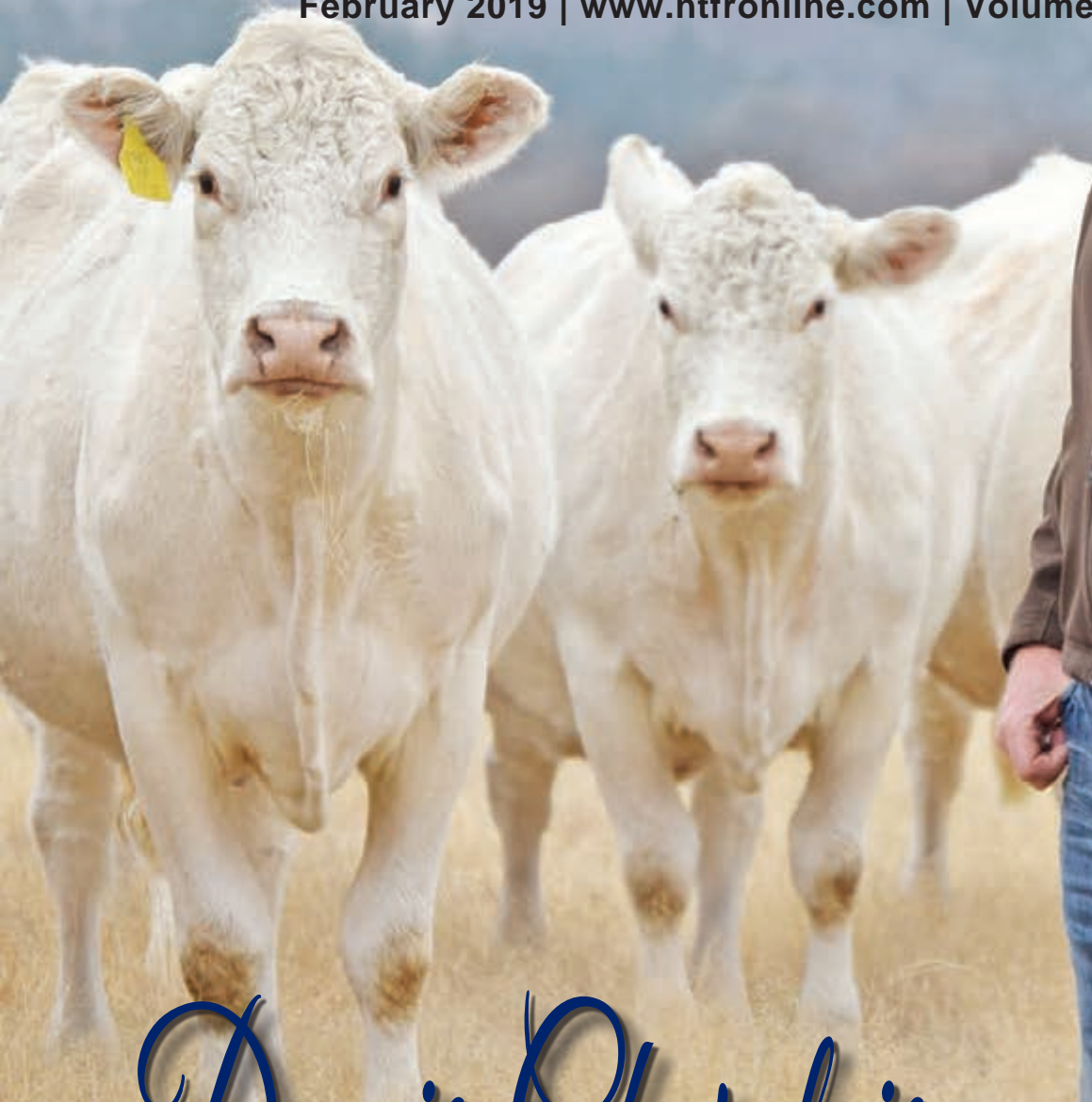


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**POST OAK
MEDIA**

Warmth in the cold

Hello NTFR readers and welcome to the February 2019 issue. It feels as if the new year is already flying by as we enter the month known for celebrating the one you love, bringing a bit of warmth to the cold winter month.

As we honor those we love and hold out hope for better weather as we near the end of the winter season, NTFR brings you Eric Dennis of Dennis Charolais Farm as this month's profile. Dennis had a love for his family's farm that ran five generations deep and created a life of his very own with wife Angie and their two children. He took his own heritage and built a strong herd of purebred Charolais, all while watching his daughter Haley wean calves from that same herd and win shows at Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio among a slew of other competitions, including a national show, four years in a row. However, you won't hear him say it's due to strong breeding, but instead, a strong work ethic.

After her husband, Logan, was stepped on by a bucking horse in August, ruining his chances of competing in Las Vegas in December, and some surprising news that followed soon after, Lacey Corbett is sharing with readers the importance of making the most of what is right in front of you in this month's "Behind the Chutes: Thoughts of a Rodeo Wife."

Phillip Kitts returns, bringing the story of a North Texas cowboy who has exploded onto the bullfighting scene through hard work and dedication.

This month we are happy to also welcome back Mandi Dietz who will provide readers with a new attraction to visit in North Texas each month.

Talk show host, rodeo announcer, media personality and former bull and bronc rider and bullfighter himself Pepper Stewart joins NTFR in "Ranch, Rodeo and Randomness." This month, he discusses the importance of documenting cattle, as well as technology that can help in the process.

New contributor Annette Bridges brings a fun twist to the magazine as a city girl gone country. In the February issue, she introduces herself and recalls the moment she moved to a farm in Tioga, all in the name of love more than 38 years ago.

While many new faces join us, we bring you longtime favorites like Rayford Pullen, who talks about the importance of keeping the calves of first-time cows alive and well through the cold and rainy season, and Norman Winter, who emphasizes the importance of planting Shoal Creek Vitex for a rare iridescent blue color when the weather finally enters those warmer months.

Don't forget to view the NTFR Calendar of Events for all the exciting activities in North Texas this month.

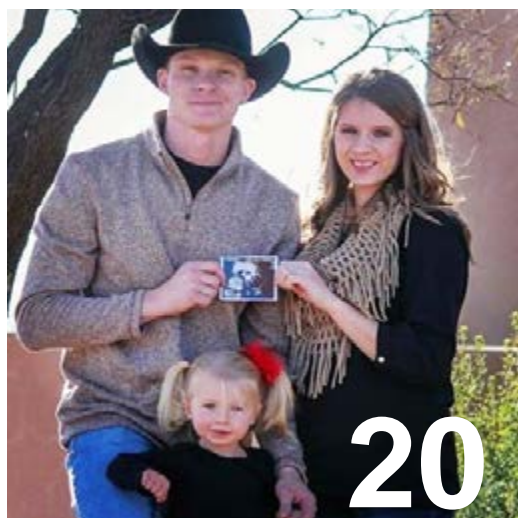
If you have an event, photo or article topic you would like to see in NTFR, email editor@ntfronline.com. Until next time, we wish you all the best!



ON THE COVER

Eric Dennis graduated Pilot Point High School in 1988 and couldn't wait to get back to his family's farm where he spent summers working as a youth. After finishing an ageon degree from his father's alma mater, Texas A&M, he returned to the land that was five generations deep in the Dennis family. The youngest Dennis took his heritage and created something of his own, building off the Charolais herd his father started. Dennis watched his daughter wean calves from that same herd and sweep the competition for four years at the biggest livestock shows in the Lone Star State. He also dedicates his time to the cattle breed that has made his living as he represents other Charolais cattlemen on the American International Charolais Association. Read more about this Saint Jo farmer on page 42. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

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Heritage & Hard Work

Eric Dennis of Saint Jo, Texas, took the land that ran five generations deep in his family, and with a little hard work, has expanded the Charolais herd his father started.

42





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Tehama County Cattlewomen

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

NTFR welcomes letters to the editor for its Socializing page, but some rules apply. They include:

1. 125-word limit.
2. Deadline for submission is the first Wednesday of the month.
3. Only one letter per writer per issue.
4. All letters must include a name, address and phone number. Only the name and city of residence will be published.
5. All letters will be verified by the NTFR staff by a phone call prior to publication. If the NTFR staff is unable to contact the writer of a letter, the letter will be held until such times as contact is made.
6. Letters containing libelous statements or those intended as advertising will not be published.
7. Letters that target previous letter writers will be edited to remove the name of such letter writers who are non-candidates or non-public figures. Letters critical of previously published guest columns may identify the writer only once, and then only to make it clear which column they are writing about.
8. NTFR reserves the right to edit or reject any letters.
9. Letters must be mailed to NTFR Letter to the Editor, P.O. Box 831, Bowie, TX 76230 or emailed to editor@ntfronline.com.



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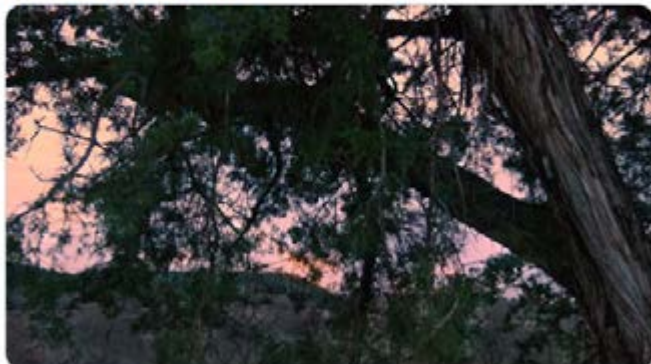
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TWITTER FEED

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This month in Ag Elsewhere: Lainey Smith shares the importance of land management after the most destructive fire in the state's history raged through California. Learn more in the January 2019 NTFR issue. ntfronline.com/2018/01/log-it...



MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

By Rayford Pullen | rcpullen@yahoo.com

While it's the dead of winter, spring calving is under way and keeping those newborns alive and doing good can often be a challenge, particularly with first calf heifers. The biggest challenge is for calves born during cold and wet weather that are unable to maintain body temperature. On our place we have done and tried many ways to get the body temperature back to normal as quickly as possible and after a year of battling this problem, we elected to purchase a warming box that is completely enclosed and equipped with a forced air heater. Ever since we bought this device, the winters have been relatively mild and it has only seen action on one occasion. It did its job in about a minute and the calf was rip raring to go.

Before we purchased this tool, we did several things. First, drying the calf off as soon after birth as possible, next, putting the calf in the floorboard of the pickup with the heater on high and then, if needed, putting the calf in the bathtub in warm water. This can be particularly dangerous if you do not have your wife's blessing before bringing the calf into the house and placing it into the bathtub because in most cases, there will be a significant mess made.

Regardless of the method used, we would also give the calf a packet of colostrum replacement dissolved in water and administered with an esophageal feeder. This results in the calf having a good warm meal in them and better able to handle the cold. While we don't like to lose calves for any reason, it's the ones we could have potentially avoided that hurt the most.

While this is not a particularly frequent problem in the mature cow, those first calf heifers may not clean their calves up as quickly as the cows and their colostrum is lower in quality. We also are watching our heifers more closely, usually in smaller quarters like our lots, where water is more apt to stand and there is more exposure to windy conditions.

As a reminder, feeding your cattle after 4 or so in the afternoon with either cubes or hay will result in more calves being born during daylight hours and receiving help, if need be, more quickly. If you're like me, you do a better



It may still be winter, but spring calving is under way. There are several steps to take to ensure calves survive the cold and wet weather. (Photo courtesy Rayford Pullen)

job at 2 p.m. than you do at 2 a.m., but either way, it is our responsibility to be good stewards for our animals.

As we anticipate the arrival of spring, we must make sure our livestock are receiving the nutrition they need to help prevent weak born calves, retained placentas and have your cattle in better shape to breed back more quickly. While nutritional needs depend on several things, the condition of the animals going into winter dictate the needs as the winter persists. Providing 0.8-1.0 pounds of protein per day to a mature cow has been our rule of thumb. If you're feeding a 20 percent protein cube, that would be four to five pounds per day but better yet is providing the total, 28-35 pounds, in three equal feedings of nine to 12 pounds each feeding.

From what I understand, cattle get better utilization of the protein from high doses than lower doses and three feedings per week is cheaper and easier to do than seven feedings


per week.

Proper nutrition also includes keeping out a good, high quality mineral supplement that your cattle will eat. One tell-tale sign of mineral deficiency during calving season is a higher rate of placenta retention or cows that are slow to "clean out" which may subsequently result in slower breed back.

It's all related but we want to do all we can do to prevent calf morbidity and mortality while maintaining cow health which also can relate back to these same problems.

While we keep our eyes peeled for the first signs of spring, be sure to take care of the little things that will influence our success in raising a healthy calf to market annually from our cow herds.

If you have questions or comments, feel free to let me know by emailing rcpullen@yahoo.com

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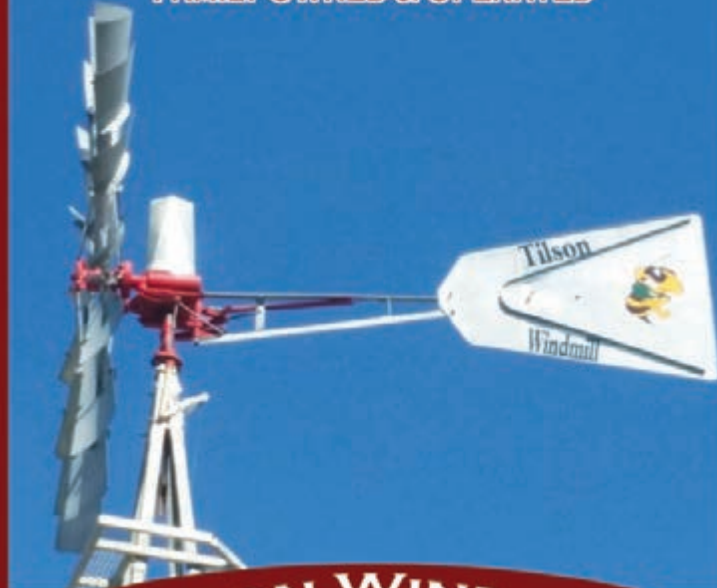


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The Vaquero Way

Modern day vaquero horsemanship is showcased most prominently in the reined cow horse sport, which emphasizes grit, endurance and finesse through three events.

If you were to ask anyone on the street, “Which state is the horse capital?” the answer would almost certainly be “Texas.”

Texas has roughly 10 percent of the United States horse population, hosts the World Finals for sports like cutting, reined cow horse, and ranch rodeo and is home to the King Ranch, birth place of the American Quarter Horse.

I will admit defeat when someone asks which state is the “horse capital” and say that Texas takes the crown. However, when it comes to horsemanship, there is no state that can match the vaquero way. The California vaquero style derived from the Spanish cavalry in the early seventeen hundreds, as Spain settled the Western Coast of modern day American and established communities centered on farming, ranching and the

Mission. Vaqueros established a multi-level training method for their horses, to become light to the rider’s touch, connected to the movement of cattle and responsive to the handcrafted gear.

The Vaquero style of horsemanship led to the birth of an iconic performance horse—the reined cow horse. Vaqueros adopted a slow, meticulous approach to training, starting colts in snaffle bits for up to three years before graduating to a hackamore.

After mastering a soft feel and body control in a hackamore, a horse would land in a bridle. For the vaqueros, this approach was not as accelerated as other horseman programs, and would result in a horse sturdy enough in body and mind to complete the rigorous ranch work. The finesse of the horsemanship combined with the grit and confidence from the training proved to be the perfect mix for the modern day performance horse.


In the National Reined Cow Horse Association, this vaquero approach to training is reflected in

the classes offered. Young horses compete in the Snaffle Bit Futurity their three-year-old year. Their four and five-year-old years they can show in Derby competition, and during this time transition from the snaffle to the hackamore, which is then followed by the two rein. Finally, they compete in a traditional bridle as an aged competitor. The cow horse sport got its start on the West Coast, forming in 1949 and hosting the Snaffle Bit Futurity in Reno, Nev., before making the move to Fort Worth in 2017.

The handmade quality goods that Texas cowboys cherish and invest in can be traced back to the California Vaquero. Their attention to detail and how their gear affected their horse’s performance led to elaborate saddles, bits, and bridles. During the age of the large ranches, working cowboys did not have a way to purchase tack from trading posts, instead relying on their own craftsmanship. They became known not only as great horsemen, but great rawhide braiders, leatherworkers and

silversmiths. The vaqueros can be credited for inventing modern day gear such as the rawhide riata, hackamore and spade bit.

In modern age, the vaquero survives through its influence in performance horse sports and the new generation of working cowboy. Ranch rodeos pay homage to the working cowboys of history and showcase the horsemanship and horse power it takes to get the job done. Mainstream rodeo events gather large crowds because of the elite talent equine athletes and competitors possess. And, every specialized performance horse sport can be traced back to the tasks of the vaquero.

California cowboys celebrate their history through the California Vaquero Horse Association, Vaquero Heritage Days, which takes place every August in San Juan Bautista, Calif. While we live in a new era as an equine industry, thriving in the central region of the United States and elevating the next generation of performance athletes, it only continues because of the vaquero way. 

THE GARDEN GUY

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

The Shoal Creek vitex is in the verbenaceae family and attracts a variety of pollinators.

Plant Shoal Creek vitex now for Summer WOW factor

Oh my gosh, if you aren't growing the Shoal Creek vitex you are missing the opportunity to add rare iridescent blue color to the landscape like few other plants can do. I've loved the vitex for years but the award-winning Shoal Creek has to be the best in the marketplace.

It was a Louisiana Super Plant, and Texas Superstar, too, and is perfect for the North Texas area with wide range of adaptability from zones five to nine. In warm climates it is grown as a large deciduous shrub or small open vase tree, while in colder areas it freezes to the ground and returns in the spring as a shrub, almost reminiscent of a buddleia or butterfly bush.

It is known botanically as *Vitex agnus-castus*, and is a marvel with its small structure, large, marijuana-looking leaves and fragrant, blue blooms that are most rare among trees.

Centuries ago, the seeds that followed the blossoms were used to

keep monks' libidos in check. It is said that in ancient Greece during the feast of the goddess Ceres, the women of Athens made their beds with the vitex leaves to cool lust and to keep themselves chaste for a time.

Today, on the other hand, an extract from these plants is used to help women who want to become pregnant. I would suggest, however, to just make sure you grow some. The Vitex, or lilac chaste tree, is native to Sicily and is a member of the verbenaceae family. It was recognized by the Greeks for its medicinal properties and has been in cultivation in British gardens since 1570.

As a shrub, it is at home in the perennial or cottage garden. I have had the opportunity to grow them in Mediterranean style gardens as well as those that might be considered Grandma's Cottage. Partnerships where they are combined with orange flowers makes a dazzling complementary color scheme.

See GARDEN GUY page 17

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GARDEN GUY

Continued from page 14

As a small tree, use it as an accent or specimen. Try combining in a cluster with pink or red forms of crape myrtles. Since it can attract hummingbirds and butterflies it brings added benefits as part of any wildlife habitat. In this type of garden try combining with gold and orange shades of lantana. A Shoal Creek vitex along with a sweep of gloriosa daisies and purple coneflowers will surely bring out the cameras.

Choose a well-drained, fertile bed in full sun. Dig the planting hole two to three times as wide as the rootball, but no deeper. This wide hole allows for easy root expansion and acclimation in the landscape. The top of the rootball should be even with the soil profile.

The Shoal Creek vitex is drought tolerant, easy to grow, and has virtually no pests or diseases, making it an environmentally friendly plant. Feed established trees in late winter with an application of a slow-release, 12-6-6 fertilizer per 100 square feet of planting area.

The first bloom cycle occurs in May and June with a second flush in August. I like to remove old blossoms and give another light application of fertilizer in early July for a more robust bloom, but you'll love it regardless. Maintaining moisture during prolonged dry periods also will help the late summer flush of flowers.

Shoal Creek is a big improvement with larger and more vivid blue flowers. There also are white selections available. You'll notice these are in full bloom at the Savannah/Hilton Head International Airport as you head toward departures. Now is a good time to shop your local garden center to pick up a few. You will be glad you did. Follow me on Facebook @ NormanWinterTheGardenGuy. 



The Shoal Creek vitex can be trained as a large shrub or small tree as seen here.



(Left) Gulf Fritillary butterfly is just one of several that feeds on the vitex. (Right) The Shoal Creek vitex is partnered here with red pentas for a butterfly haven. (Photos by Norman Winter)

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Dow AgroSciences

RANCH, Rodeo & Randomness

By Pepper Stewart

In recent weeks I've been visiting with cattle growers to see what topics are floating around the coffee shop.

"If documenting your cattle got you more money, why would you not do it?"

The reviews are mixed. They are anywhere from keeping the government off their farm, size of their herd, to even the age of the cattleman. The one thing we all agreed upon was that getting top dollar is everyone's goal.

Over the past few years, cattle associations have tried to come up with a uniform way to trace cattle from birth to the table. Herd management is at the top of the list. While talking with cattle growers, each had their own way to keep records on their cattle. The tried and true method—that most people discussed as the most effective—was that of the good ol' notebook, pencil and paper.

The use of a computer program and online filing was mentioned a few times for record keeping. A couple of the cattlemen said they don't keep any records or have a vaccination program. Just like a box of apples, it only takes one cow to not be vaccinated and undocumented to ruin the market for the rest of us. Cases such as this are why it is important to know where the cattle come from as they travel from birth to the plate.

Today we live in a high-tech world where consumers have gotten more interested in where the products they buy come from and if they are safe.

Do your cattle have identification ear tags? How much do you pay for the ID ear tags you buy for your cattle? Cattle ear tags average \$1 to \$3 each and range from only numbers to a radio frequency identification device numbered ear



tag. What information does your current ear tag offer when you sell that animal? Other than a blank stare, a couple of cattlemen said that you can scan the RFID tag. What if you could scan your ear tag with a RFID reader and your smart phone? What if you could scan an ear tag and pull up all the history of that animal?

Then I was asked, "You're saying that there is an ear tag you can scan with your phone, and pull up that calf's story?" Yep! I took out my phone, pulled up the app, and showed them the history on my cattle. I then explained that the new buyer gets all this information after purchase.

"How much does the app cost? That's a lot of information with a picture of the calf. I bet that program is expensive." The smartphone app is free, the software is free, but there is always a catch. The catch is that you have to buy the RFID smart phone scannable

ear tags. Well guess what? Those tags are only \$2 each, and that's worth it to have access to free herd management software. Have you priced those herd management programs lately? They average \$10 to \$50 a month.


There has been another round of discussions on tracking cattle and keeping track of the herd for disease control. These discussions have been making the rounds on the internet and most of your farm and ranch publications. I have had a couple off the record conversations with those behind the new push, and it seems that the program I currently use is just fine.

Here is an example of how it should work with cattlemen participation. Rancher Joe sells Rancher Sally 10 calves. Now Rancher Sally signs up for the free software. Once she inputs the tag numbers, boom, there is all the history that Rancher Joe had on the calves. Birth place, birth

date, weight, vaccination records, pictures and more is all available, and now under Rancher Sally's account.

As this continues and the calves or cattle change hands once they reach the packer, they too can scan the tag and see all the history on the animal. That is the traceability that everyone is looking for. The program and tags we use are from AGEX using the AGEX HERD Management software. We use it for herd records, but it doubles for traceability, too.

Everyone does things their own way, but here is how we use the program: When working cattle, we scan the tags as we put them in the animal's ear, all while still taking notes on paper.

At the end of the day, we sit down (in the comfort of our house) and input the information that correlates with the tag numbers. We do still keep the paper notebook for a backup. 



BEHIND THE CHUTES

By Lacey Corbett

Thoughts from a Rodeo Wife

Counting down the weeks

I'm a planner. I feel like I must have a daily, weekly, monthly and even a yearly agenda. I have to-do lists, daily schedules and calendar reminders. No matter how organized and prepared you think you are, life loves to hand you curve balls. Just when we think we have our lives in order, God says, "Trust Me more," and sends something unexpected our way. That's exactly what happened in our family last August when we were given not one, but two curveballs.

The first one happened the beginning of August when my husband, Logan, was stepped on by a bucking horse. The blow tore both labrums in his hips and ended his rodeo season for the year. He was sitting 17th in the world, just two spots away from being in the top 15.

If you follow rodeo, you know how important it is for a guy or girl to secure their spot as one of the top 15 competitors in their event at Sept. 30.

They punch their ticket to the National Finals Rodeo, the Super Bowl of the sport, and compete for 10 nights under the bright lights of Las Vegas. We didn't know it then, but his ticket was torn in half the moment that horse planted his feet on Logan's back.

The next surprise happened a couple weeks following Logan's accident. I was visiting family and felt the need to take a pregnancy test. Much to my surprise, I got two faint lines on not one but two pregnancy tests. It was later confirmed at my doctor's office, and later that fall we found out we were expecting a baby boy. Fast forward to December and Logan has had surgery to repair his injury, and I'm well into the second trimester of the pregnancy.



Life threw a couple of unexpected changes our way in 2018, a pregnancy being one of them. (Photo courtesy Lacey Corbett)

The interesting thing about our situation is that we are measuring progress in weeks; Logan's recovery takes about 14-16 weeks. Likewise, pregnancy is often measured in weeks, so here we are, counting down our weeks.

Do you ever find yourself counting down the time to the next big thing? Maybe it's waiting for Friday night. Maybe it's waiting for graduation, a promotion, or even for your lunch to finish cooking in the microwave.

No matter the moment, we often find ourselves waiting for the next moment in our

lives. But what about the time we have right now? We often miss the beauty of our current circumstances because we are looking toward the horizon.


We are learning not to miss the beauty of our current circumstances. Of course, Logan can't wait to get back on the road, as I can't wait to hold my precious baby boy. In the meantime, we are making memories with our toddler, Conlee; Logan is using downtime to heal properly so he will be a force when the doctor gives him the green light.

We are striving to not miss the moments right in front of us because we have our sights set on the next big thing.

Injuries happen in the rodeo world all the time, and they are especially prevalent on the rough stock end of the arena. It shouldn't surprise anyone when I say that cowboys are hardheaded and stubborn, but I truly feel like an injury is the Lord saying, "time for a slowdown."

When the bumps and bruises spring up, I know that these guys get to spend time at home with their loved ones. It grants them the rest that they wouldn't take otherwise. There's always another horse drawn or another plane to catch.

If you find yourself in a period of waiting, I encourage you to take a moment to pause and look around you. What do you see? Maybe it's your family, your friends, or finally an opportunity to pick up an old hobby or refine your passion.

Don't just sit around and wait for the next big event in life. Make the most of what is right in front of you. 

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Listening & Learning

By Krista Lucas

There are many books to assist in training or learning about the horse, and now horse enthusiasts of all ages can utilize a fairly new technology called podcasts, available online through websites, iTunes, Spotify and more. Podcasts have been around for several years now, but the genre available to listeners interested in horses is growing.

A podcast is a series of episodes of digital audio or video files that users can download to listen and subscribe.

A previous Wrangler National Finals Rodeo barrel racing qualifier, Sydni Blanchard, has recently uploaded her own podcast that includes interviews with 2018 WNFR barrel racers and fearless stories from rodeo athletes on the road.

"I started it to help build a fan base for the competitors," Blanchard said. "As well as allow people to get an up close and personal taste for what the road is like, and to urge people to not give up and stay fearless because we all go through the same trials."

Racer's Edge is another podcast offered to rodeo and barrel racing fans. Listeners can hear Hannah Haugen and Jeye Johnson talk to many of today's top horse professionals. They produced six episodes in 2018 and will release even more in 2019.

"I work as a public relations coordinator, and we all work for the company Equibrand. We have a small media company called Equimedia that produces a barrel racing show on RideTV called Racer's Edge and various other projects in the western industry," Haugen said. "We wanted an outlet to share more content to

our loyal following outside of the parameters of our TV show and a podcast seemed like a perfect fit."

The podcast is a fun passion project for Haugen, Johnson and co-producer Garrett Matthews. Each episode runs about an hour long, and one of the most popular interviews has been "Let's Talk 'Sussess'" featuring Sherri Cervi and Jane Fambro.

"What I most enjoy about the podcast is sharing stories from professionals in and out of barrel racing," Haugen said. "I enjoy hearing about people's routines, their journey to success, and the horses that were monumental in their lives and careers. It's amazing the paths that the love of horses will cross and it's rewarding to be able to share this content with other barrel racers and horse enthusiasts."

For other horse related podcasts, check out "Whoa," "Horses in the Morning," "Horse Tip Daily", "Horse Radio Network," "HorseHour," "Straight From the Horse's Mouth," "Stable Scoop," "Horsemanship Radio," "Equinely – Inclined," and "Because of Horses". Podcasts can be utilized

on rainy days, while working in the barn or on long drives. To download current podcasts visit

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EQUINE SUPERSTARS & EVERYDAY HEROES

By Janis Blackwell

A Mare BECOMES A Wolf

Paul Wolf lives in Ponder, Texas, with his beautiful wife, Delaney, five-year-old son, Carter and two-year-old daughter, Brindle. Paul and his family also share their home with a very special gray mare named Nemo. At least Nemo is her barn name, thanks to Carter, who started calling her that after his favorite television show.

Her actual registered name is Gismo Lena Boonsmal, which gives us a little insight into her breeding. Doc O'Lena is her grand sire on the top side and three more grandparents' pedigree are Doc Bar bred horses. Paul said he had purchased her from a friend who trained cutters which certainly explains the breeding. She is a 14.3 hand, 1,100 pound willing helper and member of the Wolf family. Nemo carries Paul to any job around their place requiring a horse and to steers in the team roping competition. The family owns other horses as well but, from listening to Paul talk about Nemo, I think it is easy to tell that she is his favorite. That's not too hard to understand since she is a pretty unique kind of mare.

So how did Nemo come to live with the Wolf family you ask? Well, it started like this. Paul and Delaney both attended Tarleton State University and competed on the stock horse team.

While there, they competed in team penning and sortings as well. Even then Paul would go to team ropings when he had time. While in the Stephenville area, in Paul's words they were able to acquire some "more cow bred horses," one of which was Nemo.

Nemo, who is six now, was purchased by Paul as a three-year-old. At that time, she was only green broke so he decided to send her to a friend, Marty McCormick of Weatherford, to finish out for him. Marty rode her for about two months and then entered her in the Fort Worth Stock Show AQHA team roping. Paul said that she showed so well it was remarkable for a three-year-old with only two months of training. He attributes that to the fact that she



The Wolf family from Ponder share their home with a very special gray mare named Nemo, a nickname given by five-year-old Carter. (Photo courtesy Janis Blackwell)

is a really quick learner with a good attitude. In fact, she is so smart that you had better show her any new task correctly the first time because she is paying attention and going to remember it.

After living with Nemo for three years, they also have discovered that she has a few little quirks that make her unique. Paul said you had better tie her up really well if you want her to

be there when you get back because she can untie herself. Paul doesn't have to go into her pen to get the empty feed pan out of it to be refilled because every day, Nemo throws it over the fence for him. At a roping she will prop her front feet up on the fence and take her own overreach boots off. He may look at her tied up waiting to rope to find her with his stirrup in her
See WOLF page 26



Wolf

Continued from page 25


mouth. Finally, she aspires to be the boss in the pasture, and tries to act that way, but the other horses are having none of that so she still has a way to go to accomplish that feat. Right now she just has the attitude, not the pasture creds.

Finally, although this isn't a quirk, it is a great trait. Whenever anyone in the family comes out into the pasture or her pen, she comes immediately to them, and if the kids are present, she puts her head right down where they are as a greeting and an offer of a muzzle for petting if they're interested.

The fact is, Paul is so pleased with her that he bought Nemo's mom and raised a full sister to her which he sold to a lady in California. Recently, she called back to tell them how much she loves her and how she has become her favorite.

Right now Paul has a lot of responsibilities that don't allow him to spend as much time on his horses or roping as he'd like. He hopes to start going to ropings at last once a week in the future, but for now it is just when he can squeeze one in, but, he added, no matter how long Nemo goes unriden, she stays broke.

Although Paul focuses more on roping now, Delaney has stayed in the cow working events and, in fact, is now cutting on a recently purchased prospect that is showing much promise. She and her new mount will be a future feature of this article.

Although Paul is a young man, he has wisdom beyond his years as noted when he told me about the couple working different events these days. In Paul's words, "It's easier for a couple to get along if they don't compete against each other," he said with a chuckle, and from my experience I have to agree. Until next month faithful readers, happy trails. 



Two-year-old Brindle Wolf reaches up to pet her family's favorite mare, Nemo. (Photo courtesy Janis Blackwell)

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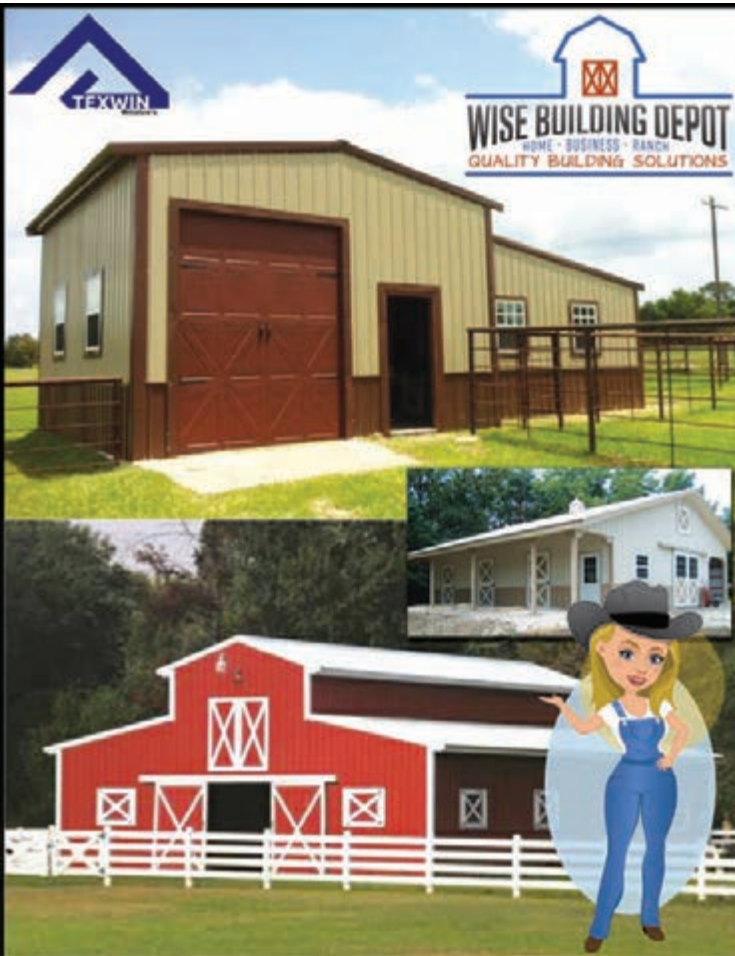
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Flipping onto the scene

By Phillip Kitts

The history of bullfighting has many speculations and goes back much further than what many people realize. One of the main theories is that the sport traces its roots back to 711 A.D. in Spain where it was celebrated in conjunction with King Alfonso and his coronation.

Many years later, the modern matador and the sport of bullfighting has become a story of legends, bravery and tradition.

The evolution of American Freestyle Bullfighting comes in direct connection with what many call the “rodeo clown.” Years ago, this connection was somewhat valid in that the talented young men who served the purpose to protect bull riders from their 1500 to 1800-pound competitors would also tell jokes and act out skits to provide rodeo fans with entertainment. As the sport of rodeo evolved, it became very apparent that there needed to be a separation between a rodeo clown and a bullfighter. This separation provided the sport of rodeo something new: Rodeo clowns, aka funny men, aka barrel men, began to focus on entertainment and honing their skills and maneuvering the infamous barrel around the arena while the bull fighter focused purely on assisting bull riders away from the bull once they were no longer on its back.

As with any sport, the bull fighters began to find a competitive sense amongst themselves. Through several years of development, an entirely new rodeo event evolved.

This new sport brought in a variation of the traditional sport of bullfighting with a few twists. A great majority of the bullfighting



Cade Gibson, the 20-year-old cowboy from Tioga, performs his famous backflip in Gonzales. (Photo courtesy Avid Visual Imagery)

controversy came with the fact that in “traditional” bullfighting the bull is normally put to death at the completion of the fight. However, in American Freestyle Bullfighting the bulls leave each event uninjured and go on to fight many more times throughout their careers. Another significant difference is that the bull starts each fight fresh and at full strength.

American Freestyle Bullfighting has some other components that are familiar to traditional bullfighting and some variations that are much different than its ancestral roots. The “Mexican Fighting Bull” is a direct descendant from the same fighting bulls that fought in the arenas in Europe. These bulls are purely bred to be aggressive. Most of their life is spent in

secluded areas where their interaction with people is limited. Put into simple words, these bovines, both bulls and cows, are mean, and they are bred to attack.

The difference between traditional bullfighting and American Freestyle Bullfighting is when the bullfighter enters the arena the only tools he has are his wits and knowledge of bull behavior. A Matadors enters with swords, capes and fancy dress to carry on a tradition. The Freestyle Bullfighter enters the arena in athletic attire and in most cases wearing “Baggies” (Baggies are cut up jeans that are converted to something like an apron. Attached to the baggies are often handkerchiefs or strips of material that move as the bull fighter moves. It is this movement

that plays into agitating the bull and accentuating their attacks.

American Freestyle Bullfighting took hold in the early 1980s and had a strong run through the early 2000s. During this time the thrill of bullfighting had a huge influence on the sport of rodeo and began to develop a strong following. In the late 2000s, after struggles with sponsorships and disagreements with the vision of the sport, the sport of bullfighting quickly faded away.

As the world of thrills and spills of extreme sports began to take hold, Freestyle Bullfighting again grasped the attention of America. Several organizations quickly came about between 2012 and 2017, and Freestyle Bullfighting once again started to see its



popularity take off.

With many names becoming synonymous as power houses in the sport, one name that has blasted onto the scene is a young North Texas cowboy.

Cade Gibson is a 20-year-old cowboy from Tioga, Texas, and did not come about by happenstance. Starting in his youth, Cade spent his entire life in and around rodeo arenas. His early years had him running around with rodeo legends like Dan Mortenson, Deb Greenough and many other influential names. As Cade grew old enough to start competing, his initial focus was as a bull rider. Cade started riding miniature bulls in his youth and saw his share of success. In this time, he found himself riding alongside what are now some of the greats of bull riding like Keyshawn Whitehorse and competing with other top names like Boudreaux Campbell.

Cade moved from Idaho to

North Texas in 2012 where he attended Pilot Point High School his freshman year. He then moved to Tioga High School his sophomore year. During high school he continued to rodeo, competing in saddle bronc, bull riding and team roping. Along with his rodeo career, he also played football and baseball.

During his time competing in high school rodeo, Cade suffered a serious knee injury that included a torn meniscus, anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), and fractures in the knee itself. This injury forced young Cade to make career decisions about his future in rodeo. It was during his recovery time from these injuries on a fateful day that Cade was handed a bullfighting vest from Cody Hart so he could step in and help protect some bull riders.

Following high school, Cade ventured out after his baseball

See SCENE page 30



Cade Gibson earned his first big win in the bullfighting world at the American Freestyle Bullfighting in Deadwood, S.D. (Photo courtesy Avid Visual Imagery)



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He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. -Psalm 107:20

Jesus said unto him, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." -Mark 9:23

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. -Romans 10:17

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Scene

Continued from page 29

career by attending Wesleyan Baptist College in Bartlesville, Okla., where he played baseball.

The bullfighting bug had already taken its bite out of him, and he eventually made his move back to Pilot Point where he accepted a supervisor job with a construction company to pay the bills and continued to find any opportunity to fight bulls.

The year 2018 came along, and Shorty Gorham put together a bullfighting tour with the focus of giving young guns a platform to showcase their skills. It was this tour that provided Cade with his break. In May, Cade made his way to Uvalde, Texas, where the first tour stop of the year 2018 took place. Here in Cade's first big freestyle appearance, he electrified

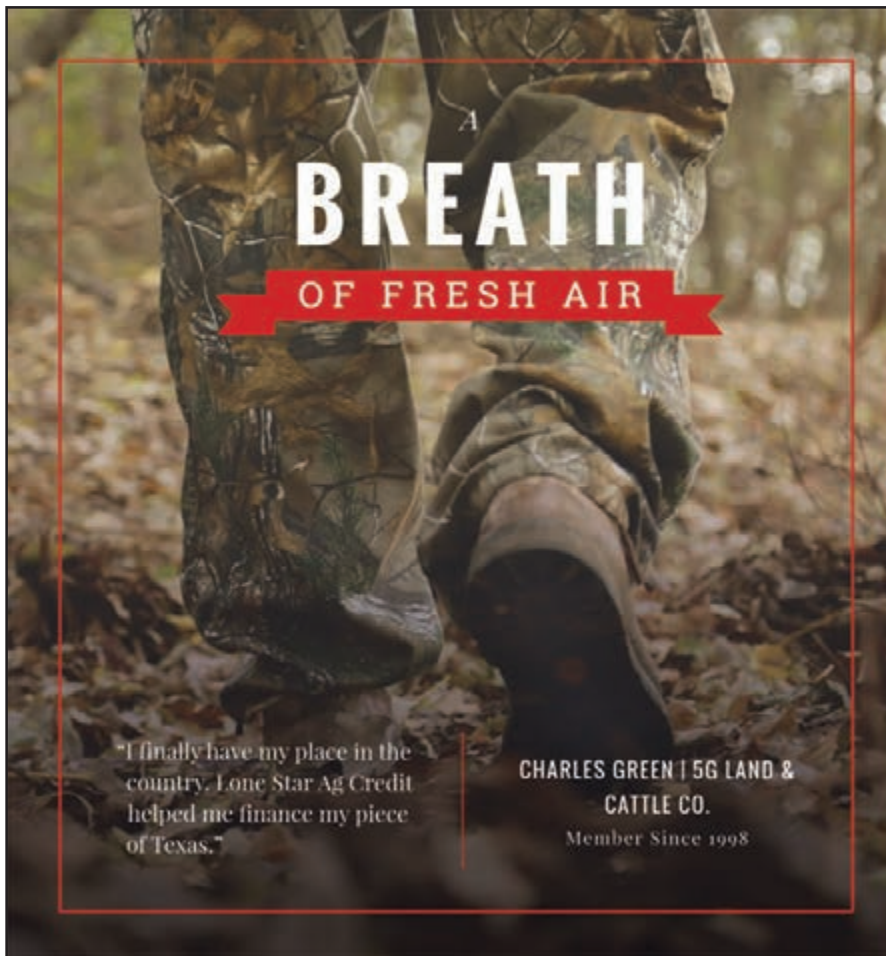
the crowd with his fancy foot work and big jumps.

Unfortunately, Uvalde did not end on the highest of notes, but in no way did this drag down the positive mindset of young Mr. Gibson. Cade left Uvalde with much more than an impression on his skills as a bullfighter. Three days straight not a youngster passed by or a fan went unnoticed by this talented young athlete.

One short week later Cade got his second chance in Gonzales, Texas, where Gorham's AFB made its second tour stop. Cade had a great long round performance that afforded him a shot at the short round. As Cade stepped in as the second to last fighter in the short round, he knew he would have to do something special to



Cade Gibson had a jersey made that honored veterans at a memorial day event in Missouri. He wore the jersey when he fought and had as many veterans as he could find sign it. (Photo courtesy Avid Visual Imagery)



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have a shot. At this point, Cade made his impact in a huge way. He called barrel man Robbie Hodges to the center of the arena and crawled himself to a standing position on top of the barrel. When young Cade called for the 800 pounds of terror, the bull made a charging run right at the barrel where Cade executed a perfectly timed back flip off the barrel, over the bull, and on to the ground. He went on to a one-minute fight with the bull in an arena where you were lucky to hear yourself think.

Cade had not only made his mark with the infamous “barrel flip,” but he electrified the crowd to an extent he may have single handedly created several thousand bullfighting fans.

Unfortunately, the “barrel flip” was not enough to get the win. Right after Cade’s fight, Myles Essick put on a clinic during his short round appearance that gave him the win in the event. Again, the champion outside of the arena showed itself in this young man. Even with the raging fans and the massive amount of attention after the event, you could find Cade talking to the youngsters and shaking hands with the fans.

A young and hungry Cade, who had now had a small taste of success and glory wanted nothing more than to both get a win and focus on his future in bullfighting. During the next couple of weeks, Cade competed in some small events, meanwhile spending everyday working out and training for what he truly believes in. When Cade got home from his run of small events, he made what just might have been the most influential decision of his career.

Arriving back to north Texas, Cade chose to quit his job and focus on bull fighting.

Not three weeks later Cade got another big shot. With a phone call from the producer of Gorham’s American Freestyle Bullfighting, he received the offer to the Invitational Bullfights



Cade Gibson in the short round fight in Gonzales. (Photo courtesy Avid Visual Imagery)

in historic Deadwood, S.D. It is here that Cade made his next big statement in bullfighting. Cade made two great fights, affording him his first big win in the bull fighting world.

The win did not seem to faze the demeanor of Cade. Not only did he see his first big success, but he became an even bigger fan favorite. It was very apparent with all of the autographs he signed and the more he dedicated time to the supporters of the sport, he became more and more grounded and appreciative of everyone in the sport of bullfighting.

At this point Cade and his commitment to his bullfighting career seemed to have come to fruition. During the next couple of months Cade went on to continue making an impact at every fight he entered. One of these major impacts took place in Orem, Utah, at the Freestyle for Hope event. This bullfight is a fund raiser in the efforts of raising money and awareness for juvenile diabetes. During this event each bullfighter is paired with a youngster who is fighting juvenile diabetes.

Once matched up with his youth counterpart, in true Cade Gibson

style he lighted up the arena in his long round fight. Going into the short round, he promised his young partner a barrel jump in his honor. Not only did Cade execute the barrel jump but went on to win the event and share every moment of glory and celebration with his young partner at his side.

As the fall of his rookie season rolled in, Cade found himself sitting number one in the standings in the Gorham’s American Freestyle Bullfighting tour, but he also received his first invitation to a Bullfighters Only event. This Bullfighters Only event proved to be another major step. BFO Wichita attracts every major bullfighter in America, including the top 10 competitors in the sport. As an underdog at this venue, Cade stepped into the arena and left it all on the dirt. It was this effort that afforded him a win in Wichita and a place at the biggest stage of bull fighting. Young Cade Gibson was on his way to Las Vegas to fight in the Bullfighters Only Finale.

BFO Las Vegas is the Super Bowl of Bullfighting; on this stage in the Tropicana all the top bull fighters in the world convene at their chance for \$50,000 in win-

nings. In his qualifier round, Cade once again showed his nerves of steel and his dedication to the sport by winning his qualifying round which advanced him to the preliminaries. The first round of preliminaries, Cade went on to post the highest score of the day and positioned himself in a good place for round two. Round two of the preliminaries did not go as planned. Cade drew a handful of a bull that he was not able to maneuver enough to get a direct advancement into the final rounds.

In the wild card round, Cade again took the bad luck of a tough draw. He finished his fight with a few bumps and bruises.

Unfortunately, his run in Vegas came to an end in the Wild Card round, but like a true champion Cade put it like this, “Just means it’s time to train harder and go get the next one.”

In one year, a young North Texas cowboy born to the sport of rodeo went from a “Who is this guy” to “Hey, that is Cade Gibson.” Every day his work ethic, focus and talent are in a league of their own, and his actions outside of the arena are what truly make him a champion.



Equine Dental: Disease and Complications

By Garrett Metcalf, DVM

It is no secret that horses are very reliant on their teeth for survival. The horse has to be able to apprehend and grind feed to get adequate nutrition to meet their daily caloric needs. Horses have teeth that constantly need to erupt to keep up with the physical demanding work of grinding food, but their teeth have a finite life span, and once they are used up there is nothing to replace them.

Good dentition also is important for the overall health, performance and well-being of a horse. Horses with inadequate or lack of dental care can have performance issues, weight loss, colic, dental pain and secondary sinus infections due to poor dentition. The goal of this article is to address



Good dental work is important for overall horse health. Inadequate care can lead to many problems, including weight loss, colic, dental pain and secondary sinus infections. (Courtesy photo)

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more complicated dental issues and to inform the readers of how to avoid and detect dental issues as well as discuss treatment options if these problems arise.

Many owners are aware of common dental issues that horses face and the importance to get them addressed with routine dental care, but not all owners are aware of secondary complications that occur from dental problems. One of the most common complications that occurs from a bad tooth is tooth root abscesses that drain into the sinuses or from a tract out the bottom of the mandible or jaw.

These complications from infected tooth roots are challenging to diagnose and to treat at times, especially if there is major sinusitis that further complicates the problem. Complications such as these are also monetarily costly to correct compared to routine dental care that could have prevented the

problem from occurring.

It can be difficult for horse owners to detect an infected tooth early in the disease process, but there are signs that can clue owners in that they have a problem. Tooth root infections are often considered an older horse disease but can also occur in young horses.

The signs to watch for are difficulty eating, dropping feed, foul odor coming from the mouth or nostrils, purulent nasal discharge or pus coming from one nostril or a draining tract from the jaw. Some of these signs are indications of various dental issues, but the more clear distinction between a general dental issue and tooth root infection is the nasal discharge or draining tract that has a foul odor.

The reason horses develop secondary sinusitis from tooth root infections is because of their anatomical relationship with their

molars and sinuses. The back three molars of the upper dental arcades arise from the maxillary sinuses, which communicate or drain directly into the nasal passages. Unfortunately, these upper molars are where some of the most common area of dental issues leading to over wearing, fractures or abnormal decay of the tooth occur. This is why routine dental examinations and dental floating is important for the health of these more at-risk teeth that can lead to further complicating disease processes.

Take, for example, a common dental abnormality called a wave mouth. This is a formation of a tall wave in the middle of the lower dental arcade that causes over wearing and destruction of the upper dental arcade commonly affecting one or more of the molars that lead into the sinus cavities. If these conditions are caught early and corrected, the life of the upper

teeth can be preserved for a longer period of time and avoid secondary complications.

Diagnosing a bad tooth can be difficult at times and require a multifaceted approach. The first step in the approach is a history and oral examination to see if there are any clues from the oral cavity as to which tooth is the problem.

Often times x-rays are taken in multiple angles to examine the rows of teeth individually in order to avoid summation or the overlapping of other anatomical structures in the skull. X-rays also provide imaging of the sinus cavities, allowing detection if there is evidence of sinusitis, which often shows up as fluid in the sinus.

Sometimes more advanced imaging such as CT or CAT scan is necessary to fully appreciate the disease process due to the complexity of the equine skull. CT scan equipment is becoming **See DENTAL page 34**

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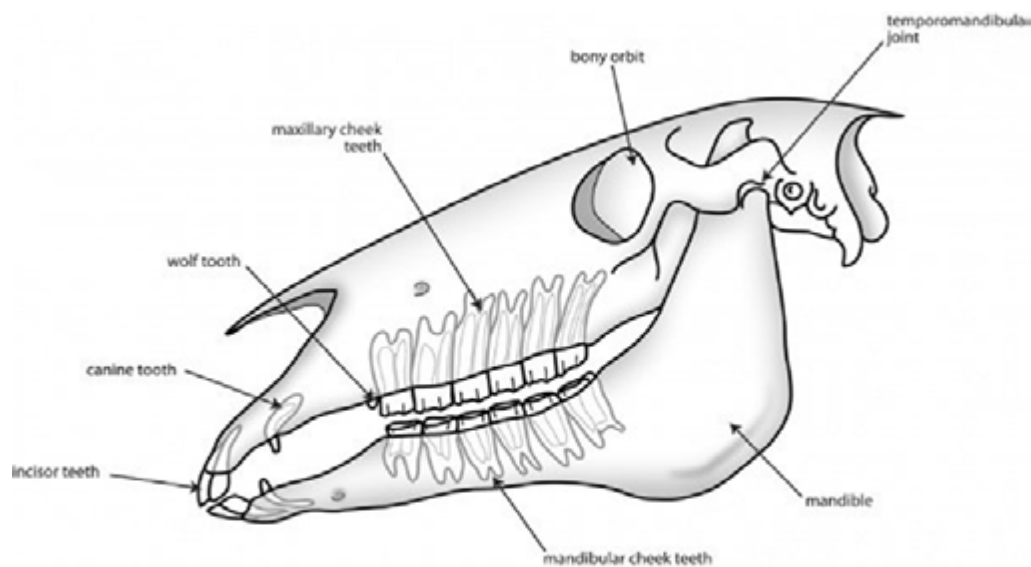


Dental

Continued from page 33

more available and provides superior imaging especially when it comes to the skull of a horse. Because of the short scan times and with the development of special stocks that are integrated into the CT machine, the images can be acquired when the horse is sedated and standing versus being anesthetized and under general anesthesia. Another technique to explore the sinuses of horses is by sinuscopy, where a hole is drilled in the thin bones of the skull over the sinuses in strategic locations to allow a flexible endoscope to be passed into the sinus.

Once the tooth is identified as the culprit, it is mostly likely going to need to be removed. This is no small feat in many cases due to, once again, the anatomy, location of the diseased tooth and some-



The Equine Skull

It's always better to prevent than it is to treat, especially with equine dentistry. If you're concerned that your horse has a dental issue, please see your veterinarian for an exam. (Photo courtesy of vcahospitals.com)


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times the tolerance of the horse to allow the tooth to be extracted. Multiple specialty pieces of equipment are needed to remove a tooth in a horse such as elevators, spreaders and extractors.

A recently developed extraction system called a buccotomy set is another option to extract difficult teeth. This system requires an incision into the cheek to introduce the equipment into the oral cavity. The tooth is extracted by drilling a hole in the center of the tooth, allowing a threaded rod to be placed into the tooth. Then the tooth is driven out by a sliding hammer weight that drives the tooth out.

Some dental abnormalities or fractured teeth do not leave enough crown to grab hold of to allow oral extraction and requires a more invasive approach. This technique is called tooth repulsion. This requires a surgical approach to the top of the tooth roots where a punch is used to drive the tooth out in to the mouth. This approach also gives surgical access to the sinuses and if there is secondary sinusitis from the tooth root infection, it can be addressed at the same time while in surgery. Tooth repulsion most commonly requires the horse to be under anesthesia but can be performed in select cases if the horse is amenable to the process.

Once the affected tooth is removed, the task of keeping the space it came from protected begins, especially when the tooth communicates with the sinus. The sinus must be protected from feed stuff and bacteria entering the sinus from the oral cavity.

This is achieved by several methods, but a physical barrier or plug is required to allow the alveolus (space where the tooth came from) to heal, creating a seal between the mouth and the sinus. If this is not achieved, a fistula can form a nearly permanent pathway for feed stuff and bacteria to enter the sinus, creating a very serious chronic sinusitis that is

extremely challenging to treat in some cases.

Molars and premolars are not the only teeth that are a source of dental disease. A newly recognized dental disease called EOTRH, or equine odontoclastic tooth resorption and hypercementosis, affects the incisors of horses. EOTRH is a painful disease process that results in the resorption of the tooth roots, bone and infection of the incisions and canine teeth. This disease typically affects horses greater than 15 years of age and has various signs throughout the disease process. Common signs are pain, inflammation of the gingival, gingival recession, decreased incisor angle not appropriate with horse age and draining tracts from infection. The best means of diagnosis is with intraoral radiographs or x-ray. There is no current prevention or treatment other than extraction of the diseased teeth. The cause is unknown at this time but theorized that chronic inflammation is believed to play a major role in the disease process.

The equine mouth and dentition is a highly functional grinding machine to process and grind down feed stuffs, but it also has its weaknesses.

These problems areas need to be addressed routinely in order to prevent or detect problems quickly in order to prevent further complications and secondary issues that may go unnoticed, further complicating or worsening the situation.

Remember it is always better to prevent than it is to treat and many of these secondary complications can be avoided with good dental care. If you are concerned that your horse has a dental issue, please see your veterinarian for an exam.

Many veterinarians are equipped to diagnose, treat and prevent dental issues. When it comes to more advanced cases, referral hospitals have the training and expertise to correct these more challenging dental problems. (V)



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By Judy Wade

Drivers on Highway 79 between Wichita Falls, Texas, and Waurika, Okla., are enjoying a new bridge over Red River. Millions of vehicles—from bicycles to heavily loaded oil field trucks and more than a few pedestrians—have traversed the old structure.

A least one cattle drive crossed the Red River via the bridge. In the early 50s, cattle from Claypool, Okla., traveled to Waurika on Highway 70, spent the night there, and continued south on Highway 79 to the Langford Ranch, just south of the river.

Built in 1939, the almost 80-year-old bridge withstood the test of time. It even survived the horrible flood of 1984 when part of the highway on the Texas side washed away, closing access to the bridge for many months. Travelers had to detour through Burkburnett, Texas, or Terral, Okla., where the closest bridges spanned the river, an additional 50 miles or so.

Recently, however, the old structure began to show its age, requiring constant repair.

The last camelback pony bridge and the fourth longest bridge in the Texas State Highway system, it was 2,255 feet long. Twenty-two truss spans on each side, making it a beautiful sight as it stood proudly above the winding river below.

The bridge was added to the National Registry of Historic Places in 1996, meaning the trusses can be relocated rather than being destroyed.

Construction of the new bridge began in September 2017 and was completed near the end of 2018. The contractors were able to keep traffic flowing with only minor delays when work dictated



A new bridge welcomes drivers on Highway 79 across the Red River between Wichita Falls, Texas, and Waurika, Okla. (Photo courtesy Judy Wade)

one-lane be directed by a series of stop lights on each end.

All that remains of the old structure are some of the trusses that have not been removed. Attempts were made to relocate the old trusses, meeting with minimal results. One will move to I35 just north of the WinStar Casino where it will be part of a kiosk

showing the history of Texas river crossings.

Tentative commitments to take trusses were made by two Oklahoma cities, but they found the cost of moving them prohibitive. The contractor who built the new bridge will take the remaining trusses.

The \$22.4 million cost was

shared by Oklahoma and Texas, with Oklahoma taking the lead in the construction, and Oklahoma will be responsible for maintenance of the new bridge.

In addition to a smooth, wide bridge, drivers are enjoying a different view of Red River as the new structure rises well above the old one. (N)



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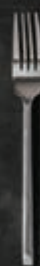
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LACEY'S PANTRY

By Lacey Newlin



Best Ever Chocolate Cake

Total time: One hour and 15 minutes

Yields: Two dozen cupcakes or three (eight-inch) round pans

Ingredients

Cake:

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup unsweetened cocoa
1 1/2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
3/4 cup butter or margarine
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 cup sugar
3 large eggs
2 tsp vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups low-fat buttermilk

Frosting:

1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa
1/3 cup boiling water
1 cup of butter, softened
2 cups confectioner's sugar
12 ounces semisweet chocolate, melted and cooled

Directions

For cake:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Butter and flour pans or ready cupcake liners in cupcake pans. Combine flour, cocoa, baking soda and salt, set aside. In a large mixing bowl, beat softened butter and sugars on low speed until blended. Increase speed to high; beat five minutes or until pale and fluffy, occasionally scraping bowl. Reduce speed to medium-low; add eggs, one at a time, beating



well after each addition. Beat in vanilla then add flour mixture alternatively with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture; beat until smooth. Fill pans with batter and bake for 22 to 25 minutes.

For frosting:

In small bowl, combine cocoa and boiling water, stirring until smooth. In large bowl, with mixer at medium-high speed, beat butter and confectioners' sugar five minutes or until fluffy. Reduce

speed to medium-low; add melted chocolate, then cocoa mixture, beating until smooth and occasionally scraping bowl with rubber spatula. If frosting is too runny, refrigerate until just stiff enough to spread.

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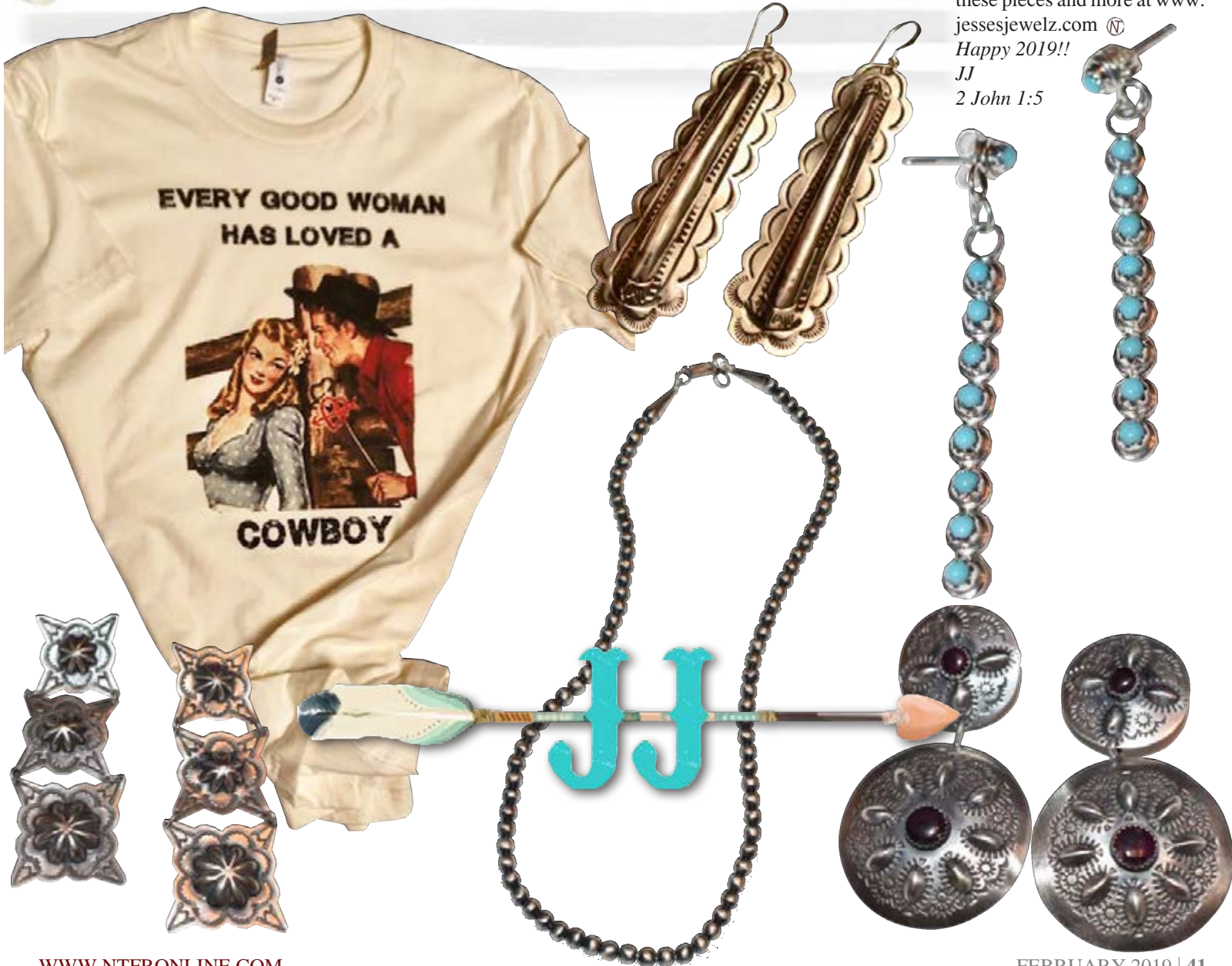
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PROFILE

A close-up photograph of a white Charolais cow's head, showing its eye, ear with a green tag, and nose. The cow is looking slightly to the left. The background is blurred, showing other cows and a blue sky.

Dennis Charolais

HERITAGE AND
HARD WORK



Every family farm has a story to tell. Some are generations deep, rooted in tradition, while others see younger generations diversify from its beginnings. Some maintain modest-sized businesses, while other have turned into sprawling corporations. Too many times in this day and age, others see farms fade away with the generations that came before.

The Dennis Charolais Farm in Saint Jo, Texas, nestled among rolling hills and surrounded by wineries, a pizzeria and soon a bed and breakfast, is an accumulation of five generations in the Dennis family.

Today, Eric Dennis operates the farm that was a piece of his heritage he took and made his very own.

Old signs can still be found dictating where the Dennis Farm once sprawled across thousands of acres, but as each generation took

possession, the land slowly dwindled.

“You can see signs where Dennises used to own it from the bluff all the way to the river,” said Dennis, as he points far off in each direction. “Sadly enough, what happens in most instances when land is passed down to the next generation is the kids don’t have use for the land or haven’t been around, and they will sell their parts off and gradually everything gets sold down and chipped away.”

Fortunately, Dennis’ father, Richard, refused to let go of any more of his family’s legacy. The elder Dennis had graduated from Texas A&M with his masters and doctorate, had a veterinarian license and was working as a professor at Ohio State University when he was informed his kinfolk were preparing to sell the family land.

Continued on page 44



Dennis Charolais

HERITAGE AND HARD WORK

"He bought it while he was up in Ohio. He didn't grow up on this place, he grew up on another part, but he still tells me when he went to college he didn't even have a car or much of anything to his name, but there were people a lot worse off with a lot less than he had. He was born at the end of the depression, and still tells stories of the land and shows me where the old houses used to be. He was here the other day and pointed to where a house stood and told me it was just a chicken house when he was young," said Dennis.

Richard Dennis raised five children, four boys and one girl, but it was the second to oldest, Eric, who knew exactly where he was headed after graduating at 17 years old from Pilot Point High School in 1988- right back to the family farm he spent his summers working as a youth.

"Dad always had this farm and when we went to high school, we would stay out here every summer. It wasn't as nice as it is now, but it had several sets of bunk beds. Me and some of my classmates would haul hay, build fence during the day and at night we would shoot frogs and fish," recalled Dennis.

The only time Dennis spent away from the farm since his teenage years was at College Station as he earned a bachelor's degree from his father's alma mater, Texas A&M. His degree is in agecon, or agriculture business economics. He even took a break in college to return to the farm when it was shorthanded. After completing his degree, it was straight back to Saint Jo.

"I treated the land the same way. I see some people after they become land owners, even though

they're on it and in line to get it, don't help on it at all. Then when it belongs to them, they start working it, but I didn't change the way I treated it," said Dennis.

The farmer has raised his family on the land, marrying wife Angie in 1991, who is just as involved with operations as her husband.

"She'll do whatever she needs to. Half of the time I see her doing things and I think I'm sure most

a child the day after a sale, this time a son, Brayden, on Jan. 26, 2003.

"Both days I bragged on her, how tough she was," said the proud husband.

Dennis Charolais

In 1968, Richard Dennis had purchased the farm's first Charolais during a time the Charolais Association only allowed the artificial insemination of a small percentage of each herd.

"SOMEBODY SAID BEING A COWBOY ISN'T WEARING A HAT OR BOOTS OR YOUR WRANGLER JEANS. IT'S ABOUT PUTTING THE COWS BEFORE YOURSELF"

Eric Dennis.

women would say they can't believe she's doing that,'" laughed Dennis.

His children were born right into the lifestyle. On Jan. 25, 1992, Eric and Angie were having their first bull sale in Paris, Texas, when Angie informed her husband she thought she was going into labor. Dennis recalled he blew it off, but sure enough, the couple's first child, Haley, was born the very next day on Jan. 26, 1992.

Fast forward to Jan. 25, 2003, and the couple once again were in the midst of a bull sale in Sulphur Springs. Angie knew it was time. The couple once again welcomed

"They were going to make you buy a bull but one bull for very few head was very expensive," explained the younger Dennis. "My dad ended up having to stick a lot of those in other people's names, family members names and AI them and not buy a bull and work through that."

At the time, the farm also had cross bred cattle the Charolais bulls were used on, but eventually those were phased all the way out. However, in recent years, Dennis has brought back a few recip cows to put embryos in.

The family continued to build their herd, steering the purebred

calves and selling them to the local meat locker in Nocona.

"I remember taking over the weighing and realizing we were missing out on making extra money by not marketing and selling them as bulls. We started leaving them as bulls and went to having two sales a year, and those have been really great," explained Dennis.

Dennis continues to AI 60 to 70 percent and includes a few herd cleanup bulls, with some years entailing more embryo work than others.

"We haven't been putting the bulls in, but we did put some in this year," said Dennis.

Each fall and spring, the Dennis Charolais Farm Beefgene Bull Sale takes place. The farm has sold cattle everywhere from Utah to North Carolina to Mexico and brought cattle in from Canada.

"It's tough and I think it is tough to make it," said Dennis. "Some days I don't want to talk about anything else, and other days everything goes wrong and I don't want to talk about it at all, everything goes wrong. I guess it's that way with anything, you have to work through those days. I got to thinking the other day and talking to my wife, how many people around here just make a living off cattle only? We couldn't think of many. There are some who are retired from their other job, but the average age is getting on up there."

Dennis donates a large portion of his time to the breed that has been his life, serving as president of the Charolais Association of Texas and currently sitting on the American International Charolais Association (AICA) for this area
Continued on page 46

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Dennis Charolais

HERITAGE AND HARD WORK

Continued from page 44
of North Texas.

"Some say the purpose of the board is to represent my membership area and I think others say it is to better the breed. It just depends on what you are voting on and how you are voting. I am voted in by my peers, so I feel like I should represent them. People all over the country have agendas, and what works up north doesn't work down here," explained Dennis.

But why Charolais? Bottom line, pounds pay the bills, said the farmer.

"Charolais bulls will increase your weaning weights when used on all breeds of cattle," said Dennis. "Cattle are still sold by the pound, whether on the rail or on the hoof."

While other breeds have lost their identity, Charolais have kept their distinctiveness.

"If you see a black calf, you have no idea what breed or make up it is. You don't know if it is Limousine, Angus, Gelbvieh and Simmental. Even Herford now has gone black. However, if you see a Charolais cross calf, you know it. Smoky and buckskin calves will bring you top dollar."

In addition, Charolais red meat yield and cutability tend to be the greatest strength of the breed.

"You want to increase weight or pounds by increasing cutability. Charolais has established itself in the marketplace and even in the show steer world. Charolais have dominated the slick shear shows here in Texas for years now," said Dennis.

Show Ring

The family knows all too well the success a Charolais can have in the show ring after daughter Haley spent her high school years sweeping the competition. However, it wasn't cattle Haley began showing as a youngster, but pigs after winning an \$8,000 scholarship to San Antonio at just eight years old.

"She just kept selling pigs and I didn't mind because she was really good at it, but she would sit up in the stands and watch the calf shows," said Dennis.

In her freshman year at Saint Jo High School Haley turned to her father and told him she wanted to show a heifer. The father



Eric Dennis' daughter, Hayley, experienced great success in the show ring with Dennis Charolais during her high school years. (Photo courtesy Eric Dennis)



Two of the young Charolais on the Dennis Charolais Farm outside of Saint Jo, Texas. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

and daughter weaned a calf from the family's herd and began competing in jackpots during the summer.

"She won Champion Charolais at almost all of them," recalled Dennis. "If they had supreme, she won that too. She would sit in the stands and watch other people in showmanship

and pick up on little things they were doing right and then I would see her doing them. I was glad because at the time I would rather her sitting up there and doing that than getting beat and then not know why."

Her hard work paid off as she went on to win the State Fair of Texas in Fort Worth,



Eric Dennis stands with his father, Richard, who still resides in Pilot Point and his son, Brayden, who is a sophomore at Saint Jo High School.

San Antonio, Houston and the Star of Texas in Austin.

"I thought well, she probably won't do that again, but we got another calf and she did it again her sophomore year, except for Austin, which we skipped because she was missing so many days of school," recalled Dennis.

"Everyone was calling me saying 'Oh, you're so lucky.' I realize we were and there were a lot of politics happening too. We were blind to it, we didn't know anybody, so we didn't realize what was going on. As we started showing more, we were more aware but there was nothing we could do about it," said Dennis.

Haley turned a blind eye and kept working, the next year selecting one of the smallest and youngest of the herd.

"I didn't realize that little baby calf was that special at the time, but she won all those again, the State Fair in Fort Worth, San Antonio and Houston her junior year," said Dennis.

The calf was so young, Haley was able to show it again the next year, and once again, won at the State Fair Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio, as well as the opens and Kansas City.

"That calf was reserve national champion and the junior heifer was national champion. The only time we went to Denver, we went

with two heifers and won grand and reserve. I look back and see people who can do it with one breed maybe one time, two times is a stretch, but I don't think they will ever do it four times. At the time we were doing it, it didn't dawn on me what we were doing. Now I realize how lucky we were," said Dennis.

Some would say Haley's success is a testament to the quality of cattle raised on the Dennis Farm, but the farmer believes hard work had a lot more to do with it.

"Our calves stayed right out here. Every time at the shows some of those that were winning would stay at fitters and those showing wouldn't see them until the show. They would run around the whole time, but Haley sat right there by her calf," recalled Dennis.

As she got older, it was Haley who did all the work.

"You didn't blow it. She did everything," said Dennis. "If I combed the hair she would go back and do it because I didn't do it just right. The days were long, we were the first in the barn and the last to leave."

Dennis continues to see hard work pay off in the calves he sells to youth competing in current events.

"I'll have some people show up and they want a calf with the scramble certificates from stock shows and all they will have is \$1,500 or

\$1,700 and I'll tell them I'll find you a calf for that," said Dennis. "Then I will have another I think is a great calf and it'll be halter broke and put it in the sale, I sold one for \$16,000, and the guy with the \$1,500 who works with his really hard and feeds it every day on time and puts the calf before himself would beat the high dollar calf."

It is difficult to put a percentage on the quality of calf verses hard work, but the difference is there.

"You have to have a good calf to begin with, but the sole part of that person ringing out the best in it is up to them," said Dennis.

Hard Work

The same principle applies to farm work. Success is no accident in the farming world. It comes with hard work, education, persistence and a solid reputation. That's just what Dennis has created for himself.

"Somebody said being a cowboy isn't wearing a hat or boots or your wrangler jeans. It's about putting the cows before yourself. If there is snow on the ground, you go feed the calves before you eat breakfast. You worry about them first, especially if they are the ones making your money," said Dennis.

Now, Haley is married to Garrett Skiles, and she is a teacher with Brady Independent
Continued on page 48



Dennis Charolais

HERITAGE AND HARD WORK

Continued from page 47

School District, and Brayden is currently a sophomore at Saint Jo High School.

"I have been running the bus route forever as far as taking the kids to town, to school. When I finally quit that I don't know what I'll do. I have to wait to take them to school, then I start off with feed," laughed Dennis.


However, no matter how much hard work a farmer puts in, there is always some uncertainty to the job. For Dennis, the uncertainty is the most difficult part.

"The present cattle market isn't the greatest. Everything has to line up, that's what is so bad about the cattle deal. Even though we are getting rain, what happens in Argentina or Brazil or China affects us over here, not to mention oil and gas. Any little thing," explained Dennis.

Even when everything seems to be going right, things can instantly take a turn, recalling this past fall when everyone's pastures had never looked better but were suddenly stripped by army worms. Land also can be hard to come by. The farm includes more than 700 continuous acres with multiple leases on land but finding and keeping those can be a difficult task.

"I lost some leases, or they sold it. I just got off the phone with a guy who sold some land we leased. There are more houses, people just keep moving in. When something comes up for lease, we grab it. The lease that just sold, we had it leased since the 1970s. When something does come up for lease, you better get it," said Dennis. Despite the difficulties and a life of uncertainty, Dennis enjoys the lifestyle owning a cattle farm provides.

"I know we enjoy sitting down watching deer and wildlife. I think about people who live in the city, what do they do if you're side by side and house to house. Where do they go to get away and appreciate something? You have to get out there by yourself," said Dennis. "When I think about it, if I didn't have this, what would I do?"

For sale dates and more information, follow Dennis Charolais on Facebook at www.facebook.com/dennischarolais 



Eric Dennis with his wife, Angie, son Brayden, daughter, Hayley, and son-in-law, Garrett. (Photo courtesy Eric Dennis)



A young Eric feeds carrot tops to Poker Chip in May 1974. (Photo courtesy Eric Dennis).

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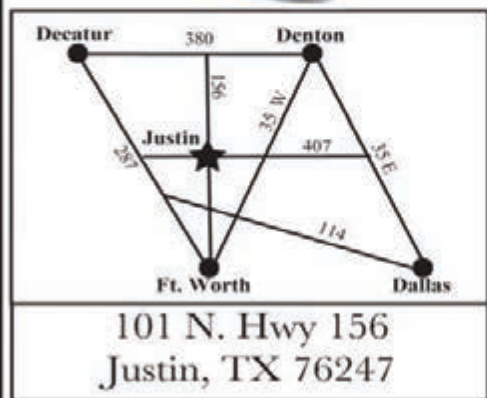
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-Rich in North Texas History-

The Red River Valley Museum

By Savannah Magoteaux

The Red River Valley Museum is a hub of north Texas art and history and is located on the campus of Vernon College in Vernon, Texas. The museum was created in 1964, with the gift of the J. Henry and Ethel Ray artifact collection. This expansive collection of fossils and native artifacts was uncovered in more than 25 years of exploring Wilbarger County and the Red River Valley area. "It was given to the city of Vernon with the condition that the city would house it, and the city did - in four different spots," noted Sherry Yoakum, Red River Valley Museum Executive Director. The first location for the collection was a coat closet in the Wilbarger Auditorium. "You can imagine 10,000 pieces of artifacts in a coat closet. There wasn't much room. Especially not when one of them is the back jawbone of a woolly mammoth!"

The artifacts were next housed in an old hospital. "There was also a third location, but in 1985 we opened this building on the campus, and that's where we've been ever since," Yoakum explained.

Now, the 15,000 square foot Red River Valley Museum is made up of three main galleries: the Berry Gallery, the Bond Gallery and the Waggoner Gallery.

The Berry History and Science Room, recently redesigned, focuses on the intriguing history of Wilbarger County, and is home to the assemblage of fossils and artifacts from the J. Henry and Ethel Ray Collection that gave the Red River Valley Museum its start. "It shows the history of the county from the time of the dinosaurs



A large mural depicting a Texas sunset greets museum visitors as they walk through the doors. The photo was taken by local photographer Joe Rogers. (Photo courtesy of the Red River Valley Museum)

to what we are today. We have artifacts up to 200 million years old, including one the Smithsonian was quite amazed with because it is so rare," Yoakum said. Visitors can see mammoth and mastodon bones, fossilized plant imprints imbedded in rock and a 120 million year old fossil of a reptile known as a Captorhinus – all from the north Texas area.

"The Berry Room speaks for itself. There is so much history. It also focuses on the native Indians such as the Comanche, Wichita and Kiowa tribes. The Great Western Trail, the Railroad, the Palomino Club, the Doan's Com-

munity, Wright Brand Foods, which is now Tyson, and more are also showcased," Yoakum said.

The next gallery, the William H. Bond Trophy and Game Room, is home to 135 game mounts from the collection of Bill Bond, a big game hunter and rancher who was also instrumental in the creation of the Red River Valley Museum. Bond traveled the world from Africa to the Arctic Circle. "All animals featured in the exhibit are adult males. We have everything from the little bitty dik diks (a small antelope) to a standing polar bear and standing brown bear. There also are two standing lions.

The educational opportunities are amazing," Yoakum said. "This room will be the next to have a redesign, which we hope will be done in 2019."

The final room of the Red River Valley Museum is the Waggoner Gallery, which contains history of the historic Waggoner Ranch. The Ranch is the largest in the United States under once fence. "We have the family tree as well as a replica of Electra Waggoner-Biggs' art studio," Yoakum said. Waggoner-Biggs was an internationally renowned sculptor. She won a third prize at the prestigious **See MUSEUM page 52**



Two of the incredible mounts showcased in the William H. Bond Trophy and Game Room at the Red River Valley Museum. Bill Bond, a rancher and big game hunter, was instrumental in the creation of the museum. (Photo courtesy of the Red River Valley Museum)

Museum

Continued from page 51

Salon d'Autum in Paris and had work exhibited at Seligman's in New York. Her work also has been exhibited at the National Museum for Women in the Arts, Notre Dame University and Duke University as well as having commissions in the Eisenhower Library, the Truman Library, the National USO Building and the Texas State House. The Red River Valley Museum has the largest

collection of her work.

In addition to the three main galleries, the Red River Valley Museum also has a traveling art room used to host special events, including its annual international juried art competition.


"Believe it or not, it is not a huge museum. Many of our visitors are amazed that there is a museum of this caliber in a town the size of Vernon, and make sure

to tell us that," Yoakum said with a laugh.

Yoakum noted that people can spend a few minutes to a few hours in the museum. "It's just according to how interested they are in it.

"If they're terribly interested, they will spend two or three hours. If they're just doing a fly by – maybe in town for a meeting or something – they'll be there a

few minutes and must leave, but they'll tell us they have to come back," she said.

Admission to the Red River Valley Museum is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. The Museum is open from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Saturday. For more information, call 940-553-1849, or visit the website at RRVM.net. 

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WHEN A CITY GIRL GOES COUNTRY

By Annette Bridges

My mamma used to tell absolutely everyone who learned I was getting married and moving to my husband's cattle ranch that she didn't send me to college to get my hands dirty. At the time I had no idea what she was worried about. I wasn't planning on getting any part of me dirty. I was simply going to live with my husband on his family's ranch. Yes, I guess I was going to be a rancher's wife, but I had my own career dreams that didn't include working cattle. Did I say I wasn't planning to get my hands or any other part of me dirty?

I was a city girl in love with a country boy. It was quite romantic to me. I adored his simple charm with his impeccable good manners and sincere chivalry. I loved his farmer's tan and sexy cowboy hats. He wasn't a man of many words, but his love was felt and expressed in his unconditional actions. There was no doubt he loved me as much as I loved him. Ours was a love at first sight story that I wholeheartedly believed was written in the stars. We met in line for a ride at Six Flags Over Texas. There was instant chemistry and connection. He left with my phone number and I went home and called my mom to proclaim that I had met the man I was going to marry, and that is exactly what happened seven months later.

I wasn't trying to flee the city. I wasn't looking for a slower paced life. I didn't have dreams of living off the land. I was clueless about any conveniences that would be given up. What was irrevocably true is that there was never a question about where we would live. I only wanted to be with the man I loved, and his family cattle ranch was where that would be, even if it meant I had to live next door to my in-laws. And it did. Another reality I was clueless about at the time.

Friends and family members had their questions and doubts about what seemed like two different worlds merging together. They wondered how our marriage would survive much less thrive. Thirty-eight years later we are happily married and living on our cattle ranch. Something apparently worked.

There have been many memorable moments, lessons learned, surprises and compromises along with challenges and accomplish-



Thirty-eight years ago, Annette Bridges uprooted her life to marry a farmer and follow him to Texas. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

ments. In my columns that follow you will get the scoop.

To all of our doubting friends and family members and perhaps to some of you reading this column right now who have your own wonderings about the meshing of a city girl and a country boy, I would say consider this. The English idiom "don't judge a book by its

cover" is a metaphorical phrase which means "you shouldn't prejudge the worth or value of something or someone by outward appearance alone." I've learned that part of what makes life an amazing adventure is the many unexpected twists and turns that come along. And what's most important is to always believe something wonderful is going to happen. ☺

Doug's Peach Orchard



WORTH THE DRIVE

By Dani Blackburn

Doug's Peach Orchard located just across the Red River at 27677 U.S. Highway 81 in Terral, Okla., has survived the test of time to remain a favorite among locals since its beginning in 1948.

It is not uncommon for North Texans to take a day trip just for a refreshing glass of tea and some delicious bites. If you're local, you know those bites won't include any peaches like the name suggests. Instead, the hometown favorite derives its name from the peach orchard that used to sit where the restaurant now does, serving up catfish and other fried foods.

If you're not local, let us introduce you to the restaurant that makes it worth the drive – your taste buds will thank us later.

Driving across the Red River, it would be easy to get caught up in the scenery and miss this local dive, which appears nothing more than a hole-in-the-wall to some-

but I mean that affectionately, it's the kind of place you know will greet you with all the southern comfort food you could want and fine hospitality at its best.

Fortunately, a parking lot full of cars and a bright and cheery turquoise and orange sign welcoming all visitors will help you from driving by without notice. Summer time is a favorite season for many to visit, with cars spilling into the grass and down the road at times.

As you walk in, a U-shaped sit-down counter welcomes you into the main room, which also includes some booths along the wall.

Two other adjoining rooms come with more booths and tables big enough for trips that include the whole family.

The décor is cowboy and charming and has changed little since the building was constructed from the dust of the former Doug's Peach Orchard that burnt to the

ground in the 1960s. Formerly, the restaurant was more of a bar, serving only beer, and the owners can still relive the tales of rowdy crowds and fights in the parking lot.

The restaurant was named after owner Jimmy Edwards' father, Doug. The owner has cooked at the establishment since he was just 14-years-old, and has passed that torch onto his son, Joby, as they keep it a family business.

For waitress Nichole Prater, the family part of the business is her favorite part of the job.

"We are all like one big family," she explained.

If you're lucky enough to skip a wait, a rarity at the Peach Orchard, you'll have your choice of unsweet tea, water and a variety of soft drinks, and beer is available.

A short menu awaits its guests, with not a ton of options, but that's okay – what they do, they do well. Guests can choose from catfish, steak fingers, chicken livers, calf

fries, shrimp and chicken strips in half and full basket sizes. Corn dogs and sandwiches also are available.

If you're wanting an appetizer to get started, several delicious options await you, including onion rings, fried pickles, fried mushrooms and my favorite – hush puppies, served up with butter. Healthy, I know, but if you're going to break your diet, this is the way to do it.

Waitresses are quick to take orders, but don't let their speed full you.

Hospitality is still important, but in a restaurant where diners are flooding the door, moving fast is important.

Today, the food quickly arrived to the table since I was lucky enough to beat the crowd. I went for the staple favorite, the fried catfish, which arrived in a basket topped with fries and stuffed so full of food there's no way to add in dipping sauces, but no worries-

an extra basket is brought to you just for that reason.

A big platter arrives along with the food, adorned with sides of onion, pickles, bread and tartar sauce for parties to split and enjoy.

The food was exactly what fried food is all about. The catfish was light and greaseless, and better still, doesn't leave that fishy taste in your mouth I despise so much. The fries are soft without being soggy, and very little grease was present for a basket full of fried food. If you have any room left at the end of the meal, a variety of pie options await you.

However, if you think people drive all that way just for the fish you would be wrong – it's the secret recipe tartar sauce that puts this place above the rest. Onions, pickles and who knows what else comes together to create a spoon full of deliciousness.

"What keeps people coming back? That's easy, the fish and the tartar sauce," said Prater.

However, for many North Texans, it's the nostalgia the restaurant holds that carries them back time and time again, to a moment when a jute box sat in the wall of each booth and music filled the place.

"I remember you would have to get here by five, because if not the line would be out the door," said Lila Deweber, a North Texas resident who has been going to Doug's Peach Orchard for years. "You would eat and enjoy a dinner with the family, then you were gone before the rowdy bunch showed up."

The wait isn't getting any shorter with a new casino recently opened up within view of the restaurant's parking lot, giving travelers just one more reason to stop for lunch at the longtime favorite establishment.

If you haven't already, put Doug's Peach Orchard on your must visit list. You'll find yourself revisiting this local, family-owned staple time and time again. Hours are 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., and remember to bring cash or check because they do not accept credit cards. ®



Doug's Peach Orchard has been a favorite of locals since 1948.



The Peach Orchard's tartar sauce is a hug hit among guests who travel from all over just to enjoy the delicious side.



Visitors young and old enjoy dropping a quarter in the sucker box and picking out their favorite flavor. (Photos by Dani Blackburn)

Serving the Square



By Mandi Dietz

With time comes change and a melting pot of old and new, creating a destination to rediscover.

Most small-town squares, downtowns, and city centers these days resemble that of Parker County, with business offerings and bustle a bit different than that of its heyday.

Once the go-to place and one-stop shop for everything from groceries to feed, household items, hardware, entertainment and socialization, the Square now offers an unforeseeable blend of tradition and trendy, past, present and in between, with a mix of old-timers, fancy eateries and generous space “for lease,” making room for a new crop of trade.

Some seasoned residents and visitors take it as a hard pill to swallow, while others welcome and celebrate change.

Evolution seems inevitable in a growing community, but the hope to maintain heritage remains. Even if they give it a whirl, it’s nearly impossible for younger generations to visualize the Weatherford Square in all its glory.

Thankfully, stories passed down and pictures shared keep memories alive, recounting a hotel, at least three cinemas and five and dimes, Duke & Ayers, believed to have begun in Bowie, and the Ben Franklin Store.

“Your Papa would have been the one to speak to about that,” says Mack Dobbs, former farmer

and county commissioner and current owner and operator of the Clock Shop off the Square. “He’d say, ‘You could come down here on a Saturday night and see hundreds of people.’”

Eventually, South Main Street and a handful of other paved roads took people farther and farther from the Square.

Big box chains frequented today compelled most original mom and pops to shut their doors permanently.

First Monday Trade Days, with the exchange of hand-made goods, produce and livestock, relocated to Santa Fe Drive, as did two beefy institutions, Merchants and Farmers State turned Texas Bank, and Citizens National.

Summer dances shuffled off to the rodeo grounds down Palo Pinto Street.

Previously, where long lines eagerly waited at the Plaza Theatre to see new releases such as Star Wars, Rocky and Jaws in 3D, there’s painted plywood with signs advertising availability for rent.

Nowadays, Film Alley, several miles away, off the freeway, provides plenty of fun, featuring dine-in movies, an arcade, a bowling alley and more.

Parking meters are gone, too, sold off many years ago to the public, but they can still be found around, including outside the police station for nostalgia. Nevertheless, and good news, this

means Square parking is complimentary.

"I kinda miss it the way it was," Dobbs said, echoing many like-minded. "Downtown used to be the only place; everything was right here. There were no shopping centers."

Surprisingly, long-standing residents, such as QUICKPRINT and Bennett's Office Supply, both showcasing reliable festive winter window displays, "Good Neighbor" Davis City Pharmacy, Texas Butane, Two Heels and a Loafer, and Hair on the Square, survive, some sustaining roughly half a century.

A mix of old and new, entwined with ample vacancies, at least a half dozen attorneys share the Square with a flower shop, vet supply, antique store, title company, a few restaurants, The Popcorn Corner, and various services ranging from financial, to construction, foster and adoption, and home care.

A vape and hemp store shares a sidewalk with Parker County Democrats and massage therapy, and it's adjacent to a cigar and tobacco smoking lounge.

Despite various interests and age, businesses servicing the Square share a common goal of aiming to draw and ultimately please customers.

They can help each other, too. "We bring a lot of people from out of town who visit while they're here, and vice versa," Dobbs said. "Other businesses do the same for me."

Dobbs also says moving the Clock Shop from Old Garner Road into town and near the Square specifically, where it's visible, helped his business considerably.

Although the Square seems different than in its splendor, prosperity comes in waves, long since the days of watering holes and saloons. Hopefully, there's a surge on the horizon.

However, the Square is still kicking, thanks to annual events and festivals, a continuous circuit of traffic flow, the dedication of clientele, and the unique businesses serving them well.®

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Despite substantial growth, Weatherford continues to cling to its heritage, represented in this mural on the square.



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The Birthplace and Home OF THE SINGING COWBOY

By Savannah Magoteaux

With Christmas just behind us, the sounds and jingles of the season's holiday songs still ring in some ears. More than likely you heard the old-time rendition of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, sung by Gene Autry. That song is the second all-time best-selling Christmas single, boasting sales in excess of \$30 million. Although Autry wasn't the author of that song – that honor belongs to writer Robert May – he did pen another well-known Christmas song, Here Comes Santa Clause.

As an Oklahoman who lives in the southern part of the state, I'd always assumed Gene Autry was born in the town that bears his name, Gene Autry. Located just to the northwest of Ardmore, it's home to a little more than 100 people. The town had originally been named Lou, then Dresden, then was followed by Berwyn, but was finally renamed Gene Autry in 1941. It even hosts the Gene Autry Museum, which pays homage not only to its namesake, but also to the stars of western films from the 1930s to 1950s.

I was floored when, after moving south of the Red River for several years, I found out that another small town, this one in Texas, was actually his birthplace.

Gene was born Orvon Grover Autry on a ranch in Tioga. "The Singing Cowboy" lived to the ripe old age of 91 before he succumbed to lymphoma in 1998. At the time, his worth was estimated upward of \$300 million, placing him on Forbes' list of richest Americans. His fortune was made not only through the entertainment industry, but also oil wells, hotels, TV and radio stations, real estate, and



The Gene Autry Museum sits in Tioga, Texas, the birthplace of the great entertainer, singer, songwriter, actor, musician and rodeo performer Gene Autry. (Photo courtesy Gene Autry Museum)

ownership of the Anaheim Angels (now Los Angeles Angels).

Autry came by his singing talent honestly. As the grandson of a preacher, he sang in the church choir when he was young. When his family moved to Oklahoma, he helped work his father's ranch after school. The story goes that he purchased his first guitar for \$8 at the age of 12, and when he got a job as a telegrapher for the railroad, he would use his work breaks to sing, yodel, and play guitar. At some point, he was heard by the celebrated Will Rogers, who encouraged him to try it professionally.

Autry soon gained a following after signing a recording contract with Columbia Records in 1929, and soon after performed on the "National Barn Dance" for a radio

station in Chicago. Just five years later he began to appear on screen, and it was obvious his talent wasn't limited to behind the mic. He starred in 93 films, and was voted as the fourth biggest box office attraction in 1940 behind Mickey Rooney, Clark Gable, and Spencer Tracy.

Autry's popularity was evident during his tours, and he was the first performer to sell out Madison Square Garden. He was known to do two shows per day, seven days a week, for months at a time. According to his official website, a 1953 fan magazine estimated that if all the recordings that Gene sold were stacked one atop of the other, the pile would be 57 miles high!

Although successful and wealthy, he was moved to enlist in the U.S. Army Air Force in

1942 during World War II, becoming Sgt. Gene Autry. During the war he transported fuel and ammunition in the China/Indian/Burma Theater of war, and also flew a hazardous route over the Himalayas. After the war, he was reassigned to the Special Services where he toured with a USO troupe. He resumed his movie career in 1946.

Autry was more than just a great entertainer; he was a lover of baseball with a sharp business sense. When presented with the opportunity, he purchased the American League Los Angeles Angels (Anaheim Angels at the time of his death). He also opened the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum in California in 1998. Now called the Autry Museum of **See COWBOY page 62**

COWBOY

Continued from page 61

the American West, the museum welcomes thousands of visitors each year.


Although many people know of his involvement in baseball, they aren't aware of his connection to rodeo. You see, the Singing Cowboy actually owned a string of rodeo stock, and became a partner in the World Championship Rodeo Company in the 1940s. The WCRC furnished stock for many of the major rodeos at the time.

The Singing Cowboy is the only entertainer to have five stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame; one each for radio, recording, motion pictures, television, and live theatre/performance. He was also inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, The National Cowboy Hall of

Fame, the National Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame, and he received The Songwriters Guild Life Achievement Award.

Despite having achieved fame and fortune, he did not forget his Tioga roots and traveled back there to visit his family and friends, not acting as an untouchable legend, but more of the hometown boy he was.

The first annual Gene Autry Day in Tioga was held on September 29, 2001. Texas House Resolution No. 575 was adopted in 2001, honoring Tioga's observance of Gene Autry Day.

Regardless of which small town is actually the home of Gene Autry, there's no doubt that the legendary Singing Cowboy was a person to be proud of. 



The legendary entertainer, Gene Autry. (Photo courtesy Gene Autry Museum)





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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

San Angelo Stock Show & Rodeo

FEB. 1-17 • SAN ANGELO

200 West 43rd Street, San Angelo, Texas 76903. Beginning in 1932 with the goal of sustaining growth, the San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo Association continually evolves and is now a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Association is made up of more than 1,000 hard-working volunteers that are dedicated to continually providing the best events so that the association can continue to provide scholarships to deserving youth. Dedicated to preserving the western way of life and promoting agricultural education to the Youth of Texas, the San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo Association works year round to continue to bring top notch events to the West Texas area. Though the primary event, the Association hosts is the annual Stock Show and Rodeo, it always produces the Cinch Roping Fiesta held annually in October, the Fall Spectacular jackpot livestock show held in November, the Silver Spur Circuit Octoberfest AQHA Show, and the San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo Quarter Horse Show in January. SASSRA has also opened the gates and housed events such as the National Reined Cow Horse Celebration of Champions, the USTRC's West Texas Championship, Stock Horse of Texas events, as well as a variety of circus, roping, trade show, and private events. The association is dedicated to hosting and holding events that continue to draw a variety of people and organizations into the town of San Angelo. The events conducted at the fairgrounds by the association boasts an economic impact approaching \$30 million annually. The San Angelo Rodeo ranks as one of the nation's largest rodeos in total contestants and the livestock

show ranks fourth in the nation in entries. The Stock Show and Rodeo provides the largest economic impact of any event held in the city of San Angelo. The event attracts over 5,500 4-H and FFA exhibitors from more than 200 Texas counties and is arguably the largest event in West Texas at the Tom Green County fairgrounds. For a complete schedule of events and tickets, visit www.sanangelorodeo.com.

San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo

FEB. 7-24 • SAN ANTONIO

723 AT&T Center Parkway, San Antonio, Texas 78219. Established In 1949, The San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo has grown to be one of the largest and most prestigious single events in the city, with more than 2 million visitors each year. For more information, rodeo map, tickets and more visit www.sarodeo.com.

The Original Harlem Globetrotters

FEB. 8 • WICHITA FALLS

Kay Yeager Coliseum, 1000 5th Street, Wichita Falls, Texas 76301. The Original Harlem Globetrotters are on the road for their action packed tour. A star-studded roster will have fans on the edge of their seats to witness the ball handling wizardry, basketball artistry and one-of-a-kind family entertainment that thrills fans of all ages. Join Globetrotter stars after the game where they will stay for an autograph, photograph and high five session for fans (subject to availability). The Original Harlem Globetrotters will come on Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20. For group discounts on tickets, please call Kristine Slizewski at 678-497-1887 or email slizewski@harlemglobetrotters.com.

JASON BOWLAND AND THE STRAGGLERS BOWIE FEBRUARY 23



Chad Prather's Star Spangled Banter Comedy Tour

FEBRUARY 14 • WICHITA FALLS

Wichita Falls Auditorium, 1300 7th St., Wichita Falls, Texas, 76301 Spend your Valentine's Day with Chad Prather, who is known for his way with words. A comedian, armchair, philosopher, musician and observation humorist, he is often referred to as the modern-day Will Rogers. Many recognize him from his fast talking, rapid fire rants from the front seat of his truck, and now guests will have the chance to hear them in person. A meet and greet will take place before the show, available to buy online only. wfmpec.com/event/chad-prather/

PK Cutters Horse Cutting Event

FEBRUARY 15-17 • GRAHAM

Young County Arena, 120 Barclay Blvd., Graham, Texas 76450. Make your way out to the Young County Arena for some cutting Feb. 15-17.

President's Day Angus Bull & Female Sale

FEB 18 • CADDO, OKLA.

Clay Freeny Ranch, Caddo, Okla. The Albrecht/Penz eighth annual President's Day Angus Bull and Female Sale takes place at noon on Feb. 18 at the Clay Freeny Ranch in Caddo, Okla. The President's Day sale will include 150 Angus bulls plus more than 200 registered and commercial Angus females. For your free reference sale booklet for this eighth annual sale, call 816-531-0811, email angushall@angushall.com, fax 816-531-0851 or visit www.angushall.com.

Gabriel "Fluffy" Iglesias "Beyond The Fluffy" Tour

FEB. 21 • WICHITA FALLS

Memorial Auditorium, 1300 7th Street, Wichita Falls, Texas 76301. Comedian Gabriel Iglesias will be performing in Wichita Falls on Feb. 21. Tickets can be purchased at wfmpec.com starting Nov. 1 at 10 a.m. For tickets visit www.fluffyguy.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Art Alive! Home & Garden Show

FEBRUARY 23 • WICHITA FALLS

Ray Clymer Exhibit Hall, 1000 5th Street, Wichita Falls, TX 76301. The Annual Arts Alive! Home and Garden Festival will be filled with new and innovative products and services for inside your home, in the garden or on the deck. Vendors, seminars, demonstrations and more fill the Ray Clymer Exhibit Hall. Show hours are Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. *Free Trolley Transportation available Saturday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. from the MPEC Parking Lot to the front door for all guests. Advance \$6, at the door \$8, military \$6, children 12 and under FREE with an adult. For more info contact Carol Sales at 940-767-2787 or at carols@kempcenter.org.

Jason Bowland and The Stragglers

FEBRUARY 23 • BOWIE

Bowie Community Center, 413 Pelham, Bowie, Texas 76230. Get your tickets now to enjoy the sounds of Jason Boland and The Stragglers at the City of Bowie Community Center on Feb. 23, also featuring Tanner Fenoglio. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the show begins at 7 p.m. General admission is \$25 and a table of eight is \$250, but hurry because only six are available. The Bowie Chamber of Commerce will be selling beer. Visit www.cityofbowietx.com.

KJRA Youth Rodeo

FEBRUARY 23-24 • GRAHAM

Young County Arena, 120 Barclay Blvd., Graham, Texas 76450. Make your way out to the Young County Arena for the Kids Junior Rodeo Association event.

Cow Town Marathon

FEBRUARY 23-24 • FORT WORTH

Will Rogers Memorial Center, 3400 Burnett-Tandy Drive, Fort Worth, TX. The largest multi-event race in North Texas kicks off on Feb. 23 with distances for everyone, including both the Kids 5K presented by Academy Sports and Adults 5K, 10K, Half Marathon, Marathon and Ultra Marathon presented by Miller Lite. The race accommodates runners and walkers with all walking abilities. This year, The Cowtown is celebrating the 41st year of running. Proceeds from every race entry go towards helping low-income children in North Texas receive a free pair of running shoes and a reduced entry fee into the Kids 5K. cowtownmarathon.org/the-cowtown-marathon-40th-anniversary/.

Wise County Junior Livestock Show

FEB. 25- MARCH 2 • DECATUR

Decatur, Texas. Wise County FFA and 4-H students will showcase their hard work and dedication as the Wise County Junior Livestock Show gets underway. Plan to be there and show support for the local youth.

Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo

FEB. 25 - MARCH 17 • HOUSTON

3 NRG Pkwy, Houston, Texas 77054. Since the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ was established, it has made an impressive footprint on the livestock and entertainment industries and in the sport of rodeo. Houston's most popular event. For tickets, additional info, map of the grounds, a full schedule of events and more see www.rodeohouston.com.

RFD-TV The American

MARCH 2-3 • ARLINGTON

AT&T Stadium, 1 AT&T Way, Arlington, Texas 76011. Qualifying events take place across the country as ropers and riders hope to compete at the world's richest rodeo. Athletes are still competing in qualifying events in the hopes of earning a chance to rope and ride at the annual event. Amateurs compete with a mixture of champions and top athletes from the PRCA and WPRA. Starting at 6:30 p.m. on March 2 will be the "long go" for the rodeo with the top 15 in each event participating. Starting at 2 p.m. on March 3 will be the "short go" with the top eight and top four for the rodeo. www.americanrodeo.com/category/320696/the-american.

From "Turkey to Tulsa, A Tribute to Bob Wills"

MARCH 5 • WICHITA FALLS

The Elks Club, 4205 Seymour Rd., Wichita Falls, Texas. Presented by Museum of North Texas History, a catered meal by the Elks kicks off

the event followed by a program and dance with Susan and Kenny Mayo and "Post Oak." Tickets are \$35, museum members are \$30 and a reserved table of eight is \$240. The event begins at 6:30 p.m. For reservations call 940-322-7628. Deadline for reservations is March 1.

Wichita Falls Ranch & Farm Expo

MARCH 13-14 • WICHITA FALLS

JS Bridwell Ag Center, 111 N Burnett, Wichita Falls, TX 76301. The Wichita Falls Ranch & Farm Expo features more than 350 vendors from 25 states and Australia, in over 175,000 square feet of exhibit space. The expo will feature a live production bull sale, wild west rodeo acts and entertainment, Beer Garden, plus more than \$5,000 in prizes and giveaways. Fun for the entertainment family. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension will be providing Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for Oklahoma and Texas producers through speakers and seminars. It is free to the public. For more information call Darren Dale at 866-685-0989.



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On the Road with Dave Alexander



Howdy Texas Music Lovers. What an honor it is to share my musical stories and friends with you each month right here in this great magazine.

I've said it before, and I still stand by it today: Texas music "musicians" are among some of the finest in the world. What a pleasure it has been to report to work on many different stages with so many talented people. Today I want you to meet a dear friend and one of the "Very Best."

Floyd Domino is known to many in our industry as the greatest "Texas Piano Man" around today. He has captured the style and virtuosity of so many greats who have preceded him. Names like Al Strickland, Pee Wee Lynn, Floyd Cramer and Pig Robbins to name a few. Now you may not recognize all those names, but trust me, they

are hit makers.

I've had the pleasure to share the stage with Floyd many times as we played for some of the finest. Texas fiddlers Bob Boatright and Johnnie Gimble, Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, George Strait, to name a few. And of course, we've both spent many years with Asleep at the Wheel.

People seldom think about the band members when they hear a great piano solo behind guys like Merle, George or Willie, but believe me, these guys will be the first to tell you it's musicians like Floyd Domino who make country songs into Country Hits.

Check out his new CD at Floyddomino.com and have a listen for yourself, or better yet, watch for Floyd and me coming soon to a city near you. See you in Ruidoso....

Happy Trails. 



Floyd Domino, known as the greatest "Texas Piano Man" around. (Photo courtesy Dave Alexander)

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EDGE ROAD RANCH

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The Edge Road Ranch consist of 188.228 acres in south central Archer County. It's completely wooded with mesquite, has seasonal creeks traversing the property, good elevation changes with scenic views and rock outcroppings, two stock ponds, one being 8.5 acres, its completely fenced for cattle, has steel corrals in good condition, adequate interior roads. Overall a great all around secluded hunting property.

618 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



CHARLIE RIVER RANCH

\$2,145/Ac

The Charlie River Ranch is prime recreational land located on the Red River in northern Clay County. It consist of 618 acres, both deeded and accreted land, being mostly wooded with a good balance of natural cleared areas. It has good topography with nearly 50' of elevation change with great views. The property is fenced and cross fenced. There is a windmill and electricity on the ranch. This is a very nice ranch on the Red River covered with game. Additional acreage available.

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838 ACRES | JACK COUNTY



SWIFT CREEK RANCH

\$2,450/Ac

The Swift Creek Ranch is one of the nicer raw land tracts currently available in Jack County. It's heavily wooded with primarily oaks, with scattered mesquites, good hunting, great cover and habitat for wildlife, several creeks traverse the ranch, rolling terrain with outstanding views, over 115' of elevation change, several building sites, good interior roads, several ponds, electricity is on the ranch and well water is available.

206 ACRES | YOUNG COUNTY



LOST CREEK RANCH

\$2,500/Ac

The Lost Creek is located in northwest Young County, 3.5 miles southwest of Markley. The property is heavily wooded with oaks, mesquite along with scattered grass meadows. There is nearly 100 feet of elevation change across the ranch, with outstanding views. The north portion of the property is dominated by a wet weather creek, which eventually flows east into Brushy Creek. This is an ideal recreational property with wildlife all over it.

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Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean

A new plant can result from the stem segments of tasajillo breaking off and coming in contact with the soil.

Tasajillo

There are a handful of mean-spirited plants that seem to have developed a liking to growing in places where they are a nuisance on North Texas grazing lands. One of those plants is definitely tasajillo. I can't count the number of gates that I've had to open that required a fight with this prickly foe.

I now realize there is a plausible reason why so many fence lines and gates are home to tasajillo, that being birds eat the seeds and then deposit them along the fences, thus creating a virtual nursery for this unfriendly species.

Tasajillo is a perennial member of the cactus family and can be found in all areas of the state but with less presence in deep East Texas. It grows as individual plants or as thicket-forming clumps. This cactus seems to be

most adapted to loamy soils and is often found in association with mesquite.

Flowering period is April to August, with yellowish-green flowers from $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter, which open in the afternoon and close before sunrise.

Fruits are small bright red tunas up to $\frac{3}{4}$ " in length and contain many flattened seeds. The tunas ripen in the fall and can stay on the plant for months.

If you are willing to deal with the spines, the fruit is suitable for human consumption. Several native tribes made it a part of their diet.

Martin Terry, professor of biology at Sul Ross State University, says the tunas are "vaguely sweet," similar in taste to the fruit of a prickly pear.

Tasajillo produces erect or re-





Grazing Value of This Plant

Tasajillo

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Tasajillo has very limited value to livestock or wildlife.

clining stems that can grow up to 5' long. The thin round stem segments can be easily detached from the plant by brushing against it. The lower most stems turn woody and are brown in color, while the upper stems remain greenish. Spines from 1" to 2" long cover the plant.

While tasajillo can spread by seed, it can also spread by cloning itself. The stem joints are dotted with areoles, small specialize buds that are peculiar to the cactus family. Spines, flowers and new branches can arise from areoles. A stem segment that is broken loose from the stem and comes in contact with the soil can take root and grow into a whole new plant.

Areoles appear even on the fruit of this cactus, and it is not uncommon to see a stem segment growing out of a tuna that has hung on the plant through the winter and into spring.

Tasajillo also is known as turkey cactus, jumping cactus, and pencil cactus. As with other cactus species, tasajillo can be controlled by herbicides.

Tasajillo is seldom eaten by livestock and provides only poor browse value for deer during a short period of time in early spring.

Deer, quail, and turkey eat the small tunas. Tasajillo has some value as wildlife cover, but is a nasty plant to stumble into. (N)

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Confessions of a Hunter

By Andy Anderson

From the field to the table

I have been hunting all my life and continue to do so for many reasons, but the biggest is the meat and meat treats I get from my harvest. When I was young, my dad taught me how to process deer, and it was basically trim all the meat off, cut a few steaks from tenderloins and grind the rest. Now, I'll admit, the chicken fried backstrap is a highly treasured treat. There's nothing more tender and satisfying to go with homemade mashed potatoes and milk gravy made in that famous iron skillet of my dad's. The ground meat was used all year in a number of dishes and helped to offset the cost of hamburger, but that was about it. It was really a basic do-it-yourself experience that provided food for the family.

As I got older and was exposed to products created by game processors, like jalapeño cheese summer sausage, deer jerky, bratwurst and more, I realized I was missing out. I started meeting people who made their own meat snacks and such at home. I learned the process of making jerky and snack sticks as well as the usual sausages, but the process was still the same: mostly grinding everything up but the choice cuts and making processed meat products.

One day it all changed, a day the clouds parted and the bright light of the sun seemed to be shining down on a new culinary path that was warm, exciting and delightful. I met Chef Bri Van Scotter of Wilderness to Table who took a black buck and pre-



After an evening with Chef Bri Van Scotter of Wilderness to Table, Andy Anderson started down a culinary learning experience that has returned huge dividends. (Photo courtesy Andy Anderson)

pared an amazing dish with it. It was then I experienced a meal of all natural, grass fed, non GMO foods, served in a succulent and tender way that left me craving more, not just for another plate, but to learn new ways of cooking game meat.

It's easy to just stick with what works, simple and within our comfort zones. Simple processing was just the way we always did it. After an evening with Bri, I jumped out there and started down a culinary leaning experience that has returned huge dividends in everything from properly processing a carcass to preparing meals in my own kitchen at the level of a professional chef. Every time I create a meal, it leaves me wanting


to try more, and my kids think we are eating beef when we are enjoying a red deer or black buck. It's funny that after weeks of dining on wild game, we have a steak or beef dish and they say they would rather have deer. My son's favorite is axis meat; he loves it.

I think the most intriguing part of this experience is how to gain different cuts of meat from a carcass, and what I once thought was a horrible cut of meat and just ground it up is actually the best. I was amazed at how much I was discarding doing it the old way. Taking the time to break down the cuts from different sides of wild game is no different than a beef butcher cutting a porterhouse steak.

When I get into the kitchen and start bringing it all together, the smells, the sounds and taste are nearly indescribable. The joy I get from my family enjoying the meal and them understanding not just how it got on the table, but that it's really good for you is extremely satisfying. I recently created a meal from the tenderloin of the red deer my son had harvested. I bacon wrapped the tenderloin and lightly marinated it in a raspberry vinaigrette. I served it with a creamy garlic butter shrimp sauce and asparagus with portabella mushrooms.

As we were enjoying our dinner, my wife stopped and said, "I can't believe we eat like this almost every night." She went on to say she can hardly eat out at restaurants any longer because of the meals we have at home. I have to agree. I have yet to find a steak house or other restaurant that satisfies my pallet for wild game.

Chef Gusteau, from the movie Ratatouille, said it best, "Anyone can cook," and so can you if you are willing to learn. There is nothing I do in preparing these meals that requires expert skills or equipment, and it doesn't take all day. I can typically have dinner on the table in an hour and as my wife says, "It's beyond restaurant quality."

When you harvest your next game animal, take a minute or two and watch a few YouTube videos and try something new. I promise there is more there than jerky or summer sausage. 



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ENDANGERED ARK ELEPHANT SANCTUARY

By Michelle Ames

The Endangered Ark Foundation in Hugo, Okla., is such an incredible place: a circus elephant sanctuary where these animals can live and roam their 200 forested acres in southeast Oklahoma, just 10 miles from the Red River and the Texas/Oklahoma border.

The forest of southeast Oklahoma is very similar to their native forest in southern Asia. They house the second largest elephant herd in the country. The town of Hugo is known as Circus City USA, where as many as 15 circuses once wintered, although there are only two now.

Endangered Ark offers public tours on Fridays and Saturdays seasonally. They also offer private tours during the week. Tickets are sold online. The tours fill up and sell out quickly. One of our friends was buying her ticket separately, and it was sold out so she didn't get to go. Be sure and make your reservations in advance and if possible purchase all your tickets at one time.

Public tours are offered at 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

We arrived about 9:30 a.m., and after a long drive, needed to use the restroom. The restrooms are located inside the gate, and you can't enter until 10 a.m. (free-roaming guests and elephants don't mix) when the tour starts, which meant I missed several minutes of the tour and introduction, and asked questions she had already discussed, plus they only have port-a-potties, so my tip is go



Whimpy gently nuzzles her calf Dori, who still nurses, away as she continues the process of weaning. (Photo courtesy Michelle Ames)

before you get there.

It also meant I missed the introduction of Dori and Whimpy. I already knew all about Dori from their website. At three years old, we had just missed her birthday party, a fun annual activity held in mid-August.

Her mother, Whimpy, was gently nuzzling Dori, who still nurses, away, but mom is in the process of weaning.

One of the most humorous moments came when Whimpy threw

hay at a pigeon that came a little too close.

Endangered Ark does have a breeding program to help ensure the continuation of the Asian elephant, which is considered endangered in the wild. Their elephants are part of a Species Survival Plan with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and they loan out their males to breed with other zoos to continue a varied genetic pool. Dori was born at the sanctuary.

They then brought in Del Rita to show us how they care for her feet and bathe her.

She also is an artist, and she decorated a shirt and made a paw print painting. Del Rita also showed off her tusches and teeth.

Unlike African elephants, female Asian elephants usually lack tusks and have what are called "tusches" barely visible except when their mouth is open.


If you take a deep look inside, **See ELEPHANT page 77**



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ELEPHANT

Continued from page 74

you can see her four teeth. They are huge. They passed around one so everyone could see it and feel its weight, about nine pounds.

Then we loaded up into the wagons to go out into the forest to feed the elephants.

Free-roaming, the elephants only come in for their treat. We were feeding them one third of a banana, with the peel still on. They tell you to feed them quickly, because the elephants will leave if they think there is no more food.

I was so excited and quickly handed over my camera when one of the employees offered to take our pictures for me.

That was a mistake because in the picture I got you can't even see the elephant. I do have the remarkable memory of touching and actually placing the banana in the elephant's trunk. It was incredible.

I would have gladly paid another \$10 to Enchanted Ark for a good picture and would really suggest they offer that for their guests, although I love that they allow us to take pictures. Either way, it was a completely unforgettable experience.

We visited the gift shop before our tour, even picking out the shirts, etc. we wanted, but since we didn't want to walk back to our car, which wasn't far, I put off purchasing the shirts until after the tour. Big mistake. After our tour, the gift shop was packed with people, both from our tour buying souvenirs and those just arriving for the 11:30 a.m. tour. I did get my shirts, including several that were painted by Del Rita herself.

Things To Do in Hugo, Okla.

Play

After our tour, we headed over to the Mount Olivet Cemetery to see Showman's Rest, a section of the cemetery reserved mostly for former circus members. The



Asian elephants roam through the Endangered Ark Foundation in Hugo, Okla. (Courtesy photo)

monuments are amazing, and while we were only there about 10 to 15 minutes, it was pretty neat.

Each year, the town of Hugo hosts a Christmas parade, and they bring out the elephants to walk in the parade, with Santa riding the lead elephant.

The reason that Hugo was so popular for the circuses was their moderate winter climate and the railroad depot. The Frisco Depot Museum in Hugo has exhibits from the hey-days in Hugo, plus

a miniature train and circus.

Eat

We loved our cheeseburgers at Angie's Circus City Diner. Posters and pictures of Hugo's circuses cover the walls.

Stay

The State Park offers two types of cabins, primitive with just beds and a screened porch overlooking the lake, and larger "Resort" cabins, with two bedrooms, a kitchen, bathrooms and a deck overlooking the lake. While I wasn't able to get

a cabin, we did go do a drive-by of each, and for what they are, they were both nice. I would have really liked to have reserved a resort cabin and extended our stay in Hugo. The lake was very pretty, although we skipped out on swimming after seeing the swim beach, which was low and overgrown. There is a marina and boat dock at the park. ☺

Endangered Ark Foundation
2657 East 2070 Rd. Hugo, OK
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Bobby Norris-
\$2,400,000



GRAFORD

Venado Canyon Ranch is 386+/- acs of one of the finest recreational ranches in the area! Possum Kingdom Lake is just minutes away. A 2 Bdrm cabin sits at one of the highest points on the ranch overlooking the 4 ac lake. Home sells furnished. Perfect for running cattle, horses and hunting. Blinds and feeders included, fence in excellent condition with solar powered well.

Bobby Norris -
\$1,435,000



WEATHERFORD

Fantastic 5149 sq ft custom home on 35 acres. 2 Trinity wells, pip, cedar fence, electric gate, spring fed pond, large 50x86 barn shop with 2-18 roll up doors, large loft area. Barn has 20x60 shed area on each side for stalls. Has double-wide

with well. **REDUCED!**

Pete Rehm-
\$895,000



SEMINOLE, OK

Highly improved horse facility. Features large home 4 bdrms 4 baths. Mare barn with 7 stalls and lab or utility area, tack room, wash rack and feed storage. Stud barn has 3 stalls 2 with large runs, also a lab/utility area. 3 large shops, separate hay/shavings barn. 3 bdrm mfg home, dog kennels, enclosed heated swimming pool and 2 water wells. Property is completely fenced and cross

fenced. **REDUCED!**

Tom Moore- **\$1,450,000**



WEATHERFORD

This 40 acre turnkey horse facility has everything for the professional trainer or breeding farm. A 40 x 102 block constructed barn with 12 x 17 stall. 8 runs, automatic water, chute, wash rack, lab, tack room. Covered round pen. Covered Preifert Euro sizer walker, 2 apartments, reception and office area, two wells, irrigation, 1 tank.

Bobby Norris- **REDUCED!**
\$995,000



SAVOY

Great opportunity for the Horse enthusiast. Large 5 bedroom, 3 bath home with big kitchen.

Sits on 57 rolling acres, 6 stock tanks. Large barn with 8 stalls that are approximately 12x20 with turn outs, hay and feed areas as well. There is a 100x100 30 ft. shed with 6 additional 12x12 stalls attached, another 60x125 covered riding pen. Hay and shaving barn.

Tom Moore-
\$689,000



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Gabe Webster
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Tri Goldthwaite
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Jennifer Barefoot
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