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# NTFR

April 2019 | [www.ntfronline.com](http://www.ntfronline.com) | Volume 7 Issue 6



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## POST OAK MEDIA

# Welcoming spring

Welcome to the April 2019 issue of NTFR magazine. The cloudy skies and cold winds have finally left us and warmer weather is on its way as flowers begin to bloom and the fields are full of baby calves chasing after their mothers.

The profile this month is the family-oriented Pecan Creek Strawberry Farm in Pilot Point, owned by Chris and Kylie Demases. Chris, a fourth-generation farmer, grew up helping out on his family's farm in Boyd.

Kylie fell in love with Chris and his agricultural lifestyle due to its family-oriented nature.

The two have branched out and created something of their very own – a pick your own strawberry farm on land that has been in Kylie's family for more than 100 years.

The couple has been working for months as they farm the land and prepare for its second season of picking, preparing the soil, building the rows and caring for them through the cold winter months.

Now, 43,000 strawberries await visitors who are yearning to get down in the dirt and experience produce the way it was meant - picked right from the fields. Pictured above is one of the first blooms fighting against the cold weather in early March.

As you get ready to get outside and enjoy the warmer weather, consider taking a trip to the Lyndon B. Johnson National Grasslands in Wise County. Learn more about its history and the importance to this area in the first of a two-part series.

See the stunning Indian paintbrushes popping up in fields and along highways? Find out why they grow with the Texas bluebonnets in this month's "Grazing North Texas" from Tony Dean.

If you're looking for a way to celebrate Easter with your family, consider a trip to Fort Richardson. Judy Wade discusses the history of this significant site, as well as Fort Richardson Days when historical re-enactors take visitors back to the 1860s and 1870s to experience life on the frontier and the annual Easter egg hunt at 2 p.m. on April 20.

Get ready for upcoming festivals, sales and events with the NTFR calendar of events. If you have a photo, event or topic you would like to see in NTFR email editor@ntfronline.com.

For more NTFR visit our website at [www.NTFRonline.com](http://www.NTFRonline.com) where you can subscribe to an online edition. To subscribe by mail call 940-872-5922. Make sure to like our Facebook page and follow us on Instagram and Twitter.

Wishing you all the best this April,

*Dani Blackburn*

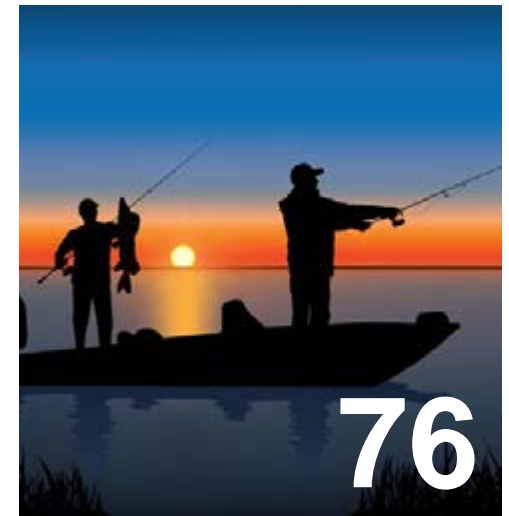


## ON THE COVER

Chris and Kylie Demases enjoy some time together on their strawberry farm, surrounded by plants ripe for the picking. Chris began growing strawberries on his family's farm in Boyd and saw a need from the public for a pick your own farm during his trips to local farmers markets. Now, the couple has branched out and started their own farm as they look to the future with a family-oriented lifestyle in mind. (Photo by Janey Cooper Photography)



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## Pecan Creek

Chris, a fourth-generation farmer, and his wife, Kylie, have taken their love for agriculture and branched out to start their own pick-your-own strawberry farm in Pilot Point, Texas.





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Luke Perry was known to millions as the heartthrob on Beverly Hills 90210 but to the western sports community, he will forever be remembered as the passionate actor who brought Lane Frost back to life on the big screen in 8 Seconds. In Luke's first leading feature film role, he captured Lane's competitive and generous spirit in a very convincing way in a film that remains a favorite of bull riding fans. Luke once said that while he had played other athletes, he never felt more connected to a sport than bull riding.

Luke came out to some events and was a good friend of the PBR family until his passing. The PBR's thoughts are with Luke's family and friends on this very sad day.

The world was heartbroken when the passing of Luke Perry, who had suffered a stroke the previous week, was announced. While many know him as his role as the heartthrob on Beverly Hills 90210, the western world loved him for his portrayal of Lane Frost in Eight Seconds. Perry brought the character to life, telling the story of one of the greatest of all time. Perry remained a good friend of the PBR family.

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## 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 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.
8. 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.
9. NTFR reserves the right to edit or reject any letters.
10. 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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# MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

By Rayford Pullen | [rcpullen@yahoo.com](mailto:rcpullen@yahoo.com)

I've always liked the saying "It's ok to be in a rut if you are headed in the right direction," and it seems that sometimes we're in that rut but cannot figure out which direction we are headed. That's why another favorite saying "Don't get so busy chopping trees that you forget to sharpen your ax" also reminds me just because we have it figured out today doesn't mean we'll have it figured out tomorrow because of

this rapidly changing world. In other words, where are you going and how will you know when you get there?

I've been waiting about six months for spring to arrive, and as I've mentioned in prior articles, April 15 is normally my favorite day of the year due to the abundance of grasses and legumes in our pastures. Winters seem to get longer and longer each year, and the cost associated with supple-

mental feeds and proteins seem to get larger and larger, so in the meantime, we'll concentrate on getting the most out of the livestock we raise so we can do it all over again.

Going over our calving records this spring, I've noticed there is a big difference in the birthweights of calves out of the same sire. While all the calves were born unassisted and out of mature cows, I just thought the weight differences

were interesting.

According to the chart, birthweights ranged from a low of 60 pounds to a high of 94 pounds with the average birthweight being 77 pounds and the average difference within a sire group being 21 pounds, which brings about the question of, "Which sire should I use on my cattle?" which will depend on whether or not you are breeding heifers or cows. The number on the right end of the



chart is the projected accuracy of each bull in regards to birthweight based on his progeny and ancestral records. Therefore, a virgin bull will have a lot lower accuracy than a bull with calves due to the progeny criteria.

If you were only looking at the EPDs on these bulls, you would see that the Puma 5151 has the best calving ease and birthweight at 19 and -2.7 respectively while Homestead comes in at a CED of 5 and BW of 1.3. Power Point is 11 for CED and -.01 for BW; Rock Solid has a CED of 10 and a BW of 1.7; McCook comes in at 9 and 2.8; Generation at 6 and 2.3 and Journey at 13 and 0.3. How do these numbers stack up with the actually progeny, albeit a very small sampling for each sire? These were actually the first calves sired by the Ruggles McCook, Puma Generation and Puma Journey bulls.

While birthweight should never

Sire	# Calves	Lowest Birthweight	Highest Birthweight	Difference	AVG BW	Accuracy EPD
Puma 5151	25	61	80	19#	74	68%
Homestead	12	60	88	28#	75	79%
Power Point	5	72	88	16#	79	85%
Rock Solid	8	75	93	18#	84	75%
McCook	32	67	94	27#	80	53%
Puma Generation	7	64	88	24#	73	62%
Puma Journey	9	70	83	13#	75	44%

be the only criteria when selecting a bull, it really needs to be considered when breeding heifers. If selecting a bull from this group to use on heifers, the one you would choose, and the one I think that would be an easy pick, is Puma 5151. He almost has the tightest birthweight range but no really big calves.

Which one of these bulls would you choose for low birthweights and high weaning weights? You cannot tell that from the information provided here and would need

to see the EPDs on the registration papers, which is why we register all these bulls so you will at least have a good idea of what to expect rather than buying a bull with no information, which is most certainly a shot in the dark. We know most of our customers don't need the bull's registration papers to register his offspring, but they do need the information only the registration papers provide in regards to weaning weights, etc.

Personally, I think bigger is usually better in terms of a calf's

ability to take off and get rolling after it is born. Having said that, too big has been the kiss of death for many breeds, but within the Angus breed, calving difficulties are much more the exception than the rule.

Don't forget to give your spring-born calves a blackleg shot and deworm when they are two to three months old and remember to hit those cows with Lepto-Vibrio vaccine at the same time.

It's a wonderful time to be in the cattle business. 



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PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY JENNIFER NELSON



A view of a peach tree orchard in Biglerville, Pa., just a few miles from historic Gettysburg.®





# AG *elsewhere* MONTANA

PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY LINDSEY MONK

Calving season in Montana is going full bore. The February calvers had it pretty rough up here with negative wind chills. This Tarentaise and Red Angus cross calf is aggressively looking for a meal. His first-time momma did a good job getting him cleaned up. ©





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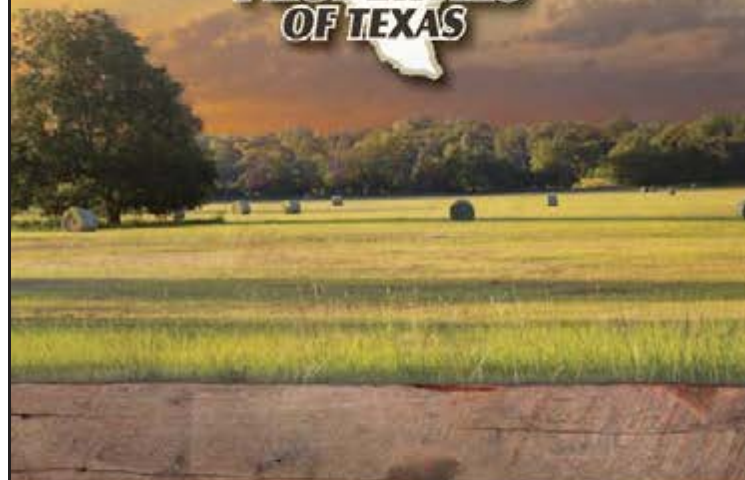
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# THE GARDEN GUY

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

## *Loropetalum* will make you a *Daydream Believer*

**P**urple Daydream will capture your heart and probably make you forget all other varieties of loropetalum. I'm growing it with October Magic orchid camellias, Autumn Jewel azaleas and Gold Mound chamaecyparis, and its graceful and elegant habit just screams "look at me."

Purple Daydream reaches about three feet tall with a slightly pendulous spread three to four feet wide. The deep purple foliage is ever present and, of course, loads up with a bounty of iridescent purple flowers in the spring, repeating throughout the year.

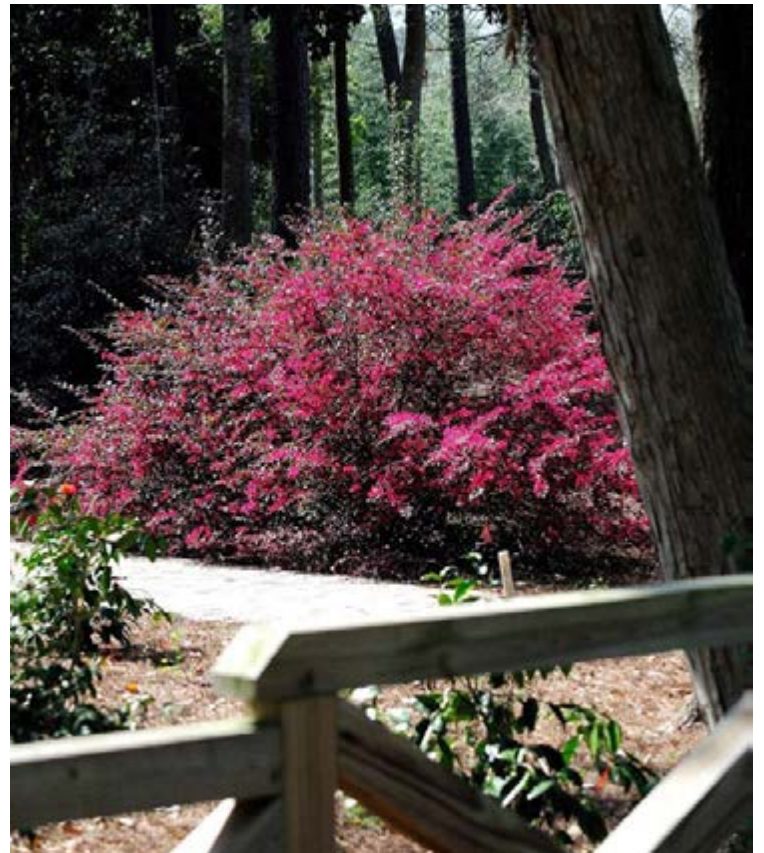
I remember 18 years ago as a horticulturist with Mississippi State University where we selected Burgundy as a Mississippi Medallion Award Winner. While this variety was superior at the time, it longed to reach 12-feet in height. If we could have dreamed then it would have been for Purple Daydream.

While I was at the Coastal

Georgia Botanical Garden in Savannah, I also fell head over heels for Purple Diamond loropetalum, which is semi-dwarf, pushing to five feet. Whether it was flanking a bridge or reflecting at the Water Garden, it was a show stopper. Dark purple foliage and hot pink flowers demanded visitors get out their cameras.

Consequently, when Red Diamond hit the market, I had to have it for my own landscape. It will reach a little taller, pushing to six feet, but has darker leaves and what I might call hot lipstick red flowers. It will electrify the garden.

Botanically speaking, they are all known as *Loropetalum chinense* with a lot of gardeners knowing them as Chinese fringe flower. These selections are all part of the Southern Living Plant Collection and are really what gardeners and landscaper want versus those that reach skyscraper status. It was always hilarious to see visitors  
**See GARDEN GUY page 19**



The Purple Diamond loropetalum reaches five feet in height and produces iridescent pink blooms. (Photo by Norman Winter)



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# GARDEN GUY


Continued from page 16

faces when they saw a burgundy loropetalum the size of a tall red-bud at the gardens.

If you need a selection even shorter or for an ornate container, then Purple Pixie is the choice for you. To be honest, if it never bloomed, I would still love it for its habit and texture. It is remarkable, however, in a large European style container where its dark purple foliage tumbles over the edge. It reaches about two feet in height with a spread of four feet. So, while in a container, you may want to do a little tip pruning. Rest assured, in the landscape it is a superb groundcover.

All of these are cold-hardy from zones 7-10, meaning they can take zero. Those of you plagued by deer will be delighted to know these are not on the menu. No matter what loropetalum you choose, they perform best in full sun but can tolerate partial shade. Plant them in well-drained, organic-rich beds that are slightly acidic. Amending your soil is critical in the North Texas area that typically leans toward neutral to slightly alkaline. Since these loropetalums are shallow rooted, planting on raised beds with a prepared planting mix will aid your long-term success.

I like to emphasize the part about planting in beds. When planting loropetalums or any other shrub, put them in a well-prepared bed instead of sticking them in a patch of turf. Like we suggest with azaleas, plant them high, one to two inches above the soil surface.

In the spring landscape, consider planting them with blooming trees like Yoshino or Kwansan cherries like you see growing at the Fort Worth Botanical Garden. I love them with yellow to gold shrubs like Sunshine Ligustrum and Kaleidoscope abelia. You are the artist; let your imagination run wild. Follow me on Facebook @ NormanWinterTheGardenGuy. 



The Red Diamond loropetalum has darker foliage and flowers that are a hot red lipstick color. (Photo by Norman Winter)



The Purple Daydream loropetalum has dark year round foliage and reaches three-foot tall and up to four-foot wide. (Photo by Norman Winter)



# RANCH, Rodeo & Randomness

By Pepper Stewart



## I CAN'T BE THAT OLD

**M**any years ago when the computer first landed in school classrooms, I made a comment that has come back to haunt me, “Why do I need to learn that? What good will that do me on the back of a horse?”

Well, now that happened nearly 30 years ago and look how far we have come with technology. It was about 18 years ago I finally got a mobile phone and traded in my “beeper” or “pager.” What a beating that was trying to find a phone before the third page with 911 on the end. Some of you will get that.

There are kids today who have never heard a dial tone or got a chance to get tangled up in the 50-foot cord on the kitchen wall phone.

Now days, you have electronic ear tags, GPS, cattle management computer programs, and the computer tablet you can carry in your pocket.

A lot of the larger cattle operations are much more technologically advanced than they were less than 10 years ago.

With the new computer systems, a simple scan of the ear tag and the entire life history of the cow pops up on a screen much like your medical records at the doctor’s office.

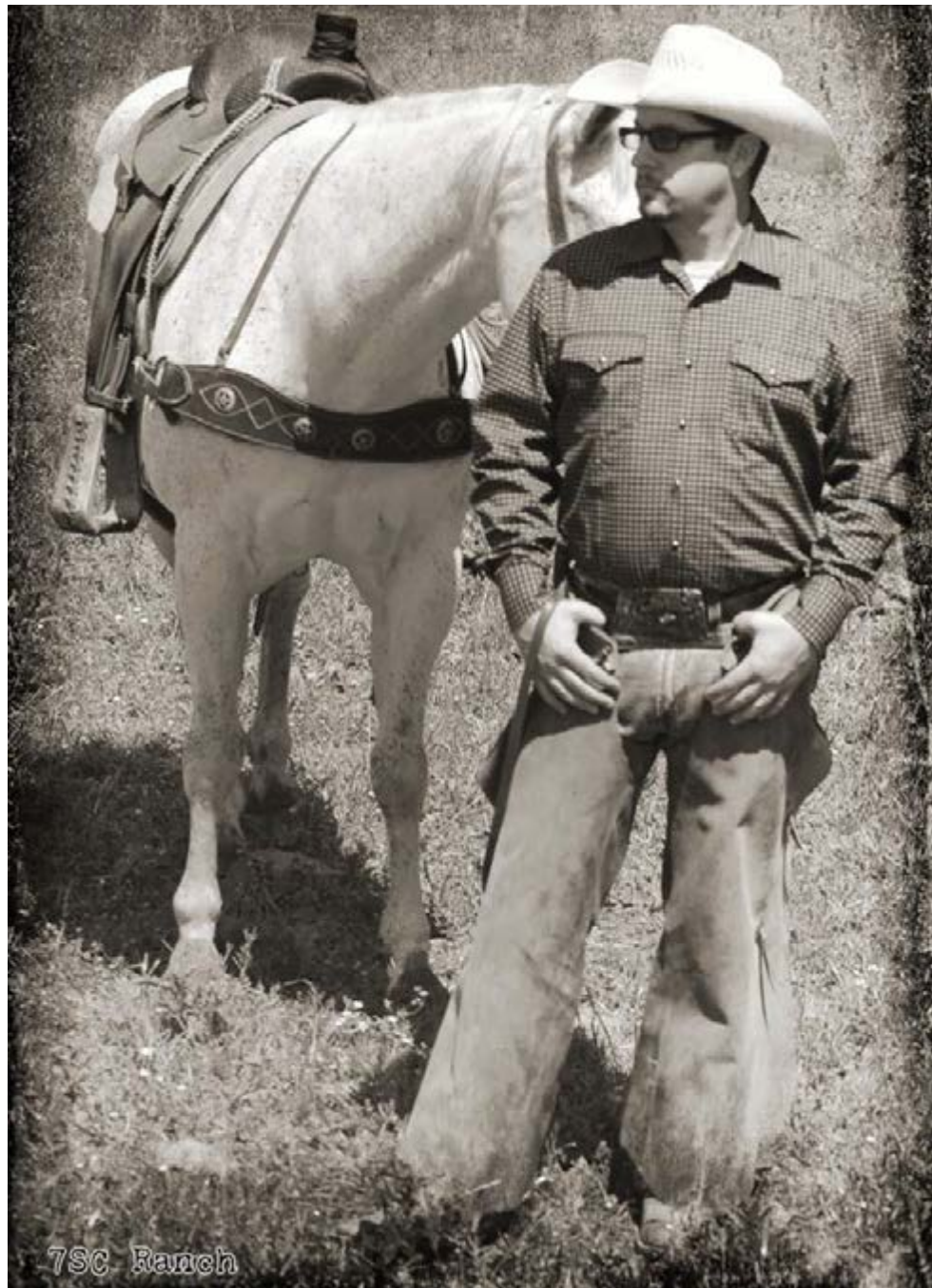
Current applications on your phone allow you to watch television, check weather, cattle market reports, satellite maps and even a GPS that allows you to mark where fence repairs are needed so you can return to make the repairs.

Although the cattle industry has come a long way, there are still some old timers who have done it their way since birth and will never change.

I, like many others, have surrendered to technology and do not go anywhere without my iPhone.

There are times I think back to that day I first saw the large television style box with the black and white letters thinking, “Where has the time gone?”

When I pull out my iPhone while on the back of my horse to take a picture, it’s then I realize there is no going back now and wonder what is next.®



Pepper Stewart has surrendered to technology, and doesn't go anywhere without his iPhone - including when he is on the back of his horse. (Photo courtesy Pepper Stewart)



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# EQUINE SUPERSTARS & EVERYDAY HEROES

By Janis Blackwell

## JoAnn Hess

This month, Equine Superstars and Everyday Heroes introduces you to JoAnn Hess. She is an avid barrel racer from Bonham, Texas. That characteristic alone doesn't particularly make her unique but added to that fact she is 76-years-old and still going down the road hard does. Hess is one of a growing number of barrel racers who are returning to, or choosing to, continue their barrel racing careers far into what some might call "old age."

Hess said she had heard all the negative comments and warnings about continuing her beloved sport at her age like how it was "too dangerous" or "who would take care of her if she got hurt" and all the rest. So, she decided "Well maybe they're right. I could do some of the other things I find interesting." So she tried that for a while, and told me, "I hated it." About that time, she read an article encouraging older people to try something they had always wanted to do and to stay active because it was so much healthier than the alternative. The article gave examples of people doing things more dangerous than barrel racing, so she decided to heck with what everybody else thought, and returned to barrel racing.

She broke back out in a big way. She had previously won and kept tucked away a wild card which enabled her to go compete in the National Barrel Horse Association World Show in Georgia. So with that for motivation, Hess was ready to get back to competing in the sport she loved and had missed so much.

One small problem faced her. She needed a horse. She still **See HESS page 24**



JoAnn Hess and Pepsi at NRS. (Photo by Jo Haigwood)



JoAnn Hess and Pepsi making a run at Graham, Texas. (Photo by Jo Haigwood)





# Hess

Continued from page 23

owned some horses, but they were beyond the ages of competing anymore. She looked around and found a little sorrel mare named Pepsi owned by Jerry Marie Smith. Pepsi, who stands 14.1 and weighs 1,000 pounds, is blind in her right eye. She had previously been a high school rodeo champion and has other impressive credentials as well, but now she had become the main mount of Hess.

She said Pepsi goes to the right barrel first and as they approach it, she will cock her head around just enough to locate it and rate it perfectly. Hess never has to cue her at all. She said she just kicks to the barrel and stays out of her way, and Pepsi pins her ears back and goes at the barrels as if it is her only purpose in life.

When Hess first acquired Pepsi, her most recent previous owner was a little girl who had run her over and over as children will if not taught the harm in that practice, so Pepsi had become very nervous and would act up in the alley. However, it didn't take Hess very long to show her they were only going to make one run and she would get a horse cookie after. Soon Pepsi relaxed and now comes right in the alley with no issues.

In addition to being fun to watch because of the grit and intensity, another fun thing about this special team is the flash they bring to the arena. When Hess decided to go back to racing, she also decided to do it in style. She got out her fancy shirts, her colorful hats, and bought tack to color coordinate Pepsi's look with hers. You can see from the photos they are pretty spectacular in the arena.

When I asked Hess about Pepsi's overall condition and maintenance to keep her sound, Hess said she is healthy and sound



JoAnn Hess and Pepsi between barrel races. (Photo courtesy JoAnn Hess)

as a dollar even at her age of more than 20 years.

She came with no papers so her exact age is unknown, but she is easy to keep with just exercise and good feed.

She runs barefooted and needs no injections or anything. Hess and Pepsi are super blessed, she is so sound without needing the extra maintenance that most older horses require.


Hess said she has two favorite wins on Pepsi that happened on

the same day. She won the Senior buckle from the Hopperween Barrel Race, the annual barrel race on Halloween put on by Mary Hopper in Aubry, Texas, then loaded in the truck and went to Montague County Cowboy Church Arena that afternoon and won the "Don't Look Back" buckle at the Mary Walker clinic.

Two buckles in the same day on the same little spunky mare. I believe Pepsi, even in her later years, still definitely qualifies as

a superstar.

What an amazing little horse with heart the size of Texas, with handicaps and all still giving it everything she's got every run. Hess said her mission is to just keep inspiring people to get up and out on their horses or doing whatever is their passion.

Don't give in to the recliner. Keep living life. Wow. If these two don't inspire you to get out and go for it, check your pulse. Until next month ....Happy Trails! 





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175 ACRES | WICHITA & CLAY COUNTIES



**BYMOND WICHITA RIVER RANCH** \$2,900/Ac

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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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# Rodeo Culture

By Phillip Kitts



**W**hat inspires a person to drive thousands of miles across numerous states during all times of the year? What drives a person to put the needs and safety of an animal over their own?

The answers to these questions come from not an individual or a career field but a complete culture that spans not only the United States but also the entire history of our great country.

The rodeo culture can be traced back to a time where many of our current states were not even officially part of the union. The one consistency was all these states had some sort of agricultural and farming influence and nearly all of them had some sort of rodeo.

Back in history, the format for the rodeo culture was no where near as demanding as it is today. Over time what was a “back yard event” has turned into a multimillion-dollar venture.

Let’s just look at the month of February for the average rodeo cowboy. Many of these competitors have covered most of the South in the pursuit of paychecks and their place in rodeo history. In this month alone, many of the top names in rodeo have made appearances in Texas, Florida, California, Georgia, California and Arizona. This impressive list only covers several states, but just in Texas there has been a long list of cities with rodeos.

Translating all these events into

travel can boggle the mind. A lot of these cowboys and cowgirls will travel more than 5,000 miles and cover 15 to 20 states in one month alone.

When it comes to the rough stock competitor, which are the cowboys who compete in bareback, saddle bronc and bull riding, these athletes are blessed enough to be able to use air travel to get to and from events. Considering these guys will travel to two to three rodeos in one weekend and the average flight from Oklahoma City, Okla., to Kissimmee, Fla., runs around \$323, and then flying on from Orlando to their next rodeo, these cowboys will accumulate more than \$900 in airfare in one weekend.

This scenario completely changes when it comes to the timed event athletes. These athletes are ones who compete in team roping, tie down roping, steer wrestling and barrel racing. Because these competitors must rely on the use of horses and tack, flight is not an option for them. Now take into consideration in order to haul their animal athletes to rodeos, they have a need for a pickup, which can run upward of \$80,000, plus a trailer that can run from \$40,000 to more than \$200,000. In a vehicle alone, a top-end rodeo athlete can invest over a quarter of a million dollars. These travel numbers do not even account for the cost of a horse, tack or equipment that goes into





The rodeo culture spans not only the United States but the entire history of our great country. (Photo courtesy Phillip Kitts)

competing at top levels.

Taking into consideration these figures only represent the rodeo athletes, there is an entire group of rodeo personnel who spend a lifetime's worth of financial and personal time investments to make the rodeo world possible. This defines how rodeo is much more than a sport. It's a way of life as well as a culture.

Working in the day of a stock contractor is defining proof of how much dedication and commitment goes into this life. The average stock contractor starts their day before the sunrises; a day starts long before they indulge in their own breakfast as they feed the animal athletes that make their living eight seconds at a time. After feeding, the contractor might make it to their own meal before it is back out to handle cleaning and taking a detailed look over their animals. Their day continues with all the doctoring and individual care each

animal needs. By the time all these tasks have been accomplished, the time has come for the evening feeding and settling the stock in for the night.

Add into this mix times when livestock needs to be transported to an event. The logistics alone are a feat in themselves, coordinating trucks, feed, places to rest the animals on long runs and the long list of documents it takes to haul animals from state to state is a full-time task.

Previously we have discussed the financial investment the competitor has in order to compete at the highest levels. Now magnify that to a level where a contractor is now hauling 15 to 20 bucking horses and 15 to 20 bulls plus enough feed to sustain the animals for up to a week at one individual rodeo. In the competitor's world it is trucks, trailers and equipment that can add up to nearly a quarter million dollars. **See RODEO page 28**

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# Rodeo

Continued from page 27

ter million dollars. In the case of contractors who must have semi-trucks, livestock pots and just as much equipment, that number can double and triple quickly.

One must add in the fact many of the stock contractors double as rodeo producers. They must balance the ability to provide stock for other contractors to fill gaps in their own stock along with having the staff, equipment and animals to produce their own rodeo.

These are just a few of many examples of how and why the sport of rodeo is much more than a sport. The level of involvement that it takes to make each portion of rodeo happen goes much deeper than what the average rodeo fan will ever see. Taking these factors into a yearlong assessment where most of the top cowboys and stock contractors and producers will travel nearly 12 months out of the year, some covering in the vicinity of 60 or 70,000 miles and investing hundreds of thousands of dollars, you can see that the investment is significant.

It is all these factors that prove the rodeo is a lifestyle, a culture within a sport within a nation, and at the grass roots, America grew up with the sport of rodeo, and rodeo grew with the United States.®



The level of involvement it takes to make each portion of rodeo happen goes much deeper than what the average rodeo fan will ever see, including the movement of stock to each event. (Photo courtesy Phillip Kitts)



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# Healthy Hocks

By Krista Lucas

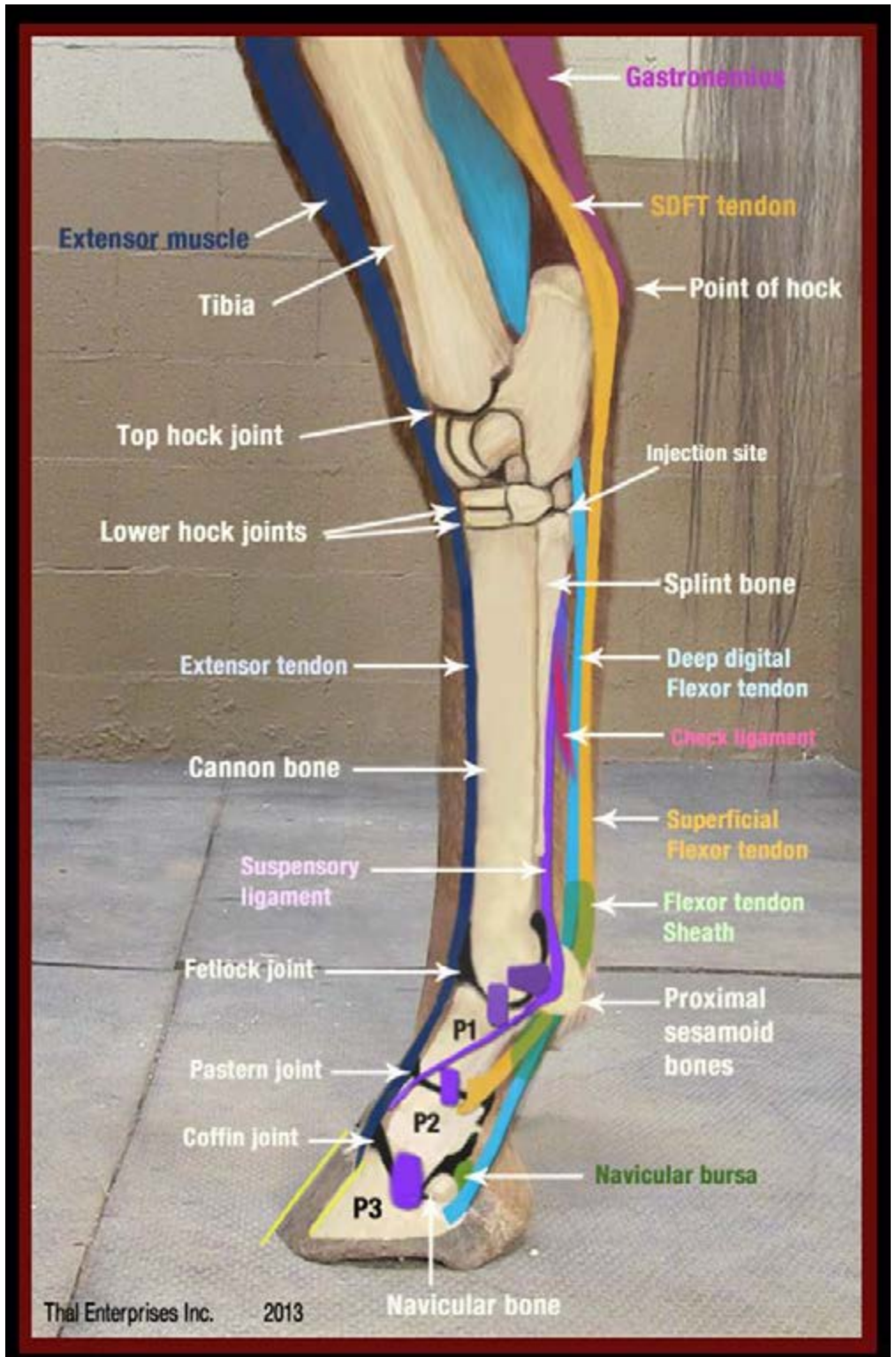
When a horse is acting a bit odd, especially a performance horse, it may be wise to get a professional veterinarian opinion. An equine athlete who is suddenly not performing at the top of its game or seems to be in pain may need the hocks thoroughly checked out.

The hock joints of the horse are equivalent to the human ankle and are located right above the cannon bones. It may look like the “knee-cap” of the back legs. Horses use their hocks to push off of the hindquarters and to properly carry their weight. The hocks are crucial to allow the equine animal to run, turn, jump and play. Horses performing at high levels such as in barrel racing, cutting and roping events put daily strain on their hock joints and rely heavily on having healthy joints.

There are multiple signs that can mean a horse is having hock issues. Some general signs that indicate a horse may need the hocks checked out include issues with changing gait, bucking and resting a hind leg frequently. In barrel racing, a horse may not want to finish the turn or run as hard every time. Roping horses that have to stop hard in the ground may start coming to a bouncing stop instead of a smooth, fluid halt. Cutting horses may not want to get in the ground to cut a calf or turn back and forth as quickly. These signs can be subtle and become more noticeable over time.

Hock issues are extremely common in performance horses and can be caused by inflammation in the joints due to intense work. Bone spurs may develop as well. The pain can get worse by the horse trying to carry the majority of its weight toward the front end. This in turn, can cause a domino effect making other health issues or soreness arise over time.

During a vet visit, the vet will perform a typical lameness exam. The horse will be lunged in small circles to determine where the pain is coming from. The vet also can take digital images, or X-rays, of the horse’s hock joints, and then the best option of care will be decided. There is no age limit on horses’ hocks. Usually young horses do not experience problems, but the more a horse is used over time, hock issues can develop. Horses may need routine maintenance such as hock injections, **See HOCKS page 33**



The hock joints of the horse are equivalent to the human ankle and are located right above the cannon bones. (Photo courtesy Thai Enterprises Inc, 2013)





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# Hocks

Continued from page 30

and others may never need anything.

Hock injections are the most common route taken. These injections are quick and painless, administered directly into the joint. It consists of Hyaluronic Acid (HA) and a steroid. This has an anti-inflammatory effect, and the horse should feel relief within 24 hours. In more serious cases, a horse may need surgery as well to remove large bone spurs or chips in the hock joints.

Many owners prefer to have hocks injected every six months to a year. Feeding supplements that contain glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate also can have a lasting effect on decreasing joint pain and inflammation. There are many brands on the market that provide therapy to performance horses with hock issues. Back On Track and PHT Products both offer hock wraps for horses to wear before and after competition and while traveling. B Equine Essentials is a sports mud and wound care that uses all natural ingredients to revitalize and heal joints such as the hocks.®



Pictured are bone spurs removed from a hock joint. The surgery was performed by Dr. John McCarroll at Equine Medical Associates, Pilot Point. (Photo courtesy Krista Lucas)

The horse's hocks may be the most important joints on the equine body. The small but powerful joint is what makes fast turns, hard

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# Expecting Mares & Newborn Foals

By Garrett Metcalf, DVM

The time is here, and talking about taking care of newborn foals is upon us. Owners, breeders and trainers have waited nearly 11 or more months to see what their hard work and dedication has provided them and the time to be prepared is before the foal has arrived. There are many key steps and preparations to be aware of to make the foaling process a success and to obtain a healthy foal. This article will highlight the key aspects of the foaling process and aftercare of the foal in the first hours and days of life to help ensure a healthy foal.

As the time nears for the foal to arrive, the level of excitement and fear becomes more real for horse owners. If you have experienced watching and waiting for a foal to arrive, you may already know not all mares follow the rulebook. The average gestational length is 342 days for a mare give or take, with a range of 320 to 365 days before they foal. Breeding dates are helpful to get a rough idea when the foal may arrive but certainly not going to help pinpoint a specific date or time.

There are clues the mare will give that will help with guessing when the foal will be born. Some of the first signs are tail head laxity, vulva elongation and mammary development. The muscles around the croup and tail head become more soft and relaxed in preparation for the birthing process and of course mammary development to supply milk for the foal.

The next clue to narrow the foaling window time is waxing. A waxy plug material will form on the ends of the teats indicating the mare is getting rather close to foaling. This usually indicates the mare will foal in the next few days (one to four days). A more accurate test has been developed



Spring is an exciting time for mare owners as foals begin to arrive. The average gestational length is 342 days. (Photo by Cheryl Cody)

to test calcium levels in the mare's milk and as the milk calcium or calcium carbonate levels rise, the probability of the mare foaling in 24-48 hours increases, but if the calcium is below a certain level it indicates the probability the mare won't foal in the next 24 hours.

Stages of parturition in a mare are important for owners to be aware of, especially when it comes to detecting a problem in the process.

There are three stages a mare goes through in the birthing process. Stage 1 is usually the longest of the stages. This is the stage the uterine contractions begin, and the mare will display changes in behavior, restlessness, colic, sweating and agitation. This can take several hours (one to four hours) before Stage 2 begins.

Stage 2 is very short in a mare compared to other species. This is the time from when the water breaks to the delivery of the foal. The second stage of parturition should only take 15-20 minutes

and if prolonged the health of the foal can be in danger. Intervention is needed if this stage does go over the 15-20 minute mark and especially exceeding 30 minutes. This can be simply assisting delivery of the foal by grabbing the legs and pulling or as serious as a c-section, depending on the problem. When this process is prolonged, time is of the essence and is now declared a dystocia.

Dystocia simply means a difficult birth. It is important to have a plan in place in case there is difficulty in this stage. Plans should include emergency contact with your veterinarian, truck and trailer ready if needed and knowing where the closest surgical equine specialists are in case a c-section is necessary to deliver the foal. All of these steps and plans are not something that someone wants to come up with on the fly because time is critical in getting a live foal. Thankfully, most of the time foaling is smooth and uneventful, but one to two percent of mares

will experience dystocia, and it is more common in first-time foaling mares.

Stage 3 is passing of the placenta, and if it takes longer than three hours for the placenta to be passed, it is considered retained. This is important to the health of the mare and can be delayed in cases of dystocia. Retained placental tissue can lead to serious life-threatening illnesses for the mare and it is important to collect the placenta for examination later if there is concern a portion of the placenta remains in the uterus.

There are key early-life stages the foal needs to meet to ensure the foal is going to be able to get one of the most important meals of its life. Newborn foals are going to spend a few minutes figuring out what just happen but quickly should be on their feet. Newborn foals should be standing within an hour learning quickly how to navigate with their legs, maintain balance and, of course, there will be some crashes, but not to worry, they will figure it out soon.

The next important step is nursing. It is imperative for foals to receive colostrum in the first few hours of life. Normally a foal should nurse within two hours of being born. If there are delays because the foal cannot stand because of limb deformities or the foal doesn't progress normally in its ability to nurse, your veterinarian should be contacted to aid in correcting these issues quickly.

Colostrum is a vital key to foal's health and protection from environmental pathogens, and without it they are going to become ill very quickly. Foals' ability to absorb the large antibody immunoglobulins in colostrum diminishes quickly after 12 hours and no longer can be absorbed after 24 hours after birth. If foals





Always remember if your mare or foal is having trouble, please call your local veterinarian for assistance and advice. They can walk you through any problems. (Photo by Cheryl Cody)


do not receive adequate amounts of colostrum, they will have failure of passive transfer, putting them at risk of sepsis, joint ill and other complications. There are no good oral supplements to replace colostrum in a foal except having banked colostrum from donor mares. The best replacement short of banked colostrum is via IV plasma transfusion. A blood test can confirm if the foal has received adequate amounts of colostrum and determine if the foal is at risk of failure of passive transfer. In some high risk foals or large breeding farms, IV plasma is administered regardless of the IgG levels in their blood because it has helped reduced the risk of key foal diseases.

If all of this sounds overwhelming, and you would rather be able to sleep well at night, there are options for you. There are many foaling facilities or veterinary practices that use technology and close monitoring to make sure it all goes well. Well equipped facilities have foal monitoring systems that alert the veterinarian or staff members if there is a mare

beginning to foal. One particular system called Foal Alert requires a transducer sutured into the vulva of the mare, and when the foal is being born a signal is sent to a receiver, which then calls a list of phone numbers alerting that a mare is foaling.

Many foaling facilities or veterinary practices also employ camera systems to monitor mares without having to disturb the mare and to watch if there is a problem. Also some veterinary practices have an operating room and full time staff prepared to perform an emergency c-section if needed.

Whether or not you delivered multiple foals or it is your first time, it always pays off to be prepared for the arrival of new life.

These stages of labor and life milestones foals need to accomplish to survive are key steps horse owners need to be familiar with in order to assure success. Always remember if you feel your mare or foal is having trouble, please call your local veterinarian for assistance and advice to help you work through these problems when they arise. 

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# FORT RICHARDSON

By Judy Wade

Settlers moving into north Texas plus marauding Indians equaled the need for protection for the pioneers. The answer: a line of eight forts stretching from north to south across the state. Fort Richardson was one of these.

With soldiers largely absent from the area because of the Civil War, Native American raids increased. To begin to restore order after the war, in 1866 the Federal Government sent a troop of soldiers to Buffalo Springs, 20 miles north of Jacksboro, to build a fort. There they found what they termed “unhealthy conditions” and constant Indian raids.

The soldiers retreated to Jacksboro and received permission to establish a stronghold there as the state’s northernmost fort. It was only 70 miles from Indian Territory, now Oklahoma.

Completed in 1867, the fort was named in honor of General Israel B. Richardson, who died in the Battle of Antietam during the Civil War. During its 11 years of active military existence, it was home to more than 5,000 United States Army soldiers and headquarters for Mackenzie’s 4th Cavalry Regiment.

Covering a little more than 450 acres, the site had more than 60 buildings in addition to the parade ground where troops were trained. When the fort was abandoned in 1878, locals tore down many of the buildings. Six of the structures have been restored.

The post hospital was the largest building on the fort grounds. It was completed in 1869 at a cost of \$150,000 and contained 24 beds. Although the doctors worked in poor sanitary conditions with



The entrance welcomes guests to Fort Richardson. (Photo by Judy Wade)

limited medical supplies treating mainly common illnesses caused by bad water, spoiled food, alcoholism and venereal diseases, the hospital was considered the state-of-the-art army hospital between Fort Worth and Abilene.

The upstairs of the hospital was originally used as a morgue until a separate building was added. The bodies of soldiers were prepared for burial there.

The bakery operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week, supplying 600 to 800 loaves of bread a day. The magazine, with its four foot thick walls, was used to store

ammunition and black powder. If the fort was attacked, it was to be a last place of refuge for women and children.

The commissary was used for storing post supplies such as dried fruit, clothing and livestock feed.

The largest building on the fort grounds was the commanding officer’s quarters. It is the only cottonwood frame officer’s quarters from the Indian War period still standing in the entire United States.

The majority of the buildings were enlisted men’s barracks. Each building contained two

rooms on the west end used by non-commissioned officers and a back room used for storage. The large east room was sleeping quarters for enlisted men. Lining the walls were double bunk beds designed for two men to sleep on top and two on the bottom with bed sacks filled with hay. The hay was replaced monthly and fed to livestock. Two wood-burning stoves heated the large room.

The ruins of the stone guard house are still visible. Four stone cells, each four feet by eight feet, housed three soldiers each and

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# FORT

Continued from page 37

were almost always full. Additional rooms were finally added. The fort reportedly lost 246 soldiers through desertion.

The Interpretive Center is a reproduction of an officer's barracks. The building housed several bachelor officers or several families of the lesser ranking officers. There were never enough quarters for all the officers so many slept in tents.

Staffed by a Park Ranger, the Interpretive Center holds many artifacts from the days of the fort and offers educational dioramas of area Indians and events.

James Dozier was a civilian scout assigned to Fort Richardson in the 1870s. During one of the many Indian wars, he charged alone toward a group of K'itaiish Indians to draw their fire away from the soldiers. Although wounded, he survived and in 1870 was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery. In 1917, the medal was rescinded because Dozier was a civilian. Medals were rescinded for a total of 910 recipients at that time.

In 1989, 11 medals were reinstated, including Dozier's. His family received a new medal in 1991.

The most significant historic event connected to Fort Richardson was the Warren Wagon Train Massacre of 1871. Satanta, Satank and Big Tree amassed 150 Kiowa warriors and attached a supply train about 20 miles from Jacksboro. Several teamsters were slaughtered, one was tied to a wagon wheel and burned, the supplies were destroyed and 40 mules driven off. Five wounded managed to escape and make their way to the fort. Col. Ranald Mackenzie contacted General Sherman in Fort Sill, and soldiers from Fort Richardson helped in the arrest of



Typical soldier from the 1860s. (Photo by Judy Wade)

the three chiefs.

The three were being returned to Jacksboro to stand trial, and on the way, Satank managed to escape and stabbed a soldier with a knife he had concealed. He was shot and killed.

A jury found Satanta and Big Tree guilty, and they were sentenced to hang.

The sentence was commuted to life in prison, and they were sent to Huntsville. In 1873 Governor Davis pardoned them. Satanta died in a fall from a second-story window while still in prison, and Big Tree returned to Oklahoma and became

a deacon in a Baptist church.

The fort is only one part of the Fort Richardson State Park and Historic site. Hiking, biking and equestrian trails offer scenic views of the park. Fishing is permitted in several areas. Also available are picnic areas, a playground and several cabins available for rent.

Extensive camping spots with restrooms and showers as well as RV hookups offer a weekend getaway or an extended stay.

Spring events include Fort Richardson Days April 12-13 when historical re-enactors take the visitor back to the 1860s and

1870s to experience life on the frontier. The Annual Easter Egg Hunt begins at 2 p.m. April 20. Thousands of eggs left by the Easter Bunny can be hunted by children in separate age groups. The event is free, and park fees will be waived for the event. May 11 is Mother's Day Crafts. Come out from 10 a.m. to noon and make mom a unique gift.

A fee of \$3 per person is payable at the check-in center. Camping and RV fees vary. For more information, visit [www.tpwd.texas.gov/fortrichardson](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/fortrichardson) or call 90-567-3506.



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# Pecan Creek STRAWBERRY FARM

In a fast-paced world where groceries come packaged in boxes and can even be ordered online, Pecan Creek Strawberry Farm in Pilot Point offers the opportunity to slow down and experience delicious, fresh fruit the way it was intended: picked right from the fields.

The farm, in its second year, provides a chance to get back to your roots and make memories with the friends and family you bring along for the adventure.

It was family that spurred a young couple, Chris and Kylie Demases, to start the pick-your-own strawberry farm. Chris was born into the farming lifestyle, which afforded him the luxury of spending quality time with his parents as a child.

A fourth-generation farmer, Chris is the youngest of two sons born to Robert and Pam Demases. Chris and his brother, Chance, were raised in Boyd on his family's produce farm. The Demases family grew a variety of fruits, including watermelon, cantaloupes, squash and greens.

"We produced just about anything that can be grown, and that is what I grew up doing. I was in the field as soon as I could walk," said Chris. "I think I learned a lot, and it's where my work ethic came from."

A young Kylie grew up in basketball gyms and on football fields. She is the daughter of Teri Schipper and Keith and Teresa Crusting. Born in Sherman, her parents were teachers and coaches.

Her parent's career choice allowed her to spend quite a bit of time with them, although the family moved several times as many in the career field do. She eventually landed at Paradise High School where her mother was the basketball coach, graduating

in 2009. However, the place Kylie always felt at home was her grandmother's land in Pilot Point.

"I moved around a lot, which is pretty common with educator's kids. For me, my sense of home was always here. They never moved, lived in the same house, and this land is where I learned to drive. I picked up pecans or would just go out there and work," said Kylie.

The pair met in high school, with Kylie's full introduction into the agricultural lifestyle a bit of a shocking experience for a girl who was a bit unsure of what she was getting herself into dating a farmer's son.

"The first time I met Chris' parents, they had invited me to their house around Thanksgiving," recalled Kylie. "I did not know that happened to be one of the busiest times of the year for greens with people consuming a lot of those around Thanksgiving. I went dressed all cute thinking I was going to meet his parents."

Her choice of clothing was a mistake, she soon discovered, after pulling up to the farm and noticing shop lights across the fields as her new beau's family was hard at work.

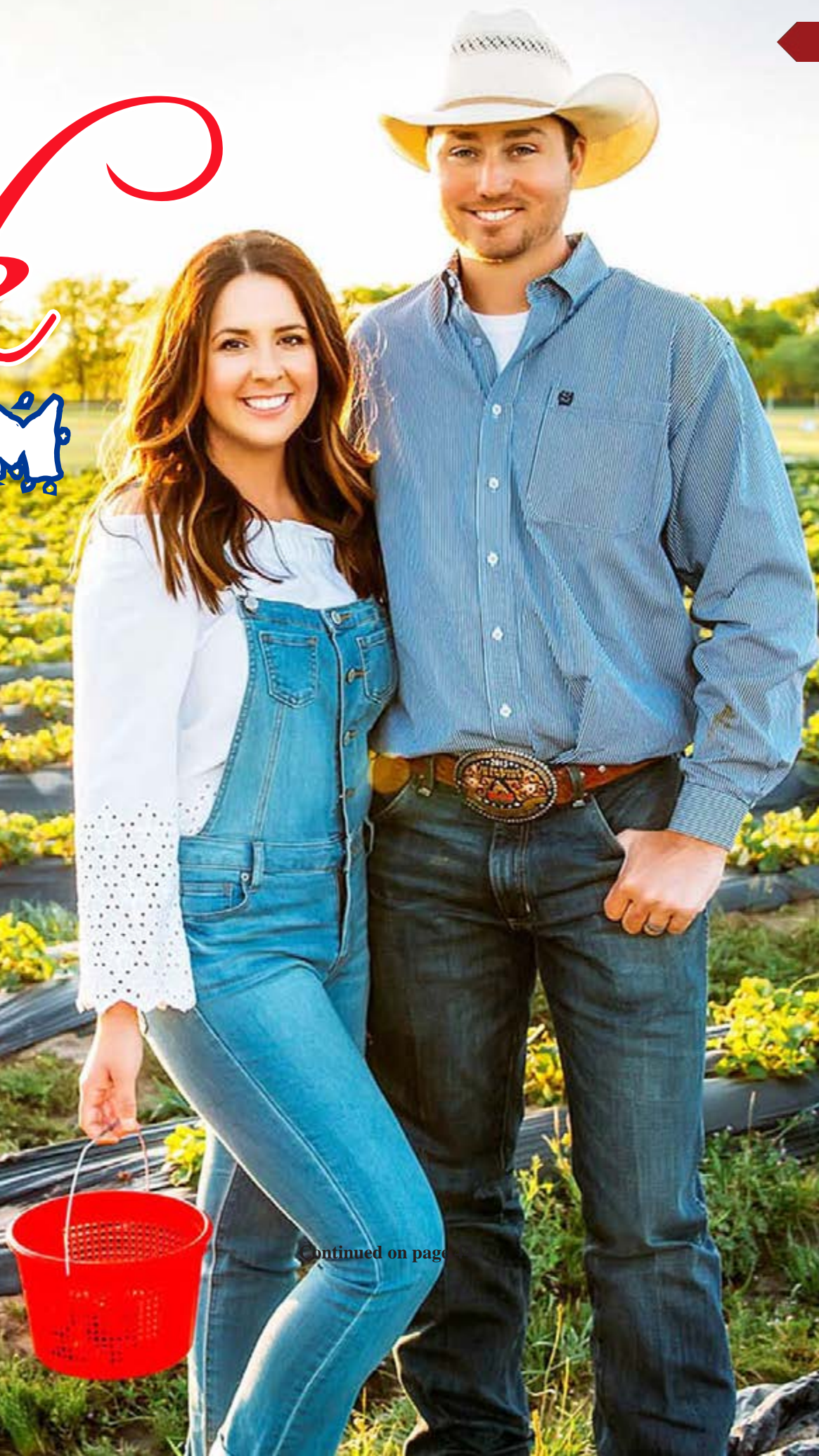
"I learned really quick what kind of lifestyle I was getting myself into. I met his parents for the first time and learned how to tie greens all at once," laughed Kylie.

Despite the task of getting her hands dirty, Kylie was drawn to the agricultural lifestyle and its focus on family. After high school, Kylie went on to college, graduating with a degree in registered nursing. She went to work as a labor and delivery nurse at Wise Regional. Meanwhile, Chris attended Weatherford College for three years on a rodeo scholarship in calf roping. The two tied the knot on April 4, 2014, knowing an agricultural





# Week ARM



Continued on page





# Pecan Creek STRAWBERRY FARM

**Continued from page 42**

lifestyle was in their future.

“We knew pretty early on we wanted to have that lifestyle. Both of us were raised very different, him being on the farm and me being in education, but we both spent a lot of time with our parents. I would be at the same school and then get on the bus and go to games with them, just as Chris did with his parents when he was working,” said Kylie.

A young Chris would enjoy breakfast with his parents. Then as a family they would head to the fields and work. The Demases family would come back in and enjoy lunch and then head back out again.

“It was a family unit, and that’s what drew me to the lifestyle. Chris and I have decided to carry that on, and hopefully one day we can have babies and they can work right alongside us,” predicted Kylie.

Strawberries came into the picture around six years ago when Chris began growing them on his family’s farm after returning home from college.

“I started with just a few thousand plants, picking and hauling them to markets. We attended markets all over the metroplex and saw a need and interest from people wanting to pick their own,” said Chris.

As far as a location for their new adventure, it was an easy decision for the Demases to grow their own roots on the land that had been in Kylie’s family for more than 100 years. Although the land had not been farmed since the 1970s when pecans and cotton were the main crops, Kylie’s grandmother, Willene Crustinger, was more than excited to see the land put to use once again.

“She was glad to see it back

**Continued on page 46**



The Demases farm three to four acres for strawberries in Pilot Point, Texas. Cattle can often be found grazing behind the rows of plants. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)



One of the first blooms of the 2019 season at Pecan Creek Strawberry Farm. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)



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# Pecan Creek STRAWBERRY FARM

Continued from page 44

to work in a family aspect. You should see her on days we are open for picking: she drives out there and watches everyone. She loves it. She is 76, but I swear she gets around like a 60-year-old; she is super active. Without her help we couldn't have done this. I didn't grow up around agriculture, but she did, so me marrying someone in that lifestyle and her having that background, it really all came full circle," said Kylie.

Each season begins long before the first bloom emerges. In September, the ground is prepared with all raised beds, with plastic dripped irrigation underneath. Chris begins planting around the first of October, using bare roots from California. This year, 43,000 strawberries were planted, each one by hand.

"It was wet, rainy and it was cold, but when you get the plants they need to go in the ground, so there wasn't much waiting around," recalled Chris.

A crew of three workers helped Chris over the course of five days with planting in less than ideal conditions, but that is the way of a farmer. Through the following months, the root systems of the plants were established, one of the most important steps in the process.

Come December, Chris put out wire hoops around each row, every five feet or so, allowing the plants to grow in a low tunnel, which is similar to a greenhouse effect.

"Through early December we pull those covers just to protect from really icy weather, and it gets me some warmer dates, so when it is in the mid-30s, in that tunnel it may be 50 degrees, allowing the plant to establish a little faster during winter. It doesn't have to be done, but I feel like it is pretty



A basket full of delicious strawberries picked right from the Pecan Creek Strawberry Farm. (Courtesy photo)

effective," explained Chris.

The time many are anxiously waiting for arrives around the middle of March, when Chris pulls the covers off and the strawberries are ripe.

In their first year of business, it was a bit later in the season – around April – when the Pecan Creek Strawberry Farm opened. However, Chris hadn't used the tunnels, and planted only a quarter of the strawberries that are now awaiting picking when warmer temperatures arrive.

"When I was on my family's farm, the most strawberries I had ever planted was around 2,500 plants, just because we were picking ourselves and could barely keep up with that and hauling to market. Then when I planted 10,000 last year, I thought we were going to have to try and pick some

ourselves," said Chris.

The couple didn't know what to expect the very first season and were shocked at the overwhelming response from the public.

"On one day in particular, we counted more than 100 people standing in line when we opened. We posted at 9:07 a.m. we were at capacity, and if we let anybody else in, they were not going to be able to find any ripe berries. This year we decided to expand and hopefully accommodate more people," said Chris.

The Demases were able to meet a variety of customers, including young children who came along with their parents.

"They were just excited to have an educational type of experience for kids to come out and really see their strawberries don't always come from a plastic shell from the

store — that they could get down and come out muddy. Some days after the rain they counted that as an experience," said Kylie.

The young children and other families picked so many strawberries in 2018 the owners wound up not getting to pick any strawberries for themselves at all.

"They picked us all out last year," laughed Chris. "It's hard trying to find the right number. We don't want to plant too many then have to figure out who is going to help pick them all and where we are going to go with them, but as the customer base expands, we will grow our acreage of plants. Being picked out is a good thing."

Right now, the couple farms three to four acres, with more than enough room left for expansion with the other 80 acres. In comparison, the largest strawberry farm in Texas lies in southern Texas at 20 acres. Expansion comes with a few things to figure out, including more modernized equipment, laborers and more.

However, their future plans include much more than just the number of strawberries planted, but instead, they hope to create a destination for visitors.

"Last year, visitors kept asking if we were going to expand, but we also tried to really listen to what else they were saying and implement that," said Kylie. "Chris is out there in the fields working with customers and I am checking them out, and we really wanted to hear what the customer had to say."

One change already made this year is wider rows, allowing greater space and making it more comfortable for picking. It also accommodates those customers who wanted more room to get down in the dirt.

In the future, the couple plans





While many couples would find it difficult working alongside each other for hours on end, it is what Chris and Kylie love most about their farm and the agricultural lifestyle. (Photo courtesy Janey Cooper Photography)

to make the farm “all things strawberry.”

“I really want to make this a destination as far as Pilot Point and make it something people can come and do. We want to make it all things strawberry. Chris and I believe we want to stick with one crop and perfect the craft of it and be good at the one thing we are doing,” said Kylie.

A food truck concept with delectable strawberry items like ice cream and a strawberry lemonade stand are just a few of the ideas floating around for the future of the farm. Props for photo opportunities once families are done picking also are on the agenda.

“I want it to be a full strawberry experience. I feel like people not only want to know where their food is coming from, but they want to get outside and do some-

thing together. We also want to cater to our clientele from the city and urbanized area and bring it back to what Chris and I fell in love with, which is the family aspect of the agriculture lifestyle,” said Kylie.

It’s a fun adventure for the wife, who says it breaks up the routine of her daytime job of nursing.

“It is a creative outlet. I get to go out there and paint signs. I do all the social media. For me, I always said Chris is the brains and muscle behind the operation, but for me I get to be the fluff and frill so it is a good balance. I get to work alongside with my husband, so I don’t feel like I am taking away from that. We wake up in the morning, set everything up together and get to spend time together,” said Kylie.

Luckily, her coworkers have been understanding and some of her biggest fans, allowing her the flexibility with her schedule to be there alongside her husband during picking season. Many couples would understandably struggle working with their spouse, but it’s what this pair loves most about the job.

“Chris is a very patient person; I knew that from the beginning. I am more head strong. I like to think I control things, and he is such a mild-mannered man,” said Kylie. “We get out there in the middle of all the craziness with people lined up and we will be stressed out, but catch ourselves looking at each other and we just start giggling like ‘what is even going on?’ It has been great. We wanted to keep the family aspect, so for us to be able to work alongside each other

has worked out great. It has been extremely fun to be on this crazy, wild journey of ‘let’s start a pick our own strawberry farm and just run with it.’”

Pecan Creek Strawberry Farm is open Wednesdays and Saturdays during picking season from 9 a.m. until the fields are picked out. It is on a first come, first serve basis. There is no limit on the amount picked, or any guarantee. As of press time, their official opening had not yet been announced, but follow them on Facebook for the exciting date.

Always check their page before heading out to pick your strawberries. They will post the status of the field, if the field is picked over for the day and overall conditions for picking. Visit [pecan creek-strawberryfarm.com](http://pecan creek-strawberryfarm.com) for more information.



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# Corn Time<sup>©</sup> by Lang







# LACEY'S PANTRY

By Lacey Newlin

## Lasagna Stuffed Chicken Breast

**Total Time:** 45 minutes

**Serves:** 4

### Ingredients

#### For the chicken

4 thin chicken breasts no thicker than 1/4 inch

1 cup Italian seasoned breadcrumbs

1/4 cup parmesan cheese

1 egg beaten

1 1/2 cups marinara sauce

#### For the lasagna filling

1/2 cup shredded provolone or mozzarella cheese or a mixture of the two

3/4 cup ricotta cheese

1/4 cup parmesan cheese

1 tbsp fresh chopped basil

1/4 tsp garlic powder

1/2 tsp salt

1 egg beaten



### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Pour sauce into the bottom of an oven-proof skillet or casserole dish.
2. Set up a chicken dredging station, with one shallow bowl of egg and one of the parmesan cheese and breadcrumbs. Dredge chicken through egg, shaking off excess, then through the breadcrumb mixture, making sure to coat both sides equally. Set chicken aside.
3. Mix together lasagna filling ingredients in a small mixing bowl. Split filling evenly between the four chicken pieces. Place filling in the center of each chicken breast. Roll chicken over, tucking in one end under the other.
4. Place seam side down in the sauce. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. If cheese runs out, push back in before it cools. It will set up as it cools. Let sit 5-10 minutes to allow ricotta mixture to set up.®



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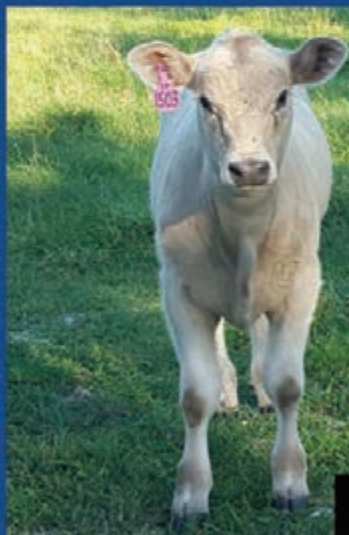
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# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

“Would you like to come up to the farm and haul hay with me?”

His enthusiasm made the experience sound like so much fun, how could I refuse?

I had never driven a stick shift before. I had never driven a truck before. I had certainly never hauled hay before. In fact, I had no idea what it meant to “haul hay.” So what was my boyfriend soon-to-be husband thinking when he invited me to haul hay with him?

Why was he willing to risk his life by putting this totally inexperienced city girl behind the wheel of his flatbed truck with an old granny four-speed? Did he want to test his balance? Did he want to see how much patience he had or how good of a driving instructor he could be? Perhaps he wanted to see if this adorable, naïve city girl he was so very enamored with could muster up what it would take to partner with him in his ranch life? The answers to all of these questions would be revealed on my very first trip to the ranch.

He may have been impressed by my eagerness to help him. I was sincerely interested and curious about his life in the country. I’m quite certain he had never received a more animated and delighted response to his request.

He might have given me some tips on appropriate attire for hauling hay. I don’t think he minded seeing me in my sexy shorts and flip-flops though. It was a hot summer day in August, and I probably would have thought he was crazy if he had suggested I wear jeans

and boots.

Long story short, I didn’t throw him off the truck bed even though I did kill the engine dozens of times, and let’s just say I did not master how to release the clutch slowly in my first try. I did get pretty darn good at getting the bales into the loader, except when I needed to turn to go down a new row. That skill would require many more hay hauling adventures, but we did get all the bales picked up and stacked in the barn. I learned how to use a hay hook that day, too. The old adage “practice makes perfect” would prove to be a true one for driving an old granny four-speed and maneuvering a hay loader.

There would be many more things to learn about this unfamiliar world where the love of my life lived. Much practice would be required from this city girl, and much patience would be needed from both of us. Rome wasn’t built in a day, and the successful merging of a city girl and a country boy would be no different.

The idea of doing something I’ve never done before has always been intriguing to me so one thing that was certain is that my boyfriend-soon-to-be-husband had a willing partner by his side.

I may not have picked up ranch life perfectly in my first attempts, but I was not the type of city girl to give up. I was actually a steel magnolia born in Atlanta, Ga., with my mamma’s grit and hard-headed determination in my blood. I knew, in the words of Thomas Edison, “The most certain way to succeed is to try just one more time.” In my case, many times. (N)



Annette Bridges had many things to learn when she married a farmer and moved to Tioga, Texas, from the city. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)



Annette often wonders why her husband was willing to risk his life by putting an inexperienced city girl behind the wheel of his flatbed truck while hauling hay. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)



# PYTHIAN HOME

## *Past and Present*

By Mandi Dietz

Previously discussed, the Pythian Home adorns spacious acres of farmland alongside historic Bankhead Drive in east Weatherford, near Interstate 20. Although technically urban, it's a scenic country-themed parcel and a beautiful place to raise children. Formerly a fully functioning farm, the Home adjusts to changes, rolling with the punches of obstacles brought about with time for more than a century, from tuberculosis long ago to modern day child labor laws, FDA regulations, state restrictions, funding, fire and other forces of nature.

Kristin Watson grew up at the Home and now works there as a marketing coordinator, handling social media and fundraisers. She can pretty much answer every question about the Home, considering her history of helping spans officially two years but unofficially 30.

The Pythian Home celebrates its 110th anniversary this year.

Per Watson, the land was given to the Home in 1905, but by whom is a mystery because it's somehow not documented.

Originally 350 acres, the Home now rests upon 164, less than half.

Building began in 1906, the first cornerstone laid one year later, and by March 1, 1909, the Home opened, and its first four children arrived from Amarillo.

Although the state allows for 64 children to live at the Home, they only have 52 beds.

Watson says a new regulation will soon limit each dorm to a max of eight children. With six dorms available, that limits them to 48.

Currently, 22 children live at the Pythian Home, and the duration of a child's stay could range



Widows working on the farm of Pythian Home. (Photo courtesy Pythian Home)



A view of the on-site cemetery with graves of five widows, five children and numerous pets. (Photo by Mandi Dietz)

from a short time sometimes to graduating college, it just depends.

Returning to its roots, a new project called the Family Care Program is planned to house eight families, consisting of single mothers and their children. This way families can live together full

time. An application and interview process will determine eligibility, and the mothers who are willing to try must meet goals.

Because the state requires a physical separation of programs, the Family Care Project will occupy a future building, projected to cost 1.5 million dollars. This

is cheaper than renovating the Homecoming building, a structure with no known significance to its name, which would cost three to five million to revive.

In the past, the Homecoming building offered haunted houses to the public, put on by responders: **See PYTHIAN page 57**



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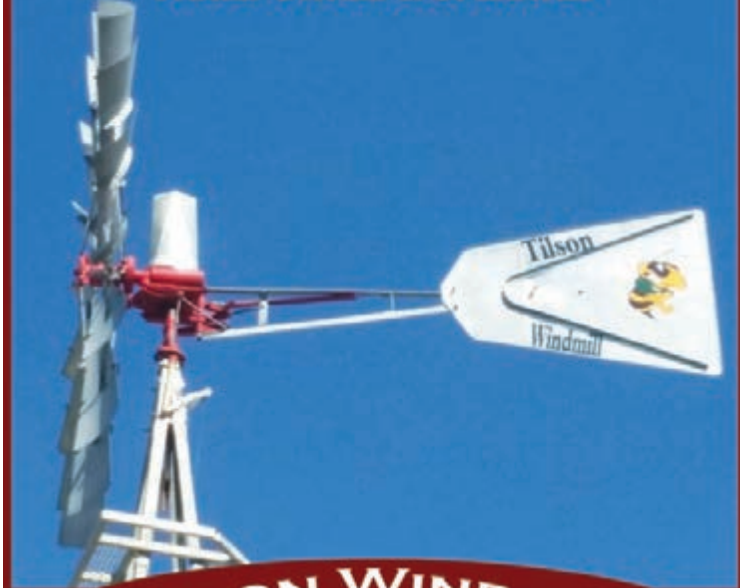
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# PYTHIAN

the fire department, police station and tactical department, generating finances to benefit the Home. Over time, the costs of insurance requirements halted the Halloween festivities.

To help raise funds, the Home is hosting its first annual Castle 5K on April 27 at Gene Voyles Park in Hudson Oaks. The event is too large for the Home's property, and Bankhead Drive is highly traveled, so the city of Hudson Oaks offered to help, saying "We'll shut down the whole town for ya."

Other Home fundraisers, such as two garage sales a year, selling unusable material donations, pay for the children's summer activities like Six Flags, camp, water park visits and trips to the zoo.

The Home works with families to care for their children day-to-day during difficult times, and the biggest donation need, in addition to funds, is food such as dry goods and items that can be microwaved or stove-top cooked, sent home with the children for their weekends with family.

Once upon a time, children living at the Home worked the farm, but since child labor laws and FDA regulations, the Home stopped its dairy and large gardening activities.

Because the kids want to plant, they do grow a small amount of produce, such as pumpkins, cantaloupes and tomatoes, but nothing major. The stuff they grow is with seed and replanted annually. Deer do eat their fruits though. Watson calls this another "fighting factor or maybe why" the children really like to grow things.

Long ago, residents of this fully functioning farm only needed to venture into town for textiles. About the 1970s, came the hurdle of pasteurization and laws claiming the children worked too much, so crops and dairy production halted.



The Home keeps donkeys to protect calves from coyotes. (Photo courtesy Mandi Dietz)

"We still grow our own beef," Watson said. "That way, we know what's going into our own meat."

Currently, the Home possesses 33 head of cattle they'll send off to slaughter as needed. They used to slaughter their own meat onsite, which was common in the early 1900s, but with sanitation restrictions and process requirements, it's easier to send it out to someone else.

"We don't have the money to keep up with freezing costs," Watson said. "Think of it as any other ranch or farm."

The Pythian Home also keeps about a half dozen donkeys on property to help keep coyotes away and protect their calves.

Two dogs live in the dorms, a Shih Tzu named Sushi and a poodle, Ty.

There are several barns on property, one with hay, one for tractors, one for mechanics, and one with donated lumber, which doubles as a wood shop for furniture projects, such as cabinets.

"We have a pretty amazing

maintenance man who is a carpenter by trade," Watson said.

The Pythian Home hires someone to bale their coastal hay because they lack the equipment.

Last year, the property survived a wildfire, one of several featured on the news when Parker County endured many. A neighbor welding a fence accidentally started the one at the Home. Thankfully, the fire only took their coastal hay, and people donated Alfalfa after. However, a hard-lesson was learned, the Home then lost two cows due to a rich diet of too much Alfalfa.

The Home has endeared its share of hardships and houses its own cemetery.


Watson said the graves consists of 10 people and numerous house pets. Five children and five widows are buried there with the last person put to rest in 1932. The children passed of tuberculosis and influenza, and the widows of "old age."

Watson said Weatherford was the fourth city in Texas to have Knights of Pythias and Pythian

Sisters, currently the "oldest" active lodge and temple. Lodges one through three, and Temples one through three are no more. Their number indicates the order of charter establishment, hence the Lone Star Lodge #4 and Columbian Temple #4, which once met at the historic building off the Square, occupied by Bennett's Office Supply. The Lodge and Temple now meet at the Pythian Home.

Anyone wanting to tour the Home can do so for free, and there are many opportunities to do so, weekdays by appointment and two open houses per year, once in early March to celebrate the anniversary and Christmas at the Castle, a celebratory Saturday each December.

From afar, the Pythian Home seems magical and out of reach, but up close, it's warm and personal, a place where people live. It's also a resting place for lives lost and a century of history.

An inoperable water tower stands as a backdrop and an "emblem," staple in the community. 



# Ranchman's Cafe

By Michelle Ames



The Ranchman's Café is one of our favorites and a must place to stop if we are in the Ponder area. Since 1948 they have served steaks, huge baked potatoes and delicious pie in a building built in 1903. It's even been featured on Food Network's FoodNation with Bobby Flay.

We love the smallness of the restaurant, and always prefer to sit in the front section instead of the "newer" addition, added in the 1980s. Here in the old section, newspaper articles and pictures line the wall and tell the history of the restaurant.

While the menu offers such options as quail quarters, calf fries and on occasion deep-fried cactus, it's the steaks that keep us coming back. Perfectly cooked, and slathered with butter, the rib steak is our favorite. All the steaks

are hand cut on site, so like my husband, you can ask for yours a little thicker, or like my daughter, a thinner cut.

Their huge baked potatoes are baked daily, and they request that you call in to reserve yours by 3 p.m. that day, so they have time to bake it.

On our last trip, we had the chicken fried steak and homemade mashed potatoes, along with a couple of their house rolls, and try to leave room for their fresh-made pies.

### Things to do near Ponder

Legend has it that Bonnie and Clyde attempted to rob the Ponder State Bank, only to find it had gone broke the week before. The bank building is still standing in town, and a fun place to get your picture taken.

Yes, there's not a lot else to do




Guests must leave room for freshmade pies when visiting the Ranchman's Cafe in Ponder. (Photo courtesy Michelle Ames)

in Ponder, but tons to do nearby.

Texas Motor Speedway offers Nascar and Indycar racing, as well as tons of activities, from the Gift of Lights each December to 5K's and much more.

Downtown Denton on the

Courthouse Square has fun shops and other things to do.

Also each October, Fort Worth Alliance Airport host a huge airshow. 

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# Tradition continues AT DOAN'S MAY PICNIC

By Dani Blackburn

The oldest continuously celebrated pioneer event in the Lone Star State is being readied for the 136th time as the Doan's May Picnic in Wilbarger County kicks off on May 4.

On the first Saturday of May each year, hundreds of guests gather to celebrate an event dating back to 1884 when settlers of Doan's gathered for lunch along the Red River for the very first time. If making plans to attend this year's event, make sure to arrive by 11 a.m. to catch all the activities.

The small community lies just north of Vernon close to the intersection of Farm-to-Market 2916 and FM 924. It is named for the Doan family who settled the land in 1878, including Jonathan, his brother Calvin and nephew Corwin.

They had left their home in Ohio and headed for unsettled territory, paving the way for future settlers. Corwin Doan's adobe home was built in 1881 near Doan's Crossing. The structure is the oldest building in Wilbarger County, with a designation from the Texas State Historical Commission. Jonathan Doan created a trading post near where cattle were taken across the Red River, which became a center point for the community, and Corwin Doan soon became his partner.

"It was a store, and that is where Corwin Doan traded with the Indians and with the trail drivers. Thousands and thousands of head of cattle were herded up the cattle trails and they had places for them to eat and a school. It



The oldest house in Wilbarger County is an adobe at Doans, the 1881 home of Corwin F. Doan, who operated a trading post nearby that served trail drivers, Indians and early-day settlers. The picture shows the landmark adobe as it appeared in the early 1990s before a 1993 restoration resulted in the removal of the frame addition and the addition of an EIFS (Exterior Insulation Finishing System, essentially synthetic stucco) sheathing that changed the exterior appearance. (Photo by Hanaba Welch)

was quite a bustling community," explained Pat Mints, chair of the Doan's May Picnic Coronation Committee.

The Great Western Trail kept Vernon and Doans alive for many years as cattle and horses were moved across the river into Indian Territory, headed for Kansas. C.F. Doan eventually took over the store, creating a large company

and opening a branch store where the town of Vernon now sits.

The very first Doan's May Picnic was a small event, when the Doan family and a few neighbors went on a little picnic along the river at Watt's Grove, most likely unaware of the tradition that would follow from a simple gathering. The next year, more showed up, until the event had

grown to as many as 5,000 people by the 1930s. It was not unheard of for members of local Indian tribes to attend the event. Corwin Doan himself had been friends with Comanche Chief Quanah Parker and other Indian leaders who visited Doans in the early days. The festivities were even a chance for politicians to shine. During election years, candidates would spend



all afternoon making election speeches to the large crowd.

The picnic remained at Watt's Grove until flooding forced the event to be moved to Doan's Adobe. Today, the event is not quite as large, but many descendants of the pioneers work hard to carry on the tradition that is cherished by so many in the area.

"We think it is very special. Usually the families who come have heritage that goes back years and we try to live up to that standard every year," said Mints.

The main event is the coronation of the 2019 King and Queen, at 11:30 a.m. along with the presentation of Outstanding Woman of the Year and Outstanding Man of the Year.

The first Doan's queen was crowned in 1911. The duty of selecting the queen each year fell to Bertha Doan Ross, the child at the first picnic. A king was added to the celebration in 1939 and the man and woman of the year were first honored in 1968.

The coronation is a carefully planned ceremony, full of delightful costumes and a theme to celebrate. In 1953, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth prompted a strong British pomp and circumstance theme. In the year 1955, the queen, Hanaba Munn (now Welch), dressed as a Native American to honor her given name, which means prairie flower.

"The court was all dressed in white corduroy to look like buckskin, with beads and feathers, fake turquoise and silver. Then the princes and princesses, who were the royal guests, were dressed like pioneer men and women. It was a break in tradition and it was a fun deal," said Welch.

However, being queen and king comes with great responsibility.

"It is a great honor. When you are chosen as queen, all of a sudden you have to put it all together. It's a lot of work, but it's fun," said Welch.

Many costumes are adorned with cattle brands representing their heritage and other items from their family's past.

The festivity also includes

entertainment, chosen by the king and queen. During the annual event, choirs, fiddlers and singers have sung, danced and told stories to the delight of the crowds. Most importantly, the event gives visitors a chance to share stories of their past, keeping the history of the community alive.

"Many times, the younger generations will learn things they didn't know about their past, but someone older in their family had mentioned it and passed the story down long enough for us to get ahold of it. Vernon is not as exciting as it used to be, but it does get exciting when they realize their history and long-lost friends, and a lot of people, especially from the Doan's community, come back every year for the picnic," said Mints.

Food remains a big part of the social event. In the earlier days, men would dig pits and roast delicious entrees, with the ladies bringing a heap of delightful side dishes, but now, the event is a fundraising opportunity for the Northside High School junior class.

"It is their one big fundraiser of the year and it is delicious. We involve the churches and ask them to be a part of the program. It is always very patriotic, and it is a lovely tribute to Texas and the people who came here early," said Mints.

The western heritage is kept alive by a group that gathers at Elmer, Okla., and mount their horses in the Hess area before heading to the Red River, joining the celebration in time for the picnic. They tether their horses and enjoy the day before heading back across the river.

It is quite the event to put on, with hours of work going into the once-a-year event from a committee of dedicated individuals. Many take on important jobs for the event, including setting up chairs, printing programs as well as the upkeep of the old home throughout the year.

"It is all for the community," said Mints of her time spent vol-  
**See DOAN'S page 63**

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Bound for the 2008 Doan's May Picnic, a rider from Oklahoma sets foot on Texas soil on the south bank of the Red River north of Doans, Texas. The river crossing is a yearly Hess-to-Doans tradition that typically attracts 50 or more riders. The yearly picnic has drawn participants from both Texas and Oklahoma since the late 1800s. The river has changed course over the years, but the crossing location is in the same area as the historic Doan's Crossing on the Great Western Trail. (Photo by Hanaba Welch)


Continued from page 61

# DOAN'S

unteering. "We see each other at stock shows throughout the year and that sort of thing, but this is a chance to celebrate our young people. I'm sure the members of my committee would say a lot of other things too. Families even plan their reunions around this date, so it is pretty important that we keep doing this. Anything done for 136 years is worthwhile in today's times."

Guests are invited to come enjoy the day's activities and learn more about the history of Doan's and the early settlers who paved the way for Texas, all while enjoying the company of others.

Meanwhile, visitors can learn about the rich history of the area and soak in some of the delightful costumes worn by queens and kings of the past at the Red River Valley Museum.

"I love this time of the year," said Mints. "Spring is always a sort of reawakening. It reminds us that we need to get out and be with neighbors." 



Royalty from the 2018 Doan's May Picnic. Pictured are Queen Marlie Faye Morris and King Jackson Creede Stafford. (Photo courtesy of the queen's grandmother, Barbara Franklin)



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# On the Road with Dave Alexander



**H**owdy Texas Music Fans. Most of my readers know each month I feature future, past and present contributors to Texas Country Music. When you think about it, we really wouldn't have Texas Country Music as we know it if it weren't for the cowboy, and if it weren't for our historic ranches throughout our great state, there wouldn't have been much need for great Cowboys.

The Stark Ranch is one of those historic ranches that has helped shape our great Texas heritage, so today I'd like to turn your attention in their direction for a moment.

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Cowboy True

MARCH 29-30 • WICHITA FALLS

2120 Speedway Ave., Wichita Falls. The mission of Cowboy True is to educate the region about the honor, art and beauty of the cowboy's daily life. Cowboy True is a celebration to honor working cowboys and the artwork that comes from their daily lives. In 2019, Cowboy True returns to its roots at The Forum. Cowboy True was originally inspired as an effort to raise awareness and funding for The Forum, formerly the home of The Woman's Forum, which has a long association with the women and families of the North Texas cattle industry. Categories include: bits, spurs, buckles, jewelry, gun/knife engraving, saddles, boots, trappings/gear, photography, paintings, drawings, sculptures, carving and cowboy cartoons. Friday night events include the artists' reception and opening, Saturday will see daytime activities and the exhibit open to the public, while Saturday evening will consist of a night dinner, live auction and entertainment. All proceeds go to The Forum to assist with programming and mission fulfillment. For more information, call 940-766-3347 or email [cowboytrue@artscouncilwf.org](mailto:cowboytrue@artscouncilwf.org). [www.artscouncilwf.org/cowboy-true](http://www.artscouncilwf.org/cowboy-true)

## Cattle Raisers Convention

MARCH 29-31 • FORT WORTH

Fort Worth Convention Center, 1201 Houston St., Fort Worth. Improve your ranch management skills, learn about state and national issues, enjoy live music and entertainment, and shop the largest ranching expo in the region at the Cattle Raisers Convention on March 29-31 at the Fort Worth Convention Center. [www.cattle-raisersconvention.com](http://www.cattle-raisersconvention.com)

## District 9 Ropings

MARCH 30 • DECATUR

NRS Events Center, 309 CR 4228, Decatur, Texas. District 9 Ropings March 30 and April 27. District finals May 18. Saddles and breast collars to High Point Division Champions. Buckles to Champion Header and Heeler in all divisions. [www.NRSevents.com](http://www.NRSevents.com) or 940-393-7019.

## Top of Texas Market

MARCH 30-31 • WICHITA FALLS

Ray Clymer Exhibit Hall, 1000 5th Street, Wichita Falls. Vintage. Unique. Re-purposed. Handmade. Eclectic. Presented by Wichita County Heritage Society, this event will entice visitors to enjoy the weekend shopping. March 30 and March 31 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. [www.topoftexasantiques.com](http://www.topoftexasantiques.com)

## Premier Equine Auctions, "A Cut Above"

APRIL 5-6 • LUFKIN

George H. Henderson, Jr. Expo Center, 1200 Ellen Trout Dr., Lufkin. Mike Pedersen and Steve Friskup have joined forces to offer a premier sale in order to bring buyers and sellers together in a professional and friendly environment. "A cut above." Auctioneers will be Steve Friskup and Wade Shaw. Consignment deadline is March 1. On Friday, April 5, cutters will be shown on cattle or mechanical cow while selling; roping, reiner and barrel horse demo and premier riding horse session selling ropers reiners, cutters, sorters, penners and pleasure horses. Consignment fee is \$250, includes cattle charge, eight percent commission, no PO fee. On Saturday, April 6, will be a premier mixed session. Visit [www.premierequineauctions.com](http://www.premierequineauctions.com).

## TURKEY FEST APRIL 10-13



## Red River Wine & Beer Festival

APRIL 6 • WICHITA FALLS

J. S. Bridwell Ag Center, 111 N. Burnett St., Wichita Falls. Novices to connoisseurs can choose from 44 different Texas wines to sample and craft beer tastings, all under one roof. [www.redriver-wineandbeerfestival.com](http://www.redriver-wineandbeerfestival.com)

## Denton Redbud Festival

APRIL 13 • DENTON

Denton Civic Center, 321 E. McKinney Street, Denton. The award-winning Denton Redbud Festival is Denton's Official Arbor Day celebration – promoting community beautification and Denton pride since 1994. The Denton Redbud Festival features dozens of vendors. [kdb.org/programs/beautification/denton-redbud-festival/](http://kdb.org/programs/beautification/denton-redbud-festival/)

## 13th Annual Turkey Fest

APRIL 10-13 • HENRIETTA

Henrietta Courthouse Square, Henrietta, Texas 76365. Turkey Fest is the spring family-oriented festival in North Texas. Turkey Fest attracted 6,000 festival goers in 2016. We love to see our fest grow. Our team of volunteers loves this annual event. We see the positive impact on our community, our economy and the Henrietta and Clay County Chamber. Turkey Fest is not just for hunters – it's for the whole family. We make sure we have activities for everyone and every budget. Plus, coming to the fest is free and there are plenty of free children's activities to keep the kids occupied. Don't miss this fun annual event on the courthouse square. For a full schedule of events visit [hccchamber.org](http://hccchamber.org).



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## Wichita Falls PRCA Rodeo

APRIL 26-27 • WICHITA FALLS

*JS Bridwell Ag Center, 111 N Burnett, Wichita Falls, TX 76301.* PRCA Rodeo returns to Wichita Falls. Rodeo starts at 7 p.m. nightly at the J.S. Bridwell Ag Center. Events include barrel racing, saddle bronc riding, bareback riding, steer wrestling, team roping, calf roping and bull riding. Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association is a non-profit organization intending to preserve the heritage of rodeo while benefitting our area youth and community. <https://wichitafallsprcarodeo.org/>

## Germanfest

APRIL 26-28 • MUENSTER

*Muenster, Texas.* Muenster throws one of the biggest parties in Texas, Germanfest, the last full weekend in April. This three-day festival attracts thousands to mouthwatering German sausage, scrumptious apple strudel, hearty cheese and homemade bread, cakes and pies. So, come to Muenster and let us be your host for food, fun and frolic. Be sure to bring a "guten appetit." [www.muenstergermanfest.com](http://www.muenstergermanfest.com)

## Doan's Annual May Picnic

MAY 4 • DOAN'S CROSSING

*Doan's Crossing, Texas.* Come celebrate the longest running continuous event in the Lone Star State. The event will include entertainment, coronation of the 2019 Doan's King and Queen as well as the Outstanding Woman of the Year and Outstanding Man of the Year. Come enjoy delicious food and soak in the history of the community. [www.doansmaypicnic.com](http://www.doansmaypicnic.com)

## Training Challenge Horse Show & Adoption

MAY 4 • SANGER

*Jim A Dee Ranch, 9494 Waide Rd., Sanger, Texas 76266.* The Bluebonnet Help A Horse Spring Horse Show, Adoption Event and Rescue Horse Training Challenge is back for 2019. The event will include the Bluebonnet Rescue Horse Training Challenge. Trainers and non-pros have been working with horses all across the Lone Star State for three months and then compete against each other for prize money, with horses available for adoption. Vendors will be in attendance and the event also will include a silent auction. The Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society is a nonprofit organization that helps abused, neglected, abandoned and stray horses throughout Texas. Bluebonnet Equine Human Society works with foster homes located throughout the Lone Star State and with volunteers and new foster homes. Visit [www.bluebonnethelpahorse.org/](http://www.bluebonnethelpahorse.org/)

## 2019 Spring Fling at Leonard Park

MAY 4 • GAINESVILLE

*Leonard Park, 1000 W. California St., Gainesville, TX 76240.* To honor the birthday of the play-scape in Gainesville's Leonard Park, the annual Spring Fling Celebration is conducted the first Saturday in May at Leonard Park from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Vendors come from all over, and the day is filled with wonderful arts and crafts including handmade baby shoes, jewelry and beads, bird house and feeders, seed bombs, handmade wooden crosses, hair bows and halos, candles and face painting, to name a few. There also is great food available at this exciting annual celebration. Typically on the menu for guests is a variety of food, including: corn dogs, funnel cakes, twisted taters, brisket tacos, chicken strips, scones, cotton candy, kettle corn and much, much more. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call **940-668-4530** for more information or visit [www.gainesville.tx.us/586/Spring-Fling](http://www.gainesville.tx.us/586/Spring-Fling).

## Red River Regional Replacement Sale

MAY 11 • OVERBROOK, OK

*Red River Livestock Market, 283 Lodge Rd., Overbrook, Okla., 73453.* The Red River Regional Replacement Sale takes place May 11 at the Red River Livestock Market in Overbrook, Okla. [www.redriverlivestockauction.com/weekly-report.html](http://www.redriverlivestockauction.com/weekly-report.html)

## Celebration of Freedom

MAY 18 • HOBART, OK

*Courthouse Square, Hobart, Okla., 73651.* Celebration of Freedom was created to celebrate the freedom we enjoy and recognize our brave men and women in uniform. Festivities feature the Celebration of Freedom Show and Shine, live music, Oklahoma's largest silent auction, a children's pageant and activities area, a skeet/trap shoot, kiddie car races, car show, parade, DARE dunk-a-cop fundraiser, food and craft vendors downtown on the courthouse square. Family fun for all ages. [www.tommyfranksmuseum.org](http://www.tommyfranksmuseum.org)



**WICHITA FALLS PRCA RODEO**  
**APRIL 26-27**



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# LBJ Grasslands

## PRESERVATION THROUGH A MULTI-USE APPROACH

By Dani Blackburn

*This is the first of a two-part series on the Lyndon B. Johnson Grasslands located in Wise County, with a portion extending into Montague County. The grasslands are one of Texas' greatest natural resources and are managed with a multi-use approach by the Forest Service. The land also offers numerous recreational opportunities for the public, which we will focus on in the second part of the series in the May issue.*

There are only 20 national grasslands in the United States of America, with two located in the Lone Star State and just one – the Lyndon B. Johnson Grasslands – located right in North Texas.

The Caddo encompasses 17,785 acres and three lakes, including Lake Coffee Mill, Lake Crockett and Lake Fannin. While the Caddo rests northeast of Dallas/Fort Worth in Fannin County, the Lyndon B. Johnson National Grasslands sits right in our readers' backdoor in Wise County,

with a small portion extending into Montague County.

One of Texas' greatest natural assets, the LBJ covers 20,250 acres, and includes Black Creek Lake. The 30-acre lake is the location for a developed recreational area including picnic units, tent camping, a boat ramp and ample access for fishing.

National grasslands are managed together with the four United States National Forests. The LBJ office is located right off U.S. Highway 287 in Decatur, with a sign welcoming guests. The office has maps available and general information regarding the grasslands and their significance to the area.

The name given to the grasslands in 1974 pays homage to the late President Lyndon B. Johnson; however, its history dates back much further. Unlike the open grass fields one would expect to find, the grasslands are a barrier of timber with heavy undergrowth. The timber, known as the "Cross Timbers," was a major landmark

of the western prairies. The grasslands were originally named the Cross Timbers National Grassland because of this unique trait.

The area now designated as the LBJ Grasslands was originally home to bison, antelope, deer and elk, which became a hunting ground of the Native people. The Caddo Indians were the first to settle on the land until the Apache and Comanche forced them out around the mid-1700s. The European settlers came in the 1800s with farmers arriving in the 1900s. The acreage has been part of cattle drives with an estimated 10 million head of cattle driven northward. The cattle, along with farming, brought major changes to the landscape.

The grasslands were officially established in the 1930s after the Dust Bowl, a prolonged period of drought, when homesteads on poor farmland all across the country dried up and blew away. The government purchased lands as an emergency measure with the

intent of land utilization and land use adjustment.

In 1929, Congress enacted the Agricultural Marketing Act after recognizing the problem of sub marginal land.

The National Conference on Land Utilization was conducted in November 1931 with a goal of studying and making recommendations on how to resolve the problem of restoring the sub marginal lands. The National Land Use Planning Committee then prepared a report in 1933 directed to the concept of public acquisition, retention and management, and as a result, a sub marginal land purchase program was implemented by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration under the National Industrial Recovery Act of June 16, 1933. The lands were transferred to the Forest Service in 1953 and have remained a part of the service ever since.

The Civilian Conservation Corps helped stabilize the eroding soil by re-seeding it. Today, the





Forest Service takes a multi-use approach in land management of the Grasslands.

“It was critical to keep the land in public hands,” said U.S. Forest Service District Ranger Jeff Stoney. “Our function is to restore and maintain the national grasslands. These lands, at one time, were degraded beyond the ability to recover naturally. The federal government took over these lands, purchasing them for a nominal fee, and worked to stabilize and restore them with the end goal of keeping them available for multiple uses by the public.”

Stoney has 32 years of experience with the Forest Service and has spent the last two years of his career managing the Caddo and LBJ Grasslands with assistance of 11 full-time employees.

“Our folks specialize in grasslands and multiple use management. So we have cattle grazing, hunting, hiking, bird watching, research, oil and gas development and several other activities, as well as a whole number of events that occur on the grasslands, all of which are allowed and permitted through our processes, explained the district manager.

The service strives to return the prairie to its natural state through patch-burn grazing, a practice familiar to land managers.

With this strategy, a portion of prairie is burned, attracting animals who focus their grazing on the burned patch. As new patches are burned, land managers shift their grazing to the most recently burned patch, allowing the previous patches to recover. The method mimics those of bison herds back in the day, who historically would graze after wildfires. That grazing led to increases in plant diversity and thus a better home for wildlife.

Prescribed burns are carefully planned for the Lyndon B. Johnson Grasslands and used quite often, followed by the grazing of cattle.

See LBJ page 72



The LBJ Grasslands office right off U.S. Highway 287 welcomes visitors. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)



The LBJ Grasslands includes the 30-acre Black Creek Lake. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)





# LBJ

Continued from page 71

The Caddo and LBJ total roughly 40,000 acres, with around 8,000 of those burned each year, or roughly 25 percent. Stoney explained it is not all done at one time. There might be 10 burns done throughout the year to accomplish that goal, or it may stretch to as many as 15-18, depending on what is being burned and what the window of time is.

The grazing itself is a long-term conservation tool used by the Forest Service.

“A lot of our land management program consists of fire followed by grazing the land on the Caddo and LBJ. Much of it is still overgrown and choked out with

undesirable vegetation. Our goal is to turn it back into a Post Oak savannah like it once was,” said Stoney. “That is what the grasslands looked like pre-settlement, which was maintained naturally by fire then grazed heavily by buffalo. That kept it the way it was until we interjected ourselves and changed that system.”

Local ranchers are allowed to graze cattle through a permit allowing their cattle access to public lands.

“We closely manage the grazing opportunity. It’s a partnership between us and the private rancher,” said Stoney. “They pay a fee to graze cattle. That fee is

established by Congress. Then they do improvements on us, such as building fences, maintaining fences, keeping fire lines open, doing water improvements and things like that.”

The grasslands are an important part of the farming and ranching community in North Texas, providing a partnership vital to both sides.


“We do serve as an example for other farmers and ranchers in the area,” said Stoney. “We often share ideas amongst each other on best practices. We learn from them and they learn from us.”

Not only do the grasslands provide agricultural industrial use,

they also are the site of oil and natural gas extraction.

“We have a good number of oil and gas sites on us, and that aids in the local economy and helps us produce the energy resources we all need,” explained the district ranger.

All this is done to maintain the land while offering readily accessible, federal public land to the public. Visitors can take part in a variety of outdoor activities from hiking to hunting and fishing to camping or sight seeing and bird watching.

Read more about recreational opportunities at LBJ Grasslands in the May issue of NTFR. 



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# Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean

## Indian Paintbrush

The Texas bluebonnet is the undisputed star of the wildflower show that is on display every spring all across Texas (when moisture is adequate). Another beautiful native flower, the Indian paintbrush, has earned a costarring role. In fact, the two are often seen growing together.

Indian paintbrush also is known by other names like Texas paintbrush, Scarlet paintbrush, Grandmother's hair, Common red paintbrush, Butterfly weed, Prairie fire, Painted cup, and Painted lady. Most folks prefer to call it by its most popular name — Indian paintbrush.

The name of this flower is based on the legend of an Indian who wanted to paint a sunset. Frustrated that he could not produce any of the colors that matched the beauty of a sunset,

he asked the Great Spirit for help. The Great Spirit provided him with paintbrushes to create his painting. After completing his work, the artist then discarded his used paintbrushes around the landscape. These paint bushes later blossomed into plants.

The name Grandmother's hair is attributed to the Chippewa Indians who used the plant to treat women's diseases and rheumatism.

The Navajo Indians also used the plant for medicinal purposes, and other Native Americans soaked the plant in grease to make a hair oil.

The modern genus name, *Castilleja*, is named after a Spanish botanist, Domingo Castilleja.

Indian paintbrush plants are semi-parasitic. This means the Indian paintbrush relies on other plants to grow. When the roots of



### Grazing Value of This Plant

#### Indian Paintbrush

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Indian paintbrush is of little value to livestock.

Indian paintbrush come in contact with the roots of other plants (including grasses) they latch on to their neighbor's roots to get additional nutrients. So, the next time you see Indian paintbrush growing alongside Texas bluebonnets, you can pretty much know what's going on.

Some references indicate that Indian paintbrush must have a host plant to survive, and that it also relies on pollinators for reproduction. Many pollinators visit the plant, but, like most red flowered plants, the most common pollinator is the hummingbird.

From a distance, it appears that the slender stalks of Indian paintbrush are covered with flowers. These flowers are actually petal-like bracts, or colored leaves, that grow below the actual flower of the plant. In the case of the paintbrush, these bracts get more attention than the inconspicuous cream-colored flowers.

By 1916, over half of the states in the United States had already designated a state flower. The Wyoming Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution felt it was time for Wyoming to select its choice of native flower-





ing plants and put their support behind Indian paintbrush.

Others in Wyoming objected, indicating Indian paintbrush should not be considered because the plant was not common throughout the state, and that there would be confusion since there are more than 200 different species of Indian paintbrush listed.

However, when all was said and done, the Wyoming Legislature made Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja linariaefolia*) the official state flower of Wyoming on Jan. 31, 1917.

The flowers of Indian paintbrush are edible, and were consumed in moderation by Native Americans as a condiment with other fresh greens. However, the plant has a tendency to absorb and concentrate selenium from the soil in its tissue and can potentially be very toxic. Highly alkaline soils increase the selenium concentrate in the plant.

Included in the estimated 200 different species, there are perennial, annual and biennial plants of Indian paintbrush. Seeds are contained in a chambered capsule with two divisions, and once ripe, the capsules split open. Wind then helps spread the up to 300 seeds contained in each capsule.

Seeds are exceptionally small, about four million seeds per pound, and the recommended seeding rate for establishment is ¼ lb. per acre. Seed capsules can be carefully collected by hand in April and May, when the capsules are dry and brown. A check of a Central Texas seed company showed Indian paintbrush seed cost of \$54 per ounce.

There is little information available concerning grazing of Indian paintbrush, but is likely of little grazing value in North Texas. There are reports that some species are of more value in northern states for sheep, deer and elk.®

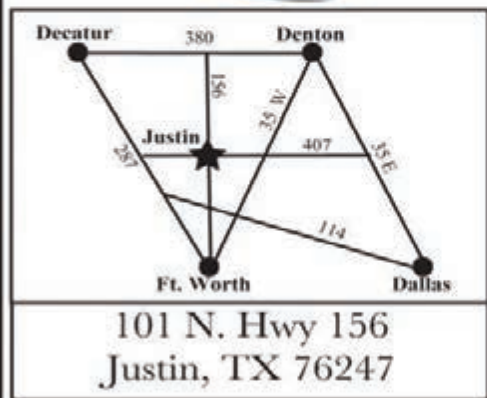


Indian paintbrush is the state flower of Wyoming. (Photos by Tony Dean)



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# Confessions of a Hunter

By Andy Anderson

## Spring Time Fishing and Pain

The cool mornings yield to warm breezes in the afternoons, the mesquite trees are beginning to bud, and the signs spring has arrived are everywhere. This was the time of year my buddy Jake and I really looked forward to getting back outside. Jake and I enjoyed fishing and did it as much as we could. We gathered up poles and various tackle and hit every stock tank, creek and lake we had access to. We didn't have a boat so all our fishing was from the bank and mostly for bass, some catfishing, but bass fishing was our thing.

One day Jake shows up to school and says he got his hands on a two-man bass boat. Needed a little work, but it was ours. For the next several days we spent all our spare time rounding up things we needed for our new boat. We found a trolling motor, got a battery and managed to fix the seats. The trial run was in the stock pond behind the house, that's how we found the holes in it. After a little fiberglass work and help from a friend, we were ready to set off for a full day of fishing.

It was a warm morning, with a slight breeze and broken clouds that cast moving shadows across the water. We set off the bank moving across the large pond and with the water slapping the sides of the boat and the gentle hum of the trolling motor behind me, Jake set his sights on a spot he always wanted to fish. The smell of lake water filled the air and the sounds of the birds feasting and drinking



Andy Anderson and his friend Jake have some good memories out on the lake. (Courtesy photo)

made for a relaxing and nearly perfect morning. As we began to slowly arrive, I cast into the bank with a spinner bait. I let it sink for a second and pulled up slightly to set the spin and retrieve. Bam, fish on.

For a few hours Jake and I could do no wrong, we were catching fish nearly every cast and we were having a grand time. Best part was if we got hung up, we could just troll up to where the bait was hung up and work it loose. Jake and I were really enjoying the boat and the benefits it brought.

Then, just like someone hit a switch they stopped biting. We

couldn't catch a thing. We were changing bait about as fast as a cook flipping flapjacks. All of a sudden Jake starts catching fish again. He is pitching a rooster tail and he is just killing it. Of course, I have to change to a rooster tail, so I find one in my tackle box, tied it on and started pitching it in. Now, I really never did like the rooster tail. It has a treble hook on the end and seems to get snagged on everything.

After a half hour of watching Jake catch fish after fish and listening to him brag and tease me on his superior angler skills I hang up on the bank. I snagged the grass line and while I was trying to work it

loose the frustration and lack of patience was beginning to show. Jake says, "Hang on, let me just work the boat over to it." As we are moving over to where I was snagged, Jake was trolling his bait in the water and of course he catches a fish. Are you freaking kidding me? He caught a fish. He stops the trolling motor so he can bring his fish in. I get impatient and start trying to work my snag out.

I pull straight back on the line and bait hoping to pop it and work it loose. Jake makes a comment about just waiting a minute and we will go to it, after he lands this big'ol bass. Just then I felt it





release, and like a sling shot that rooster tail came towards me at lighting speed. You could hear the spinner singing as it sailed through the air. Instinctively I dodged the path of projectile. It sailed past my right ear only by inches. Just then I hear Jake scream out. I turn and see him holding his left eye. He was cussing me, throwing his pole down in the boat, spinning around in his chair.

Concerned it got his eye, I offer help. He removed his hand and to my relief it missed his eye and hit him in that very soft and tender spot just under the left eye. There were three perfect lines indicating where the treble hook made impact. After a few moments and after Jake got control of his emotions, he finished voicing his feelings about what happened, and smacked me with his rod a few times. We continued fishing, just a little more cautious about working snags out. Ⓜ



Andy Anderson and his friend Jake were a little more cautious about working snags out after a mishap. (Courtesy photo)



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03-02p

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### BURLESON

CUTTERS AND ROPERS LOOK NO FURTHER- 20 min to Will Rogers, .5 mile off 35. Brushy Creek Ranch! Beautifully manicured 78 ac. Stadium-style seating & apx. 120x250 indoor arena with 16 stalls. Beautiful 4 BR home. 2 additional barns, 2 apts. 28 stalls, office.

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 Brm 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 -  
**\$1,335,150**



### NOCONA, TX

Income Producing Property. This unique Western Village sits on the highest point in Montague County, it boasts a Fudge Factory, Boutique and Trading Post. 2 br, 2 bath barndominium 84x36, with 4-12 stalls with auto water and feed room. Separate guest cottage with bathroom. Tiny home, 4 RV park hook ups, 2 water wells, 2 ponds, 3 septic's. All under 2 years old. Seller is highly motivated.

Bobby Norris- **\$390,000**



### POOLVILLE, TX

Fantastic view and location to build you a home on. Total 17 acres (7 acre tract & 10 acres tract) each tract has a well. The 10 acres has well, septic, 3 carport, very clean 2016-385 foot travel trailer with 2 slid-outs. Also a John Deere model 4555 tractor can be bought separate. Need to look at the property.

Pete Rehm- **\$245,000**



### ALVARADO, TX

Like new complete state of the art training facility. From indoor arena, stalls, fencing and house. This recently completed facility is like new!! Shop, irrigation system, Two barns, 6 loafing sheds, shop Prefeirt Euro Sizer, outdoor arena.

MUST SEE!!!  
Bobby Norris-  
**\$1,995,000**



### SAVOY

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

Sits on 57 rolling acres, 8 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**



Larry Porter  
817-597-8699



Gabe Webster  
817-204-3452



Tri Goldthwaite  
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Jennifer Barefoot  
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