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Volume 25, No.1
Rodeo Issue 2018
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ADVERTISING OFFICES

- HEADQUARTER OFFICE
(281) 447-0772 Phone Horseback Magazine
Advertising@horsebackmagazine.com
(281) 751-9568 Phone Uptown Magazine
Vicki@uptowncountrymagazine.com

STAFF
PUBLISHER
Vicki Long
EDITOR
Steven Long
NATIONAL NEWS EDITOR
Carrie Gobernatz

- BRAZOS VALLEY BUREAU
Diane Holt
(936) 878-2678 Ranch & (713) 408-8114 Cell
Diane@horsebackmagazine.com
uptowncountrylife@gmail.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Jim Hubbard, Steven Long, Vicki Long, Roni Norquist,
Lew Pewterbaugh, Cathy Strobel, Kelsey Hellmann

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
P.O. Box 681397, Houston, TX 77268-1397

Email: vicki@horsebackmagazine.com Phone: (281) 447-0772
Email: vicki@uptowncountrymagazine.com Phone: (281) 751-9568

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TEXAS' BEST-KEPT SECRET.

A 120-mile-long canyon system that's grand in its own right.

By Diane Holt

Searching for the perfect place that we could enjoy a trip with our 4-legged kids, we decided on Palo Duro Canyon and the world-renowned Doves Rest Cabins, just minutes to the main entrance of the state park. My husband, being a direct descendant of Comanche Chief Quanah Parker, who roamed this land 150-years ago, seemed to be a perfect fit and great destination for us to explore Palo Duro's history and natural beauty.

Doves Rest Cabins features nine modern, yet rustic cabins located hundreds of feet above the west rim of Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Inside, the cabin design is a relaxing, breezy style that blends in seamlessly with its natural surroundings. High ceilings, rustic elements

like a stone fireplace, and an abundance of windows will make you feel like you're always able to embrace the nature you traveled to enjoy.

We chose the Doves Rest "Fortress" cabin for our stay this past October which is a perfect season for exploring in cooler weather. Upon our mid-afternoon arrival we were greeted by a stunning view gazing at Palo Duro Canyon just below us. The no check in-out concept was the best. Once inside, it felt as though we were being welcomed back home. Chilled bubbly was waiting for us in the refrigerator, as were fresh bathrobes. The kitchen was well stocked along with plenty of firewood for the fireplace.

Did I mention the hot tub? The round jacuzzi situated on the

cabin patios canyon rim was spotless and clean. The 360-degree panoramic view was, well just out of this world while enjoying a glass of champagne to rejuvenate until tomorrows hike in the canyon.

We awoke early to view the breathtaking sunrise over the canyon. The morning was perfect as I sat in the swinging chairs enjoying my cup of fresh brewed coffee in the crisp clean morning air. To my right I heard a slight noise in the brush off the edge of the canyon, I turn to look and just a few feet from me stood a beautiful Texas Mule Deer. It was just some of the general splendor of the place we were getting to enjoy.

Driving down the cliffs to the bottom of the canyon was amaz-

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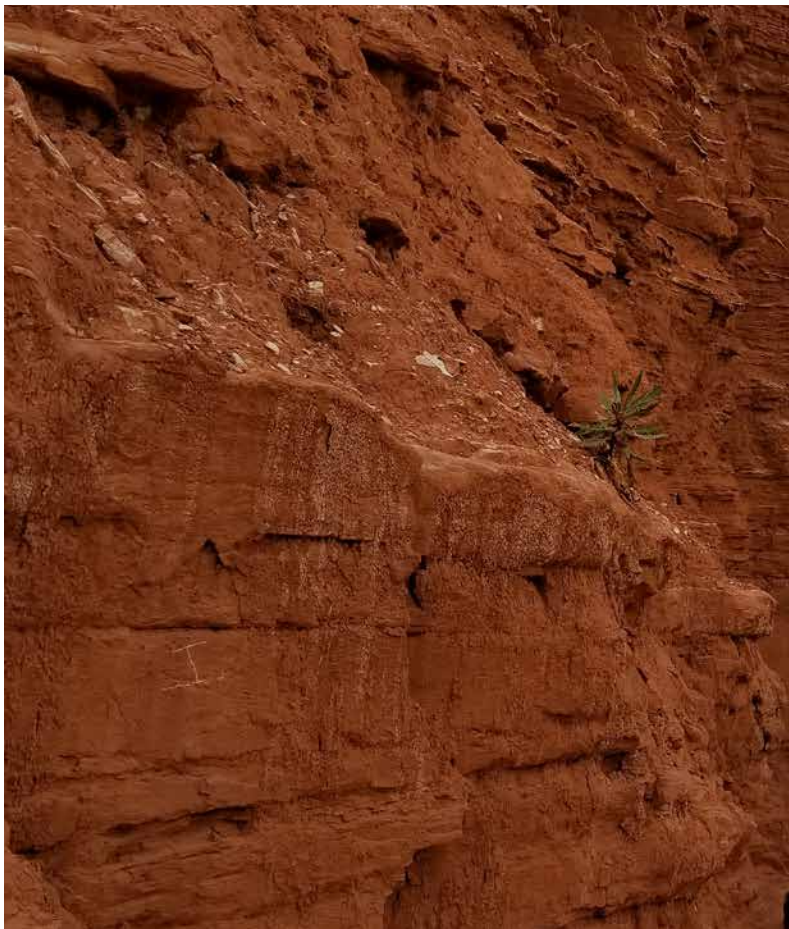
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ing to see the technicolor walls that invoked a sense of Indian and old west history. We arrived at the trading post store in the canyon’s base just in time to see a large family of turkeys enjoying a morning stroll.

Our first hike in the canyon would be Rojo Grande a 2.34-mile total trail where we walked in shade, a scenic trail through rusty red quartermaster geologic formation at the canyon bottom, on to the Paseo Del Rio trail, a 2.06 total mile trail to see the Cowboy Dugout of how the cowboys lived in the 1880s. Next, we did the Equestrian trail a 3.32 mile trail, it is the former grazing lands of the historic JA Ranch. Later we did some of the other trails and one of our favorites was the Lighthouse, a nearly 6-mile trek to the park’s most popular trail leading to the

iconic Lighthouse rock formation.

Traveling in Texas with horses is fairly common, so it’s not surprising Palo Duro Canyon State Park has 30-miles of equestrian and hiking trails, with an additional 1,500 acres set aside for horseback riding. They provide a corral and water for horses inside the park. However, the owners of Doves Rest Cabins have in the works a new horse corral on their property to accept boarding of your horses during your stay. Look for this upgrade in May.

There are many things to do in the area including a fun zip-line just across the gorge for Doves rest, plus riding stables. The American Quarter Horse association and Museum is head-

quartered in Amarillo, about 20-miles away. During the summer, enjoy a performance of the outdoor musical drama TEXAS. The play, marking a half-century in its on-going production, runs Tuesdays through Sundays, June through August, at the 1,700 seat Pioneer Amphitheater.

This is the place if your idea of a successful getaway includes your own horses, an incredible view and wine – (us too). The unparalleled views, giant patio and hot tub at Doves Rest Cabins simply screams: “happy hour.”

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The Incredible Story Of Palo Duro Riding Stables

By Kristin L. Sorenson

Family owned and operated since 1962, Palo Duro Riding Stables is not just your average trail ride, it's an experience. Continuing his father's dream of giving folks a taste of the Old West, Jesse Sorenson is the third generation. Beginning as a dream, Jimmy Newt Sorenson left the family farm and created Six Gun City. A bustling Wild West town, along with honest to goodness gunfighters and saloon girls. Several generations of travelers have fond memories of Six Gun City. A place where you could walk in and feel like you've been transported back through time. You could get on the back of a horse and ride through a privately-owned part of Palo Duro Canyon, belly up to the bar for an old-fashioned sarsaparilla, or just kick back for one of the many gunfight shows that were reenacted day after day.

While deciding on a location for his reverie, Jim knew that it had to land somewhere on the rim of the beautiful Palo Duro Canyon. With such history as the Battle of Palo Duro, the great Comanche Chief Quanah Parker, and the infamous Charles Goodnight staking claim, it seemed Palo Duro Canyon was the right fit for the Wild West to be brought back to life. While searching for water, things began to look grim. After two attempts, they had yet to discover water and with only one chance left, Jim chose to leave fate in God's hands. Standing in a pasture on the rim of the canyon on a particularly windy day, Jim held his hat in the air and stated where his hat landed is where they would drill for the third and last time. The brisk Texas winds caught the brim and sent it assail. The



exact site where that divine old cowboy hat lighted on that fateful day, the well for Six Gun City and Palo Duro Riding Stables exists.

Slightly leery, in the beginning, to his son's vision, Jim's father, Nels, eventually invested into the marvel that Six Gun City would become. Sighting that, "I didn't realize that every time we had a rock slide, our land got bigger," Six Gun City blossomed into a lucrative family business. From brothers and sisters, to cousins, aunts, and uncles, and many lifelong friends, it seemed that everybody had a hand in making Six Gun City a roaring success.

At its prime, Six Gun City was thirty-four buildings strong. With a working

"upside down" hotel, appropriately named the Topsy Turvy, and a small, but adequate chapel in which church was held every Sunday and several weddings took place, Six Gun City did not happen overnight. Only three buildings stood in the first year. One or two buildings a year came after the initial three, as funds allowed. Six Gun City was built on the backs of horses with the help of cabin rentals that were located down in the bottom of the canyon. Horse rentals started at \$1.25 for an hour and folks were allowed to go out on their own. You could also rent a cabin along with a horse for the night for a mere twelve dollars! My, how times have changed.

On July 8, 1964, "Sheriff" Jim and a
(cont. on pg. 14)



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Kody Jo

few of his “deputies” began exploring one of the several caves that are located on our property. Moving buckets of sand in an attempt to connect the larger cave to an adjacent, smaller one, a discovery was made. Picking up his lantern to get a better look inside the smaller cave, Jim immediately noticed a fairly large bone protruding in an upward fashion from in between two small rocks. While studying the bone, he noted the rocks looked as if they had been stacked. The joints were staggered just like a rock mason would lay them nowadays, except these had no mortar in the joints. Jim called for his helpers and they all stood in amazement of this wall that, clearly, had been man made. Slowly, they began loosening and removing the rocks out of the wall, gradually uncovering more bone. After about an hour of carefully moving sand from the bone, what lay before them was a human pelvis and hip section, another hour of meticulous work and they had most of the body uncovered. They also unearthed arrow

heads and long flint knives, and several beads and other Indian jewelry.

They took photos of the find and, in turn, guarded the “tomb.” Since the caves are located on the sheer edge of the canyon and many wild animals still prevail in the territory, Jim didn’t want to take any chances on this valuable discovery being harmed.

Soon after, Jim notified the curator and archaeologist of the museum in Canyon of the incredible find. It was found that the “Indian” had lived around a thousand years ago. By the manner in which he was buried and all of the artifacts that were buried with him, it was apparent that the “Indian” was most certainly a chief of his tribe. Unfortunately, the actual tribe that he belonged to remains a mystery with his estimated time of being is older than most of the Native American tribes that we know today. The closest “guess” that we have been given was he was possibly a type of Pueblo In-

dian. One of my favorite stories of this legend was when Jim was asked how the “Indian” died. He always answered with, “Well, his plane crashed.”

Throughout the years, Jim has touched and changed so many lives. As a running joke, we’ve always said that the canyon tends to pick up “strays.” So many teenagers that were being led down the wrong path have, in some form or fashion, made their way to Six Gun City or Palo Duro Riding Stables. Through hard work and tough love, Jim has turned out some downright gentlemen. He was also quick to give a “city” girl a chance to live out her own dream of working with horses. That would be me, almost 18 years ago.

Along with the horses, I fell in love with the land, the family, and his youngest son, Jesse. I’ll never be able to thank him enough. While Jim is no longer with us, his spirit will always be a part of this very unique place. We still take in “strays.”

Several years ago, just eleven months after we lost our patriarch and friend, our daughter, Kodi Josephine, aka. Kodi Jo, was born on Jim’s birthday. On her first horse at two weeks old, Kodi Jo has been guiding riders through the canyon on Peekaboo since she turned three, two years older than her daddy was when he started guiding. At almost four years old, she amazes us every day. She would have been “Big Daddy” Jim’s most favorite person. We lost a boss and gained another. With his same facial expressions and his affinity for horses, he will forever be with us.

While Six Gun City has long since passed, Palo Duro Riding Stables is in its fifty-seventh year of providing family fun on horseback. With the years gone by, many things have changed, but so much still remains the same.

(cont. on pg. 16)



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(cont. from pg. 14)

We still ride through the same part of Palo Duro Canyon where “Sheriff” Jim rode. It’s the same canyon where Colonel Charles Goodnight found cedar logs for his cabins and out buildings on the JA Ranch that is located down by Clarendon, TX.

Many of our horses that we ride today are direct descendants from the horses that were used so many years ago. So much of the Sorenson family still love and enjoy this canyon land that we have been blessed with. We have 4th and 5th generations helping to keep the dream alive. We’re meeting and riding with folks that were blessed with an authentic experience at Six Gun City. They’re bringing their children and grandchildren to us for their first horseback ride because this is the place where they had theirs. Continuing the visions of Jim and his father, the legacy prevails with all wranglers in 1800-style clothing, carrying six guns, and upholding true southern hospitality. Here’s to fifty more years! Palo Duro Riding Stables (806)488-2799 paloduroridingstables.com



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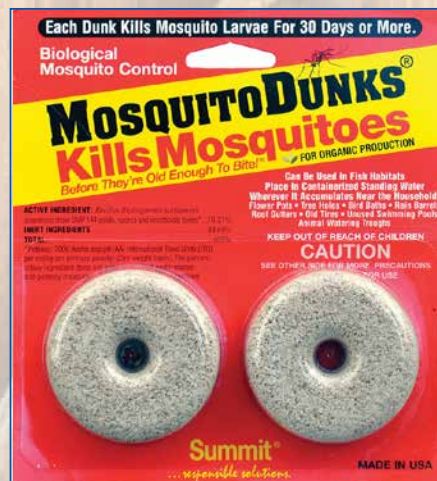
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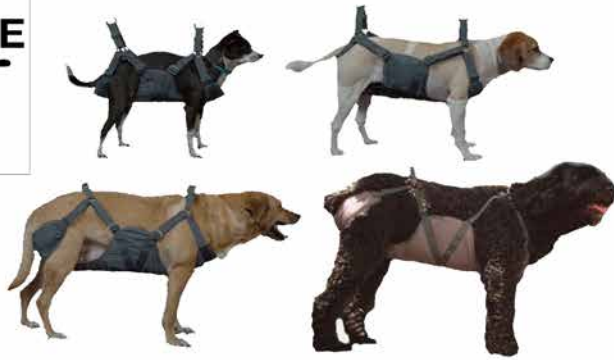
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*Nothing defines a Texan at rodeo time like their western wear. It's the last authentic connection to our past. Worn by settlers, cattle barons, wildcat-
ters, local celebrities and rednecks, there will always be a hallowed place
in our hearts for boots and denim jeans topped off by a hat
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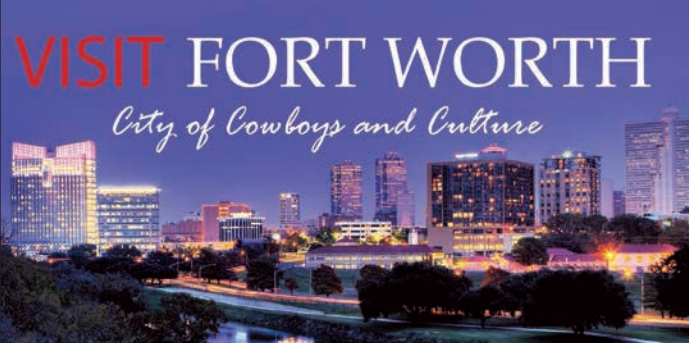
“**C**ourage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway, said John Wayne. And if you have ever squeezed your foot into a new boot, pulling hard on taut leather and praying your toes find a resting place, you understand. New boots are like meeting a stranger and knowing you have to live with them for a long time. Give'em a month, a wade in a creek, a rough climb on an embankment or two, and a couple of days on the back of a horse and you won't ever part with them.



Yup, this is a relationship that gets better with age.

But trying to break in a new pair of boots now days is nothing compared to the problem early Texas cowboys faced. Our cowboy boot is almost a newfangled invention in the long scheme of things. After the Civil War, many soldiers without jobs turned to being cowboys. And the boots they wore at that time, with rounded toes, were not well suited to time spent in the saddle.

(cont. on pg. 22)



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(cont. from pg. 21)

The cowboy boot is the soul of Texas and rodeos. They are more than just an accessory that helps you in and out of the saddle. Even in our most modern society the old boot has made a flawless transition with a wide variety of styles and colors while maintaining its history and sex appeal. Put them on and you're taller, slimmer, braver and more powerful. A really good working pair of cowboy boots, is indispensable to any Texan.



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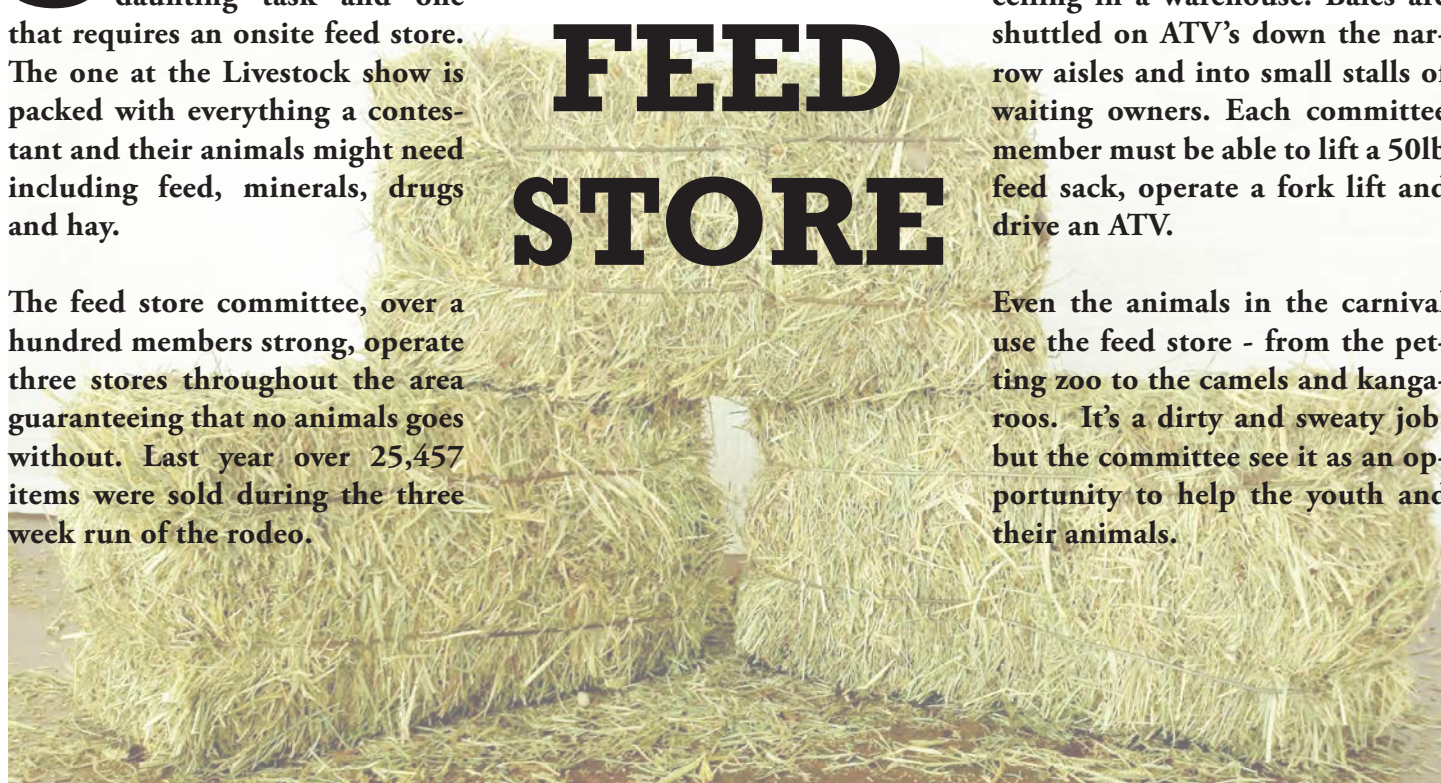
Showing more than 30,000 animals at the Houston Livestock Show is a daunting task and one that requires an onsite feed store. The one at the Livestock show is packed with everything a contestant and their animals might need including feed, minerals, drugs and hay.

The feed store committee, over a hundred members strong, operate three stores throughout the area guaranteeing that no animals goes without. Last year over 25,457 items were sold during the three week run of the rodeo.

RODEO FEED STORE

Bales of coastal, alfalfa and sudan hay are ordered months before the rodeo begins and stacked to the ceiling in a warehouse. Bales are shuttled on ATV's down the narrow aisles and into small stalls of waiting owners. Each committee member must be able to lift a 50lb feed sack, operate a fork lift and drive an ATV.

Even the animals in the carnival use the feed store - from the petting zoo to the camels and kangaroos. It's a dirty and sweaty job, but the committee see it as an opportunity to help the youth and their animals.



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“How’s your dirt?” This is a question we all need to be asking! Our horse’s legs & feet are too valuable to leave to chance. I was trying to find some statistics or even a study done by a reputable vet school outlining WHY leaving rocks in your arena is such an irresponsible choice but after much internet research, contacting a few equine vets, and even reaching out to social media (which is entertaining if not necessarily informative), I came to a conclusion. It’s basic common sense!

When a horse’s foot meets a rock at even relatively low speeds, there’s a real likelihood for injury. Stone bruises, torn suspensory ligaments, sprained joints are some of the worst things to occur but even the mildest of these injuries can bring a screeching halt to the career of a talented equine athlete.

We’re Rock B Gone, and we can help you avoid the pitfalls of a rocky arena. We’re horse folk, just like you, and also care about our horse’s

legs & feet. In the spring of 2015, we contacted Joe Chavez of Rid O Rock, an outfit near Phoenix, AZ to inquire about getting the rocks out of our soon-to-be-built arena and...fast forward one year, we’re doing our first job at an arena in Midland as Rock B Gone, LLC, and our Facebook page is running strong!



We have the only machine of its kind in Texas and we stay busy all year long, which is exactly what Joe predicted. We’ve cleared arenas belonging to businessmen, professional horsewomen, show jumpers, high school rodeo athletes and folks who only ride for the pure joy of it. If your horse’s health is a high priority, and I know that goes for all of us, the questions you should be asking now are, “How’s your dirt? Have you called Rock B Gone?” For more information call 702- 378- 5460

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One of my fondest memories of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo was leading and winning the tour guide competition. Helping to enrich the lives of children by exposing them to agriculture and what it brings to the world was an awesome experience. I enjoyed helping to educate youth while also getting them engaged in a world they may never have seen."

Wendy drives her personal life with the same vigor that she does her real estate business. She personally owns a ranch and often travels to show Quarter Horses. She finds interest in rodeos and barrel racing, and is currently competing in the latter.

Giving back to the community is key for her. She consistently supports the Waller County Fair, Relay

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for Life and her church. One of her passions is taking care of teachers and veterans. She loves to stay connected to her local community and help out where she can.

Wendy is a native of Cypress, Texas and was raised with horses. She competed as a child in 4H and was a member of FFA. Wendy attended Texas A&M University and

worked in the construction business out of college. She has incorporated her equestrian background with real estate and excels as a Farm and Ranch specialist.




Cherish the Memory of your Pet Forever

By Vicki Long Edited D.L. Gardner

Have you ever thought to have your pet's portrait painted? There are artists who specialize in bringing those cherished memories of your four-legged friend to canvas. Pet portraits have existed for centuries. In art museums everywhere you will find portraits of kings and emperors standing in grand halls, posed next to their favorite pets. To commission an artist to do the portrait, look for one that uses fine material to create a true work of art. Pastels, and watercolors make great mediums

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for your portrait, but oil paintings have the longest life, and offer the richest colors. The artist should be able to capture the true character and personality of your beloved dog, cat and other animals. Most artists have a portfolios to show you, and many have websites that will show you how well the artist has captured the true character and personality of your pet. You can browse online and choose the style and medium you prefer. The best way to have a portrait done is for the artist to work from photographs. You can incorporate your chosen background, inside or outside. The reference material you provide will determine how well the artist can reproduce the character of your pet, so make sure you have good color, sharp focus, and quality exposure.



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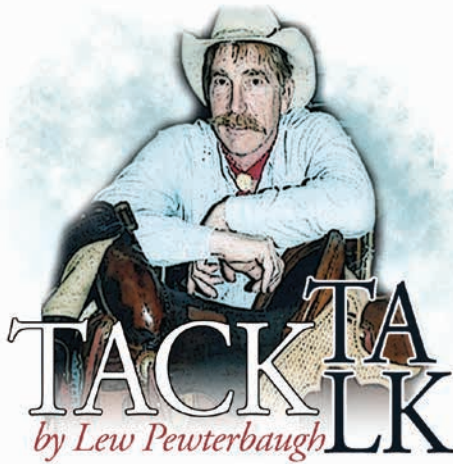


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*Horseback Magazine's
Saddle & Tack Editor*

It appears to me, from visiting with former tack shop owners, shoppers, and horse owners, that the Mom and Pop tack shops are almost gone. After selling my very successful store almost 7 years ago, and watching it go broke through mismanagement, I tried to get back into a little retail business last year. I decided the beginning of this year not to pursue it. Big online retailers like Dover and State Line Tack are taking a large percentage of the business, with buying power that the little folks don't have. They not only buy at better prices, buying in large volume, but they sell at lower margins, too. This is good business on their part. Stores like Teskey's in Weatherford, Texas, have a huge inventory, and have pretty nice products.

The problem I see is that, just like the big box home improvement stores like Home Depot and Lowe's, they have large quantities of product, mostly imported, and, in many cases, employees with inadequate product knowledge. I often find the sales people know less about the products they are selling than I do.

It's pretty much the same in the big box tack stores. Management is concentrating on getting products that will sell quickly, while giving them a good margin, and the quantity is often heavy on the best sellers, making the one of a kinds, and the special fit items, very difficult to find.

This leaves the poor folks that need

The End of the Neighborhood Tack Shop!

something special in a dilemma, trying to find what they need.

I recently had a saddle fit customer, an occasional rider, with a difficult to fit horse. Very high withered and narrow. I knew she needed a saddle with semi-quarter horse bars, and she wanted one lightweight, so I suggested buying a Fabtron saddle from State Line. First time buyers can download a 25% off coupon, and they can apply that to their first purchase, which makes the cost of the saddle below State Line's wholesale price. Pretty good deal, but they didn't have the saddle in semi-quarter horse bars and told her regular quarter horse bars would work with an extra pad. That kind of ignorance should not be allowed with all the information about saddle fit today. Anyway, she had to send the saddle back, paying the return shipping, and getting a low end saddle from a major company, with the right bar angle. Still the gullet rested on the horse's withers, so I made a special cut 1" wool felt pad, and a special horse hair pad on top of that, which gave the

withers enough clearance.

The demise of so many saddle companies in the last year have also made saddle buying more difficult, in spite of the fact that almost all of the companies that went under, had been losing quality due to cost cutting moves over the past several years. In this day and age, you

can't cut cost and maintain quality. You have to keep your quality control up, and raise prices as you incur increased costs.

Companies that have sent their production offshore have

generally increased their profit margin significantly, while lowering quality, and not passing the savings along to the customers.

I personally think that one of the few saddlerys still doing a good job is HR Saddles out of Frisco, Texas. Probably one of the best saddles for the money that you can buy today. Their production ability tends to keep them out of the big box store tack shops. You will have to wait 8 to 10 weeks to get an HR





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saddle, but it's worth the wait.

If you want a really top of the line saddle that will really stand up to the test of time, you will never go wrong with McCall. You'll have to spend close to \$3,000.00 to get one, but it's worth it. I've been seeing ads for a new outfit in San Antonio, Franco saddlery, and they look real good. I don't know about the prices. There are a number of small custom saddle makers, a lot of them are really good, but most will run from 3 to \$5,000.00. Some of them are just saddle makers and not saddle fitters. Beware the seller that says their saddle will fit any horse. That's like saying a size 10 boot will fit any man.

There are still some decently made saddles available at a friendly price. I've had a couple of Dakota saddles and they are made okay for a factory saddle, although I think their tooling lacks a whole lot. I really have not been up in the loop like I used to be, and I should take the time and spend the money and go to market to see what's out there today. Mostly what I have found has been a disappointment. I will make an effort to get to one of the markets this spring so I can report what the state of the saddle world is. I'll leave fixing the state of the country to someone else.



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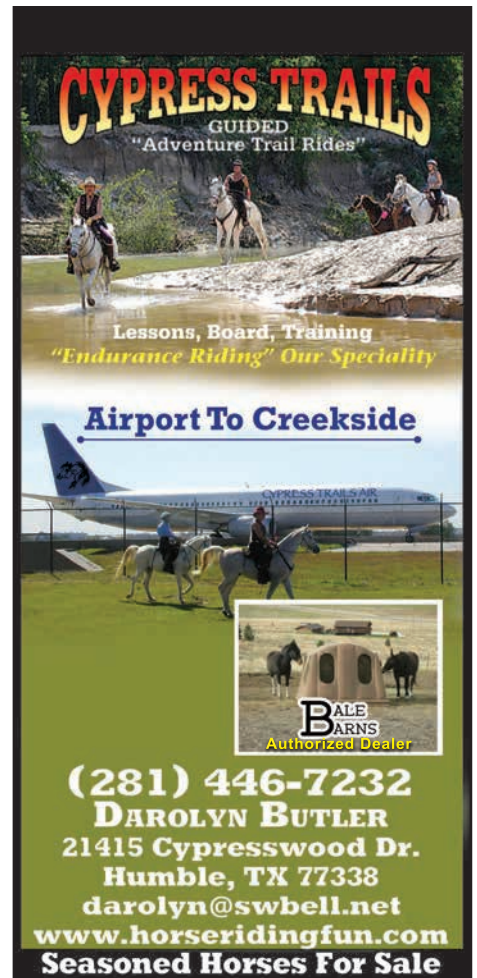
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Of Hurricanes & Hitches!

Howdy!

Welcome to Cowboy Corner.

Hurricane Harvey came, stayed too long Recall last fall wonderin' if the weather would ever cool off. Ol' Jack Frost found its way to Texas and brought along the rain. The really cold weather in mid- January created all types of issues for the future, not the least of which is hay. Feed consumption during January, and after, was and is, much higher than normal, whatever normal is. Have always wanted to ranch in the Brazos River bottom in a "normal year".

Back to hay, yes I think there is a shortage. The 2017 hay crop was good, however a lot of hay was lost or damaged during hurricane Harvey. Some left over hay from prior years, barn stored, has been available along with Harvey damaged hay, but the 2018 cold weather really increased the demand. Increased demand and reduced supply produces higher prices, elementary economics. Good luck on finding some affordable cow hay and let's all pray hard for dryer, warmer weather.

Brush clearing at my ranch is a yea long program. Like to clear, make piles to let dry a while, then burn. Sometimes, like since Thanksgiving, drying takes longer than planned and

harder to burn. Diesel fuel is our fire booster because it's readily available, affordable and much safer than some other fuels such as gasoline. Do not use gasoline, kerosene if you can find it, and afford it, and charcoal lighter if you can afford it, are much safer alternatives.

Growing up, kerosene was available and affordable, and I made fire starters, primarily for the ranch fireplace, by soaking corn cobs, in a gallon can with kerosene. About a quarter can of kerosene would treat a whole can of corn cobs producing an effective, safe, fire starter. Well times have changed, don't feed our horses and mules whole corn any more, or have available, affordable kerosene. Did see some cans of kerosene last week at the hardware store for about five dollars a gallon, but am gonna' use diesel fuel at half the price.

Have been using an improved fire starter in recent years that works really good. Start with a gallon can, add a role of toilet paper, then fill about a fourth full with diesel fuel. In a few hours the toilet paper will

absorb the diesel. The toilet paper is wrapped around a cone with a center hole large enough for a handle made from a stick, making a torch. A little charcoal lighter on the torch makes lighting easy and safe with kitchen matches.

For gallon metal cans try your local pizza restaurants. Pizza ingredients such as mushrooms come in metal cans. The gallon cans are just about right for a roll of toilet paper and make the fire starter easy to carry. A roll of diesel soaked toilet paper can start a big brush pile because the "torch" will burn for a long time.

The "cowboy" fire starter also does a good job on campfires. First quarter of the year is the time for trail rides and rodeo. Campfires are a part of trail rides, and gettin' um goin' is sometimes a real challenge if the wood is a little green, or wet, or both. The fire starter may help. Please be careful and again don't use gasoline, the life you save may be your own.

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