

NORTH TEXAS FARM & RANCH



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Let Freedom Ring....

Welcome to the July issue of North Texas Farm and Ranch magazine.

One of my favorite holidays falls this month, a time to sit back and reflect on the honor we have to live in such a great nation as we celebrate its birthday. As a child, it was a day spent out at the lake, surrounded by family



and friends as we soaked up the sun and time with each other, wrapped up by a brilliant display of fireworks. Whatever traditions you enjoy this Independence Day, I hope it finds you enjoying as much happiness as those days did for me. Remember, always stay safe around water and fireworks.

This month we bring you Master Beekeeper Judge Christian, one of less than 40 beekeepers in the Lone Star State who carry the prestigious title. The importance of pollination to agriculture cannot be understated, and beekeepers like Christian are working hard to help bees with their efficient work in Mother Nature.

Tony Dean continues his discussion on stocking rates in this month's "Grazing North Texas." Make sure to browse his article to find out how you can determine if your stocking rate is correct.

Judy Wade brings us not one, but two articles for July, one featuring Ross Coleman's recent team roping benefit and another tale of a cowboy reunion.

Over in equine, Janis Blackwell goes tropical, taking a look at what it is like to run barrels in the paradise of Hawaii. She brings us Kasey Kono-Badoyen and her horse Benny, a 17-year-old grade gelding whose breeding is a blend of appaloosa and quarter horse.

Krista Lucas also brings us an equine star, just one year younger. Meet 16-year-old Madison Outhier of Fulshear, Texas. This rider is no ordinary teenager, in her young age, she has already become an accomplished student, basketball player, polo player and rodeo competitor.

If the heat gets to be a little too much and you need an afternoon in the air conditioning, remember to take tips from Pepper Stewart on the top 10 westerns streaming on Netflix for the perfect way to relax.

Meanwhile, Jelly Cocanougher continues to stun with her parting shots, and this month's is no exception.

For more NTFR visit our website at 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.

Dani Blackburn, editor

ON THE COVER

Master Beekeeper Judge Christian has always had an interest in bees. That interest has led to his newest venture, queen rearing, in order to help local landowners with ag exemptions. The world of honeybees has many pieces that can influence a hive and its efficiency, making it one big puzzle that Christian thoroughly enjoys solving. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

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Grazing North Texas

In this month's Grazing North Texas, Tony Dean begins the first of a four part series focusing on stocking rate. Should you really be that concerned about your stocking rate? Turn to page 73 to find out.

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Behind the Chutes

Lacey Corbett and husband Logan recently welcomed son Cannon and are now a family of four. Learn how they are adjusting to the new addition in this month's "Behind the Chutes."

PROFILE Page 40

Collier Farms

Jeannette Shaw, recently retired from a successful career in education, joins her father Carroll at Collier Farm as the pair continue a family tradition of farming, land conservation and looking to the future.

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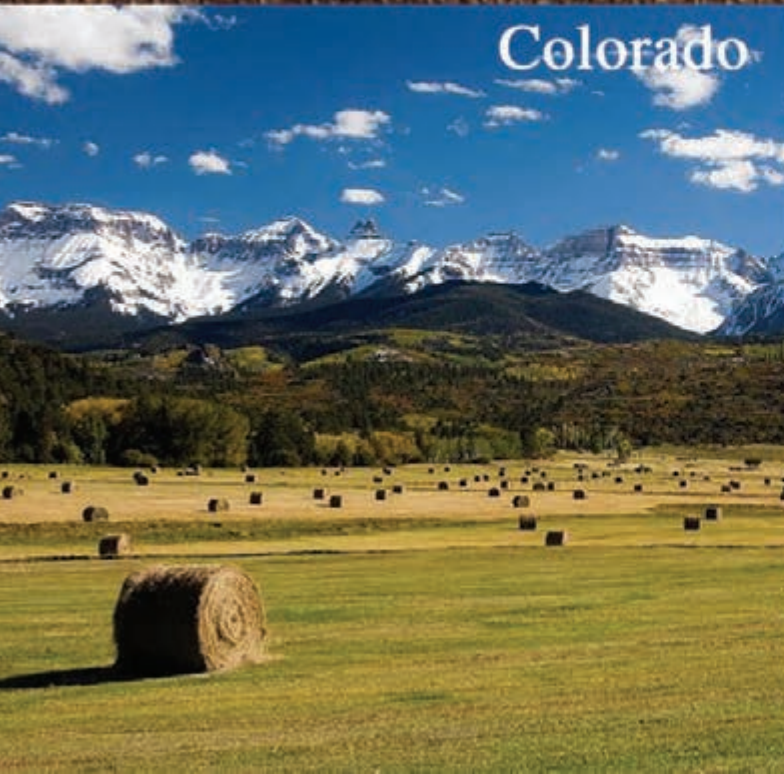
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Cindy Glenn Hedeman is with Charmie Sanders and Sherry Robinson Huff

June 6 at 6:46 PM · 🌐

We are looking good in our American Hats and custom Texas feathers for the Opening Ceremony!



Bowie Intermediate School's Team Rabbits, the Texas champion for junior community problem solving, received their very own hats from American Hat Company. The students wore the hats in the parade of teams, similar to the Olympics, at the June international conference in Massachusetts.

TWITTER FEED



NTFR Magazine @NTFRMagazine · May 31

A heifer in Young County recently defied the odds by giving birth to triplets.
ntfronline.com/2019/05/heifer...



A heifer in Young County defied the odds when she gave birth to not one, not two, but three babies during the month of May. Head over to www.NTFRonline.com to read the full story.

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MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

By Rayford Pullen | rcpullen@yahoo.com

In our neck of the woods, the abundant spring and early summer rains have us positioned for one of the best forage years in memory.

Our fall grazing was not too good because of the excess moisture in the soil, resulting in the exclusion of oxygen necessary for plant growth, but as we turned the corner and headed into spring and summer, our summer annual and perennial grasses have been turning the crank.

Hay producers have had a difficult time due to the poor drying conditions, but thinking back not so long ago, over abundant rainfall sure beats the heck out of a long-term drought.

Quoting Elmer Kelton in "The Time It Never Rained," his historical fiction novel, "Some folks have several droughts during the summer, but around here, the Concho River area, we have several summers during the drought."

According to information on grass production I've read over the years, 75 percent of our total forage production from perennial grasses is made by July 15, and since it seems as though it has been raining for the past nine or so months, hopefully we'll get those summer rains that seem to elude us every year and keep on keeping on and those memories of \$100 bales of hay will be just that, memories. Keep your fingers crossed, at least for those of us buying hay, that we have a great hay year.

This rain, while being a boom for many, also has been so very destructive for others, especially those areas where flooding was not only rampant, but where livestock and crops have been decimated.

We all know how hard it is to make things work when things are normal and how hard it must be

for those caught in the cross hairs of the storms. Keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

While this cattle market is not letting us look very intelligent in our marketing attempts, it has, at least on our place, made us evaluate each one of our cows in an attempt to cut out the expenses associated with cow/calf production, which looks to me to be around \$500 to \$700 per head on an annual basis.

So, if you're pumping that much money into a cow with zero return, and not getting but \$800 or so for the calves you do sell, you have to donate the profit from three to seven calves just to cover the cost of one cow that does not produce a calf.

If you have 50 cows and five of them do not produce a calf, the profit from 15 to 35 calves goes to cover the expenses of the non-producing cows and now you only have 10 to 30 calves, out of 45, to service debt or other needs.

The best time to cut your losses is when you pregnancy test your cows and boot those not performing.

Since we have both a spring and fall calving herd, we will pregnancy test the spring herd around Sept. 1 and the fall calving herd around May 1, and will cull them when we wean their calves if they are open.

Yes, I know it's hard to do, but when you look at the market we are currently experiencing, we really don't have much of a choice unless we just want to do this as a hobby.

As the dog days of summer linger, we probably all need to take a close look at what is going on in our businesses and make those tough decisions necessary for the well-being of our operations. The



The best time to cut your losses is when you pregnancy test your cows and boot those not performing. (Courtesy photo)

numbers I threw out above are pretty scary but should at least shed a little light on what's currently going on. If you don't know where you stand or what you have or what you need to do, start getting a handle on things and make those changes important to you. Ear tags with a cow ID number

and your phone number is, in my opinion, the best place to start because if you don't know where you are, you don't know where you're heading. It's a wonderful time to be in the cattle business.

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AG *elsewhere* SCOTLAND

PHOTO BY ANNETTE BRIDGES



NTFR contributor Annette Bridges recently ventured overseas to visit the beautiful country of Scotland. While there, she snapped some photos of what agriculture looks like in the United Kingdom's northernmost country. Pictured is a beautiful stone fence lining the land. ®

AG *elsewhere* MONTANA

PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY LINDSEY MONK

June means summertime is here and the local wildlife are confirming that. I saw an antelope baby in the hills. Cute little things. Don't worry, Mom was supervising from a distance. Here's to warmer weather, and hopefully Montana and Wyoming will quit flooding. ®

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RANCH, Rodeo & Randomness

By Pepper Stewart



TOP 10 NETFLIX WESTERNS

It's 2019 and everyone seems to have logged into the streaming entertainment world. Let's see what westerns you're watching or missing out on. We did a recent poll of top Netflix westerns and here are the results:

10.



THE BALLAD OF BUSTER SCRUGGS

2018-Ranging from absurd to profound, these western vignettes from the Coen brothers follow the adventures of outlaws and settlers on the American frontier.

THE HATEFUL EIGHT

2015- Years after the Civil War, a bounty hunter and his captive are waylaid by a Wyoming blizzard and hold up in a way station with six dicey strangers.

9.



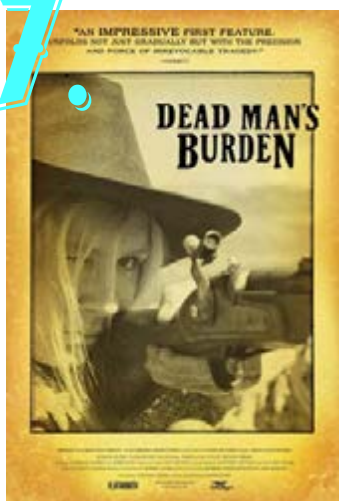
8.



GONE ARE THE DAYS

2018-As a notorious outlaw comes to grips with his past, he reconnects with his estranged daughter and gets one more chance to make things right.

7.



DEAD MAN'S BURDEN

2012-In 1870, a homesteader wants to sell her family farm in New Mexico and move, but the return of her presumed dead brother derails her plans.

6.



STRANGE EMPIRE

2015-This dark western set in 19th century Alberta follows a group of women struggling to survive after most of the men in their town are massacred.

4.



HOSTILES

2017-In 1892 a legendary Army Captain reluctantly agrees to escort a Cheyenne chief and his family through dangerous territory.

5.



THE SALVATION

2014-After shooting the man who murdered his wife, a Danish settler incurs the wrath of the man's brother, a ruthless land baron who rules their frontier town.



HATFIELDS & MCCOYS

2017-Two close friends return home after the Civil War, but building tensions and resentment soon explode into desperate warfare.

THE HOMESMAN

2014-Three women who have been driven mad by pioneer life are to be transported, Mary employs a low life drifter to assist her.



Before you fire off that response because the best western ever made is not on here, these were compiled only from Netflix and the original Lonesome Dove is not available. Most of these I've watched and a couple are now on my list. I'm not sure why Buster Scruggs made the list, I turned it off after about 10 minutes. One thing I can say for certain is they don't make westerns like the old days.®

HELL ON WHEELS

2016-Confederate soldier

Cullen Bohannon sets out on journey to find his wife's killer as post Civil War America struggles to rebuild its identity. The railroad boom ensues.



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3,401 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



NEW LISTING

BRODAY RANCH

\$2,375/Ac

This is a pristine cattle ranch located in north Texas in Clay County. Open rolling grass land with hardwood lined creeks, minimal mesquites, good perimeter and cross fencing, three sets of cattle working pens, two with scales, adequate surface water throughout, two houses, both in livable condition, nice workshop on a slab with electricity, horse barn with tack room, stalls and turn-out pens and an equipment/hay barn, great access to the ranch and 15 minutes east of Wichita Falls. Owner Finance available.

8,179.36 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



TRIANGLE - T RANCH

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206 ACRES | YOUNG COUNTY



LOST CREEK RANCH

\$2,375/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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LAND MARKET REPORT

MAY 2019 RURAL LAND SALES

North Texas rural land sales proved to be very slow in May, with about half the closings that we had in the previous month. Once again, the rain seems to be keeping folks from wanting to look at land so far this year. There is still a strong demand from buyers, especially for rural, residential and recreational properties under 50 acres. Prices remain strong for the few properties that did close in May, and I anticipate the summer will be strong as well.

Here is a synopsis of land transaction for the month of May 2019 in four of our North Texas Counties.

COOKE COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	PRICE/ACRE	SELL TO LIST PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Muenster	22	\$5,250.00	91.3%	203
Valley View	10	\$19,000.00	95%	30
Gainesville	381.7	\$3,750.79	89.3%	237

DENTON COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	PRICE/ACRE	SELL TO LIST PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Sanger	14.67	\$11,588.28	89.14%	123
Pilot Point	36.5	\$25,342.47	92.15%	778
Sanger	161.431	\$8,579.52	85.76%	14

MONTAGUE COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	PRICE/ACRE	SELL TO LIST PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Montague	23.3	\$5,236.05	97.6%	178
Bowie	34.25	\$4,233.58	94..08%	128
Forestburg	34.8	\$5,172.41	90.91%	148
Nocona	81.33	\$3,996.07	88.8%	227
Nocona	150	\$3,700.00	98.67%	48

WISE COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	PRICE/ACRE	SELL TO LIST PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Chico	13.33	\$6,306.31	90.32%	42
Sunset	10.01	\$9,340.66	93.41%	38
Sunset	10.01	\$9,340.66	93.41%	38
Paradise	12	\$12,500.00	88.76%	18
Boyd	14.58	\$12,002.74	94.59%	162
Paradise	20.89	\$8,855.91	94.87%	159
Decatur	109.5	\$8,911.71	100.13%	9

natural disaster is no competition for the sport of rodeo

By Phillip Kitts

2019 will most likely go down in the history books as one of the roughest springs. The wild weather pattern that has plagued the north and northwest with unusual snow patterns and extreme colds matched by record rainfall across the Midwest has made for a really rough year for many. Add to this the massive number of severe thunderstorms that have made their way across the Midwest and South. Many of these storms carried tornadic activity and caused damage and death in several states.

Our team alone has seen the effects of this wild weather pattern. We were caught in below zero wind chills in South Dakota, which made our vehicle inoperable due to the extreme cold. Twice this spring we have seen the rainfall affect our schedule. In a rodeo in Oklahoma we had a canceling in the last performance due to rain, and, as of late, we were lucky to make it into our assignment in Arkansas thanks to the flooding.

With the challenges of bad weather, one must ask, "What is so different about a rodeo athlete and supporters from other sports?" Giving the sport of football its fair due, they have fans who grind through extremely cold temperatures in support of their local team. The reality is football may be the only other outdoor sport that accepts the challenge of weather and the elements.

For many years Fort Smith, Ark., has been the home of one of the biggest rodeos of the year. Most all the top name cowboys and cowgirls in rodeo mark their calendars for Memorial Day week. They all do so knowing that much beyond big pay checks, this community puts all their heart and soul into a week of activities dedicated to the sport.

This year, the 86th anniversary, much like any other year, the Fort Smith rodeo committee and community set their sights on rodeo week, a week where they honor those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. They showed how deep the western roots run in this part of the nation.

Nearly a year ahead, they have meetings, spend endless hours recruiting sponsors and



When the adversity of weather reared its ugly head, the community and rodeo fans stood their ground. (Photo courtesy Phillip Kitts)

vendors, and appoint individuals who accept numerous jobs on the grounds as well as in and near the arena.

All this hard work comes to fruition the first day of rodeo activities. In this case, Fort Smith rodeo week kicks off with slack the Sunday before Memorial Day. During slack most all the timed event competitors that consist of barrel racers, tie-down ropers, team ropers and steer wrestlers who were not drawn to run during the regular performances make their runs to register a time.

In the case of tie-down roping and steer wrestling, the competitors run their first of two runs where they have a chance to win both a round as well as the average for the week.

This year Mother Nature decided to put a little more challenge in their event when the record-setting rainfall pushed the Arkansas River over its edges. The water levels began to threaten closing roads and a good portion of the city as well as numerous surrounding communities that play a role in the success of

this six-day rodeo. The situation escalated to a point that two of the major bridges in and out of Fort Smith were closed for a short time as the first regular performance began.

When the adversity of weather reared its ugly head, the community and rodeo fans stood their ground. With just as much gusto and drive as a year of perfect conditions, the Old Fort Days Rodeo never even considered canceling or changing their schedule. Even at the start of the week, when the Federal Emergency Management Agency took part in making the decision to cancel the rodeo parade for safety reasons, the committee and city refused to give up.

So, on Memorial Day 2019, the rodeo kicked off. The numbers in the seats may not have been the same as the past, but looking at the program you hardly saw one competitor turn out. During the next six days the story read the same: big names, enthusiastic cowboys and cowgirls and amazing rodeo action. As Friday came around, the atmosphere and the weather



On Memorial Day 2019, the rodeo kicked off. The numbers in the seats may not have been the same as the past, but looking at the program you hardly saw one competitor turn out. (Photo courtesy Phillip Kitts)

seemed to recognize they were not going to beat this persevering community. The skies had cleared, the temperatures were up and the entire city seemed a buzz about attending the last two performances of the Old Fort Days Rodeo.

During rodeo week, if you watched social media feeds you would see competitor after competitor and fan after fan talk about what an amazing job the Fort Smith team did to put on the best rodeo even in the difficult conditions. This may be best reflected on the news feeds of great cowboys like Steven Peebles who wrote:

May 29 at 2:14 p.m.:

"Andrews Rodeo Company's 'Cool Water' is a difficult trip, and I was lucky enough to make it to eight and score an 82.

Big picture now folks, the perseverance of people in the Fort Smith area is tremendous. They continued the great rodeo tradition of this community despite experiencing historical flooding. Please say a prayer for the people of this great community. "

During the seven days of rodeo in this Arkansas city, the true roots and grit that won the West

so many years ago was obvious. Fort Smith displayed that no matter the circumstances or the challenges, they will not waiver when it comes to the week where they honor those who served and paid the sacrifice, and they honor the original American sport.

Anthony Thomas, another great bareback rider and well-known rodeo competitor said,

"Last night I was blessed with a National Finals Rodeo horse I've always wanted.


013 Sourdough from Smith Pro Rodeos

I love this rodeo—It's always been good to me.

Please keep the people of Fort Smith in your prayers after the devastating floods in their town."


These are just two of many examples of the outpouring of support that have continued through this week of rodeo.

As rodeo week ended and planning begins for the 2020 rodeo, there is no question how deep the rodeo roots run in the community of Fort Smith, Ark. This city proved that there is nothing tough enough to overcome a big heart and cowboy try. (N)




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ROPING WITH ROOSTER

By Krista Lucas

It is rare to be 16-years-old and be able to handle the pressure of professional competition. Madison Outhier, of Fulshear, Texas, is no ordinary teenager. In her young age, she has already become an accomplished student, basketball player, polo player, and rodeo competitor. Her biggest win to date being the American Rodeo Breakaway Champion and winning the \$100,000 check.

“Growing up in a successful horse family has helped me a lot because having good mentors at home like my mom and my dad is what has made me such a good horseman,” Outhier said. “It is really great to have two parents with such good knowledge of horses to make sure I am taught right and always get good coaching.”

Her parents are Mike and Kristy Outhier. Kristy is a professional polo player, who at the time of her retirement in 2017 was the highest-ranked female polo player in America. Mike is a four-time Wrangler National Finals Rodeo qualifier in the saddle bronc riding and has also won the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Linderman Award twice.

Having this support system around her has encouraged her to be the best in many areas of her life. She does it all while keeping straight A’s and being a starting point guard on her high school basketball team.

“It is definitely difficult to juggle maintaining straight A’s in school as well as playing basketball, polo and rodeoing, but it is doable with a good mindset and motivation, which is what I try to keep,” Outhier said. “I know I want to achieve my goals I set so I do what it takes to allow myself to do all of the things I want to do.”



Having a strong support system has encouraged 16-year-old Madison Outhier to be the best in many areas of her life. (Photo courtesy Maci Berry Photography)

Being a fierce competitor has taught her to develop a strong mental game. Being on the basketball court and polo field have helped her in the rodeo arena as well. The pressure of a basketball game or polo match has helped her

learn to stay calm when backing in the box. One of those pressure situations was the 2019 American Rodeo at AT&T Stadium where all eyes were on her.

To prepare for the big day, she roped with her dad every single

day and practiced on multiple horses. She worked on roping quick shots and staying consistent.

“When I won the American, I was in complete disbelief and shock for a long time,” Outhier said. “We dreamed I could win it, and I trained to win it, but the actual thought of me winning it really never came into reality even after I won it.”

Outhier did it on a horse called Allo Gallo Colonel. The Outhier family bred, raised and trained “Rooster,” and Outhier and the gelding have had a strong bond since day one. Rooster is a product of the family’s horse program, L.A. Waters Quarter Horses, out of Utopia, Texas.

With a string of good horses, Outhier will be a force to be reckoned with in the arena for quite a while. She is honored to already be able to compete against some of the best in the industry and people she looks up to.

“My number one idol and mentor is definitely my dad. He knows the ins and outs of rodeo so he has always been my only coach and pushes me every day to be my best,” Outhier said. “I also greatly admire all the women breakaway ropers who pushed for breakaway to get into something as big as the American for many years, such as the likes of Jackie Crawford, Lari Dee Guy, Kelsie Chase and, of course, many other amazing women ropers.”

With a positive attitude and strong work ethic, the future is bright for Outhier.

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EQUINE SUPERSTARS & EVERYDAY HEROES

By Janis Blackwell

Running Barrels Tropical Paradise Style

That's right, faithful readers, this month "Equine Superstars and Everyday Heroes" is going tropical and taking a look at what it's like to run barrels in the tropical paradise of Hawaii. Who even knew barrel racing was a popular horse sport in the islands? Well, now we know, so let's look deeper into the story of Kasey Kono-Badoyen and her horse Benny, a 17-year-old grade gelding whose breeding is a blend of appaloosa and quarter horse.

Badoyen said her very perceptive mom saw early on the connection between her young daughter and horses. That connection was evidenced by the fact that any time she was near horses her smile was so big you couldn't help but notice. Mom made a way for Badoyen to begin riding English where she competed in hunter/jumper classes and some dressage, but longed for something more. Again crediting her mom for fueling her horse love, Badoyen said her mom bought her the first horse of her own at age 12. That first horse was Dawn, a bay mare that is half quarter horse and half Arabian. On Dawn, Badoyen learned to compete in barrel racing. Eventually, Badoyen and Dawn began competing in high school rodeos where they were successful throughout Badoyen's high school years. Rodeo at all levels is popular in Hawaii as well as barrel racing, and both events are continuing to explode in popularity on the islands. Throughout high school, Badoyen ran poles, barrels, tied goats and roped breakaway all on Dawn, but Badoyen said barrels



Kasey Kono-Badoyen and Benny. (Photo courtesy Kasey Kono-Badoyen)

were not Dawn's favorite. Therefore, there was a need for a new barrel horse that liked the event more than she did. Enter Benny. Badoyen had ridden Benny some throughout her high school years while he was owned by a friend, but she became his actual owner about six years ago when she was a senior in high school. When Badoyen started to ride Benny, his previous jobs had been that of trail horse and roping horse. The friend from whom Badoye acquired Benny had tried to make him a

team roping horse, but when that didn't go so smoothly she decided to sell Benny. That decision set up a match made in heaven because that's when Badoyen bought him. Already having ridden Benny quite a bit, Badoyen knew she liked and wanted to own him, but Benny knew nothing about barrel racing and the career into which he was about to be launched.

Due to her experience riding in the English disciplines and rodeo events on Dawn, Badoyen felt confident that she could train

Benny to run barrels, and so she set about teaching Benny to be a barrel horse, a task he apparently learned quickly. Benny and Badoyen competed on the island in jackpots, National Barrel Horse Association barrel races and rodeos, winning their share as proven by the multiple buckles they earned. Badoyen said her favorite win was the rodeo at Kapakalua Arena in Maui where they set an arena record and won the race, the money and the champion buckle.

Eventually, it was time for Badoyen to attend college at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. Badoyen came on to the mainland for school and sent back to Hawaii for Benny. The process for getting Benny to the states was, for Badoyen, the scariest thing the pair have endured to date. Benny had to travel by barge from Maui to Oahu, wait five days there before he was put on a plane to Los Angeles, picked up there by a friend and trailered the rest of the way to Las Vegas where he and Badoyen became part of the UNLV rodeo team. When Benny arrived, he was thin and had been eaten on by flies, which told Badoyen that somewhere along the line someone hadn't taken the care of him as she had been promised. However, she put out his feed and he jumped on it and recovered quickly.

I asked Badoyen if Benny had any quirks or funny habits.

"He is a goofball," she said.

When they would be outside the arena, he would turn his head toward her and blow snot out of his nose, being sure it went some-
See PARADISE page 26



Paradise

Continued from page 25

where on Badoyen. She said she would tell him, “Benny, knock it off,” but instead he would just do it again. Then she would get off and love on him some and they would go right on their way. Apparently, just his way of getting a little attention. Badoyen has just finished studying to be an Emergency medical technician, but has decided to pursue a degree in animal science with a major in zoology and minor in marine sciences so she can work with exotic animals.

Badoyen and husband Johnathan Cawkins now live in the Cashion community between Wichita Falls and Burkburnett, and they love it because Benny can stay right in the yard and Badoyen can see him anytime, something she hasn’t had before now. The couple traveled back to Hawaii in June to have a formal wedding with her family. I asked her if the theme would be a traditional Hawaiian one and she said, “A blend of traditional Hawaiian mixed with ranch.” Badoyen hopes to be able to bring her mare, Dawn, over from Hawaii in October. That will give her two barrel horses again and her breakaway horse on which to compete. We hope that Dawn’s trip is a little easier than Benny’s was. So here is my observation after getting to know Badoyen: if you are a cowgirl at heart, it doesn’t matter where you come from. To Badoyen and Johnathan, Benny and Dawn we say, “Happy you’re on the mainland with us, wishing you many blessings and until the next barrel race...Happy Trails.” 🐾



Kasey Kono-Badoyen and Dawn. (Photo courtesy Kasey Kono-Badoyen)



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Suspensory Ligament Injuries

By Garrett Metcalf, DVM

The suspensory ligament is an important structure to the locomotion, soundness and support of the lower limb of a horse. It is a common tissue that can become injured acutely or sustain chronic injury over time that eventually causes lameness. Horse owners are typically aware of the suspensory ligament but don't always understand the importance of the structure and what it does biomechanically for the horse. This article will cover anatomy, biomechanical function of the suspensory, types of injuries and treatment options.

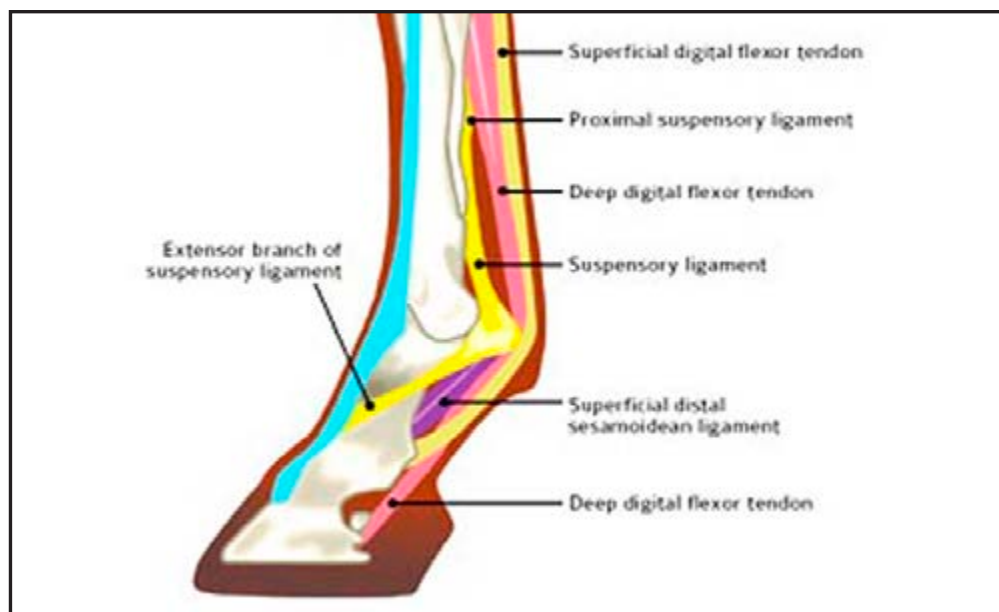
Anatomy and Biomechanics of the Suspensory Ligament

The suspensory ligament is truly named as a muscle called the interosseous muscle because it often contains muscle fibers, but it has evolved to act more like a ligament than a muscle. The suspensory ligament can be divided into three sections.

The proximal suspensory is at the very top, or the origin, where the suspensory begins by attaching to the back of the cannon bone. The body or the middle section of the suspensory is between the proximal part and the branches of the suspensory ligament. The last section of the suspensory is the branches. The suspensory at this level splits into two branches that attach to each sesamoid bone behind the ankle or fetlock joint. This section is where the suspensory ends or inserts onto the sesamoid bones.

The suspensory has its own nerve innervation that provides sensation to it by a small branch off of a larger nerve just above where the suspensory begins. This is important as you read later about the treatment options when dealing with injury to this structure.

The suspensory can be simply thought of as a shock absorber or springs on a car's suspension system. It is made to absorb force and load that is applied to the limb with each step. It is able to do this with thousands of collagen fibers that act like a rubber band that is able to stretch and then return to its original size once again ready to absorb more load just like a shock absorber on a car. The suspensory and sesamoid bones act as a pulley/cable system to keep the fetlock from extending excessively and supporting the lower limb. These fibers when looked at with an ultrasound look like a



section of rope or cable made up of many small strands of fibers to create the entire structure of the suspensory. This can be used to illustrate what the injuries look like in the horse. Imagine when a section or bundle of these fibers break. It weakens the entire structure of the suspensory, just like strands in a rope breaking and fraying causing the rope to not be as strong as it was before. The breaking of the fibers causes significant pain and inflammation leading to lameness in the horse.

Diagnosing Suspensory Injuries

Multiple breeds of horses and disciplines can be subject to suspensory desmitis. Suspensory injuries are common among sport horses, races horses and western performance horses. Injuries to the suspensory ligament can be acute sudden injuries that leave the horse quite lame initially with sometimes notable swelling, heat and pain with palpation of the leg or chronic multiple injuries overtime that cause enlargement of the suspensory ligament. Acute injuries may only need to be diagnosed with an ultrasound examination of the suspensory ligament.

Chronic injuries usually require a lameness examination, localization of the pain with diagnostic anesthesia and then ultrasound imaging of the ligament. A common history of a chronic hind limb suspensory issues is

that the horse has had repeated hock injections that were working for a period of time, but the injections stop working or are only lasting for a short period of time.

This is because the hind proximal suspensory is closely located near the lower hock joints and the medication decreases the inflammation and pain around the proximal suspensory for a period of time.

Suspensory Treatment Options

Acute inflamed suspensory injuries are treated with traditional methods of anti-inflammatory drugs, icing, compression, and rest. These lesions initially on ultrasound, if caught rather early, may appear rather harmless, but over a few weeks the full extent of the injury may be revealed. Multiple ultrasound examinations may be necessary to understand the full extent of the injury. With acute injuries, once the inflammation has subsided and a few weeks have passed, it is often desired to improve the healing quality of the suspensory to prevent further injuries. When there is significant damage to the suspensory that is going to lead to poor healing, often it is recommended to use regenerative biological treatment products such as PRP (platelet rich plasma), Stem Cells or extracellular matrix products to promote more rapid and better quality healing of the injured ligament.

Not all suspensory injuries have core lesions or disruption of the ligament fibers but rather chronic inflammation and enlargement.

This chronic inflammatory compartment type syndrome is common with hind limb proximal suspensory ligaments. These types of lesions have been notorious for poor response to rest and rehabilitation alone and recurrence of lameness even after prolonged periods of rest.

The treatment of choice in these cases is surgically splitting of a dense fascia that lies over the back of the suspensory ligament compressing it against the splint bones and cannon bone, along with removing a section of nerve that innervates the suspensory. This is called a plantar fasciotomy with neurectomy of the deep branch of the lateral plantar nerve. This surgery is being widely used to treat enlarged chronically inflamed suspensory ligaments that have little fiber damage or significant lesions in the ligament.

The other great thing about the surgical treatment is the quick response and early return to work.

A typical time to return to light work after surgery is six weeks and full work shortly after that. Other treatment options of these types of injuries are shockwave, local injections of steroids around the suspensory ligament and rest.

These treatment options work well in cases with mild to moderate suspensory pain or in cases short term relieve is needed for the horse to continue to work until a better time is reached to perform surgery if necessary.

The suspensory apparatus is a very important structure to the horse, and whenever there is an injury suspected to this structure, a thorough examination is recommended to fully understand the extent of the injury.

When an accurate diagnosis is achieved, the proper treatment plan can be implemented, giving the horse the best possible outcome and chance to return to intended use.®

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By Jude Wade

Handshakes, backslaps, hugs. “Do you remember...,” “Have you seen...,” “That time up in...,” “Old bull number...” Enough gold and silver buckles to rival Fort Knox. This was the scene when more than 50 cowboys, families and friends gathered to reconnect and reminisce at P3 Restaurant in Wichita Falls on June 1 for a Cowboy Reunion.

Hosted by Brady Crumpler, P3 owner, former National Finals Rodeo saddle bronc and bull rider and Texas Rodeo Cowboy Hall of Fame inductee, he explained, “We are affiliated with the Hall of Fame, which is conducting several reunions across the state this year. Since I have the facility for it, I decided to host the first one.”

The turnout was great—world champions, top 15 NFR qualifiers, circuit finals qualifiers, and every aspect of the rodeo world were represented.

The list included Rick Bradley and Mickey Gee, both World

Champion Steer Wrestlers; John Farris, NFR chute boss for 17 years and Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Hall of Fame inductee; Liz Kesler of Kesler Rodeo Productions; Scott Stateman, who announced more than 15,000 rodeos; Sonny Valdez, flank man for Billy Minnick and other top rodeo producers and David Burnham, clown.

PRCA steer wrestlers included Terry Thompson, NFR qualifier; Donnie Bowles (who had a great set of dogging horses according to Rick Bradley); Roy Hall and Randy (Chico) Vaughn, NFR qualifier and Texas Rodeo Cowboy Hall of Fame inductee.

Former bull riders included Vern Smith, NFR qualifier; Joe Gaskin, International Pro Rodeo Association World Champion; Randy Majors, NFR qualifier and two time Reserve World Champion Bull rider; Jack Kelly, NFR qualifier and Montana Rodeo Hall of Fame inductee; and Marty See **REUNION** page 34



Vern Smith is the first P3 Hall of Fame inductee. (Photo courtesy Judy Wade)

REUNION

Continued from page 33

Taylor.

Among the saddle bronc riders were Bobby Brown, Reserve World Champion; Bronc Jones, Circuit Finals winner and the original Winston Man; and Don Crumpler.

Jim Jones, Glenn (Spider) Webb and Don David rode barebacks. Many of those in attendance were in multiple events: Charles Burns, barebacks and bulls; Terry Link, saddle broncs and barebacks; Donnie Whitehead, calf roping and steer wrestling; Richard Whittenburg, bulls and barebacks; Wayne Whitehead, bulls, calf roping and team roping; and Randy Jackson, bulls and steer wrestling. A large picture provided a memorial for Gary (Goose) Gregg who passed away recently. He was a former

PRCA bull rider and rodeo clown and inductee to the Texas Rodeo Cowboy Hall of Fame.

At the close of the evening, Crumpler introduced his newly begun P3 Hall of Fame. The first inductee was Vern Smith, NFR bull rider and son of Dude and Frances Smith. Next was Rick Bradley, World Champion Steer Wrestler. He was followed by Dude and Frances Smith. Dude was a bull rider inducted into both the Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame and the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. Frances was an NFR Barrel Racing World Champion and Texas Cowgirl Hall of Fame inductee.

Dennis Gee PRCA steer wrestler and father of World Champion Mickey Gee, described by




Donna Gee, left, and Mickey Gee, right, accept the Hall of Fame plaque of Dennis Gee. (Photo courtesy Judy Wade)


Crumpler as “the most humble, nicest guy I ever met” was the next recipient.

The final 2019 inductee was Eugene Weakley, NFR steer wrestler, PRCA Gold Card member, pickup man and PRCA timed-

event judge.


Their pictures will hang on the Wall of Honor in P3.

“I love reconnecting with these guys. Every time it is like I just saw them yesterday,” concluded Crumpler. 



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LACEY'S PANTRY

By Lacey Newlin

LEMON LOVER'S TRIFLE

12 servings

Time: 4.5 hours

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Lemon Lovers Pound Cake cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 2.7 oz box Dream Whip
- 3 cup very cold whole milk divided
- 2 3.4 oz boxes instant lemon pudding mix
- 16 oz frozen whipped topping OR 4 cups fresh sweetened whipped cream
- 2 Tbsp grated white chocolate
- Lemon slices and sprigs of fresh mint for garnishing

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a small saucepan over medium-high heat the granulated sugar and lemon juice together. Stir until the sugar is completely dissolved then set aside to cool.

2. In the bowl of a stand mixer whip together the Dream Whip [The box contains two envelopes—use both] and two cups of cold whole milk. Whip for five minutes or until soft peaks form.

3. Add both packages of lemon pudding and the remaining one cup of whole milk. Whip for two to three minutes until thickened.

4. To assemble, divide the cubed cake in half. Begin with a layer of cubed cake on the bottom of the trifle bowl. Brush with half of the lemon syrup. Add a layer of lemon cream and half of the whipped topping. Repeat with cake, brush with lemon syrup, lemon cream ending with whipped topping.

5. Sprinkle the top with grated white chocolate and garnish with lemon slice and fresh mint if desired.

6. Chill thoroughly at least four hours prior to serving.®

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WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

I am quite certain our ranch is not the only one suffering from the excessive spring rain this year. I am pretty sure my hubby is not the only rancher who gets so stressed, overwhelmed and frustrated during such times that the joy in his life gets sucked out of him.

To be honest with y'all, my husband's woes in troubled times have not always been something I could understand.

My childhood was not the easiest. At 10-years-old, everything dramatically changed. Following the divorce from my daddy that was the complete opposite of amicable, I might add, my mom and I set out in search of a new home and happiness, and my mamma was sure both were possible. She was so convincing to my 10-year-old self, that even though our life was in turmoil and uncertainty, I was happy and expectant as we traveled west from Georgia - although we had no idea how or where we would end up to make that new home for ourselves.

This is the very short version of the story of my road to Texas. I was taught to approach life with a glass half full point of view rather than the half empty perspective. Mamma always emphasized the importance of gratitude for what we had rather than what we didn't. During our journey to Texas and since, we both learned the merit found in cherishing each present moment and the benefit of an awareness and appreciation of all the good that surrounds you. These lessons have served me well, perhaps especially in the most difficult of times.




As Annette Bridges drove around the corner not far from the ranch, there stood a beautiful axis deer sharing some shade with a group of cows. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

This day was no different. I'm referring to the photo that is pictured with this column. I was having a low moment: another wave of grief and regret that still sweep over me from time to time since the passing of my dear mamma and 17-year-old dachshund at the end of last year.

Suddenly as I drove around the corner not far from our ranch, there stood a beautiful axis deer sharing some shade with a group of cows. I immediately stopped the car. After several minutes of relishing this sweet site, I snapped a photo. Just like that, as I trea-

sured the magic of seeing unlikely friends hanging out together, the spell of feeling sad was broken.

My journey with grief has been a long one. I lost two of my brothers in the three years prior to my mamma and dog's passing. The struggles with loss and regret have been the most difficult of my life. The miracle has been embracing the possibility of being happy while still feeling sad, of being able to laugh when only moments before you wanted to cry or of seeing what is good and beautiful in the midst of destruction and chaos.

I will tell my husband about my unexpected encounter when he comes in for dinner today, and I will share with him why this was such a powerful reminder for me. Take heart dear ranchers who feel the same overwhelm and frustration as my husband. All is not lost. Even if some crops are indeed destroyed, and I'm so sorry if that is the case, I still say no matter our sorrow, our losses, our challenges, we must find those reasons to be grateful, to be happy, to laugh and enjoy being with those we love and who are still with us. Indeed, I will say it again. All is not lost. 

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PROFILE

Texas Bee Ranch



***F**or Master Beekeeper Judge Christian, the allure of the bee isn't the honey it produces or the miracle that is pollination, but it's the depth of knowledge required for a vast puzzle full of twists and turns.*



cher

JUDGE CHRISTIAN

The world of honeybees has many pieces that can influence a hive and its efficiency, and their importance to the world of agriculture through pollination cannot be underestimated.

"One of every three bites on your plate is due to pollination," explained Christian. "Even if it isn't direct, maybe the cows ate something that needed to be pollinated, and most of that is going to be bees. Though there are other pollinators out there, like the butterfly, the honeybees are really good at it. They're highly efficient."

Perhaps Christian, who makes his home in Gainesville, always had a passion for things that fly. After growing up in Rendon, Texas, a small, unincorporated community in Tarrant County at the time, and graduating from Mansfield High School, he knew exactly what he wanted to do – work for American Airlines.

"I knew that was going to be my career. I worked there 17 years in aviation maintenance, and they shut the base down and laid me off. I have been trying to reinvent myself since then, and that is part of being a beekeeper. I used to kid if I ever lost my airline job, I would do bees, soaps, candles and earth worms. I did the candles, and I have done the bees, but I haven't gotten into earth worms just yet," laughed Christian.

The layoff came in 2012, and Christian set out trying new

things, which led him to a position as an adjunct professor for North Central Texas College at Zodiac Aerospace, now Safran, which manufactures aircraft seats. When that grant came to an end, Christian realized he loved teaching and signed up to teach in a juvenile prison.

"That was an interesting experience. It was about six months, but I feel like I have about 10 years of stories to tell. I was teaching automotive technology there. That was a very difficult environment to be in," recalled Christian.

While he had tried different career avenues, there was something about bees that always drew him in. As a child, Christian's father produced bees for a few years.

"My dad did bees, and I helped him some, but not a lot because I was only eight. As an adult, we would take vacations and I would bring a book with me about bees. I have always been interested, I just needed a reason to do it," said Christian.

The future beekeeper would take every opportunity he could to expand his knowledge of bees. When earning his bachelor's degree in Applied Technology and Process Improvement and masters in Workforce Learning and Performance at the University of North Texas, he purchased bee equipment and set up a hive for a technical presentation. Even though he did not have any bees, he could still walk through the

process. For him, it was a good reason to buy the equipment.

With everything he needed to start a small beehive operation, Christian just needed an excuse to take the first step.

"As luck would have it, I met a guy who was a beekeeper days before I discovered my first bee colony already on my property," said Christian. "He told me he could help me out, and that's all I really wanted was someone to mentor me a little bit. You need someone to show you what you're looking at."

The beekeeper placed an order for more equipment, and just one day before it was set to arrive, nature stepped in and showed him a sign he was on the right path.

"I ordered the equipment on a Thursday and it was set to be delivered on a Monday. On Sunday, I discovered the open beehive. It was fully developed and hanging on the outside of one of my buildings, similar to a colony, which is unusual. I'm like okay, this is meant to be," said Christian.

He was able to successfully transfer the colony into a box, and it was the start of his beekeeping career. Now, bees are buzzing on 130 acres that has been in his family since the 1890s.

Like many beekeepers across the nation, it was not a career he chose, but one he wouldn't change for the world.

"I have met very few beekeepers who ever planned to get into beekeeping. It is something they just accidentally wandered into," said Christian.

He also has received more room to experiment with hives from Dr. Lisa Bellows, the Department of Agriculture Chair at NCTC. She began allowing Christian to speak at some of her science classes, allowing him to share the knowledge of beekeeping while fulfilling his public service credits for his master beekeeper certification.

"Through some of the ag based foundations she sits on, she was able to buy equipment to stay on her property, but I am able to manage the hives. It helped me quite a bit. She supports me in my learning, educational side, and I help consult, manage, and harvest, but the equipment is hers and the honey goes back to her. I appreciate the opportunity to learn with it and expand things," said Christian.

He continues to work for NCTC as the workforce development coordinator, offers services on queen
See BEES page 42



BEEES

Continued from page 41

grafting, sales and education; nuc production, sales and education; swarm removal and relocation and assistance in hive establishment for property tax wildlife exemption. He also offers presentations on queen rearing, hive management and maintenance and bee nutrition while raising hives of his own - but what makes someone want to work with an insect that stings?

"For me, it is started as the honey part, but now I think it is just cool. It is the greatest puzzle ever because there are so many different ways to do things, and it gives you an opportunity to try this and that. I am intrigued by the perfect blend of science and art that makes a hive flourish," explained Christian.

When one puzzle is solved, it leaves a feeling of accomplishment for the beekeeper.

"It's just how I am driven, it's a challenge of trying to figure it out," said the beekeeper. "The first time I ever harvested my first honey crop, when I first found it solid full of honey I was like 'yes, look at what I did.' I felt a sense of self-accomplishment. It's not like I was the one that had been collecting the honey, but still, it felt good."

Since the start to his beekeeping operation, Christian has spent countless hours soaking in the vast knowledge of the beekeeping world, including becoming a Texas Certified Master Beekeeper, a distinction belonging to fewer than 40 beekeepers in the Lone Star State.

Becoming a Texas Certified Master Beekeeper entails four levels. According to their website, the Texas Master Beekeeper program is "an educational program designed to increase the knowledge and skill level of participating beekeepers. The program is a five-year (minimum) beekeeper training and certification program provided by the Texas Apiary Inspection Service in association with the Texas Beekeepers Association."

The first level, Apprentice, requires a beekeeper to be registered in the state of Texas and own at least one colony of honeybees for at least one full year, score a 70 percent or higher on a written examination and score 70 percent or higher on a practical examination. The next round of Apprentice involves more

“It is the greatest puzzle ever because there are so many different ways to do things, and it gives you an opportunity to try this and that. I am intrigued by the perfect blend of science and art that makes a hive flourish.”

Judge Christian

tests along with public service credits.

"Whenever you take the advanced test, there is a huge jump in knowledge. When I left my test there was a guy with a PhD in biology and even he said he didn't think he passed. You have to know names for types of diseases, how you cure it, and so many other things. It was way more involved," said Christian.

The beekeeper recalled how each test, the number of people in attendance really thinned out.

"I think once they take the advance they really start to realize it is like 'oh my gosh, they are serious about this, not just we will put the little stamp on it.' They treat it like an actual bachelor program and the criteria is strict," said Christian.

To become a Master Beekeeper, a candidate must have held the Apprentice and Advanced

Beekeeper ranks for one year each and been a practicing beekeeper at least three years. Candidates must demonstrate and document 10 additional public service credits beyond those required for obtaining the Advanced Beekeeper level, must choose and declare a major and demonstrate expertise in three of 10 credits within their declared major and must score 70 percent or higher on a written exam. It is no easy task.

"Once you do your masters, there is no more hands-on stuff, but you get deep into essay questions and they present scenarios, and you have to answer questions like 'What is the most likely cause of this?' There are a lot of references to studies and much more critical thinking. It is more than just a name and identify, it is here is the situation, what's the problem?" said Christian.

There is a fourth level called Master Craftsman, but at this point no one in Texas has taken the exam because the program requires five years total experience and the program is only four years old. The first Master Craftsman exam will be given in the coming year.

"I know a couple of people who are going to do it, and I might be one of those, but the requirements are incredibly difficult," said Christian.

Beekeepers must be attached to a United States Department of Agriculture sponsored research program and understand the research enough to defend it in a 30-minute power point presentation. Christian is currently focused on queen rearing, which would be considered his major. Next, a beekeeper is given an assignment and must do another 30-minute presentation to the board. There are a few beekeepers in the state of Texas who are Master Craftsman with certification by other states.

"It is a lifelong learning type of environment."
See BEEES page 44





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BEEES

ment,” said Christian. “Even with all this master beekeeper stuff, it gives you a good foundation to figure things out. It is very much a situation where no one knows everything and what works for you may not work for another person. There is a joke that if you ask 10 beekeepers how to do something, you’ll get about 12 answers. Some are right and some are wrong.”

Christian cautions there is a lot of information out there, and not all of it is good.

“I think it is difficult for a new beekeeper to kind of figure out what is right and what’s wrong because you hear so many different things, and they tend to contradict each other,” explained Christian.

Finding the right mentor can be just the ticket in the beekeeping world. When Christian mentors others, his first step is finding out what they want out of the experience.

“My first question to a beekeeper is what are your goals? Why are you doing this? Are you trying to provide bees to your local neighborhood? Do you want honey? Do you want wax? Tell me what you can do with your time and I can tell you which way you should go,” said Christian.

If interested in beekeeping, expect startup costs of around \$500. Christian explained the bees are roughly \$200, and expect to spend \$200 to \$300 in equipment, including a jacket.

“You are looking at a \$500 investment per colony, but if you can rear the bees yourself, it removes some of the cost. If you build the equipment, it’s just your time at that point,” said Christian.

He tries to make new beekeepers aware of the fact it can take up to two years to produce any income. He urges new beekeepers to buy two hives to compare, which means \$1,000 in startup costs.

“With only one hive it’s like putting all your eggs in one basket. If you only have one, there’s nothing to compare it to. If you have

one hive going gang busters and the other isn’t doing anything, you know something is wrong. If you lose a queen in one hive, you still have a queen in the other. The hardest thing, even with two hives, is you’re not going to get much honey the first year, if any. So you are going to spend \$1,000 to get nothing. That’s kind of a hard sell,” said Christian.

It can become frustrating for new beekeepers, and many give up. However, there are many ways to make an income. Bees do so much more than just produce honey, including royal jelly production, honeycombs and pollination. In fact, in 2016-17, pollination services generated more money than honey production in the United States.

“Honey has always been the money maker, but pollination services are growing and growing, specifically for almonds, but there are some other crops on the horizon,” said Christian.

The beekeeper explained bees that are used for pollination do a complete circuit throughout the year. They will begin in California in February and remain for six weeks before being moved up the coast to Oregon for apples and other fruits. Next, the bees are on to North Dakota and South Dakota for the canola, a big honey producing plant. The two states combined are responsible for a large part of the country’s honey production, while Texas falls eighth on that list. During the winter months, the bees are shipped back to the south or placed in a climate-controlled building in Idaho.

“It’s quite an interesting deal,” said Christian.

However, for this North Texas beekeeper, his focus is on queen rearing, so his year looks a little different.

The official season begins in February when he begins feeding in order to expand the brood and checking on a regular schedule. He also begins adding a pollen patty, which is a protein builder, encouraging brood production and honey production. Another trick Christian

keeps up his sleeve is adding essential oils with sugar water, which makes the bees think spring has come.

“That makes the bees think ‘we need to get momma in gear and start laying eggs.’ It is another way to convince the hive to grow,” explained Christian.

Starvation is the main concern in March and April. With a rapidly expanding bee population, cold fronts can come in and shut off nectar production, and the bees suddenly have nothing to eat. Depending on a beekeeper’s goals, some are still adding pollen patties and checking on the hive every week or two in order to not disrupt the hive.

Supers are added to the bee boxes in hopes of catching honey produced by the bees.

“The best advice during this time is to leave it alone because they are hopefully going to be making honey,” said Christian.

It is a good idea to steer clear of doing deep inspections during this time, which is pulling the top box off and setting it aside to see what is going on.

When Christian is trying to rear new queens, he is either adding pollen patties and or feeding the hives sugar water based on whatever the hives needs are at that time.

“The bees can take the sugar water and make what looks like honey, but it’s not really honey,” said Christian. “The definition of honey is a plant-based nectar product. It will look like honey, but it is sugar water. I know beekeepers who continue to feed year-round because they produce more ‘honey’ but many beekeepers say it is unethical.”

Typically, beekeepers in Texas harvest honey in the summer because the fall nectar doesn’t usually taste very good. Snow on the prairie leaves a numbing effect on the tongue and a foul taste, so it is harvested before the plant has a chance to get in the hive and destroy the taste of the honey. In the spring, mesquite trees offer a sweet taste for the honey similar to the flavor of brown sugar.



Continued from page 43

The months of September and October are spent monitoring for varroa mites. Beekeepers should always monitor for these year-round, and spring, fall and winter treatments are available. Christian likes to build up his bees to 40 to 50 pounds of honey to get through winter, so through November beekeepers are monitoring for diseases and some are changing the mixture of sugar water to heavy syrup.

Things slow down quite a bit through January, where there is not a whole lot going on. Christian doesn't like to open his hives when the temperature falls below 50 to 55 degrees because bees are unable to fly.

"It kind of works out, when it is cold you don't have to do much, and when it is really hot you don't have to do much. It is designed to be that way: you can be a fair-weather beekeeper," laughed Christian.

For Christian, focusing on queen rearing comes with the purpose of helping local landowners with ag exemptions.

"I have connections if I ever wanted to pursue a more commercial side of things, but there are ways to do this too with ag exemptions," said Christian.

The state of Texas allows ag exemptions as a beekeeper for those with five to 20 acres. For those who are interested in bees as an ag exemption but don't necessarily want to learn how to do bees, Christian steps in to help by placing bees on the property
See BEES page 46



(Top) Master Beekeeper Judge Christian splits two deep brood boxes from the same colony to assess colony size and overall health. (Left) Christian points to open brood cells, identifying the proper size of larva to potentially graft for queen rearing. (Photos by Dani Blackburn)

BEEES

Continued from page 45

for \$100 fee per hive or 20 percent of what the landowners save in exemptions.

"I own everything and I am making money but the bees stay local. I don't have to send them to California, and you don't have to have 400 hives to make a profit. If you have 10, you have 10. For me, the challenge is I need queens, and this is why I want to rear them because I am trying to expand," said Christian.

His goal is to grow his current 25 hives up to more than 100 hives in the next few years. To rear the queens, Christian gained as much knowledge as possible at grafting school and is about to put that knowledge to the test.

The beekeeper explained grafting is the process of moving resources in the hive, taking larva

at a young age and 'grafting' them by removing the bees from the mother hive and placing them in what is referred to as a nursery hive.

"You work with the bees and make them think they don't have a queen and they raise a queen from the larva I have provided them from the grafting process," said Christian.

As Christian's hive continues to grow through queen rearing, hard work and dedication, so does his knowledge of the bee world, and it is this knowledge and his services he wants to share with others.

To learn more about services offered by Christian, visit www.TexasBeeRanch.com and follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TexasBeeRancher. (N)



Judge Christian smoking the bees as he opens the inner cover on the hive to do a quick inspection. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

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On the Road with Dave Alexander




Howdy Texas Music Fans.

This month I'd like to pay tribute to a group of guys who have spent most of their lives behind the scenes. They have carved out a long and illustrious musical career, which is a major accomplishment in itself as most musical endeavors are usually quite short-lived.

You may not know them individually by name, but once you find out exactly what they do and who they work for, you'll immediately realize you've been listening to, dancing to and living life to these fantastic musicians for decades and probably didn't even know it. They are "The Men behind the Man."

The Texas Jamm Band began in the early 90s as a weekly rehearsal band for these musicians to keep their chops up between gigs. Little did they know eventually they would become one of the most influential country bands of all time, George Strait's Ace in the Hole Band.

The great news is you can still find them performing regularly around the country. Their latest release, "Drinkin' Doubles," has received rave reviews. I've known most of them since the early 90s, and you won't find a better bunch of Texas gentlemen anywhere. I'm looking forward to their appearance this year at the Lincoln County Cowboy Symposium in October. Check them out at texasjammband.com. You'll be glad you did. Happy Trails...



Dave's upcoming shows:

July 4

The Stampede Dance Hall, Big Spring, TX

July 5

The Whitehorse Steakhouse, Valley View, TX

July 6

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Listen to Dave Alexander's Radio Show

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SEEK THE KINGDOM



The Wave Pool in a moment of lull between a series of timed, rolling water crests.

By Mandi Dietz

When in need to escape the summer heat, seek the refreshing scene and assortment of pools at Splash Kingdom Wild West in east Weatherford, Texas, on a hillside along Interstate 20, bordering Hudson Oaks.

The park offers a western-themed variety of rides and attractions, including the Wagon Trail Springs with splash pad; a wave pool; a FlowRider surfing experience; and a relaxing lazy river, featuring 700 feet of continuous current and first-come-first-serve tubes to float.

The Snake Pit offers five exciting slides, such as the open-air King Snake and Copperhead, and the enclosed Green Mamba, Sidewinder and Water Moccasin.

The open-air Wrangler and tunneling Coyote, two massive water chutes, can be ridden by tube alone or dual with a partner.

One way to save money includes discount tickets for Family Nights, which are Wednesday and Friday evenings; and twilight

(after 4 p.m.), military and senior admission.

Perks to season passes, single-park Blue starting at \$95, vary from bring-a-friend-free tickets to coupons on the cost of food, drinks, retail purchases and private cabanas.

Some yummy treats and favorites from the snack and grill menu include ice cream melts, snow cones, cotton candy, popcorn, pizza, salads, chicken tenders and burgers. Parking is complimentary, and guests may come and go as they please during their day of admission.

More than a waterpark, the Kingdom is a Christian-inspired business, and its community outreach includes partnering with local churches, such as New River, offering a fun venue for gatherings, such as vacation bible school.

Splash Kingdom's name pays respect to the NIV Bible verse, Matthew 6:33, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given




The Snake Pit offers a variety of exciting slides, including the King Snake, Copperhead, Green Mamba, Sidewinder and Water Moccasin. (Photos courtesy Splash Kingdom)

to you as well."

Primarily a Texas respite with locations in Weatherford, Nacogdoches, Greenville and Canton, and there's one location in Shreveport, too.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dogs of the Southwest Art Exhibit

MAY 1-JUNE 30 • DUNCAN, OK

Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway, Duncan, Okla. Sandy Magrath: Dogs of the Southwest art exhibit will open May 1 – June 30 at the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center. Magrath, a native of Norman, Okla., said her artwork is inspired by the designs and colors of the Southwest, and by her beloved dogs. She has painted dogs with personality and her work will be available to purchase through the Heritage Center. “Most of my subjects are current or past personal companions that will live forever in my heart. I love all animals, but have a crazy love for dogs,” she said. Don’t miss this exciting art show at the Chisholm Trail Museum. For more information call (580) 252-6692 or email info@onthechisholmtrail.com. Make sure to visit www.onthechisholmtrail.com

Bison Exhibit at Chisholm Trail

MAY 24-JULY 28 • DUNCAN, OK

Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway, Duncan, Okla. Ancient. Massive. Wild. This nationally touring exhibit explores the significance of the bison from pre-history, to their relationship with the Plains Indians, near extinction and current iconic status. Families and small groups are always welcome at Chisholm Trail. Educational programming available. Open seven days a week or special hours with advanced request. Call (580) 252-6692 or email info@onthechisholmtrail.com. Plenty of parking space, enough room for motor homes and tour buses. <http://onthechisholmtrail.com/art-lovers/coming-soon/>



JIM BOWIE DAYS FESTIVAL AND RODEO
JUNE 23-29

NTMC Foundation Steak Cook-Off

JUNE 22 • GAINESVILLE

Liberty Crossing, 4321 N. 135 Hwy, Gainesville, Texas. Do you cook the best steak in your neighborhood or town? Bring your cooking skills out to Market Days on June 22. The North Texas Medical Center Foundation is preparing to host a SCA Sanctioned Steak Cook-off during Market Days at Liberty Crossing. This is a first year event for the Red River Steak Cook-off and will feature a competition style steak cook-off with the steaks provided and sponsored by Stark Ranch. Competitors are coming from all around Texas and surrounding states to compete in preparing the best steak to win cash prizes. For more information or to register, go to www.steakcookoffs.com or contact Kristi Rigsby at 940-612-8607 or email kristi.rigsby@ntmconline.net.

Jim Bowie Days Festival and Rodeo

JUNE 23-29 • BOWIE

Bowie Rodeo Grounds, Bowie, Texas. Come join us for the fun!. There is something for everyone. From Pelham Park to downtown Bowie, the fun and excitement of Jim Bowie Days Rodeo and Celebration fills our community with Western spirit. Put on your cowboy hat and boots and get involved. Some of the events include a frog jumping contest, a quilt show, Indian artifact show, downtown parade, mutton bustin, a Rodeo Queen contest, food, music and, of course, every night there is some type of rodeo event. Then finally end the week with a rodeo dance at the Bowie Community Center. Are you ready for rodeo? The Jim Bowie Days Rodeo is one of the largest amateur rodeos in Texas. Events every day. For more info visit www.jimbowedays.org.

Saint Jo's 4th of July Celebration

JULY 4 • SAINT JO

Boggess Park, Saint Jo, Texas. Fourth of July Celebration and Old Jo's Firecracker 5K Run. The City of Saint Jo, the Saint Jo Chamber of Commerce and the Saint Jo Volunteer Fire Department will once again sponsor a July 4 Star Spangled Spectacular Fireworks show at Boggess City Park, beginning at full dark, around 9 p.m. Live music, free watermelon and a concession stand begins at 6 p.m. The Old Jo's Firecracker 5K Run will begin at 8 a.m. Merchants on the Saint Jo Chisholm Trail Square will be open until 6 p.m. Pre-show entertainment will also start at 6 p.m. Bring your lawn chair and join us in the park for an evening of food, fun, games, music and fireworks. Celebrate in style with your family and friends at your side July 4 in Saint Jo at the annual celebration.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Old Jo's Firecracker 5K

JULY 4 • SAINT JO

Downtown square, Saint Jo, Texas. A 5K race on a certified route through the historic town of Saint Jo, will begin at 8 a.m. Visit getmeregistered.com.

Symbols of America

JULY 4 • GRAHAM

Largest Downtown Square in America, Graham, Texas. This Fourth of July ceremony and parade will be July 4 on America's Largest Downtown Square. This year, the theme of the event is "Symbols of America" and will include activities for all ages and most importantly, a chance to celebrate symbols of patriotism. The 4th of July Parade will begin at 11 a.m. If you would like to participate in the parade, visit www.visitgrahamtexas.com/events/2016/4th-of-july-parade.

Superior Livestock Auction

JULY 8-12 • LOVELAND, CO

Loveland, Co. A Week in the Rockies auction. Consignment deadline June 15. Visit www.superiorlivestock.com or call 800-422-2117.

Peach Festival

JULY 13 • WEATHERFORD

Weatherford, Texas. With more than 40,000 people attending each year, this is an event you won't want to miss. 2019 marks the 35th annual Peach Festival, which always takes place on the second Saturday in July. More than 200 arts, crafts food and activity books, live music, family activities, Peach Petal Bike Ride and 42 domino tournament. Visit parkercountypeachfestival.org for more information.

Red, Whites and Brews, and Food Trucks Too

JULY 13 • BOWIE

Bowie Community Center, 413 Pelham St. Bowie, Texas. You are invited to the first-ever Red, Whites and Brews and Food Trucks Too festival from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at the Bowie Community Center. Events, food and fun starts at 10 a.m., brews will start being served up at 1 p.m. and live music begins at 6 p.m. There will be vendors from all across the area, focusing on local wineries and breweries. The day also includes a corn hole tournament, Bowie Gives Back Bicycle Parade and the Lone Star Garden Tractor Pullers Association pull at the rodeo arena beginning at 10 a.m. The indoor concert series at the Bowie Community Center features Jamie Richards, Hamiltons and Monty Dawson. Follow the Bowie Community Development Board on Facebook for more information at www.facebook.com/BowieCDB or call Cindy Roller, 940-872-6246. For concert information call Bonnie at 940-872-4861 or 940-841-1550.

Market Days at Liberty Crossing

JULY 19-21 • GAINESVILLE

Liberty Crossing, 4321 N. 135 Hwy, Gainesville, Texas. Introducing Liberty Crossing, Gainesville's newest retail destination and all-day experience for the entire family. The center includes monthly markets featuring specialty retail, food trucks, local wineries, craft beer and music. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. Visit www.thelibertycrossing.com.

Wise County Old Settlers Reunion

JULY 22-27 • DECATUR

Joe Wheeler Reunion Grounds, 3101 FM 51, Decatur, Texas. Bring your family out the week of July 22 to celebrate the rich heritage of Wise County and its ancestors with exciting events for everyone all week long, July 22-27. For more information call 940-627-7090.

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JULY 29-AUG. 2 • WINNEMUCCA, NV

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JULY 30 • MADILL, OKLA.

14797 McMillan Road, Madill, OK. The Noble Institute brings you Managing Crop Loan for Improved Production from 9 a.m. to noon on July 30. There is no registration fee. Registration closes July 22. For more information and to register visit www.noble.org/events/managing-crop-load-for-improved-production/.



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Ropin' for A Reason

By Judy Wade

Team ropers love the competition, the camaraderie and, of course, the cash. However, they are always eager to help a good cause.

Saturday, June 25, Ross Coleman produced his sixth annual heading and heeling at the Lee Arena in Henrietta benefiting someone in need.

T-shirts with Ropin' for a Reason and the pink breast cancer symbol on the front and an American flag on the back were sold, with all proceeds going to Georganne Wimberley, who is battling cancer. T-shirts were donated by SAY i WON'T and Ranch Swag.

Coleman, retired bull rider and member of the Professional Bull Riders Ring of Honor, has been helping those in need for many years.

It began in Molalla, Ore., Coleman's home. He hosted an invitational bull riding that drew all the big names in the PBR and Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, raising more than \$150,000 to benefit his best friend who had cancer.

For the next several years, the Make A Wish Foundation profited from the bull ridings to the tune of more than a quarter of a million dollars.

Coleman picked up several corporate sponsors for the events, and became involved with SAY i WON'T/AND i WILL.

It is a foundation that "originated as the answer to any challenge and developed into a lifestyle concept for those individuals who choose not the impossible, but the opportunity."

After moving to Texas, Coleman began producing team ropings benefiting someone in need.

The Sixth Annual Ross Coleman Invitational Team Roping

began at 9 a.m.

More than 175 ropers entered the 12, 10, and 8 ropings, competing for more than \$35,000 in cash and prizes.

The 12 roping drew over 50 entries and paid four places. Big winners were Dillon Hilton and Culley Roberts.

The number 10 saw more than 80 ropers and paid five places. Winners included James Gholson and Tyler Tugmon in first place.


The number 8 had more than 40 entries, paying three places. Courtney Jackson and Dillon Hilton were the winners.

In addition to prize money, fourth place won Cactus ropes; third, Resistol hats; second, custom headstalls and Ariat denim; first, Tres Rios buckles and Yeti coolers.

Fastest time and slowest time in each roping received Cactus ropes. High money winners of the day, header James Gholson and heeler Culley Roberts, received custom headstalls donated by Tami Seams Barrel Saddles.

Coleman is quick to thank sponsors, without whom the event could not be as successful.

They include presenting sponsor MC Energy Technologies of Henrietta and Cinch and Bill Fick Ford. Others included Tami Semas Barrel Saddles, Ariat, Boot Barn, Cactus Ropes, Resistol Hats, Tres Rios, Kerr Feed, Yeti Coolers, and SAY i WON'T.

"We have been blessed with good weather, and this arena is a sweet place to rope," said Coleman. "My father-in-law Perry Lee and brother-in-law Mark Lee are the best partners and hardest workers. Everyone loves to rope outside, and here you get a positive vibe and a friendly atmosphere." 



Ross Coleman and number eight winners Dillon Hilton and Courtney Jackson and son, Colby, holding the buckle.



Ross Coleman, Cooper Coleman, and number 10 winners James Gholson and Tyler Tugmon, and Cruse Coleman.



Cooper Coleman, Ross Coleman, and number 12 winners Culley Roberts, Dillon Hilton and Cruse Coleman. (Photos courtesy Amy Coleman)

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Peyton's Project

By Dani Blackburn

Each year, 7,000 people are bitten by a venomous snake in the United States. Of those snake bite victims, five will lose their life.

On Aug. 10, 2010, Peyton Alexandra Hood became one of those victims when just three weeks shy of her second birthday, she was playing on a swing set with her brother at Possum Kingdom Lake. The toddler walked down the steps and was struck on the ankle by a newborn Western Diamondback Rattlesnake. It struck twice, and within minutes Peyton's skin turned a bluish black color and she was care flighted to Cook's Children's Hospital in Fort Worth, Texas. Tragically, Peyton passed just five hours after the bite.

"She was a force of nature, that girl," said her Great Aunt Alyssa Cannedy, and the executive director of Peyton's Project. "It was a terrible tragedy for our family. This is why Peyton's Project was born."

It was another aunt of Peyton's, Tammy Reece, who began researching rattlesnakes in a search for healing after the death of their beloved niece. She found science had discovered a way to use rattlesnake venom for medical advancements and Peyton's Project was born with the following mission: "To heighten awareness about the realities and dangers of venomous snakes and support medically-related interventions."

Reece served as the executive director as the program continued to grow and thrive until a recent move to Colorado. It was perfect timing for Cannedy to take over as she was retiring from a 20-year education career.

Education is key in Peyton's Project, especially for those in rural areas who encounter venomous snakes often.

"It is so important that people in rural areas receive this education because it could

save a life," said Cannedy. "Everywhere I go, I am never not in a room with someone who hasn't seen a venomous snake on their road or property. They're everywhere. That's why everyone needs the education for when they see a snake on what to do and what not to do, and how to stay safe. When you get bit by a venomous snake, all senses leave you and you panic. The more knowledge you have, the safer you are and the quicker you can get treatment."

The nine cities with hospitals with antivenin in stock include: Henrietta, Vernon, Quannah, Seymour, Electra, Jacksboro, Graham, Nocona and Olney.

There are different programs depending on the age of the demographic, including kindergarten through second graders, third through fifth, sixth through twelfth, a general public and even a trained medical personnel program.

"We really do have an education program for every demographic," explained Cannedy.

All information shared by those with the nonprofit has been backed by herpetologists, toxicologists, medical journals, and two medical doctors that are apart of Peyton's Project. The program discusses venomous snakes indigenous to North Texas, including the rattlesnake, copperhead, cottonmouth and coral snake. Snakes are most active from March to August, but there have been years when bites have taken place as early as January.

Next during the educational presentations, methods for preventing a snake bite

are shared, then instructions are given on what to do if you see a snake. Those who come across a snake are instructed to SLB: Stop, locate and back away slowly with five large steps.

"The snake knows you're there before you know it's there," explained Cannedy. "They sense that through heat and vibration, and if you run, it is going to mess up the vibration and startle them. They will strike out, but if it is slow and methodical, they're used to slow and methodical. Snakes don't want to bite people, they get startled or scared and strike out."

The five steps allows a person to get out of a snake's striking zone, which is half the length of its body.

"If a snake is laying flat like a pancake, it can still strike up to three feet in half a blink of an eye. We have interviewed many victims and out of 150 people, only two saw it happen, and they were snake handlers. Kids get bit more than adults because they step on it, they don't see it, or they'll start playing with it," explained Cannedy.

However, in the case a snake bite does occur, the presentation provides information on snake bite protocol. Time is tissue, and the quicker a victim receives antivenin, the less damage they will suffer.

"How much time they have depends on size, age, height. I don't like to be factual because it is so different. People metabolize the venom differently," said Cannedy.

First and foremost, stay calm. Check to make sure you or your buddy are away from the snake, call for help, remove any constricting clothing or jewelry, immobilize and keep the bitten area at a neutral position of comfort until the antivenin treatment is started, clean the area with soap and water while waiting for help to help prevent infection and seek help.

Much of the education program also

involves defusing myths regarding the proper way to handle a snake bite incident, including sucking venom out and electrocution, neither of which are effective ways to stop the venom.

“I often say if you have recently received a booster shot, you can’t just take that out and suck out the medication, because once it is in your vein it is already flowing through your bloodstream. The only way to make the venom stop is by receiving the antivenin. Really, it is an awareness program. We tell people to enjoy the outdoors. Don’t let a fear of running into a snake keep you from living the life you want to lead,” said Cannedy.

Another point stressed is once a snake is decapitated, it remains venomous for up to two to four hours afterwards, and a victim can fall prey to a bite if not careful. However, Peyton’s Project does not recommend decapitation, but does offer a list of safe snake removal options on their website at www.peytonproject.org.

In 2016, Peyton’s Project started an anti-venin program, partnering with United Regional Hospital to ensure nine rural hospitals always have six vials of CroFab, the antivenin for snakes found in the area, in stock. When the antivenin expires or when it is used on a snake bite, it is immediately replaced. The medication is costly at \$5,000 to \$7,000 per vial, and for a snake bite victim coming in, the loading dose is six vials. After a patient receives the dose at the rural hospital, they are then transferred to United Regional for further treatment.

“This has saved the lives and
See PEYTON page 63



Peyton Alexandra Hood's aunt described her as a “force of nature.” (Courtesy photo)



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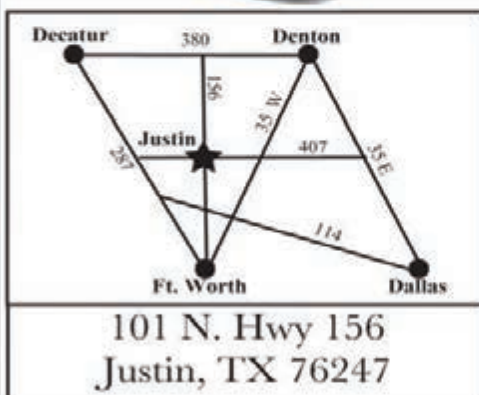
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Peyton

Continued from page 61

limbs of 42 people,” explained Cannedy. “Peyton had to die for this, but we built something from it, and it is so important to the entire family.”

The nine cities with hospitals stock with antivenin include Henrietta, Vernon, Quannah, Seymour, Electra, Jacksboro, Graham, Nocona and Olney. If going on vacation, Cannedy encourages others to download the app for smartphones called “Snake Bite 911.” The app has features that allow you to pull up the hospital closest that carries antivenin in the case a snake bite occurs on vacation.

To help cover costs, Peyton’s Project conducts one big fundraiser every year called “Spurs and Pearls” at The Rock Barn in Henrietta, Texas.

National song

writers who have written music for the likes of George Strait perform, and the event includes a ribeye dinner with all the fixings and a raffle package. The event helps sponsor the free educational programs provided by Peyton’s Project.

“I go to civic organizations, schools, apartment complexes, anywhere I am asked to go. They have asked me to come do a presentation for Region 9, which I thought was a fantastic idea, because there are playgrounds on four or five acres and they are going to have snakes and how can they keep their students safe?

I think it is absolutely necessary to take ad-

vantage of our free education system, you’ll learn what to do in an emergency situation which you might not know how to handle if you didn’t have the information we give,” said Cannedy.

It is a sense of pride and comfort for Peyton’s family to know her memory lives on through the good work the project does and the lives it saves.

“We just don’t want it to ever happen again,” stressed Cannedy. “It always makes me feel good to tell the older kids I educate, not the younger children because I don’t tell them about

Peyton to avoid putting an illogical fear in their head, that if it happens to you, you will not die. We educate and we have made sure all these hospitals always carry the antivenin and you’re always going to be able to get the medication.”

For more information on Peyton’s Project, follow on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/PeytonsProject2013/> or visit <http://www.peytonproject.org/>.



Confessions of a Hunter

By Andy Anderson

Sneaky Sea Lions

I went to Oregon right after high school to pursue my dreams as a rodeo cowboy. I was living in Aurora with some great people, Rick Miller's family, who were friends of the family. They took me in, treated me like family and helped me with a lot of things, like growing up. I had never really been out of the state of Texas so getting to travel and see the mountains had always been a dream of mine. I loved the Pacific Northwest. It was a lot to take in, but the people made the difference. Everyone was so nice and willing to help me out with anything and everything and jumped at the chance to show me something new.

I had been in Oregon for the better part of a year riding bucking horses and traveling all over the place. My little brother had just turned 16 and was wanting to get out of the house and come see and experience some of what I had been telling him about. I had lined him up a summer job harvesting rye, but they were not quite yet ready for him to start. Rick decided we needed to take a trip to the coast and do some crabbing, mostly so my brother could get a taste of that part of the country.

Well, I had never been crabbing; never heard of it. I was pretty excited to try this out after it was explained to me. My rodeo partner and running buddy, Dan, joined us on this adventure. Dan, being a local, had never done any



Andy Anderson, his brother and a friend had a fun experience crabbing that involved some pesky sea lions. (Courtesy photo)

crabbing either. Well, at least not the kind of crabbing we're talking about here.

We loaded up in our pick-ups and headed to Newport, arriving mid-morning. Rick led the way down to the docks and to the man we needed to talk to about renting boats, traps and buying bait. While waiting our turn to sign paperwork and pay our way, I was looking around at the fishing boats and local wildlife. I noticed at the end of the dock was a huge pile of what I thought were burlap sacks. Until one moved. I hollered out, asking what that was. Rick spouted off, "Sea lions, Texan." Well, there ya go. First time I had ever seen one that wasn't at the zoo, and I know it was my brother's first time as well. Ugly looking things, big

and loud. They barked a lot and had awful tempers. Definitely not something I wanted to mess with. We finished up our paperwork and paid our fees and headed down to the little boats and got our traps.

So, there we were, three cowboys standing in a 16-foot boat with crab traps, wearing boots, jeans, T-shirts and cowboy hats. We blended right in with the local fishing community. The operator of the facility took the time to teach us the difference in crab species, how to tell the sex and legal sizes we could keep. After some quick suggestions and general pointing around the bay where to fish, a quick shove and off and away we went.

We got to an area we thought looked good and started drop-

ping our crab traps. We did, or at least thought we did, as we were instructed. After about 30 or so minutes my little brother noticed a sea lion swim by the boat. We all thought it was pretty cool and watched it swim away, off into the distance, right towards the buoy where one of traps was dropped. It didn't come back up; we didn't see it anymore.

"You think it is stealing our bait?" asked Dan.

"I didn't think so. I mean how could it get inside the trap to get the bait? The traps are really small," I replied.

Curiosity got the best of us and so we went to pull the trap.

Yep, the bait was gone. Dan re-baited it and we dropped it back down and about that time my brother yelled out, "It's at the other trap." We rushed over to the next trap to pull it and found the bait gone in it as well. Well, that really got us upset.


Dan suggested we needed to run that sea lion off. Dan got up on the bow of the boat and grabbed a paddle as he instructed me to get him as close as possible to it. My brother sat in the middle of the boat helping to spot the sea lion. I fired up the motor and took out after that sneaky sea lion. It wasn't long before we got on it, coming up alongside it. Dan held the paddle up and with a hard thwack tried to smack that sea lion, but it was too quick. That sucker went under water and popped back up behind us.

For the next hour we chased this sea lion all over the bay, and every time that sucker would duck and go the other way. We never got close enough to touch it, and it wasn't getting tired at all, not as tired as I was of running all over the place, crashing over the waves, and getting salt water in my eyes. I was done. I shut the motor off and slowly came to a stop. As we sat there in the boat, soaking wet, discussing a new strategy for dealing with this sea lion, I was gazing across the water at our buoys. There and then I realized we were not dealing with a single sea lion, but several. There were probably 50 of those suckers in the water going back and forth between our traps, stealing our efforts to catch crabs.

Out of bait and patience, we head back to the dock where we shared our experience and frustration with the proprietor of the crab boat rental company. After sharing some laughs and in-kind kidding, he showed us a better place to go where the sea lions would leave

us alone.

During the next four to five hours we hauled in crabs, a lot of crabs. Sometimes we got pinched and sometimes we threw the good ones back and kept the wrong ones, but by the end of the day we got it figured out and made quite the haul. We all met back up at the dock just before the sun set, unloaded our catch and grabbed a nice cold beer. We sat and watched as the fire was lit and the water was brought to a boil. The cool breeze relaxed our hot skin as our bellies growled and grumbled in anticipation of the meal to come. As the big pot full of crab was pulled from the fire and dumped onto a large table, we gathered around to begin the feast.

As we dined like kings on some of the best, sweetest crab meat I have ever had, we shared our stories, especially of the sneaky sea lion chase. It was a reflection on a time that slowly gave way to the night, bringing an end to an amazing experience with great friends and family. 

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Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean

Stocking Rate - Should I Be That Concerned Volume 2

The decision a rancher makes on stocking rate has both short and long-term effects on land, livestock and economics of a business, making it essential a rancher have knowledge regarding correct stocking rates. Fortunately, Tony Dean is sharing his knowledge regarding stocking rates in a four part series. Read below for the second segment in "Stocking Rate - Should I be that concerned?"

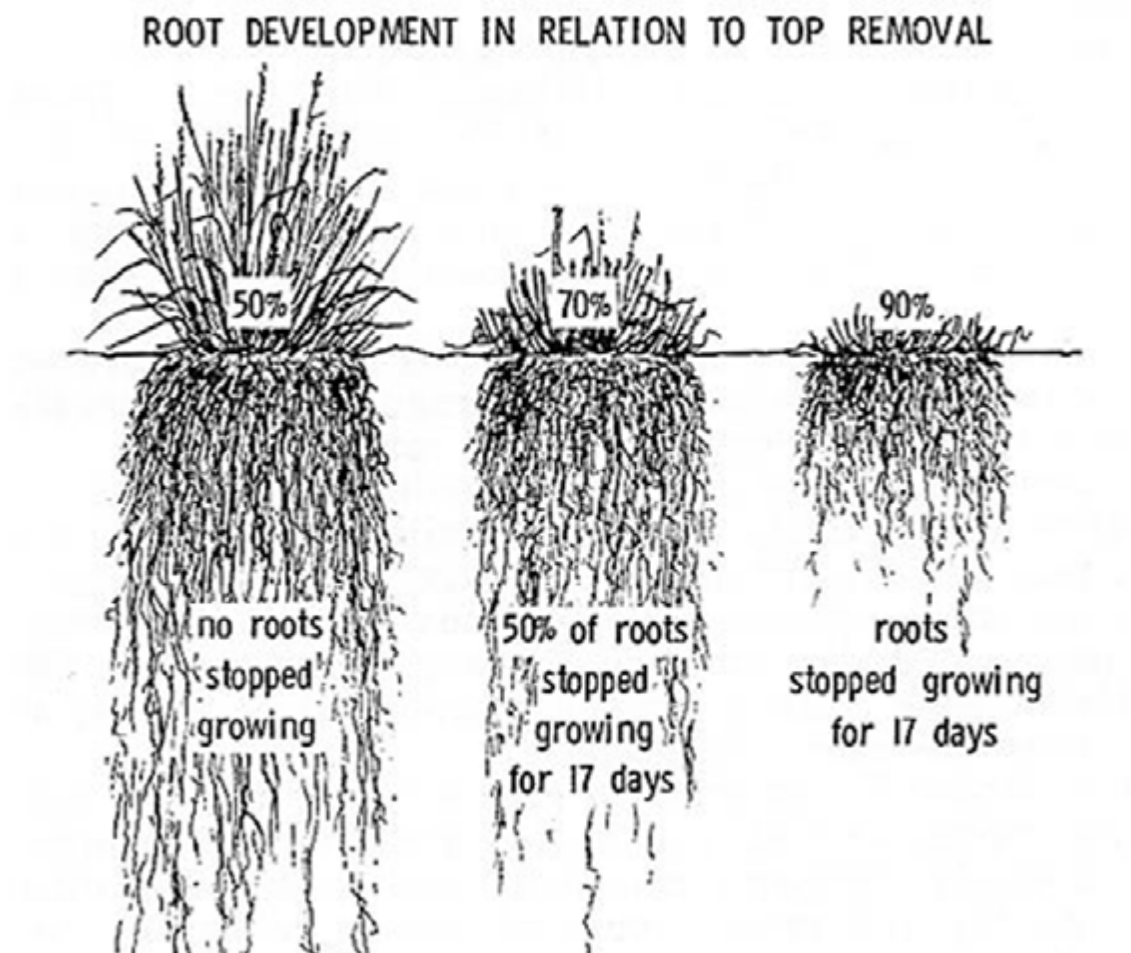
How do I know if my stocking rate is correct?

It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking, "We've always run 125 cows on this place, so that's just what we do." Many ranches are stocked based on this reasoning.

The number of head we have on the ranch should be a decision we make based on knowledge of pasture health and productivity and on the management goals of each rancher. Productivity is influenced by many variables, an important one being rainfall. There is a reason why most ranchers are very well in tune with how much it rains.

In addition to rainfall, other factors that influence stocking rate include soil type, grasses present in the pasture, health of those grasses, amount of brush infestation, size of livestock and others.

With everything to consider, it might seem too complex to add it all up and come up with a stocking rate. We don't have to make it such a difficult task. Instead, we



Horace Leithead published this drawing 50 years ago, and it is still important information on how plants respond to grazing. (Courtesy photo)

can learn to observe some important indicators, or keys, that tell us if we are carrying too many or too few head. In this issue of Grazing North Texas, we will highlight some grazing keys we can easily observe.

Key Number 1 – Do we allow livestock to graze too much of the annual production of the

better grasses?

In last month's issue of Grazing North Texas, we learned a portion of the grass leaves must be left on the plant each year because the leaves act as miniature solar panels, producing the energy necessary for plant survival.

A good rule of thumb for proper grazing on native range-

land is to "take half and leave half" of the annual production of our better quality grazing plants. If at least half of the annual leaf production on grass plants is left in the pasture, then the plants can maintain themselves. In reality, since part of the grass production is subject to trampling, insects, See RATE page 68



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Rate

Continued from page 66

etc., we should plan on using only about 25 percent of grass growth for livestock grazing.

Horace Leithead developed information in 1968 showing the roots stopped growing for 17 days on grass plants that had 90% of the foliage grazed, but when grazed to the 50% level, almost none of the roots stopped growing.

Key Number 2 - A stocking rate on native rangeland that requires feeding of large amounts of hay and/or supplemental feed year after year to keep stock in adequate body condition can be a key indication that stocking rate is too heavy.

A sustainable stocking rate on native rangeland allows the grass to "outgrow" the livestock

during summer months in order to stockpile the forage in the pasture and have extra grass to graze during winter months. This can be thought of as a standing hay crop.

Just before new growth starts in early spring, rangeland should still look ragged with some of the prior year's plants still standing, not grazed to the point that the entire pasture is short and slick.

If the native grasses are all used up well before green-up the next spring, and hay must be fed to maintain livestock, the better grasses are usually overgrazed in the process. Although hay may be provided in the pasture and be consumed by livestock, the livestock will also likely continue to graze, and eventually damage

the grasses.

Hay is a very expensive supplemental feed source. If reducing cattle numbers can lead to reduced hay cost, then the money saved by not feeding hay can partially offset running fewer head.

Key Number 3 - Active erosion and increasing bare ground are significant warning signs the grasses are being damaged and adjustments in grazing management are needed.

A healthy grass cover protects the soil surface from falling rain or from overland flow of water and helps soil absorb rainfall. Erosion may take place where the protective grass cover has been grazed out by overgrazing.

Dr. Allan McGinty, in the Texas Natural Resources Server,

indicated ranchers can watch for more subtle indicators of unhealthy rangelands. These indicators include pedicelled plants, which are grass plants that are sitting on small pedicels of soil indicating erosion has taken place around them.

Key Number 4 - A starting stocking rate can be determined by knowing the actual pounds of grass produced. This is a good method to help set a stocking rate, but usually requires clipping and weighing some sample plots in the pasture to determine your actual amount of grass production.

If a rangeland pasture is found to produce 3,000 pounds of useable forage per acre, and we are trying to stay within the 25 percent

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This grazing enclosure is made from two cattle panels. Ranchers can compare the forage produced inside the cage to the grazed pasture outside. (Photo courtesy Tony Dean)

use rule, we can estimate a starting stocking rate of a cow to about 18 acres. Clipping and weighing the grass can be done for a pasture or for a whole ranch.

One of the issues with clipping and weighing sample plots is the labor and expertise required. Another issue is the clipping can represent only one year's production. The next year might be more or less productive. Finally, in clipping plots, we harvest and weigh plants the livestock may not normally eat. However, clipping plots is still an interesting and beneficial exercise and we can learn from it.

Key Number 5 - A rancher-friendly technique that is easy to do and is a good visual tool is to construct grazing enclosures. Grazing enclosures are made by forming a circle using one or two flexible cattle panels held in place by a few steel posts.

These cages can be as small

as five to 10 feet across, just so the cattle can't reach inside them. During the year you can compare the forage inside the cage to the forage use outside the cage where your cattle are grazing. Degree of use can then be visually estimated.

Key Number 6 - Photographs taken at the same point in a pasture each year are a valuable record to document pasture conditions.

Changes in the rangeland can occur slowly, sometimes over a period of years, and we need some way to recall just what our pastures looked like as time goes by.

To document with photographs, place some steel posts at key locations in the pastures. Two or three times per year, place a camera on each post (pointed in the same direction each time) and take a landscape picture, then point the camera down toward the ground and take a close up picture. The pictures should be taken at

about the same time each year.

After two or three years, you will see a trend in the condition of the plants. In addition to taking pictures, a system of monitoring the amount of bare ground is simple to design and gives you a trend in how much ground cover you have.

Key Number 7 - Being able to identify our major grasses can help in determining stocking rate.

Jeff Goodwin is Conservation Stewardship Leader and Pasture and Range Consultant with the Noble Research Institute. In his article, "Top Ten Misconceptions in Grazing Management," he said, "Not all grasses are created equal. Native or introduced, annual or perennial—no two species of grass are the same. Grasses differ in the way they grow just as much as the amount they can grow."

A handful of grasses are considered "ice cream" plants, in that they are highly desired by grazing

livestock. When overgrazing is taking place, these plants are the first to be grazed and are usually grazed to the ground.

After a few years of heavy use, the better grasses die out and are replaced by lower quality plants. If we can identify these desired plants, we can keep track of how they are doing under our grazing management.

Little bluestem is a summer perennial grass that is adapted to loamy and sandy soils in North Texas. It grows throughout a large area of the United States and is one of the important native grasses of the plains. However, little blue is misunderstood by many ranchers.

The leaf production on little blue is only around the base of the plant. The taller portion of little blue consists of the stems that support the seed heads in the fall. Leaves at the base of the plant are highly relished by grazing animals. **See RATE page 71**

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mals, especially during summer months, but the stems are seldom palatable.

However, many producers look across a bluestem pasture and see the seed stalks sticking up, and believe that cattle are not eating the grass. Cattle will, from time to time, eat a few of the seed stalks, but if cattle remain on a bluestem pasture until they have completely eaten the seed stalks, the whole pasture is usually overgrazed.

If your soil will support little bluestem or other desired grasses or forbs, and they have been grazed out or severely reduced by livestock, the stocking rate is probably too heavy, or the cattle were forced to remain in the pasture too long.

Frank Price and his son, Sims, ranch northwest of San Angelo, Texas, and were the 2013 winners of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association's Environmental Stewardship Award. Price had these thoughts concerning stocking rate, "When implementing an effective grazing program stocking rate is one of the key factors to be considered, as a consistently profitable operation cannot be achieved without its careful consideration."

A ranching program structured around a well-planned and implemented grazing program including consideration of rest-graze-stocking rate processes can produce amazing results. Not only to improvement of the rangeland resource, but the consistent profitability of the operation."

The Price ranch is involved in a well-designed rotation grazing management plan, and we will hear more from Frank Price concerning stocking rate, profitability, and other management goals in the next issue of *Grazing North Texas*. We also will discuss additional "keys" to help determine a stocking rate on your operation. 



You can plainly see the new leaves growing from the base of this Little bluestem plant. If you look closely, you also can see some of last year's leaves that were left on the plant. Livestock seldom eat the dry seed stems above the leaves. (Photo courtesy Tony Dean)

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THE GARDEN GUY

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

Abuse-free Crape Myrtles Is a Sight to Behold

The Crape Myrtle Allee is approximately 300 feet long and features all colors of crape myrtles.

A 300-foot-long crape myrtle allée is a sight to behold, especially when it is in full bloom as it was when I was Director of the Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens.

While the visitors were shocked, if not mesmerized, by the amount of blooming color, they are equally stunned to know we didn't prune. You see, most gardeners think pruning gives you more flower canopy, but it simply isn't so.

Horticulturists everywhere have taken up the banner to end crape murder, which is the unnecessary topping or pollarding of the trees.

Several universities have gone a step further, however, which is to suggest picking out the right crape myrtles based on mature size for your location and let them grow as naturally as possible with minimal pruning.

My friend, Greg Grant, was a research associate at Piney Woods Native Plant Center, at Stephen

F. Austin University in Nacogdoches, Texas. He claimed to be a member of the Lagerstroemia Jihad with that mission to stop crape murder.

He has set up what he calls a Crape Myrtle Abuse Free Zone - no spray, no irrigation and no pruning.

They will be there, he said, minding their own business and pretty in pink and all of the other colors, too.

The same can be said for the Crape Myrtle Allée at the Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens in Savannah.

The only difference is that ours were a little older and adorned with a little, albeit minimal, obligatory Spanish moss.

In addition to the riotous color that rivals any cherry or redbud festival in the country, there is also bark of staggering beauty year-round and a winter structure most didn't know existed, which is of course because everyone has **See GARDEN page 74**



The Fantasy crape myrtle is white flowered selection featuring some of the most colorful orange shades of bark. (Photos by Norman Winter)

Garden

Continued from page 73

been pruning.

Now don't get me wrong. Sprouts or suckers should always be removed.

In the initial training you may even desire to limb up, but I can tell you the prettiest jaw dropping crape myrtle on our property is the white blooming Acoma with a weeping habit where the blooms grow all the way to the ground. It is also much taller and wider than most publications have predicted.

Obviously, you should remove broken or damaged branches, and, if you feel the need, crisscross branches, too.

Feel free to deadhead seed pods, if easily accomplished, to quickly stimulate another round of blooms. I will tell you no one was more surprised than me to find birds chattering in our crape myrtles one foggy morning. Believe it or not, cardinals were eating the dried seeds.

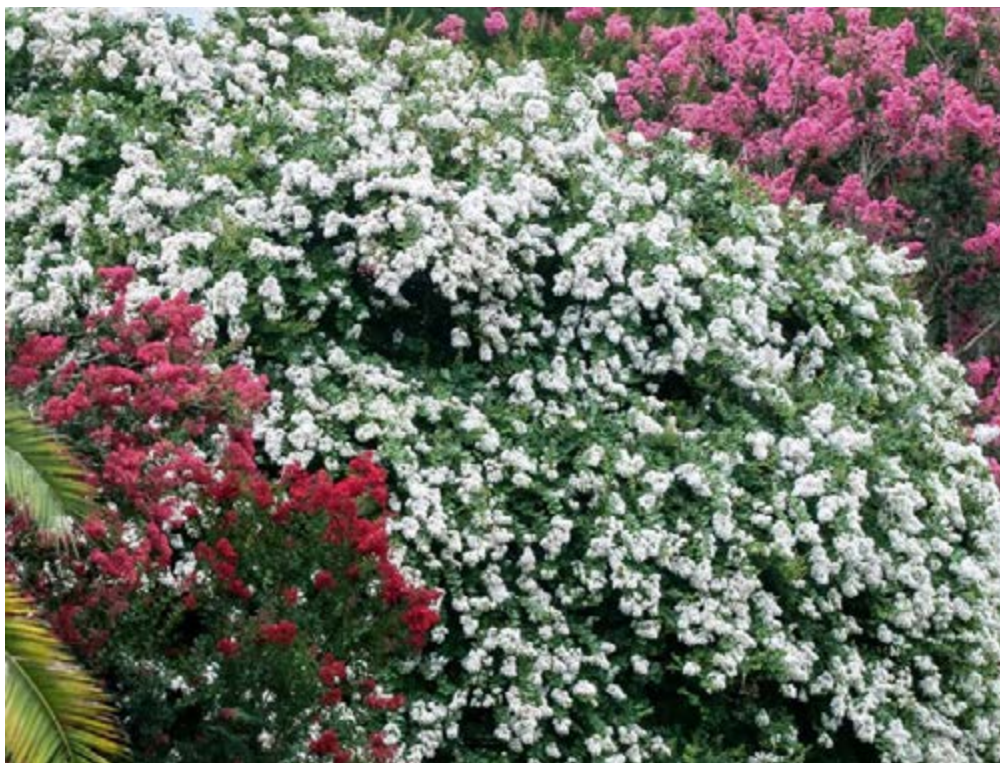
As you walked the Crape Myrtle Allée, you noticed that some do have a pleasant fragrance. I'm not sure if my friend Greg first came up with the descriptor of crape myrtles being called the Lilacs of the South, but it certainly seems to be a most worthy, if not appropriate, adjective.

Though I am touting crape myrtles as some of my favorite trees, things have changed, making it a good reason to stop by your favorite garden center. In downtown Columbus, Ga., where I live now, it is a riveting show of red with a fairly new selection called Cherry Dazzle.

It seems the entire growing season this dwarf three-foot-tall selection is in full bloom rivaling the bloom and structure of any shrub rose. There are now six colors in the dazzle series.

Crape myrtles bloom best in full sun and will thrive in well-drained soil. Your nurseryman will help you pick out the best for disease resistance, mature size and best performance for your location. Crape myrtles came to our country in the 1700s from China, Asia and Japan.

Botanically speaking, two species, *Lagerstroemia indica* and *Lagerstroemia fauriei*, and their resulting hybridization have given us a long season of richly-colored blooms, incredible bark and a wonderful natural winter structure. Follow me on Facebook @Norman-WinterTheGardenGuy.®



The white Acoma a weeping crape myrtle picturesquely touches the ground at the Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens.



Dynamite is among the truest saturated red crape myrtles in the market. (Photos by Norman Winter)



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