her fragile hands. The birds were whistling *High Noon* and the Mongolian was smiling.

With those magical two words, *Tex Ritter*, we were spared the dungeons of Rossiniere. The conversation and tea and biscuits took a savage, and wonderful turn for the better. Out came the cognac. Glasses were raised all around. We ran down a list of the great Tex Ritter songs. The darker the better.

An hour later I said a prayer to Woodrow Maurice Ritter as we staggered out of there into the snow storm, and back down the valley in that little train. I looked back at the old chalet, up in the high floors where I thought I could see the little yellow birds flying around, and I started singing "Blood on the Saddle," and I imagined the canaries were harmonizing with me.

V Epilogue

A few days ago I was relating some of these Tex Ritter stories to a doctor friend of ours, a renowned physiatrist from Texas, Dr. Eric Spier. Eric is an expert on physical rehabilitation, fine wines, and French techno music. I don't think he owns a cowboy record. We were drinking a decent Spanish Rioja, and I was going on and on about Tex, but Dr. Spier didn't seem to take much interest. Then I mentioned the song "Blood on the Saddle." It happened again. The shadow started hovering over us. A spark came came into the doctor's eye.

"You're *kidding* me," said the good doctor. "'*Blood on the Saddle*?' My brother gave me a mix tape once when I was nineteen. It was a weird mix of techno and punk. But for some reason "Blood on the Saddle" was on it. I didn't know who the singer was, but it resonated in a way in which you could not ignore the words. *Scary*. The kind of song that follows you into your dreams."

And there you have it. The long shadow of Tex Ritter. *And* "*Blood on the Saddle*." Twisting across cultures and wiping away musical prejudices and boundaries. True cowboy music.

Black horses and dark voices travel the deep roads of the guitar.

Tom Russell's newest record: *Mesabi*, and his art book *Blue Horse/Red Desert*, are available, along with his entire cowboy catalogue, from www.tomrussell.com

Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

Where traditional heritage and modern-day amenities meet.

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Fig. 1. Ride through Alisal's 10,000 acres of canyons, shaded hillsides, grazing cattle and babbling brooks.

Fig. 2. River Course provides a serene riverside setting framed by the Santa Ynez Mountains.

Fig. 3. Enjoy a wide variety of unique meeting, recreational, and dining locations.

Fig. 4. Take in the regal outdoors with our fine list of Alisal outdoor activities.

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THE ALISAL

The West of Jack Swanson

By William Reynolds

One of my favorite authors is Montana writer William Kittredge. Years ago he wrote of a change that came to his part of the ranching universe where he had grown up and ultimately left that place to find his way in the world. His family worked the MC Ranch in southeastern Oregon and he wrote about a time long ago – the first part of the last century – when work was done with horses both ridden and harnessed. Of that era he wrote of his memories as he saw the forces of mechanization move into even his remote part of the country. He wrote of the people he admired who populated his small part of the West, not knowing yet that many of their personal competencies would be ultimately devalued by the coming tide of progress. Of those people, of his parents and grand parents' time he respectfully wrote:

"They did the endless work, they took care, they were the people who invented our civilization, theirs was a tradition of civility. These men who came before, the horseback artists who brought the rawhide reata and the Spanish silver sided bits, were quick handed men who never dreamed they could own much beyond a saddle and a bedroll and a good pocket knife. They were our nobility, I think they dreamed of capabilities and beauty. They knew better than to imagine you could own anything beyond a coherent self.

Those men, and the men I rode with on those deserts when I was a boy, lived in an ancient horseback world that is mostly gone. The nineteenth century lasted in our part of the universe until spring of 1946, when my grandfather traded off some two hundred matched teams for a fleet of John Deere tractors. Everybody thought it was a bold step into the future. We didn't know what we were losing, our ancient proximity with animals, with running horses. The shadow of the clouds went on swiftly without us."

Riders of the San Joaquin, 40 x 60, oil

Years earlier, in the far West, the Pacific Slope region of the West had experienced another blending of superb capability – that of the creation of fine bridle horses. A time of the vaquero and his methodology of horsemanship. It was a time in the early part of the nineteenth century where all the planets aligned and the opportunity for making great bridle horses would flourish.

From the 1830s through the mid-point of the century, the *rancho* system in California was in full bloom. This was helped as Mexico was encouraging the settlement of lands to the north through the Colonization Act of 1824. The huge *ranchos* in California basked in the days of the dons and *vaqueros* worked amongst the "grand isolation" of massive land grants. This condition, along with superb weather and climate, provided these horsemen with the quiet time needed to work and refine the training of their mounts. A constant process that created a natural competitive mood amongst the daily work that was done horseback.

There was much pride and quite a bit of showing off – seeing whose horse could operate the quickest, the quietest and with the least touch. A show of grace. Through this came the evolution, refinement – and adornment – of the loose-jaw spade bit, something that came to be considered to be the ultimate example of light-handed control. It's felt by many that during that era, that the loose jaw spade – in gentle, masterful hands – could create a horse instantly responsive, due to the sensitive nature of a horse's mouth. These bits became a

primary task of some of the more enlightened *ranchos'* blacksmiths and iron-workers. Of the time, the *vaquero* competitions carried with them no shortage of ego, as pride in the ability of one's horses was testimony to one's personal capability. Given that, the adornment and design of these early California bits – and the bridles that carried them – were subject to some incredible and individual ornamentation, designed to reflect the uniqueness and, frankly, in today's vernacular, the "star power" of the specific vaquero. This use of individual craftsmanship – one of reflecting stature through personal capability and adornment – was a part of the "rancho-way" until the mid part of the century. California's statehood, the discovery of gold and the drought of the early 1860s marked the end of the quiet, isolation of the exquisite life of the *ranchos* and in turn, marked the decline for most - of the vaquero's idyllic life.

When I was young, I had read widely about that era and found little pictorial evidence other than some early paintings and engravings depicting idealized moments, such as the classic grizzly bear ropings. Certainly painters such as Charles M. Russell and Santa Barbara's own Alexander Harmer produced grand remembrances of the vaquero past but no one depicted the vaquero and his world of subtle successes horseback that I had read about. It wasn't until I happened upon some copies of the Cowboy Artist's of America exhibit catalogs that I was stopped in my tracks. It was in those catalogs – back in the late 1970s – that I was first introduced into the vaquero world of Jack N. Swanson. His vaquero was a worker – tending and moving his stock. Swanson's vaquero lived in Kittredge's described, "horseback" world,

Gathering in the Spring, 30 x 48, oil on board

Stewards of the Range, 30 x 40, oil on board

but Swanson's world lived on and flourished. His horses were the stuff of dreams that enabled horse and rider that were able – as writer Thomas McGuane has described – "to merge into a third, greater thing." Swanson's vaqueros were the real deal, riders working everyday in a glorious sun-filled world of dappled shadows as they passed through oak groves or passing across the hot "buckskin and blue" of mid-summer grass lands that reached out to meet a limitless blue sky. Swanson's West was a place I wanted to be, in a time long past.

I didn't meet Jack Swanson until years later. He was an established master, amongst a dwindling number of the authentic ones who had lived their earlier years horseback. You will read in Jack's own words in this book about his early life studying under the GI Bill, while living in a stall with his horse in the California coastal town of Carmel and all the adventures that were to follow that he would share with his beloved wife Sally and his family. You won't hear him blow his own horn about the many gracious and generous contributions he has made over the years to support the American family ranching community – as he continues to do at the age of 84.

In his acceptance remarks after being named "Westerner of the Year" from the Western Ranchers Beef Co-op in 2001, he stated, "Ranchers are environmentalists. Their livelihood depends on their good care of the range. Their families are the type of honest and hard-working people that built America. Their roots are in the land, many for generations, and their land keeps improving under their care. Today, in many instances, they are being illegally attacked and destroyed by their own government. As an American

Greeting the Hide Ship, 30 x 44 inches, oil

and a Westerner, I will not stand by and allow this to happen. Every citizen should be informed of his or her rights and work to not allow this to go unchecked. Otherwise it will be just the beginning of the end of our rights outlined in the Constitution and should cause alarm to all Americans, not just ranchers."

Jack Swanson believes in his beloved West and its people. He has shown us through his art the West is a place of competency, dreams and good work. It's a place where those who wish to thrive and grow, are blessed with the opportunity to see what they can do. It is a place of fine horses and good grass. It is a place I am thankful he has shown us. He has shown us it is a living place that it is ours to treasure and protect.

Jack Swanson's book will be available in spring 2012 at www.jnswanson.com and www.oldcowdogs.com

Urban Grit & Trail Dust

Corb Lund gives cowboy music a modern edge.

By Wendy Dudley

photos courtesy Corb Lund

Canadian musician Corb Lund writes and records music that's a hybrid of his cowboy upbringing and rock-and-roll-fueled youth.

Western singer Corb Lund savors the morning breeze blowing off the mountains, cool from snow-kissed peaks softly perfumed with a waft of sage. This is his paradise, where the prairies meet the mountains in southern Alberta, a terrain of swirling hills not far from the Montana border. Some day he hopes to again call this home, settling down on a piece of land

long tethered to his ranching family.

The singer-songwriter praises the sea of grass in his song "This Is My Prairie," a salute to the countryside he fears will be lost due to uncontrolled resource development. The song is also a tip of the hat to Lund's friend and mentor, Ian Tyson, who penned the song "This Is My Sky," about the vast oceans of heavenly blue that are home to raucous magpies and screeching hawks.

Lund is a hybrid of wild rock and woolly western, which enables him to reach out to a broad audience. Since the 2002 release of his first western album, *Five Dollar Bill*, he's won fans in his native Canada, as well as in the United States, Great Britain and Australia.

"There isn't much difference between the cowboys of Canada and the U.S. Just some of the language and lingo," Lund says from his home in Edmonton, Alberta. "If you go to Texas, they're familiar with the same cowboy songs we know up here."

Lately, Lund has spent much of his time touring the United States, promoting his sixth album, *Losin' Lately Gambler*.

Lund's tunes possess the scent of sweat-soaked saddle blankets, a passion for open range, the thunder of charging cavalry horses, the humour of old-time veterinarians, and the angst of addicted gamblers. But, like a hawk exploring new territory then circling back to its nest, Lund has journeyed into other musical domains, largely the reason for his distinctive, gutsy sound.

After studying anthropology and history, he moved to Edmonton, where he spent two years in a college music program. During that time, he formed an indie rock band, The Smalls. The experience equipped him with an edge that cuts through the western music he records today, attracting not just traditional buckaroos, but lawyers, doctors, students and punk rockers.

"You can go to his concerts and see everyone from cowboys to yuppies to people with Mohawks. It's not something you'd expect," says Steve Bennett, a horseshoer and Lund fan. "He can write a song about anything, from fencing pliers to sharpening a knife."

Lund comes from four generations of ranchers and rodeo cowboys, many of whom moved to southern Alberta from Utah. His grandfather Clark Lund was the wild cow-milking champ at the 1936 Calgary Stampede, and the Stampede's 1939 all-around cowboy. Lund's mother ran barrels in 1959, the first year the Stampede staged the women's event. His father, D.C. Lund, was a professional steer wrestler, rancher, and accomplished watercolor artist. He earned his living, though, as a veterinarian, as documented in Lund's song "Talkin' Veterinarian Blues."

Lund contends that, for him, riding away from his family's ranching lifestyle wasn't an act of rebellion. "I just smartened up early," he says. "When I was 14 or 15, I got into rock and roll. It seemed exotic to me. My family was immersed in cowboys, horses and that culture, so I guess this was a teenage way of finding my own path. Music became a process of personal identification. It defines my personal psyche."

When the Smalls broke up in 2000, he returned to his roots, forming his band The Hurtin' Albertans. "I did the rock and roll," Lund says. "I had found my own way. So it was more satisfying to re-embrace my past."

The divergence has kept the 42-year-old from

bogging down in a one-genre rut. In blazing his own trail, he's kept things western, but steered clear of what he describes as the "vanilla" flavor of contemporary country music.

"The one thread that holds my music together is the cowboy culture," he says. "It's my heritage."

Just as Lund was weaned on jingling spurs, he grew up with the rhythms of Marty Robbins, Wilf Carter and Willie Nelson. The first song he learned was Carter's "Strawberry Roan." But he isn't about to perform covers of such material.

"They are great old songs, but I don't find a lot of energy in re-treading," he says. "I try to write songs where the old days meet modern life. I have a bit of reverence and a bit of tongue-in-cheek, so they present differently. For me to write straight-up about going down the dusty trail wouldn't be right. I've been on horseback since I could ride, but that's not what I do now."

Lund doesn't shy from controversial topics. His songs have addressed war, ranching's economic challenges, and the effect of energy development on Alberta ranchlands.

While there's a chasm between their musical styles, Lund credits Alberta's Ian Tyson, who ranches and rides cutting horses, for making it cool to write songs about Canada. "He made it acceptable to refer to Canadian places in a song," Lund says. "It's easy to put Houston, Nashville or New York City into a song, but it's tricky to put in Moose Jaw. Ian was the first guy I listened to that used our regional references in a tasteful way. I think regionalism is important, otherwise all songs are distilled to a common denominator."

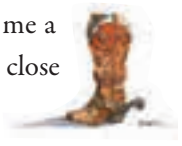
Lund considers himself first and foremost a storyteller. Whether it be about borderland whiskey runners or an as-yet-unwritten story about his grandfather running wild horses along the skirts of Montana's Chief Mountain, Lund spins yarns reminiscent of Ramblin Jack Elliot's. "I'm not a great guitar player or great singer," Lund says. "Writing is the thing for me."

An avid reader, Lund grew up digesting James Michener's novels, considering them a "painless way to find out about history." He's drawn to the dark side of Cormac McCarthy, and feels at home inside works such as Annie Proulx's *Close Range: Wyoming Stories*. He boasts of owning a complete collection of Louis L'Amour's novels and, like most cowboys, didn't leave his youth without reading Will James' *Smoky the Cowhorse*.

Lund doesn't consider himself a political singer, but does tackle tough issues in his music. He has yet to be thrown off stage, though, for singing about war, borders closed to Canadian beef, or drillers and developers ripping up productive pastureland.

In an effort to build a market for *Losin' Lately Gambler*, his sixth album and first American release, Lund spends much of his time, of late, on tour in the United States. He admits, though, to continually feeling the pull of his Alberta cowboy roots.

"I'm attracted to it," he says. "It gives me a sense of belonging. That foothills terrain is close to my heart."



Wendy Dudley is a writer based in Alberta. Learn more about Corb Lund at www.corblund.com.

Face to Face

A pictorial featuring bronzes by John Coleman

By A.J. Mangum

Sculptor John Coleman's monumental bronze *1876* is a life-size depiction of Gall, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, key figures in the Battle of the Little Bighorn, in which Lakota, Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors roundly defeated George Armstrong Custer's 700-strong 7th Cavalry.

Coleman portrays Gall sitting with one elbow resting on a bent knee. The warrior holds an axe in his hands and looks forward defiantly, his slightly raised chin suggesting the most dangerous brand of confidence, that of a man who isn't afraid of the worst his enemy can offer. In Sitting Bull's expression, stoicism gives way to anger; his fist tightly clenches a peace pipe, a subtle signal of an intriguing duality linking hope and violence. And Crazy Horse, gripping a Winchester, stares into the distance, his countenance a dark blend of anger, resolve and weariness.

Scaled so the three kneeling figures make eye contact with standing viewers and communicate an unmistakable willingness to kill or be killed, the work is at once engaging and unnerving. One cannot simply study it. One must contend with it.

photos courtesy John Coleman

Sculptor John Coleman

A member of the Cowboy Artists of America and the National Sculpture Society, Coleman creates works that are physical embodiments of Native American mythology and the emotions that marked life on a frontier that could be, in equal doses, both inspiring and bloody. His work begins with research, including firsthand visits to historical sites. He "sketches" in clay, forming rough figures that he then refines, gradually exposing poignant messages conveyed through gesture, countenance, garb and scale. The final result both transports viewers and challenges them, bringing them face to face with history's unhealed wounds and the limitless hope of a once-undiscovered country.

1876: Gall – Sitting Bull – Crazy Horse

"Gall led some of the early charges in the Battle of the Little Bighorn," Coleman says, "and it's said that Crazy Horse led the decisive charge that killed Custer. Although Sitting Bull did not participate in the battle, it was his dream of a great victory during a vision quest that brought the Indians together at Little Bighorn." At the 2011 Cowboy Artists of America exhibition, held at Oklahoma City's National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, *1876* earned the gold medal for sculpture, as well as the Anne Marion Best of Show Award. Coleman had previously earned three CA gold medals and two CA best of show honors.

Little Hopi Clowns

"In this work, a little girl holds a wooden figure. Each wears a shaft of cornhusk ribbons, identifying them as Hopi clowns, or Kwirena. Unlike Koshari, the summer clowns, Kwirena are involved in winter ceremonies and associated with the germination of corn. Hopi clowns provide comic relief during some ceremonies, playing practical jokes or mocking members of the tribe."

***Lives With Honor*, bronze and charcoal**

"This work exemplifies the simple idea that to grow old with integrity, wisdom and status among one's people was key. This elder has many symbols that tell his story of a well-honored life." The charcoal of *Lives With Honor* earned the gold medal for drawing at the 2009 CA show.

The Game of Arrows

"This sculpture depicts a Mandan archer engaged in the 'game of arrows,' an event witnessed by George Catlin around 1833. [An artist, Catlin painted portraits of frontier-era Indians.] He reported that the most distinguished archers gathered on the prairie, each having paid an entrance fee, such as a shield, robe or pipe. In turn, they shot arrows into the air to see who could get the greatest number flying at one time, the winner taking entrance fees of the other archers. It was written that the winner of this particular gathering achieved eight arrows in flight before the first struck the ground." *The Game of Arrows* earned the gold medal for sculpture at the 2010 Masters of the American West Exhibit, as well as the gold medal for sculpture, the Kieckhefer Award and the Best of Show Award at the 2009 Cowboy Artists of America Exhibit.

Into the Unknown

"There is perhaps no better symbol or metaphor for courage than a teenage Sacagawea carrying her baby while accompanying Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery on their journey to a new world. My portrayal is that of Sacagawea and her baby on the precipice of the known world. She tentatively gazes on what lies ahead before commencing her historic journey as a guide 'into the unknown.'"

The Spirit Chaser

"As part of what might be a typical nighttime ceremony for the Plains Indians, a medicine man would dance around the fire. He would thrust into the air a menacing-looking stick with an animal skull at its end, invoking fear and ridding the ceremonial grounds of unwanted evil."

Q&A: William Kittredge

The author of *Owning it All* and *Hole in the Sky* shares his thoughts on writing and the American West.

Interview by David Allan Cates

One of the West's most gifted and influential writers, William Kittredge rose to prominence in 1987 with his book *Owning It All*, an essay collection that documented Kittredge's life in the Great Basin's ranch country while unflinchingly offering up challenges to a Western mythology generations in the making. His subsequent memoir, *Hole in the Sky*, perhaps the most honest non-fiction account of the changes the 20th century brought to the American West, tells the story of Kittredge's upbringing on a southeastern Oregon cattle outfit, the surrender of his family's ranching legacy, and his rebirth as a writer.

Through his body of work – several collections of fiction and non-fiction, as well as the novel, *The Willow Field* – Kittredge has presented to readers an uncompromising window on the realities of the West, its people and its culture, describing a landscape that is a place of both inspiration and heartbreak, a still-misunderstood outback that can bestow ruin or reward.

Here, novelist David Allan Cates (author of *Hunger in America*, *X Out of Wonderland* and *Freeman Walker*) shares an interview with Kittredge. Their talk, in Kittredge's adopted hometown of Missoula, Montana, touches on the themes of a writer's inspirations, the West's ongoing evolution, and the state of writing in the Western culture.

DAC: When you first started writing, I am assuming you were not necessarily writing about where you came from. How long did it take you to get to that place?

WK: I first started writing my junior year at Oregon State. I had gotten into a jock fraternity and majored in general agriculture. Basically I was staying out of the Korean War. I took a class in which we read *The Republic* and Milton's prose and finally *The Iliad*. The last line, in our prose translation: "Thus they celebrated the funeral games of Hector, breaker of horses." I was floored. Echoes in this ancient book reached all the way to me. Men I'd grown up with were breakers of horses. The next quarter I took a class in 19th century American literature, and had an equally strong reaction to Whitman.

That winter I fell in love with a woman that I eventually married. Her father had grown up in Hell's Kitchen in New York, gone into the Army and been sent to Hawaii during World War I. During the flu epidemic, everybody he was related to in New York died. So he mustered out in L.A. and got work as a set-dresser for movies. The last one was *Gone with the Wind*. As that ended, he had a heart attack, and brought his family to a quiet life in Corvallis, where he sold insurance. He recommended Dickens and Hemingway, and Hemingway got me. I read the early stories over and

over, trying to figure out how they worked.

Bernard Malamud was teaching at Oregon State and had just published *The Natural*. I took a creative writing class and Malamud hated me, a classical arrogant boy. I sort of hated him because he insisted that we write traditional stories – a problem and the search for an answer. The same concept I later taught for decades. But I wouldn't. Instead, I wrote anecdotal versions of events on the ranch, no doubt influenced by the early Hemingway. After four out of five papers, I had four big red Fs. So I gave Malamud the kind of story he wanted. He gave me a B in the class. Main thing, I had come to think of myself as someone who was going to be a writer. Nothing else would do.

DAC: Have you been back to you family's ranch recently? What kind of feelings does it stir up?

WK: I went back about four years ago. I had it in mind to write a non-fiction book about my family. So my son and daughter and I, and one of my grandsons who is a photographer, took a drive through Warner Valley. It hadn't changed appreciably except the MC was broken up into a number of smaller operations. We had 21,000 irrigated acres in the valley when we owned it, along with close to a million acres of BLM grazing land, and accumulated another 50,000 acres in Oregon and Nevada and California.

Anyway, to answer your question, I remember being interviewed, years before, on the ranch, by men from NBC. This was going to show on the 4th of July, national television. They asked, "What do you think should become of this property?" I puzzled and gulped and finally got myself to say, "Tear out the ditches and pumps and head gates and fences. It should be a wildlife refuge." That was an opinion that betrayed ranch people I went to grade school with in

that valley. Nevertheless, I still think it would be the highest and best use of that property.

My cousin and I went to the high desert with the MC buckaroos, among them a later world champion saddle bronc rider and bulldogger, Rossie Dollarhide, when we were 9 years old. It was tough on kids. I didn't know if I could make it or not. But there was no chance of not making it, not without utter family disgrace. By the time I got to be 14 or 15, I was okay on horseback but then discovered that they had girls at the ranch. So I pretty much weaseled my way out of desert work and never really did much on horseback until 1967, when I was 35 and we were selling out, gathering cattle in the snow on the Klamath Marsh. I was a flop on horses by then. Ray Vance, a buckaroo and hellraiser who was married to a cousin of mine, told my brother and I, "You boys aren't good for a goddamn thing except reading books." It was true. I'd been most of a decade farming 8,000 irrigated acres of barley and alfalfa and reading, thinking I was preparing to be a writer. Mostly, I was stalling.

DAC: Well, you have to be good at something.

WK: Agribusiness began for us when my father drained the swamps in Warner – really impenetrable swamps, thousands of feral hogs. He bulldozed a 17-mile canal around the east side of the valley to keep the flood waters out in February and March and built interior canals and put in pumps. Those bulldozers began the change. We lived in the 19th century until the end of World War II. In 1946 my grandfather traded off a lot of matched teams for John Deere tractors. Less life, more machines. But that was okay. We thought we were doing God's work and getting paid for it. We were

raising food for the world. It was a rare property, beautifully maintained. Everything was copasetic. Or so we thought.

We were exactly east of the Klamath and Tule Lake Wildlife Refuges, major stops on the Pacific flyway. One hundred years ago, close to 10 million birds were going into Klamath and Tule Lake and probably 2 million were going into Warner. The waterbird population, from the time I was a child until I left, probably fell by 80 percent. We had sprayed a lot of chemicals. In 1962, I read *Silent Spring*, by Rachel Carson. The second chapter is about Tule Lake and chemicals that were killing the birds. Worse, we were doing everything they were doing. Same chemicals. I was in a terrific double bind. There I was, thinking, "We're doing God's work, we're straightening up the mess down there in the swamps and growing crops and feeding people." On the other hand, as Carson pointed out, we were killing the birds. Once we sprayed parathion on clover mites in the barley. Parathion is a World War II German nerve gas. One drop the size of a match head on bare skin will take you out in three seconds. We killed all the songbirds of the valley, a wonder we didn't kill ourselves. Anyway, I had very double-hearted feelings. I loved what the ranch was when I was a child. When we went into agribusiness, I went on loving the work, the best game I ever had: 5,000 water-control devices, balancing water in hundreds of miles of ditches. It was a 24-hour-a-day sport. That was the prime attraction for a very young man.

DAC: I wanted to ask you about that also. You've written about the second colonization of the West. Can you explain that idea and what you meant by it in your writing?

WK: The second colonization of the West? The first

one was, of course, the military and the settlers and the pioneers. My great-grandfather was in the first wave, my grandfather was part of that, and my father. The second colonization is what we're surrounded by right now here in Missoula. The timber business is pretty much defunct, as is the livestock business. Now we have endless retirees looking for a hideout like Missoula. Even if the stock market goes totally to hell, everything is going to be sort of okay here. Television and movie stars are buying places out here, places to hide out. Those new people have enormous influence. Look at the arts in Missoula. There's everything under the sun. That's all good. It brings money from the outside and we need that in the West. Westerners like to believe we can be an independent economic entity. Not a prayer. We are utterly dependent on national and international economics.

DAC: What is this Western dream? What does the West have to offer that's attracting new immigrants?

WK: Same things it's always offered: a promise that you can start over out here. There's a paradise that hasn't been trampled yet. This time we'll get it right.

DAC: If we can say that one of the attractions and the myths of the West is that it is a place to invent yourself new, it seems to succeed in that promise. Their new invention may be worse than their old, but they do it all the time. Are there some aspects to the Western myth that have failed over and over again, and continue to fail?

WK: Yeah. I think that it works two ways. I think the reinvention part is great, generally. I think it is a good idea. I think the part that is not good is that it is really a conquest culture and it always has been. All you have to do is take a close look at Native Americans. We rounded them up and put them out to starve in the boondocks where they still continue to suffer. I remember Annick [writer and filmmaker Annick Smith] and I and a film producer were driving through Browning, Montana. It was a dusty, cold October day, and a crowd of young men were waiting for the liquor store to open. This film producer said one word: "Soweto."

DAC: Every new thing that's created stands on the shoulder of destruction of something before. A hundred years of history, you don't have much that has lasted. Everything keeps being destroyed and replaced again.

WK: Yeah. The timberlands are overharvested in Montana, the mining industry is pretty much gone, a lot of things are gone.

DAC: It's interesting. The West has always carried a myth that makes people from other places look toward it and project hopes and project ideas. The reality – your reality, your life of growing up in the West and seeing one thing created and another destroyed is a story that you've spent your life writing about.

WK: Yeah.

DAC: When you look at writers now, who's doing a good job of telling the story of the West?

WK: In the early '80s, I remember telling students, "You better get on this bandwagon." Every magazine in the country wanted an article about Montana or Nevada. It began to dry up in the middle '90s and by 2000 it was over. But there was an enormous interest for a while.

To answer your question, there's a literature now that doesn't consider the West as a faraway fantasy land isolated from the nation or the world. The best recent novel, I think, is Marilyn Robinson's *Housekeeping*, set in northern Idaho. The finest non-fiction is *The Meadow*, by Jim Galvin. They resonate with implied connections outside the physical West. Wonderful books. The most resonate history is by Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*.

DAC: Are there ideas or a territory that haven't been written that somebody ought to write about?

WK: One of the problems is that traditional writing about the West has tended to portray stereotypes. In

Idaho Falls, there's about 75 percent Mormons and about 25 percent nuclear scientists from that Arco plant. It makes for a very strange mix. People are complex, not quite so simple and one-dimensional, or two- or three-dimensional, as they seem to be in a lot of Western storytelling.

DAC: In Western magazines or articles about Western life, oftentimes the subjects are those that would occur to somebody living in Washington, D.C., as typical Western persons.

WK: We've been down that road a lot of times. The west is a much more interesting and complex place than they know. People ask me how are things in Montana. Which Montana? There are many Montanas. They go all the way from scientists in Bozeman and Hutterites on the prairies and Latino farmers on the Yellowstone and timber fallers and retired college professors like me. Make your own list.

DAC: Reservations.

WK: Thirteen tribes on seven reservations. Each one is distinct. Every tribe is different. They have unique traditions, different leaders.

DAC: I've often times wrestled with the notion that Westerners see themselves as independent. Yet, everyone is dependent on the government and the people they work with and for. The West is thick with company workers who tell themselves that they are independent.

WK: I think we're getting over it. Think about the number of NGOs in Missoula. They're inclined to take care of their commons to the degree that they can, and work together. Example: Open hillsides above the city. Voters put up tax money and bought them. Now, in perpetuity, we do not have condos up there looking down on us. People are pulling together.

DAC: When you look at your life as a writer and a teacher [in the University of Montana's creative-writing program], how do you see your contribution, or what do you hope your contribution has been toward an understanding of the West? You've been at the center of honest thinking about what the West is and could be, an honest look at what the West has been.

WK: Those things, I think, are more important than any particular book. A lot of people are doing it – great storytellers, historians, poets, ceramicists, filmmakers. It's our good fortune.

DAC: As a teacher, what was your philosophy of teaching? What was your role as a teacher at University of Montana?

WK: You try to see things in student work that they didn't see themselves. What works and what doesn't. Trying to figure out why it works and why it doesn't. Why it's energized and not dreary. That's the most useful thing you end up doing. You have ambitions for your students. It's like another life you have through them.

David Allan Cates is the author of three novels, *Hunger in America*, a *New York Times* Notable Book, *X Out of Wonderland* and *Freeman Walker*. He is the winner of the 2010 Montana Arts Council's Artist Innovation Award in prose, and his stories have appeared in numerous literary magazines. He has also authored travel articles for *Outside* and *The New York Times Sophisticated Traveler*. Cates is the executive director of Missoula Medical Aid, which leads groups of medical professionals in providing public health and surgery services in Honduras. He works with the Missoula Writing Collaborative, teaching classes on the short story in public high schools, and is a part-time faculty member at Pacific Lutheran University's MFA program. For many years he worked as a fishing guide on the Smith River and raised cattle on his family's Wisconsin farm.

Cowboy Crossings

photos courtesy the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

We Pointed Them North, by Fred Fellows, exhibited in the 2011 CAA show.

On October 15, Oklahoma City's National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum hosted the inaugural Cowboy Crossings, a historic event featuring concurrent exhibitions by the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association and the Cowboy Artists of America.

TCAA members include some of the world's most respected saddlemakers, rawhide braiders, silversmiths, and bit and spur makers. The 13-year-old group's annual show features one-of-a-kind, museum-quality pieces made by TCAA members.

Members of the CAA, founded in 1964, are among the Western culture's most revered painters and sculptors. The Museum hosted CAA's earliest art exhibitions, beginning with the group's first show in 1966. Cowboy Crossings marked the CAA show's return to Oklahoma City after 37 years at the Phoenix Art Museum.

"This museum is where the CAA started," said event sponsor Anne Marion, of Burnett Ranches. "It's where they belong and it's where I hope they'll stay."

The two shows featured 174 pieces – 45 by TCAA members, 129 by CAA members – and opening-night sales of more than $2.2 million.

Bill Allison, Saddle Maker, Roundup, Montana, by Loren Entz, won the CAA's 2011 gold medal for work in oil.

Linking the two shows was an unprecedented experiment, combining two iconic events and bringing together two distinct audiences. The sense of pressure on participating artists – 16 from TCAA and 26 from CAA – was not lost

"It goes against what they teach in school these days, that competition isn't good," said TCAA President Scott Hardy. "But creating work for the show became a friendly competition of sorts. No one wanted to bring the worst piece."

While the CAA exhibition ended November 27, TCAA's show remains in place through January 8. Learn more at www.nationalcowboymuseum.org.

These California-style spurs, made by Russell Yates and exhibited in the 2011 TCAA show, feature 14-karat gold overlays, 24-karat gold inlays and a relief-engraved grapevine motif.

This spade bit by Ernie Marsh, exhibited in the 2011 TCAA show, features overlaid sterling silver stars, inlaid silver stripes, and engraved steel cheekpieces with a French grey finish.

Making a Hand

At 26, cowboy Joel Maloney is one of a dying breed who still want to spend their lives looking between the ears of a horse and following a cow.

By Kathy McCraine

photos by Kathy McCraine

Joel is described by the O RO ranch manager, Wayne Word, as an exceptionally gifted horseman.

It was Joel Maloney's first day on the wagon at the big O RO Ranch north of Prescott, Arizona. The cowboys had spent a couple days gathering the remuda and shoeing up. Now it was time to move the remuda to Francis Creek before starting the spring works. Being new, Joel didn't know anything about his

string of horses, so when the wagon boss stepped up to rope the morning's mounts at Encino Tank, he called out the first name on his list – Pancho. The horse was a good-looking bay with nothing in his demeanor to suggest he was anything but a good solid pony.

"I was riding point when we started out," Joel says. "We were in big, flat, brushy country, nothing but rocks. All of a sudden, some horses quit the herd and headed for an oak thicket. I went to kick them back into the drive, but when I kicked Pancho into a trot, he just blew up and went to bucking toward those trees."

Joel did all he could to pull the horse up, but into the thicket they went, where he took out a dead branch with his head, then plowed into a cedar tree that knocked him loose in the saddle. After that, Pancho handily deposited him in a big malapai rock pile.

"I swore I'd broke my pelvis when I hit those rocks," he says. "Talk about a humbling experience."

One of the cowboys caught his horse, and Joel got back on. With one rein missing, he tied his piggin' string to the bit and continued the 20-mile drive to Francis Creek, hunched over in pain. Late in the day, at Pilot Knob, he asked the horse wrangler, "How much farther is it?" When the wrangler pointed to the far horizon, he thought, Man, I'm not going to make it...and this is my first day.

But he did make it. At Francis Creek, jigger boss Linc Bundy was waiting for the crew. He took one look at Joel's broken rein and started laughing. "Yeah, that's Pancho for you." He knew exactly what had happened. Pancho was the horse nobody kept in his string for long. He usually got turned in and passed on to a new unsuspecting cowboy for the next wagon.

Joel Maloney prepares to send a houlihan loop into the remuda.

Joel's whole body was black and blue for a month after that, but he toughed it out on pain pills. Now two and a half years later, he's still at the RO's as the full-time man at Bear Creek Camp. Joel is a cowboy, and at 26 years old, one of a dying breed of men who still want to spend their lives looking between the ears of a horse and following a cow, despite long grueling hours in the saddle, unforgiving country, harsh weather, and low pay.

The O RO spring and fall wagons attract young cowboys from all over the country. This legendary ranch, its history, its reputation and its rough country are big drawing cards for cowboys who want to learn how to make a hand.

"It's a cowboy outfit," Joel says, "not a place where

a gunsel is going to last very long. It's given me a chance to learn a lot from top hands how to rope and gather wild cattle where you've got nothing but brush and rocks and cows that know how to get away. I figure if a guy can get his job done here and gather wild cattle in this rough country, he's pretty well set anywhere he goes."

At 257,000 acres, the O RO is one of the largest, and certainly one of the roughest ranches in Arizona. The eastern side of the ranch is an old Spanish land grant, the 100,000-acre Baca Float #5. The U.S. government traded this land to a Spaniard named Don Luis Maria Baca after the Gadsden Purchase of 1854 displaced him from his land grant in New Mexico. The Greene Cattle Company purchased the ranch in 1936, adding the 157,000-acre Mahon Ranch to the west shortly after. The Greene family ran the ranch until 1973, when they sold it to John Irwin, whose family operates it today as JJJ Corporation.

At one time the ranch ran 10,000 head of cattle, but today, due to wiser management and the ongoing drought, the herd has been reduced to 2,000 cows plus about 1,500 yearlings, which they hold through the winter in good grass years. Otherwise, little has changed in the past 100 years on the RO's, as it's known. It's a horseback outfit, far too big and rough to be run any other way. Trailering horses out to the distant areas of the ranch over rocky, washed out roads is out of the question, so it's one of the last outfits in the country that still runs a true wagon, not for show but out of necessity. The old mule-drawn chuckwagon used up into the 1940s, though, has been replaced by a World War II, 6x6 Army truck. The wagon stays out for two to three months each spring and fall. The cowboys camp in tepees the entire time, coming into headquarters only every two or three weeks to shower and take a short break.

Joel is a slim, wiry bundle of energy, with an easygoing nature and a smile as big as the black hat that almost swallows his face. He had cowboying in his blood long before he came to the RO's. His ancestors on both sides of the family homesteaded in southern Arizona in the late 1800s. The Maloney side settled in the Chiricahua Mountains, and the Parker family, which once ran thousands of cattle, settled in Sonoita and in the Huachuca Mountains.

Joel's great-great-grandfather Jack Maloney grew up on the Matador Ranch in Texas, but was deported for suspected cattle rustling. He is quoted as saying, "The state of Texas was so sad to see me leave, they even had the sheriff follow me to the state line begging me to come back."

Jack got as far as El Paso, where he got in an all-night poker game. By morning he had only a silver dollar and two pennies left, so he went to the train station and asked the ticket lady how far that would get him.

"It will get you as far as San Simon, Arizona," she said.

"Well, that's exactly where I want to go," he replied.

Joel's parents, Jim and Jackie Maloney, and grandparents, James and Joyce Maloney, still own the 5 Bar 7 Ranch at Sonoita, where Joel grew up, just 20 miles from the Mexican border, but after generations of family splits, it's only a remnant of what it once was. At 17, Joel earned his first outside wages on the nearby Open Cross Ranch. After that he attended Pima Community College in Tucson for two years and started day working on the big Empire Land and Cattle Company, eventually cowboying there full time. He credits manager Mac Donaldson and his son, Sam, with teaching him a lot about running cattle in diverse country, catching wild cattle, and understanding the fundamentals of pasture rotation and grasses.

Besides the Empire, Joel made a wagon at the

As jigger boss, one of Joel's responsibilities is to help the wagon boss catch horses out of the remuda each day.

Diamond A Cattle Company at Seligman, and spent a winter on the Willow Springs Ranch at Oracle, before signing on with the wagon at the RO's in the spring of 2009. Before leaving southern Arizona, he had met his wife-to-be, Rachel, a pretty black-haired girl who was working on a neighboring ranch. When the spring wagon ended, he took the job at Mahon Camp, bringing Rachel and his three cow dogs with him.

The Mahon job is always a hard one to fill due to its remoteness. Though it's possible to get there with four-wheel drive, the road is so rough that most of the camp men who have lived there choose to pack their groceries in by mule. It takes a special kind of man to choose this high desert camp, where there are more rocks than grass and drought is a constant threat. It takes an even more special kind of woman to live there, where you might never see another person for weeks or months.

Rachel was raised in San Diego, so it was an eye-opening experience for her, but she adapted quickly. She loves to ride and often helps Joel prowl his country or do other ranch chores when he's not out with the wagon. (Neither women nor dogs are allowed at the wagon.) When the position at the more centrally located Bear Creek Camp came open in 2010, she wasn't particularly anxious to move.

"I loved it at Mahon," she says. "I loved the solitude,

The O RO cowboys. The ranch's mule-drawn chuckwagon, used into the 1940s, has been replaced by World War II-era 6x6 Army truck.

loved the fact that nobody's going to just show up at your door. After so much stuff going on in San Diego – people, industry, pollution, noise – this was a life changing experience, like stripping down to the bare essentials, to what's important. I wasn't ready to leave there, but Bear Creek is growing on me."

At Mahon the couple quickly settled in to camp life, learning how to pack, hunting to help fill the small gas freezer in their solar powered house, learning how to bake bread – you don't just run to town for a loaf. About once a month they would make the three-hour horseback ride out to Triangle N Camp where they left their pickup. Then they would drive another two and a half hours to Prescott for groceries. Packing supplies back in by mule was a real learning experience, which resulted in more than a few mishaps.

"One real cold windy day we were headed home, and I had two mules behind me loaded down with groceries, and Rachel bringing up the rear," Joel says. "Just as we came over this steep rocky saddle where the trail was real narrow, my lead mule, Leroy, ran around me and rimfired my horse. Before I could get my dally loose, the rope wrapped up around my back, and my horse spun around in the other direction. The rope jerked me out of the saddle, and I landed in a big pile of rocks with my horse bucking down the hill and the lead mule trying to run off. The only thing that kept him from running off

was he was tied to my drag mule, and she was stuck straddling a big boulder.

"But I never spilt any groceries," he adds proudly. "In fact we never once even broke an egg when we were packing."

Beginning with his first wagon, Joel started keeping a daily journal in a little 5-by-7-inch book. It started out as a log of vet remedies and handy tips, then became his tally book for keeping track of calves branded and remnants gathered. Before long he was writing a diary of life at the wagon and at camp, scribbling in his tepee in the evenings, sometimes illustrating his stories with pencil sketches. It has become a vivid record of a way of life few people have the opportunity to see these days. Within the pages of that little brown book are entries as mundane as "packed salt to Jackass Basin today," to humorous accounts like the following of early morning bronc rides and wild cow wrecks, some involving fellow cowboy Drew Timmons and his horse Papoose.

"May 18, 2010 – Right Hand Canyon: Got a good bunch of cows. A bit of nylon encouragement was involved!"

"May 22, 2010 – Jones Dam: The wind's been blowin' hard fer 2 days. I thought my tepee was gonna blow away last nite. When I woke up, I was wonderin' if I was gonna step out in Oz! It made everybody cranky, hell, even the birds! I've only heard 3 chirps in the past 48 hours."

"May 23, 2010 – Triangle N: If I thought the wind was bad yesterday, it was twice as bad today. It blew harder and was 'bout 20 degrees colder. Other than that, the day went good. Killed a beef this afternoon. (Started snowin' on us.)"

"September 30, 2010 – Went back to Mayday and picked up some cattle that were triggered (about 20 head). One cow run off rite quick that I caught and led back. My first loop I wadded up on the back of her head, then she tripped and fell down and got on the fight. I tried to spook her back to the herd, but she kept wantin' to bump me and run off, so I caught 'er and led 'er back. Then a weaner size bull run off outa Drew's hole. He had some hell with Papoose tryin' to buck him off and I caught that bull real slick. Got him back to the herd and Drew was still goin' fer a bronc ride through the cedars."

"October 22, 2010 – Moved the cut up from West Split to Encino to get Bear Creek's cut and moved 'em all to Cottonwood Trap. Drizzled on us all day. Papoose tried to buck Drew off while boggin' his head through camp this mornin'. It was still a bit too dark to see it well, but you could make out a silhouette. His tracks showed that he came just a few inches from hittin' the wagon!"

"October 20, 2010 – Charlie Dam: Long day. Several head got roped at Charlie's (3 just to foul 'em cuz they was actin' stupid). Then Robert and I caught a pair outside Charlie. When Drew came up to heel my cow, Papoose went to rearing up, got over my rope, then somehow ended up on top of the cow. Literally Papoose and Drew were astraddle the ole cow brute! I let my rope go cuz when they come off her, Papoose had my rope between his hind legs, but I got it back easy enough. When she trotted off, it stayed atop some oak brush, and I reached down and got it dallied back up."

"February 8, 2011 – Worked on Right Hand Trail. I probably would've got nearly to the holdup, but when my chainsaw ran outa gas, I walked back to relay my gas, and my horse Chester had gotten loose from his hobbles. I had to walk from where we necked Tad's bull to a tree two falls ago all the way to the Brush Trap gate, which is where I tracked up Chester. When he saw me, the SOB went to runnin' in the opposite direction, but

got bluffed up. Luckily I brought my bridle, so I rode him bareback all the way back to where I left off on the trail. It cut quite a bit of time outa my day, which made fer a long afternoon."

Last spring wagon boss Bunk Robinson asked Joel to "jigger" for the wagon, a position usually reserved for older cowboys. Ranch manager Wayne Word thinks Joel definitely has the potential to move up in the organization.

"He's one of the best young cowboys I've had on the ranch," Wayne says. "He takes responsibility real well, and is an exceptional camp man who takes good care of his camp, always going the extra mile. Plus, he's an above-average horseman who is as good working in the corral as outside. I'd rather have him help me cut cattle than most anybody."

Rachel and Joel met while working on neighboring ranches in southern Arizona.

Rachel sums Joel up as "genuine. He just doesn't put up a front. He is what he is. And, the beautiful thing about him is he isn't like most people who have a job, then come home and have a different life. He is what he does."

As jigger boss, Joel is second-in-command on the wagon. One of his responsibilities is to help the wagon boss catch horses out of the remuda each day. After the horses are wrangled, the cowboys circle them with their ropes, in the center of a big corral if one's handy, or outside if not. Each man tosses the end of his rope to the man on his right until they have formed a rope circle around the herd. As each man calls out the name of the horse he wants to ride that morning or afternoon, the wagon boss or jigger boss throws a houlihan loop over its head and leads it out.

This fall Joel was back jiggering again for the new wagon boss, Brad Mead. Only one thing has changed – Pancho's not in his string anymore.

"Needless to say, Pancho was the first horse I turned in," he says. "Actually I rode him for a wagon and a half, so I gave it a valiant effort. He flipped over once with me and tried to run off in the trees all the time. It's funny. Ninety-nine percent of these RO horses are great, but I guess there's a bad apple in every tree."

Kathy McCraine is a rancher, photographer and freelance writer from Prescott, Arizona.

The Road Trip List

Making sure you have the right tunes for the road.

#2 & 3 – *Old Corrals & Sage Brush* and *Cowboyography*

In our second installment of packing your pick-up with proper tunes, we tip our hat northward to Canada's own, Ian Tyson. Tyson's music has probably racked up more miles played on marginal in-truck CD players than any artist in the West. We found it impossible to separate his cowboy-launch vehicle – *Old Corrals and Sage Brush* (1983) from the seminal classic *Cowboyography* (1986). Both albums – with their Jay-Dusard-and-Kurt-Markus-photographed vinyl record covers – helped define the cowboy renaissance of the 1980s by clearly celebrating the high-desert and far-western existence of the contemporary cowboy and buckaroo.

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

The Gift
Ian Tyson

In old St. Louis over in Missouri
The mighty Mississippi, well, it rolls and flows.
A son was born to Mary Russell
And it starts the legend every cowboy knows.

Young kid Russell was born to wander.
Ever westward he was bound to roam,
Just a kid of sixteen in 1880.
Up in wild Montana he found his home.

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

God hung the stars over Judith Basin.
God put the magic in young Charlie's hands.
And all was seen and all remembered,
Every shining mountain, every longhorn brand.

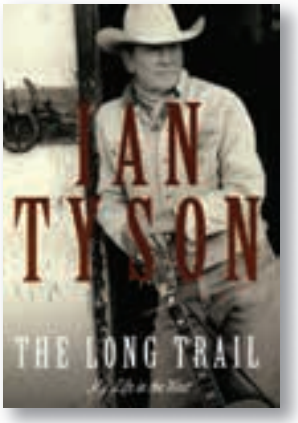
He could paint the light on horsehide shining,
The great passing herds of the buffalo,
And a cow camp cold on a rainy morning,
And the twisting wrist of the Houlihan throw.

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

When the Lord called Charlie to his home up yonder
He said, "Kid Russell, I got a job for you.
You're in charge of sunsets up in old Montana
'Cause I can't paint them quite as good as you,
And when you're done, we'll go out and have a few,
And Nancy Russell will make sure it's just two."

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

After those two albums, Tyson continued to amaze in the 1990s, with his next album, *Stood There Amazed*. In his recent book, *The Long Trail – My Life in The West*, he comments on the era and its effects on his music.



"In the music world of the 1990s, I was riding a post-*Cowboyography* wave,

doing my best to take western music to the next level by mixing reggae and other forms with cowboy music. A classic example is the song "Jaquima to Freno," off my 1991 record, *And Stood There Amazed*. I really pushed the envelope with the song. "Jaquima" is bastardized Spanish for hackamore, a rawhide bridle without a bit that eliminates potential damage to the horse's mouth from a metal bar. The use of the hackamore is a secretive old tradition in the West, and just like the legendary cutters, the old *Californio* hackamore men would never freely divulge those secrets. They kept their knowledge to themselves.

I based "Jaquima to Freno" on Bob Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man" dream fantasy concept. Essentially I had decided to do a cowboy version of Dylan's song, but I made it completely different musically. The lyrics of the song are pure fantasy:

Jaquima to Freno
He's an old vaquero
From another
Hands as fine as the dealers of Reno

He been to the ocean
He's been to the sea
Big long tapaderos hangin' both sides
Of an old Visalia tree

Hey Mr. Vaquero
Put a handle on my pony for me
Teach me the mystery

photos courtesy Ian Tyson

"I knew the folklorists might not approve of the song, but the buckaroos loved it, which meant there was nothing the folklorists could do about it. To this day "Jaquima to Freno" is one of my most requested songs."

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

Our National Archives

Researching by Topic

We introduced the website for Our National Archives in the last issue last issue. This time we will start showing some of the varied collections available for viewing and enjoying. One of the easiest ways to start is using the "Research by Topic" feature. This will enable a user to start a very basic search and is a good way to begin. Topic headings are very broad but they enable one to begin digging. One such topic heading is Art, Culture and Technology. We searched that feature and found a treasure trove of photographs taken by the renowned Ansel Adams.

In 1941, the National Park Service commissioned noted photographer Ansel Adams to create a photo mural for the Department of the Interior Building in Washington, DC. The theme was to be nature as exemplified and protected in the U.S. National Parks. The project was halted because of World War II and never resumed.

The holdings of the National Archives

Saguaros, Saguaro National Monument
vertical full view of cactus with others surrounding

Still Picture Branch include 226 photographs taken for this project, most of them signed and captioned by Adams. They were taken at the Grand Canyon, Grand Teton, Kings Canyon, Mesa Verde, Rocky Mountain, Yellowstone, Yosemite, Carlsbad Caverns, Glacier, and Zion National Parks, as well as Death Valley, Saguaro, and Canyon de Chelly National Monuments. Other pictures were taken at the Boulder Dam; Acoma Pueblo, NM; San Idelfonso, NM; Taos Pueblo, NM; Tuba City, AZ; Walpi, AZ; and Owens Valley, CA.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Many of the latter locations show Navajo and Pueblo Indians, their homes and activities.

The Kings Canyon photographs were taken in 1936 when the establishment of the park was being proposed. These prints were later added by Adams to the mural project. One of the photographs of Yosemite was a gift from Adams to the head of the Park Service, Horace Albright, in 1933. Go to www.nationalarchives.gov and click "Research Our Records," then "Research a Specific Topic" and go to "Art, Culture and Technology."

The Alisal Guest Ranch and Resort

Located in Central California's Santa Ynez Valley and its renowned Santa Barbara County wine country, the Alisal is and has been privately owned and operated since 1946 by the Jackson family. A working cattle ranch and full-service resort, this historic ranch is one of four original Spanish land grants on the west coast given to conquistador Raimundo Carrillo in the late 1700s (great-great-great grandfather of actor Leo Carrillo). Today, the romance and majesty of the old west remain in the wide-open spaces and unspoiled natural beauty of the Alisal. They serve as a reminder of simpler times and as an invitation to those with a taste for adventure.

The 73 cottages are warm and inviting and each is decorated in California ranch style with touches of Spanish tile and fine western art throughout. The guest rooms are designed for maximum privacy and comfort and are configured in either comfortable studios or spacious two-room suites. To maintain a quiet atmosphere, there are no in-room televisions or telephones.

The Alisal is a horse lover's paradise – a one-of-a-kind experience. With over 10,000 acres and countless trails to explore, riders will be sure to find a riding adventure that fits your particular skill level and interest. The Alisal is a grand getaway for a short weekend or extended, family or business gatherings. www.alisal.com

Winter in the West

A pictorial by Will Brewster

Throughout Will Brewster's lifetime in Montana ranch country, he has successfully captured the often harsh and yet romantically independent life of the American cowboy. Will's advertising-campaign photography is commonly published in national and international publications. His editorial work covers everything from architecture, vintage sports cars, motorcycle culture, sports, horses and landscapes.

Will's work graces private art collections and is displayed in businesses throughout the United States and Europe. In addition, he's worked in the film industry for more than 30 years, scouting locations worldwide, art directing, producing and shooting national advertising campaigns and movie publicity imagery.

One of the lucky few who has found his passion in his work, Will is rarely seen without his camera, and is always looking for the next great image. The miles he's put on his trucks over the years attest to the love Will has for his profession and to the wanderlust that drives him to find those rare, yet magical, defining moments that mark his approach to image-making.

Photographer Will Brewster

CA Cattle Drive

Horses Feeding in a Storm

Packing in a Storm

Horses in a Ground Blizzard

A Winter Day's Work

Trail Creek Horses

Following Spread Creek

Farmer's First

Sarrloos & Sons Wine: A Family Album

By William Reynolds

Near full-grown you wade into
the picture of bounty of promise
its waves on the wind like a sea
all one green things turning gold
sprung from bare open earth
tended expected never once ignored.
—Paul Hunter

Keith Sarrloos is hunkered down over his array of Apple computers, in the far-back of the Saarloos & Sons tasting room, working on a video for the family website. "People seem to really enjoy seeing what happens when grapes are picked. This ought to do it." He runs the finished video (which can be seen on the website at www.saarloosandsons.com) that shows in a sped-up form, the day's picking – along with appropriate theme music. A camera was mounted on the back window of the pick-up and recorded all the action – people, dogs, grapes – everything.

photos courtesy Keith Sarrloos

As one might gather, Saarloos & Sons is anything but your typical wine business. First and foremost, they are farmers. As Keith Saarloos explains, "We don't have a corporate mission statement – just a Family Creed: We live to honor those that have come before us, and to prepare the way for those yet to come. It's why all the labels on our wine feature pictures of family members – memorable moments that help celebrate each bottle. Who are we? Trying to define just who "we" are as a wine company is pretty tough in

a few words. All of our major decisions are made over dinner tables, sitting on the back of tailgates of trucks in the vineyard, and flagging down a tractor at the end of a row so we can "chat." Pretty much we are a family that happens to make wine... to be honest we are a family that grows wine. That's closer to the truth – we grow wine. We steward our grapes each year with the clear understanding that these grapes will become wine. Not juice, or jelly, or something you grab out of the fridge late at night, these grapes are wine. We take this very seriously, we don't have a company we pay to farm for us. We believe that the grape grows best in the farmer's shadow – and that would be us."

The Saarloos family operation is comprised of brothers Larry and Harvey, along with their wives, children and grand children, who make up most of the crew that creates the wine the family sells in their Los Olivos, California tasting room. And the Saarloos tasting room is as unique as the family's perspective on wine, Larry Saarloos' son Keith explains, "We are a little different because our wine reflects our family – the love and devotion we have for each other and what we do together pours out of each bottle we share. But there are other reasons as well.

First, we are farmers first. Most of the wines we serve are 100% Estate Grown. (Estate Grown is just fancy wording for: our wine company grew these grapes on our property) But to go a step further we actually grew these grapes. We don't have a farming company we pay to farm our grapes for us.

> WE TRULY BELIEVE, WINE IS FOR EVERYONE.

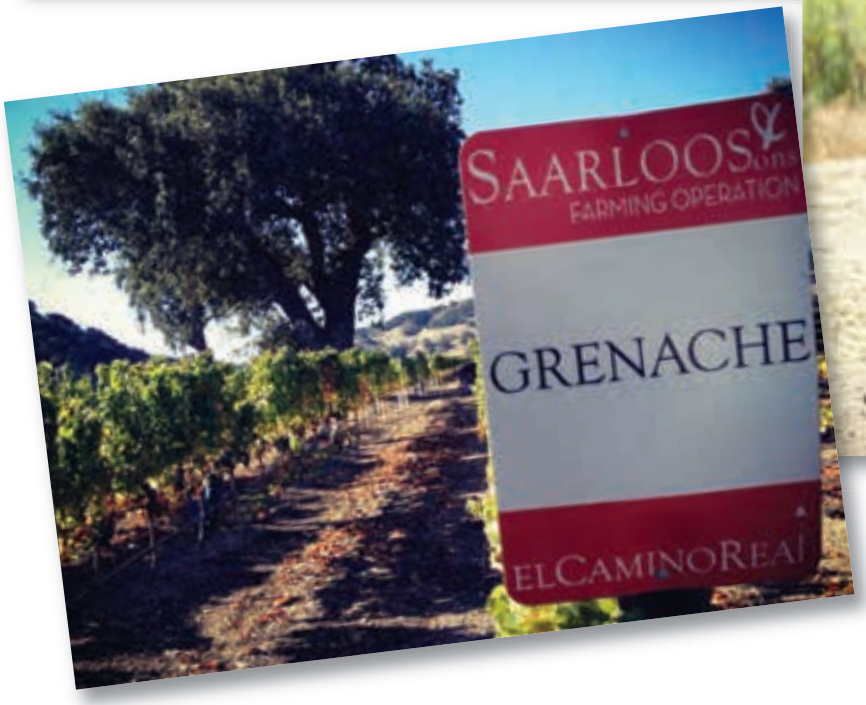
We have no tasting notes, thus we don't tell you what you taste. Wine is about discovery – how dare we tell you what you taste? We feel that our wines speak for themselves, not in a pompous way, but much like music. You would never ask what does this sound like? So, our wines taste like... what they taste like. So we simply ask you to put a bit in your mouth, splash it around, and let us know what you think. We truly believe, wine is for everyone."

It should be apparent that the Saarloos family loves what they do. One only needs to visit the tasting room and that energy comes through. Visit their website and view some of Keith Saarloos' videos, they will draw you in, just as the collection of Saarloos family photos that follow will draw you into the celebration of a family enjoying their lives together, growing wine.

For more information on Saarloos & Sons wine and their tasting room in Central California's Santa Ynez Valley, visit www.saarloosandsons.com


1931


Our Home 1941


SAARLOOS & SONS
FARMING OPERATION
GRENACHE
EL CAMINO REAL

Hidden Water

By Dane Coolidge

Publisher's Note: *Western writer and photographer Dane Coolidge (1873-1940), cousin of our 30th President, Calvin Coolidge, grew up on a small citrus ranch in Riverside County, California. His was a life filled with the knowledge of knowing old-time cowboys first-hand and wrote over forty western novels and non-fiction books.*

This book was published in 1910 and is a thrilling story of the Arizona cattle country, told by a writer who knew the country and understood the real spirit of its life. The story concerns the classic strife between cattle and sheep men for the possession of the great grazing ranges, and is told honestly and authentically without exaggeration. We will be serializing the story in several issues. Here is Chapter Six.

CHAPTER VI

THE CROSSING

From lonely ranches along the Salagua and Verde, from the Sunflower and up the Alamo, from all the sheeped-out and desolate Four Peaks country the cowboys drifted in to Hidden Water for the round-up, driving their extra mounts before them. Beneath the brush *ramada* of the ranch house they threw off their canvas-covered beds and turned their pack horses out to roll, strapping bells and hobbles on the bad ones, and in a day the deserted valley of Agua Escondida became alive with great preparations. A posse of men on fresh mounts rode out on Bronco Mesa, following with unerring instinct the trail of the Dos S horses, balking their wild breaks for freedom and rushing them headlong into the fenced pasture across the creek. As the hired hands of the Dos S outfit caught up their mounts and endeavored to put the fear of God into their

hearts, the mountain boys got out the keg of horseshoes and began to shoe–every man his own blacksmith.

It was rough work, all around, whether blinding and topping off the half-wild ponies or throwing them and tacking cold-wrought "cowboy" shoes to their flintlike feet, and more than one enthusiast came away limping or picking the loose skin from a bruised hand. Yet through it all the dominant note of dare-devil hilarity never failed. The solitude of the ranch, long endured, had left its ugly mark on all of them. They were starved for company and excitement; obsessed by strange ideas which they had evolved out of the tumuli of their past experience and clung to with dogged tenacity; warped with egotism; stubborn, boastful, or silent, as their humor took them, but now all eager to break the shell and mingle in the rush of life.

In this riot of individuals Jefferson Creede, the round-up boss, strode about like a king, untrammelled and unafraid. There was no a ridge or valley in all the Four Peaks country that he did not know, yet it was not for this that he was boss; there was not a virtue or weakness in all that crowd that he was not cognizant of, in the back of his scheming brain. The men that could rope, the men that could ride, the quitters, the blowhards, the rattleheads, the lazy, the crooked, the slow-witted–all were on his map of the country; and as, when he rode the ridges, he memorized each gulch and tree and odd rock, so about camp he tried out his puppets, one by one, to keep his map complete.

As they gathered about the fire that evening it was Bill Lightfoot who engaged his portentous interest. He listened to Bill's boastful remarks critically, cocking his head to one side and smiling whenever he mentioned his horse.

"Yes, sire," asserted Bill belligerently, "I mean it–that gray of mine can skin anything in the country, for a hundred yards or a mile. I've got money that says so!"

"Aw, bull!" exclaimed Creede scornfully.

"Bull, nothin'," retorted Lightfoot hotly. "I bet ye–I bet ye a thousand dollars they ain't a horse in Arizona that can keep out of my dust for a quarter!"

"Well, I know you ain't got no thousand dollars–ner ten," sneered Creede. "Why don't you bet yearlings? If you'd blow some of that hot hair through a tube it'd melt rocks, I reckon. But talk cow, man; we can all savvy that!"

"Well, where's the horse that can beat me?" demanded Lightfoot, bristling.

"That little sorrel out in the pasture," answered Creede laconically.

"I'll bet ye!" blustered Lightfoot. "Aw, rats! He ain't even broke yet!"

"He can run, all right. I'll go you for a yearling heifer. Put up or shut up."

And so the race was run. Early in the morning the whole *rodéo* outfit adjourned to the *parada* ground out by the pole corrals, the open spot where they work over the cattle. Hardy danced his sorrel up to the line where the gray was waiting, there was a scamper of feet, a streak of dust, and Bill Lightfoot was out one yearling heifer. A howling mob of cowboys pursued them from the scratch, racing each other to the finish, and then in a yell of laughter at Bill Lightfoot they capered up the cañon and spread out over The Rolls–the *rodéo* had begun.

As the shadow of the great red butte to the west, around which the wagon road toiled for so many weary miles, reached out and touched the valley, they came back in a body, hustling a bunch of cattle along before them. And such cattle! After his year with the Chiricahua outfit in that blessed eastern valley where no sheep as yet had ever strayed Hardy was startled by their appearance. Gaunt, rough, stunted, with sharp hips and hollow flanks and bellies swollen from eating the unprofitable browse of cactus and bitter shrubs, they

nevertheless sprinted along on their wiry legs like mountain bucks; and a peculiar wild, haggard stare, stamped upon the faces of the old cows, showed its replica even in the twos and yearlings. Yet he forbore to ask Creede the question which arose involuntarily to his lips, for he knew the inevitable answer.

Day after day, as they hurried combed The Rolls for what few cattle remained on the lower range, the cowmen turned their eyes to the river and to the cañons and towering cliffs beyond, for the sheep; until at last as they sat by the evening fire Creede pointed silently to the lambent flame of a camp fire, glowing like a torch against the southern sky.

"There's your friends, Rufe," he said, and the cowmen glanced at Hardy inquiringly.

"I might as well tell you fellers," Creede continued, "that one reason Rufe come up here was to see if he couldn't do somethin' with these sheepmen."

He paused and looked at the circle of faces with a smile that was almost a sneer.

"You fellers would n't back me up when it come to fightin'-none except Ben Reavis and the Clark boys – So I told the old judge we might as well lay down, and to send up some smooth *hombre* to try and jockey 'em a little. Well, Hardy's the *hombre*; and bein' as you fellers won't fight, you might as well look pleasant about it. What's that you say, Bill?"

He turned with a sardonic grin to Lightfoot, who had already, who had already been reduced to a state of silence by the relentless persecutions of the *rodéo* boss.

"I never said nawthin'," replied Lightfoot sullenly. "But if you'd 've gone at 'em the way we wanted to," he blurted out, as the grin broadened, "instead of tryin' to move the whole outfit by daylight, I'd 've stayed with you till hell froze over. I don't want to git sent up fer ten years."

"No," said Creede coolly, "ner you never will."

"Well, I don't see what you're pickin' on me fer," bellowed Lightfoot, "the other fellers was there too. Why don't you sass Ensign and Pete a while?"

"For a durned good reason," replied Creede steadily. "They never *was* for fightin', but you, with that yawp of yours, was always a-hollerin' and ribbin' me on to fight, and then, when the time come, you never said 'Boo!' at 'em. Tucked your young cannon into the seat of your pants and flew, dam' ye, and that's all there was to it. But that's all right," he added resignedly. "If you fellers don't want to fight you don't have to. But, dam' it, keep shut about it now, until you mean business."

As to just who this man Hardy was and what he proposed to do with the sheep the members of the Four Peaks round-up were still in ignorance. All they knew was that he could ride, even when it came to drifting his horse over the rocky ridges, and that Jeff Creede took him as a matter of course. But, for a superindependent, he never seemed to have much to say for himself. It was only when he walked up to his sorrel pony in that gentle, precise way he had, and went through the familiar motions of climbing a "bad one" that they sensed, dimly, a past not without experience and excitement. Even in the preoccupation of their own affairs and doings they could not fail to notice a supple strength in his white hands, a military precision in his movements, and above all a look in his eyes when he became excited – the steady resolute stare with which his militant father had subdued outlaw horses, buck soldiers, and Apaches, even his own son, when all had not gone well. It was this which had inspired Bill Lightfoot to restrain his tongue when he was sore over his defeat; and even though Hardy confessed to being a rider, somehow no one ever thought of sawing off Spike Kennedy's "side winder" on him. This quiet, brooding reserve which came from his soldier life protected him from such familiar jests, and without knowing why, the men of the Four Peaks looked up to him.

Even after his mission was announced, Hardy made no change in his manner of life. He rode out each day on the round-up, conning the lay of the land; at the corral he sat on the fence and kept tally, frankly admitting that he could neither rope nor brand; in camp he did his share of the cooking and said little, listening attentively to the random talk. Only when the sheep were mentioned did he show a marked interest, and even then it was noticed that he made no comment, whatever his thoughts were. But if he told no one what he was going to do, it was not entirely due to an overrated reticence, for he did not know himself. Not a man there but had run the gamut of human emotions in trying to protect his ranch; they had driven herders off with guns; they had cut their huddled bands at night and scattered them for the coyotes; they had caught unwary Mexican *borregueros* in forbidden pasture and administered "shap lessons," stretching them over bowlders and spanking them with their leather leggings; they had "talked reason" to the bosses in forceful terms; they had requested them politely to move; they had implored them with tears in their eyes and still like a wave of the sea, like a wind, like a scourge of grasshoppers which cannot be withstood, the sheep had come on, always hungry, always fats, always more.

Nor was there any new thing in hospitality. The last bacon and bread had been set upon the table; baled hay and grain, hauled in by day's works from the alfalfa fields of Moroni and the Salagua, had been fed to the famished horses of the very men who had sheeped off the grass; the same blanket had been shared, sometimes, alas, with men who were "crumby." And it was equally true that, in return, the beans and meat of chance herders had been as ravenously devoured, the water casks of patient "camp-rustlers" had been drained midway between the river and camp, and stray wethers had showed up in the round-up fry-pans in the shape of mutton. Ponder as he would upon the problem no solution offered itself to Hardy. He had no policy, even, beyond that of common politeness; and as the menacing clamor of the sheep drifted up to them from the river the diplomat who was to negotiate the great truce began to wonder whether, after al, he was the man of the hour or merely another college graduate gone wrong.

On the opposite side of the river in bands of two and three thousand the cohorts of the sheep gathered to make the crossing–gathered and waited, for the Salagua was still high. At the foot of the high cliffs, from the cleft cañon of which water flowed forth as if some rod had called it from the rock, the leaders of the sheepmen were sitting in council, gazing at the powerful sweep of the level river, and then at the distant sand bar where their charges must win the shore or be swept into the whirlpool blew. Ah, that whirlpool! Many a frightened ewe and weakling lamb in years past had drifted helplessly into its swirl and been sucked down, to come up below the point a water-logged carcass. And for each stinking corpse that littered the lower bar the boss sheep owner subtracted five dollars from the sum of his hard-earned wealth. Already on the flats below them the willows and burro bushes were trembling as eager teeth trimmed them of their leaves–in a day, or two days, the river bottom would be fed bare; and behind and behind, clear to the broad floor of the desert, band after band was pressing on to the upper crossing of the Salagua.

As Hardy rode up over the rocky point against which the river threw its full strength and then, flung inexorably back, turned upon itself in a sullen whirlpool, he could see the sheep among the willows, the herders standing impassive, leaning upon their guns as more rustic shepherds lean upon their staves, and above, at the head of the crossing, the group of men, sitting within the circle of their horses in anxious conference. If any of

them saw him, outlined like a sentinel against the sky, they made no sign; but suddenly a man in a high Texas hat leaped up from the group, sprang astride his mule and spurred him into the cold water. For the first twenty feet the mule waded, shaking his ears; then he slumped off the edge of a submerged bench into deeper water and swam, heading across the stream but drifting diagonally with the current until, striking bottom once more, he struggled out upon the sand spit. The rider looked eagerly about, glanced up casually at the man on the point below, and then plunged back into the water, shouting out hoarse orders to his Mexicans, who were smoking idly in the shade of over-hanging rocks. Immediately they scrambled to their feet and scattered along the hillside. The stroke of the axes echoed from the crags above, and soon men came staggering down to the river, dragging the thorny limbs of palo verdes behind them. With these they quickly constructed a brush fence in the form of a wing, running parallel to the cliff and making a chute which opened into the river.

Then with a great braying and bleating a huddle of sheep moved unwillingly along it, led by bold goats with crooked horns and resolute beards, and pushed forward by that same reckless rider on his black mule, assisted by a horde of shouting Mexicans. But at the touch of the cold water, two days from the snow beds of the White Mountains, even the hardy bucks stepped back and shook their heads defiantly. In vain with showers of rocks and flapping tarpaulins the herders stormed the rear of the press–every foot was set against them and the sheep only rushed about along the edge of the herd or crowded in close-wedged masses against the bluff. At last a line of men leaped into the enclosure, holding up a long canvas wagon-cover and, encircling the first section of the leaders, shoved them by main force into the river.

Instantly the goats took water, swimming free, and below them the man on the black mule shouted and waved this broad Texas hat, heading them across the stream. But the timid sheep turned back behind him, landing below the fence against all opposition, and the babel of their braying rose higher and higher, as if in protest against their unlucky fate. Again and again the herders, stripped to their underclothes, pushed the unwilling sheep into the current, wading out to their chins to keep them heading across; each time the sodden creatures evaded them and, drifting with the current, landed far below on the same side, whence they rushed back to join their fellows.

Upon the opposite shore the goats stood shivering, watching the struggle with yellow, staring eyes which showed no trace of fear. Like brave generals of a craven band they were alone in their hardihood and, with their feet upon the promised land, were doomed either to proceed alone or return to their companions. So at last they did, plunging in suddenly, while the man on the mule spurred in below in a vain effort to turn them back.

That night by the camp fire Hardy mentioned the man on a black mule.

"My old friend, Jasp Swope," explained Creede suavely, "brother of Jim, the feller I introduced you to. Sure, Jasp and I have had lo-ong talks together–but he don't like me any more." He twisted his nose and made a face, as if to intimate that it was merely a childish squabble, and Hardy said no more. He was growing wise.

The next morning, and the next, Jasper Swope made other attempts at the crossing; and then, as the snow water from the high mountains slipped by and the warm weather dried up by so much each little stream, he was able at last to ford the diminished river. But first, with that indomitable energy which marked him at every move, he cleared a passage along the base of the cliff to a place where the earth-covered moraine broke off at the edge of the water. Here a broad ledge shot

down to the river like a toboggan slide, with a six-foot jump off at the bottom.

Once on this chute, with the strong tug of the canvas wagon-covers behind, there was nothing for the sheep to do but to take the plunge, and as his brawny herders tumbled them head over heels into the deep current Swope and his helpers waded out in a line below, shunting each ewe and wether toward the farther short. There on the edge of the sand spit they huddled in a bunch, gathering abut the hardier bucks and serving as a lure for those that followed. As cut after cut was forced into the stream a long row of bobbing heads stretched clear across the river, each animal striving desperately to gain the opposite bank and landing, spent and puffing, far below. A Mexican boy at intervals drove these strays up the shore to the big bunch and then concealed himself in the bushes lest by his presence he turn some timid swimmer back and the whirlpool increase its toll. So they crossed them in two herds, the wethers first, and then the ewes and lambs–and all the little lambs that could not stem the stream were floated across in broad pieces of tarpaulin whose edges were held up by wading men.

From Lookout Point it was a majestic spectacle, the high cliffs, the silvery river gliding noiselessly out from it black cañon, the white masses of sheep, clustering on either side of the water–and as the work went ahead merrily the Mexicans, their naked bodies gleaming like polished bronze in the ardent sun, broke into a wild refrain, a long song, perhaps or a *cancion* of old Mexico. Working side by side with his men Jasper Swope joined in the song himself, and as they returned empty-handed he seized the tallest and strongest of them and ducked him in the water while his retainers roared with laughter. And Hardy, sitting unnoticed upon his horse, began to understand why these low-browed barbarians from Mexico were willing to fight, and if need be to die, for their masters. The age of feudalism had returned–the lords of the sheep went forth like barons, sharing every hardship and leading the way in danger, and their men followed with the same unthinking devotion that the Myrmidons showed for noble Achilles or the Crusaders for their white-crossed knights.

Upon this and many other feats Hardy had ample leisure to meditate, for the sheepmen regarded him no more than if he has been a monument placed high upon the point to give witness to their victory. As the sheep crossed they were even allowed to straggle out along the slopes of the forbidden mesa, untended by their shepherds; and if the upper range was special reserve o the cowmen the sheep owners showed no knowledge of the fact. For two days the grazing her crept slowly along the mesquite-covered flat toward Lookout Point, and on the third morning they boiled up over the rocks and spewed down into the valley of the Alamo.

"Well," observed Creede, as he watched the slow creeping of the flock, "here's where I have to quit you, Rufe. In a week this ground around here will be as level as the billiard table and they won't be enough horse feed in the valley to keep a burro. The town herd pulls out for Bender this mornin' and the rest of us will move up to Carrizo Creek."

He hurried away to oversee the packing, but when all was ready he waved the boys ahead and returned to the conversation.

"As I was sayin' a while ago, you won't see nothin' but sheep around here now for the next two weeks–and all I want to say is, keep 'em out of the pasture, and f'r God's sake don't let 'em corral in the brandin' pens! They're dirty enough already, but if you git about six inches of sheep manure in there and then mill a few hundred head of cattle around on top of it, the dust will choke a skunk. Our cows ain't so over-particular about the sheep smell, but if we poor cowboys has got to breathe sheep and eat sheep and spit up sheep every time

we brand, it's crowdin' hospitality pretty strong. But if they want grub or clothes or tabac, go to it–and see if you can't keep 'em off the upper range."

He paused and gazed at Hardy with eyes which suggested a world of advice and warning–then, leaving it all unsaid, he turned wearily away.

"I look to find you with a sprained wrist," he drawled, "when I come back–throwin' flapjacks for them sheepmen!" He made a quick motion of turning a pancake in midair, smiled grimly, and galloped after the long line of horses and packs that was stringing along up the Bronco Mesa trail. And, having a premonition of coming company, Hardy went in by the fireplace and put on a big kettle of beef. He was picking over another mess of beans when he heard the clatter of hoofs outside and the next moment the door was kicked violently open.

It was Jasper Swope who stood on the threshold, his high Texas hat thrust far back upon his head–and if he felt any surprise at finding the house occupied he gave no expression to it.

"Hello, there!" he exclaimed. "I thought you folks was all gone!"

"Nope," replied Hardy, and continued his work in silence.

"Cookin' for the outfit?" queried Swope, edging in at the door.

"Nope," replied Hardy.

"Well, who the hell air ye cookin' fer then?" demanded Swope, drawer nearer. " 'Scuse me if I pry into this matter, but I'm gittin' interested." He paused and showed a jagged set of teeth beneath his bristling red mustache, sneeringly.

"Well, I'll tell you," answered Hardy easily. "I thought some white man might come along later and I'd ask him to dinner." He fixed his eyes upon the sheepman with an instant's disapproval and then resumed his cookery. As for Swope, his gray eyes flashed sudden fire from beneath bushy eyebrows, and then a canny smile crept across his lips.

"I used to be a while man, myself," he said, "before I lost my soap. What's the chance to git a bite of that bymeby?" He threw his hand out toward the pot of beef, which was sending out odors of a rich broth, flavored with onions and chili.

Hardy looked at him again, little shrimp of a man that he was, and still with disapproval.

"D' ye call that a white man's way of entering another man' house?" he inquired pointedly.

"Well," temporized Swope, and then he stopped. "A man in my line of business gits in a hurry once in a while," he said lamely. "But I'm hungry, all right," he remarked, *sotto voce*.

"Yes," said Hardy, "I've noticed it. But here–sit down and eat."

The sheepman accepted the dish of beef, dipped out a spoonful of beans, broke off a slab of bread, and began his meal forthwith, meanwhile looking at Hardy curiously.

"What's that you say you've noticed?" he inquired, and a quizzical smile lurked beneath his dripping mustache as he reached over and hefted the coffeepot.

"I've noticed," replied Hardy, "that you sheepmen get in a hurry once in a while. You can't stop to knock on a door so you kick it open; can't stop to go around a ranch, so you go through it, and so on."

"Ah," observed Swope slyly, "so that's what's bitin' you, eh? I reckon you must be that new superintendent that Jim was tellin' about."

"That's right," admitted Hardy, "and you're Mr. Swope, of course. Well, I'll say this for you, Mr. Swope, you certainly know how to get sheep across a river. Abut when it comes to getting along with cowmen," he added, as the sheepman grinned his self-approval, "you don't seem to stack up very high."

"Oh, I don't, hey?" demanded Swope defiantly. "Well, how about the cowmen? Your friend Creede gets along with sheepmen like a house afire, don't he? Him and a bunch of his punchers jumped on one of my herders last Fall and dam' nigh beat him to death. Did you ever hear of a sheepman jumpin' on a cowboy? No, by Gad, and you never will! We carry arms to protect ourselves, but we never make no trouble."

He paused and combed the coffee grounds out of his heavy red mustache with fingers that were hooked like an eagle's talons from clutching at sheep in the cold water.

"I don't doubt, Mr. Superindendent," he said, with sinister directness, "that these cowmen have filled you up about how bad *hombres* we are–and of course it ain't no use to say nothin' now–but I jest want to tell you one thing, and I want you to remember it if any trouble should come up; we sheepmen have never gone beyond our legal rights, and we've got the law behind us. The laws of the United State and the statutes of this Territory guarantee us the right to graze our sheep on public lands and to go where we dam' please–and we'll go, too, you can bank on that."

He added this last with an assurance which left no doubt as to his intentions, and Hardy made no reply. His whole mind seemed centered on a handful of beans from which he was picking out the rocks and little lumps of clay which help to make up full weight.

"Well!" challenged Swope, after waiting for his answer, "ain't that straight?"

"Sure," said Hardy absently.

Swope glared at him for a moment disapprovingly.

"Huh, you're a hell of a cowman," he grunted. "What ye goin' to do about it?"

"About what?" inquired Hardy innocently.

"Aw, you know," replied Swope impatiently. "How about that upper range?" He shoved back his chair as he spoke, and his eyes lit up in anticipation of the battle.

"Well," responded Hardy judicially, "if you've got the legal right to go up there, and if you're goin' where you dam' please, anyhow, it don't look like I could do anything." He paused and smiled patiently at the sheepman.

"You know very well, Mr. Swope," he said, "that if you want to go up on that mesa and sheep off the feed we have n't got any legal means of preventing you. But you know, too, that there is n't more than enough feed for what cows the boys have left. If you want to go up there, that's your privilege–and if you want to go out over The Rolls, that's all right too."

"Of course you don't give a dam!" said Swope satirically.

"I guess you know how I feel, all right," returned Hardy, and then he lapsed into silence, while Swope picked his teeth and thought.

"Where'd you come from?" he said at last, as if, forgetting all that had passed, his mind had come back from a far country, unbiased by the facts.

"Over the mountains," replied Hardy, jerking his thumb toward the east.

"Don't have no sheep over there, do they?" inquired Swope.

"Nope, nothing but cattle and horses."

"Ump!" grunted the sheepman, and then, as if the matter was settled thereby, he said: "All right, pardner, bein' as you put it that way, I reckon I'll go around."

The Frontier Project

An independent short-subject documentary series chronicling North America's cowboy culture, *The Frontier Project* features interviews with the craftsmen, artists and horsemen defining the contemporary West. Past subjects have included horseman Peter Campbell, novelist J.P.S. Brown, sculptor Herb Mignery, and folklorist Hal Cannon. Episode 6, released in November, includes segments with Western Jubilee Recording Company's Scott O'Malley, western artist Jim Rey, and bit and spur maker Ernie Marsh.

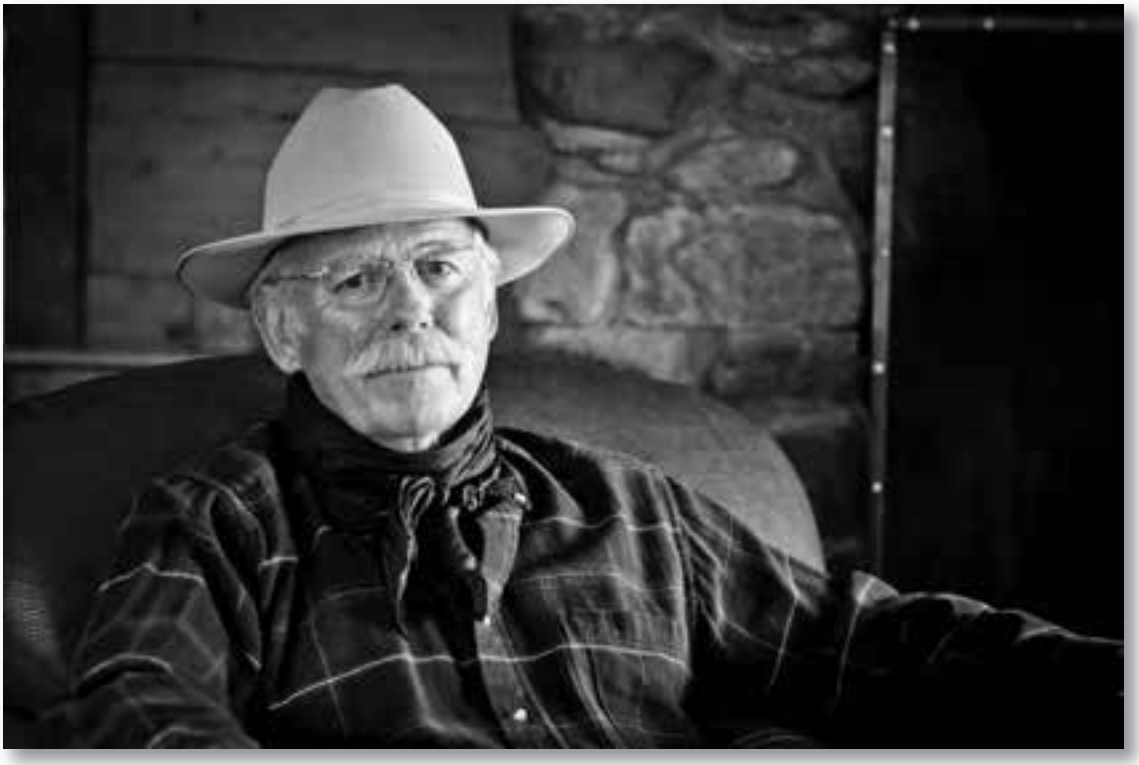
In an interview filmed on stage at Colorado Springs' Warehouse Theater, O'Malley explains the origins of his record label, which is home to performers such as Don Edwards, Waddie Mitchell, Cowboy Celtic, and Sons of the San Joaquin.

Also in the episode, western artist Jim Rey completes a painting from scratch as he explains how he reinvented his creative process while working on location at northwest Wyoming's T Cross Ranch.

And, from his Westfall, Oregon, shop, bit and spur maker Ernie Marsh shares his inspirations, as well as his approaches to design and construction of one-of-a-kind, heirloom-quality pieces favored by working cowboys throughout the West.

Episode 6 is available exclusively on DVD. View the online trailer at www.thefrontierproject.net, where you can also sign up for *The Frontier Project*'s free e-mail newsletter, which includes information on upcoming episodes and works in progress. Episode 2 – which features Wyoming's Mantle Ranch, bit and spur maker Bill Heisman, and sculptor Herb Mignery – is now available as an instant download from Amazon.com. Click here to order.

Scott O'Malley



Jim Rey at T Cross Lodge

Bit and Spur Maker Ernie Marsh

Dorie Tucker's New Mexico Salsa

By Kathy McCraine

"Salsa and tortillas are the bread and butter of New Mexico," says rancher Dorie Tucker. She and husband Roy operate the 22-section Tucker Ranch near Fort Sumner. Dorie was raised in the small town of Centreville, Mississippi, where bread and butter are the foundation of every meal, but moving to the Southwest has changed her whole concept of good eating.

photo by Scott Stinnett

Dorie Tucker

Even as a little girl, Dorie was intrigued by the West. She grew up helping her grandfather and uncles work cattle on the family's cattle operation, riding from the time she was 5, and working her way up from punching cattle up the chutes to working the weighing scales and driving trucks for her order-buyer uncle.

After studying animal science at Louisiana State University, Dorie went to work for another local order buyer, then went to Texas to work for the Texas Brangus Breeders Association as director of communications.

From there she moved to Phoenix, Arizona, in 1987 to become director of communications for the Arizona Cattle Growers' Association. It was a turning point in her life. The first week on the job she met Roy Tucker, a fourth-generation rancher from Roosevelt, Arizona.

"I just fell in love with the Tucker family's lifestyle and ranching in that big, high-desert country around Roosevelt Lake," she says in a Mississippi drawl that hasn't been erased in two decades.

Dorie and Roy were married six months later, and now after 24 years of marriage have ranched in Arizona, Kansas and New Mexico, while raising two daughters, Jessen, 22, and Georgia Ann, 17. Dorie laments that as the girls have teamed to become their dad's "right hand," she has been "reduced" to bookkeeping, truck driving and cooking.

The first lesson she learned in New Mexico is to *never* serve chicken, because she says, "All the families in the area are big-time ranchers, and it just isn't acceptable."

She made that mistake once when she served chicken to her daughter's volleyball team. One girl asked incredulously, "Is chicken even a meat?"

The Tuckers handle all the day-to-day chores at the ranch, but at branding and shipping time, a crew of 15 to 20 gather to help. In this part of the country, neighbors help one another. Roy usually has it planned out so that he has two branding crews working side by side, so they can gather and brand up to 300 calves by noon. Traditionally the cowboys meet for breakfast at 5 a.m. at the "hacienda," Dorie's nickname for the old adobe house at the ranch headquarters 45 miles from town. (The Tuckers actually live on a 20-acre farm in the valley just out of Fort Sumner.) Dorie describes the Hacienda's kitchen as "somewhat primitive," but she manages to prepare a big breakfast there and a noonday meal to carry out to the branding pens.

One morning when the crew was coming in for breakfast, Dorie's alarm went off at 4 a.m., and she jumped up with plans to scramble some eggs with chorizo, warm tortillas and salsa. To her dismay, the electricity was off, and there was no water.

"Roy went out to the electric pole and jiggled something, and everything went out on the whole hill," Dorie says. "I waited a little bit to see what cowboy logic he would come up with, but he says, 'I have no idea what happened.' So now we're really desperate. An electrician at 4 in the morning and town 45 miles way? I figured I would have to drive to town and order something from a restaurant."

As each cowboy filed in, she asked, "Do you know anything about electricity?" The universal answer was, "No." But after all had arrived, they hovered around the electric pole, and miraculously the electricity came on.

"I think it was God's favor to us, knowing that cowboy logic was not going to prevail that day," Dorie says. "So the show did go on after all."

The following is Dorie's recipe for salsa and homemade tortilla chips. Being lucky enough to live near the community of Hatch, New Mexico, famous for its green chiles, she uses fresh chiles whenever possible.

Dorie's Homemade Salsa

2 14½ -ounce cans fire roasted, diced tomatoes with garlic
1 14½ -ounce can Ro-Tel tomatoes
3-4 fresh green chiles, roasted and peeled, or 1 small can
1-2 jalapeños, cut in pieces (optional)
1 onion, coarsely chopped
1 bunch green onions, including some of the green, cut in short lengths
1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon black pepper
1 tablespoon white vinegar
1 tablespoon fresh lemon or lime juice
1 teaspoon dried oregano

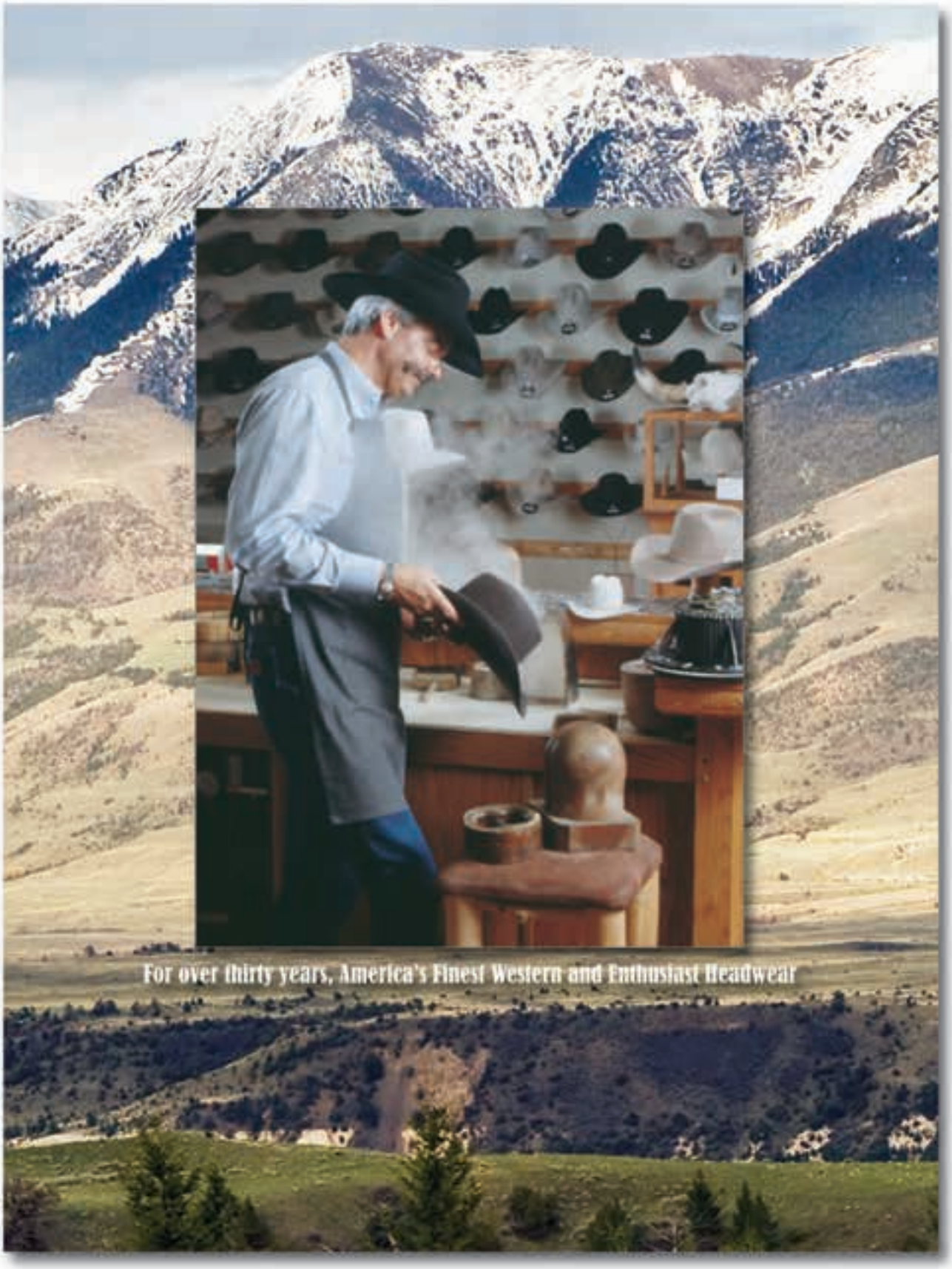
Combine 1 can diced tomatoes, the Ro-Tel tomatoes and green chiles in a blender and blend. Add the rest of the ingredients, reserving one can of diced tomatoes, and blend again until combined. Pour into a serving bowl and add the remaining can of tomatoes to add a chunky texture to the salsa. (Or you can blend all the ingredients to create a smoother salsa.) You can vary the amounts of chiles and jalapeños depending on how hot you like your salsa.

Homemade Chips

1 pack 6-inch four or corn tortillas, cut in quarters
Oil for frying
Salt to taste

Heat about 1 inch of cooking oil in a skillet to 350-375 degrees. Fry the tortilla wedges a few at a time, turning occasionally, until crisp and lightly browned, about 1 minute or less. Drain on paper towels and sprinkle lightly with salt if desired.

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



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A Western Moment

Braided work by Luis Ortega.

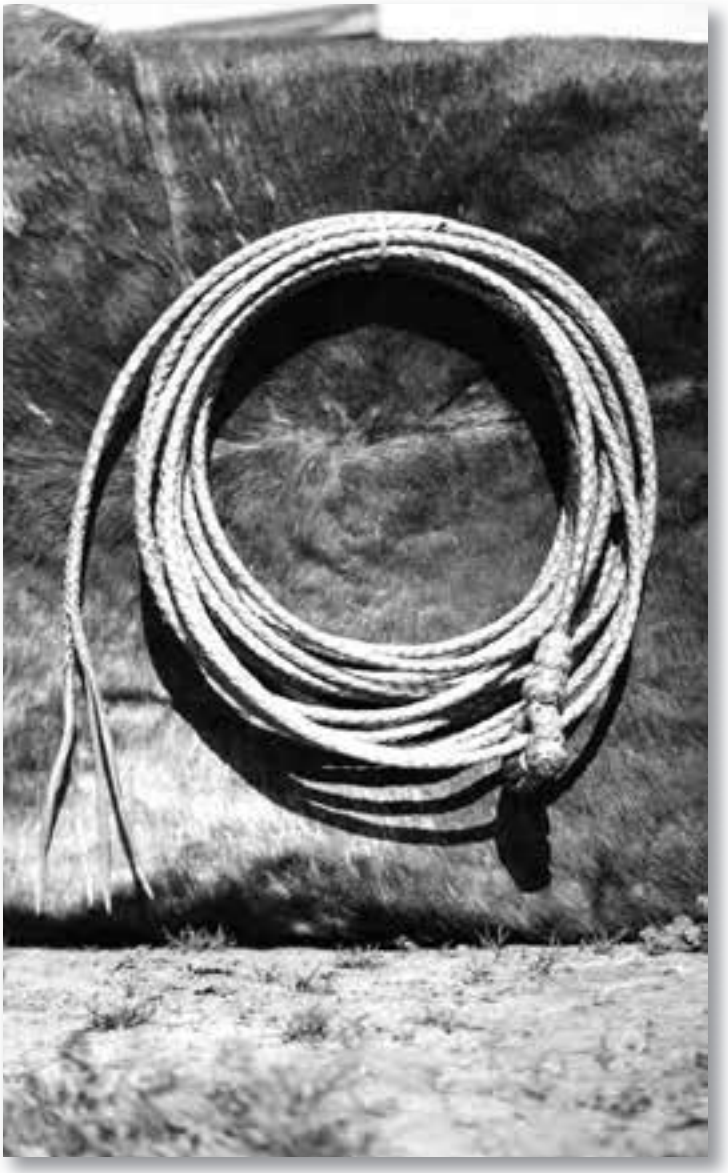

Photo courtesy Museum of The Cowboy, Santa Ynez, California

Just because we can't get enough of a good thing.

Hands, Hearts and the Long View West

This issue of *Ranch & Reata* celebrates the first-time-ever combo-show of the Cowboy Artists of America and the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City. Earlier in the issue you saw examples of the fine work by members of both of these organizations displaying the depth and breadth of the work being produced. And beyond those individual pieces lies a grand sense of optimism that comes from a historic event such as this with the two organizations joining forces – a sense that the West continues to creatively evolve and look forward. The CAA was started back in the mid-1960s by a small group of artists including the late Joe Beeler. It brought to the world an organized, once-a-year presentation of the period's pictorial positioning of the American West unlike any other ongoing organized show. Its concept helped spark many other types of western cultural creative events, including gear and trappings shows and poetry gatherings – large and small – that invited westerners to participate in the art, culture and craft of the West. The CAA was inspirational in the forming of the TCAA as well.

Hand-twisted sterling silver cuffs by Rockys Hardwear available at www.etsy.com

These organizations cast nets outside the immediate audience and are invitational to a broader group of potential "civilian"

customers and collectors. The West has always been a place where function meets an evolving form. And whether it is the crafting of a tool, a way of working stock or the creation of gear, it is a place where personal competency and capability merge not only to assist in daily tasks, but in many cases to enhance objects of those tasks into personal statements. Such is the world of the cowboy crafts of silversmithing, bit and spur making, rawhide work, saddlemaking and on and on.

In this challenging time when more and more people are looking for work, the example the members of the CAA and the TCAA portray – along with so many other entrepreneurial craftsman and women, artists and makers – is that the future for many may lie directly in their own hands and hearts – to create something on an individual level that others will want. It may be the most basic form of capitalism yet it is a logical, solution-based approach for many. The success of shows such as the CAA and TCAA proves this to be true. Even the small craft maker is finding this now with great assistance from the digital marketplace

Just as this magazine is available in the Internet, so are numerous marketplace-based websites that offer grand displays of individual craft makers' works. One such site is www.etsy.com and for many of you already familiar with this craft-based commerce site, I don't have to tell you the depth of offerings available there. For those of you who haven't heard of Etsy – please take the time to visit. Here is a place where the individual artisan and maker meet directly with you the customer. Or if you are a maker, consider this type of website marketplace as a selling tool beyond your own website. It really works and you will meet some incredibly interesting people. Here is individual-based success.

The publishing of this magazine, like the work of the individual artisans and artists we speak of, is an optimistic act as well. It is a belief in the creative spirit and the subject we celebrate. We believe the West is a place to be viewed in depth and *Ranch & Reata*, unlike any other western-genre publication gives readers a bit more – more of an esoteric look at our favorite subjects and your choosing to read *Ranch & Reata* and hopefully your subscription, is an investment in subscriber-supported journalism. It means you want more quality reading in an uncluttered environment. We love bringing it to you and the support of our hand-selected sponsor/advertisers. We appreciate your continued support of our grand experiment, as it is your enthusiasm that makes this publication possible. And during this special time of year, it is our hope that you will think of *Ranch & Reata* as great gift for any of your favorite friends, loved ones or for that matter, your favorite makers or artists.

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