

NORTH TEXAS FARM & RANCH



INTER

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Comedian

WILLIAM LEE MARTIN

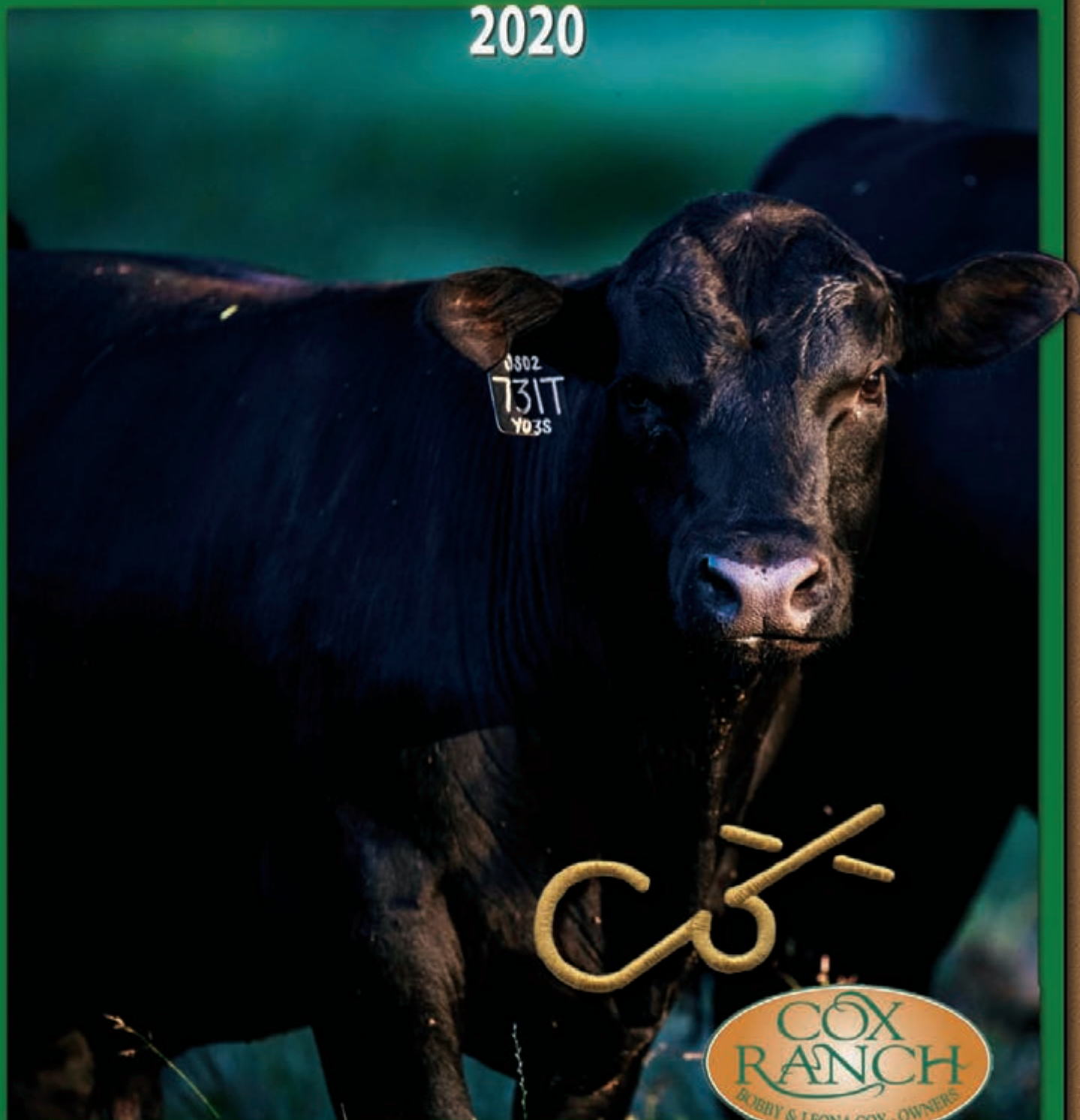
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publishing

PUBLISHER
JM Winter

EDITOR
Dani Blackburn
editor@ntfronline.com

production

ART DIRECTOR
Kayla Jean Woolf
kayla@postoakmedia.net

ADVERTISING DESIGN
Rosie Cole

advertising executives

Kathy Miller
kathy@postoakmedia.net

Sherrie Nelson
sherrie@postoakmedia.net

Rosemary Stephens
rosemary@postoakmedia.net

administration

Brenda Bingham
accounting@postoakmedia.net

contribution

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Janis Blackwell
Rayford Pullen
Lindsey Monk
Norman Winter
Pepper Stewart
Krista Lucas
Lacey Corbett
Phillip Kitts
Garrett Metcalf, DVM
Judy Wade
Lacey Newlin
Jessica Kader
Robert Lang
Barry Whitworth, DVM
Annette Bridges
Mandi Dietz
Dave Alexander
Tony Dean
Andy Anderson
Jelly Cocanougher

COPY EDITORS

Judy Wade
Krista Lucas

distribution

MANAGER

Pamela Black
subscriptions@postoakmedia.net

DISTRIBUTORS

Pamala Black
Pat Blackburn
Bill Gatlin
Tina Geurin

CONTACT US

North Texas Farm & Ranch magazine
200 Walnut St., Bowie, TX 76230
940-872-5922, www.ntfronline.com

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ON THE COVER

William Lee Martin quit the world of advertising and ventured out into a career in comedy just shy of his 30th birthday. Within just a few years, he was opening for the likes of George Strait, George Jones, Brad Paisley and all four of the Blue Collar comedy guys. His days also center around the foundation, "Cowboys Who Care" which was started by Martin and his wife, Michele. The foundation provides cowboy hats to children with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses both locally and across the country. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)



letter from the editor

Hello readers and welcome

to the January issue of North Texas Farm and Ranch magazine and to the year 2020.

Whether you're adamant on creating a long list of resolutions, or brush them off because you are realistic in the fact you will never follow through with them, the feeling of a fresh start is all around.

Regarding resolutions, I believe we must do what speaks to us as individuals. For me, I fall somewhere in the middle. I have learned - through trial and error - not to set lofty goals, but small ones that are obtainable with my busy schedule.

I have found inspiration from the contributors of NTFR, and I hope you will as well. I want to commit to learning more about what is growing in my pastures, thanks to some encouragement from Tony Dean.

I want to break out from the ordinary and attempt some new recipes in the kitchen, thanks to Lacey's Pantry. I can't even keep an aloe vera plant alive, but after following Norman Winter, I might just have to give gardening another try.

I also cannot help but admire this month's profile, Comedian William Lee Martin, formerly known as Cowboy Bill. He took a leap of faith when he quit the world of advertising to pursue a career in comedy, just shy of his 30th birthday. He also followed his heart when he and his wife, Michele, founded "Cowboys Who Care," a nonprofit providing cowboy hats to kids with cancer and other life threatening illnesses.

Visit our website at www.NTFRonline.com where you can subscribe to an online edition. To subscribe by mail call 940-872-5922 and make sure to like our Facebook page and follow us on Instagram and Twitter.

Wishing you all the best this January.

Dani Blackburn

Dani Blackburn, Editor
editor@ntfronline.com



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MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

Hopes High for the New Year

By Rayford Pullen | rcpullen@yahoo.com

The first month of the year is here where our hopes are high and wishing the new year will be a great one for our industry. I certainly hope this is the case for your family as we get ready to begin the year with dreams the new year brings better opportunities and fewer struggles that at least those of us in the agriculture business had in 2019. Here's hoping for better times in 2020 at least for those living off the land and farming and ranching outdoors.

My wife Carla is that special person who thrives off the success and good fortune of others. If you know me, you've probably heard me say that Carla is my conscience since she seems to know when folks are in need and she can help. Never seeking the spotlight, actually avoiding it, she is the epitome of the saying "It's amazing how much you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit." So, for 2020, let's try to be kinder to others, be there when they need us and be the kind of person our dog thinks we are.

Calves weaned, replacement bulls and heifers branded and vaccinated, cows pregnancy tested, winter feed and hay needs in place—we may want to pause and give thanks for the opportunity to do what we love while we take a hard look at where we are and where we want to be. Let's take a look at some of the questions we may need to ask ourselves.

Are you happy with the way things are going? If you answer yes, then there will be no changes made. Unless a person is dissatisfied with their current position in life or business, they are not willing to change and perhaps they may not need to change. We've all seen the perfect business or family only to observe later that it was not actually the case. When you are on the inside looking out, that's looking through the back of your own eyes; the perception and reality can be two entirely different things.

We never get to see ourselves as others do, and we all believe our shortcomings are plastered across our foreheads, which is almost never the case. That's only our perception. I didn't get to pick my parents or how I was raised. At this point in life, the only change



Rayford and his wife, Carla. Rayford says she is his conscience and a special person who thrives off the success and good fortune of others. (Photo courtesy Rayford Pullen)

I can make is what I do from this second forward.

Where are you now? Now in my opinion, this is the toughest one. Are all of your cows profitable? Are your calves weighing what you want them to weigh when you wean them? The questions go on and on and looking through the back of your eyes, it's really hard to assess where you are. Maybe you need a different set of eyes to look at your operation and give you their honest opinion. If you're like me, I have things I want others to see while other things are better left unexposed. So, where you are is probably in the eyes of the beholder, but the real litmus test is the bottom line on your profit and loss statement and in your heart.

Where do you want to be in five or 10 years? When I first wrote this, the first thing that came to mind was the country song "Thank God for Unanswered Prayers." While it may look like the place we want to be, it may have consequences that are completely unacceptable or require extra labor or money that we may or may not have. Having a direction is obviously important, but be flexible, since reaching the end of the rainbow may not be destination, only the journey.

Let's all be positive, be kind and above all, like Carla Sue, have a giving conscience that doesn't require recognition.

From our home to yours, Happy New Year. 🍷

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PHOTO BY ANNETTE BRIDGES



Annette Bridges and her husband enjoy the view in Scotland on a recent trip.

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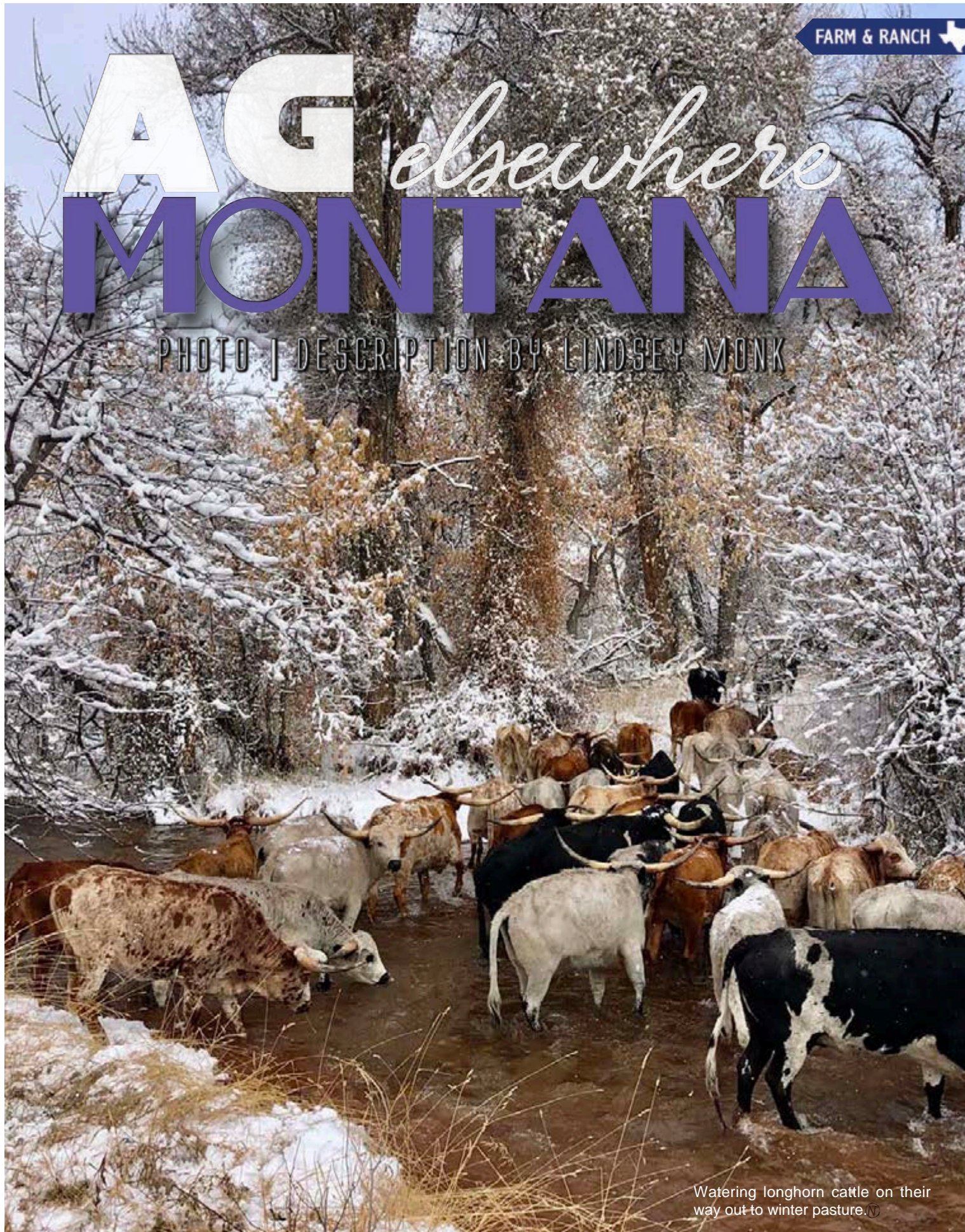
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Watering longhorn cattle on their way out to winter pasture. ©

RANCH, RODEO and Randomness

By Pepper Stewart

Have you made your annual New Year's resolution that continues in failure? 2020 is upon us so don't waste your time and energy on another busted resolution because it's January. Any time is the right time to become more healthy and fit.

To break this down, here is the reason about 90 percent of you will not succeed: Too much too soon. Your fitness is not something you want to bust out full speed ahead. The first muscle you have to work on is your mind. If you can't get your mind on board then it's a losing battle. Until you decide you want to change your life, it will not happen.

To ramble on about my story will give you a little perspective on how I got rolling. I spent my entire life working out, playing sports and rodeo. Once I left the arena everything slowed down and in a few years I was at 175 pounds. Then in a few more years I was pushing 240 pounds. I noticed my pants kept growing, but seeing yourself every day you don't notice as much.

The whole time I was growing I had people around me constantly telling me I needed to drop some weight and get healthy. No matter how many times you hear it, nothing will change until you decide it's time.

I had been going over some old talk show videos, and while watching myself on screen, it hit me like a truck, "Dang, you got fat." It was at that moment I made the decision to get back in shape. Don't sugar coat it; call it what it is and do something about it.

You have to come to the realization you didn't get heavy overnight, so don't plan to drop it overnight.

Do not try to make any drastic changes. Make them gradually as you go, start small and work at it. Start weaning yourself off soda, supersized meals and sugary treats.

If you cut soda out of your diet you can drop nearly 10 pounds in a month just from sugar. Switch your lunch menu to salads, and if you still crave food, eat some fruits as filler.

At dinner time eat smaller portions and try not to eat meals after 7 p.m. Start with your




Pepper Stewart suggests starting with your food intake for a few weeks before hitting the gym. (Photo courtesy Metro Creative)

If you have decided you want to make a change, here are a few tips to get you started:

1. Stop drinking soda and sugary drinks and try coffee black.
2. Drink lots of water during the day.
3. Only eat salads for lunch during the week.
4. Alcohol- if you drink a lot try going 30 days without a drink and you will see a big change.

food intake for a few weeks before you hit the gym. If you are new to the gym or it's been awhile, use a trainer, and if you are near a Planet Fitness, they offer free trainers to their members.

While on my fitness journey I've become certified in Health and Fitness while joining up

with an online group called Bucking Fitness. It's a free online social media group with certified fitness trainers who offer free tips, motivation, and meal plans for anyone who asks. It's based on the fitness of those in the rural life who just want some training motivation from someone who gets the rural life. 



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11 ACRES - VALLEY VIEW

Gorgeous 11-acres in the beautiful area between Lake Ray Roberts and Lone Oak Road. Offers a great home site overlooking a rolling pasture, trees, and a scenic 1-acre pond. Ag Exempt, Sandy loam soil.

Ottos Drive | \$385,000



38 ACRES - CROSS ROADS/AUBREY

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8400 Fishtrap Road | \$2,495,000



50 ACRES - PILOT POINT

Striking equestrian estate features a 4,500sf luxury home with pool, a 16-stall heated show barn, a 10-stall shed row barn with pipe runs, outdoor arena and a 50x70 storage bldg w/ 2 apartments.

9538 Wilson Road | \$2,250,000



10.7 ACRES - KRUM

Eye-catching property includes a nice 2,600SF 4BR home, inground pool, a detached 2nd garage, a 30x50 insulated workshop, 4-stall horse barn with pipe runs, riding arena and a large fenced pasture.

110 Fm2450 | \$649,900



22 ACRES - SANGER

This beautiful tract with elevation changes, expansive views and a stock pond is minutes from a boat launch and full-service marina on Lake Ray Roberts while being less than 3 miles from I-35. Ag Exempt.

Lakecrest Drive | \$419,750



8.2 ACRES - PILOT POINT

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8075 Hwy 377 | \$1,599,000



10 ACRES - AUBREY

Pretty tract of land has a good balance of pasture and trees in an ideal setting for developing into a single-family residence. Additional 10-acres available. Sandy loam soil, Ag Exempt.

Grubbs Road | \$387,000



120 ACRES - PILOT POINT

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LAND MARKET REPORT

NOVEMBER 2019 RURAL LAND SALES

Fall is upon us, and so is the fall selling season. Transactions have been brisk, as well as the number of new listings entering the market. Smaller tracts have dominated the market this year, with a small percentage of land sales being more than 100 acres in size. Prices have held steady for the majority of the year thus far. Watch for a full year recap in the February edition.

Below is a synopsis of land transactions for the month of Nov. 2019 in five of our North Texas Counties.

MONTAGUE COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	PRICE/ACRE	SELL TO LIST PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Bowie	29.12	\$4,750	100%	52
Bowie	12.33	\$12,976.48	82.26%	9
Bowie	23.5	\$7,719.30	95.69%	160
Forestburg	193	\$5,686.78	90.00%	277

COOKE COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	PRICE/ACRE	SELL TO LIST PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Whitesboro	12.27	\$6,519.97	94.12%	51
Whitesboro	8	\$10,500	98.94%	38
Valley View	10.67	\$8,903.47	89.03%	1
Valley View	10.02	\$9,500	95%	1
Whitesboro	19.71	\$6,315.78	96.35%	98
Valley View	20	\$8,000	88.80%	18
Gainesville	134.05	\$6,311.19	84.6%	254
Whitesboro	262	\$4,774.81	92.67%	28

WISE COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	PRICE/ACRE	SELL TO LIST PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Sunset	5.01	\$7,784.43	95.12%	106
Bridgeport	5.97	\$15,075.36	75.33%	50
Sunset	7.5	\$12,666.67	96.43%	57
Clisco	13.22	\$8,018.15	100%	195
Bridgeport	10	\$11,000	78.26%	116
Paradise	10.5	\$11,438.57	97.63%	13
Decatur	10	\$12,000	88.89%	27

PARKER COUNTY

Springtown	10.01	\$12,737.26	94.44%	1
Springtown	12.708	\$10,072.40	100%	186
Decatur	11	\$11,818.18	100%	217
Decatur	9.084	\$14,861.29	90.06%	29
Decatur	10.1	\$15,346.53	90.27	19
Decatur	10.1	\$15,346.53	90.27	19
Boyd	35	\$12,000	100%	55

DENTON COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	PRICE/ACRE	SELL TO LIST PRICE	DAYS ON MARKET
Sanger	10	\$12,500	92.59%	35
Sanger	10	\$15,250	95.31%	265
Ponder	10	\$17,000	91.89%	15
Aubrey	5.06	\$36,363.64	99.51%	107
Krum	14.09	\$13,129.88	94.87%	310
Krum	15.771	\$12,618.10	100%	63
Sanger	19.91	\$13,812.15	98.25%	187
Hickory Creek	5	\$70,000	97.22%	8
Argyle	5	\$75,000	94.94%	5
Sanger	43	\$9,302.33	80.89%	58
Justin	27.25	\$18,311.93	100%	259
Lewisville	13.643	\$51,398.36	58.33%	127
Aubrey	43.9	\$52,763.10	99.39%	7



Tim O'Connell: A True Cowboy

You may have noticed Tim O'Connell competing in the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo. This article was written prior to the start of the rodeo, but we thought you might enjoy a little background on O'Connell and his journey to the WNFR from writer and photographer Phillip Kitts.

By Phillip Kitts

Every year as the rodeo season comes to its big show of the year with the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo (which many have dubbed the Super Bowl of Rodeo) only a few weeks away, the rodeo world is buzzing.

Each year there is a list of impressive accomplishments from individuals and groups that are often the highlight of the WNFR.

Among this list, there are always cowboys who ran it down to their last rodeo in order to qualify and others who have put in extra miles

on the way.

Most years, there are one or two cowboys who have overcome a variety of adversities in order to qualify for a shot at the big money and the title of world champion. This year is no different, but there seems to be an extra inspiring tale right out of the story books. Tim O'Connell is a true cowboy who calls Zwingle, Iowa, home. Tim's connection to the rodeo world has very deep roots. His father is a Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association pickup man, and

his brother, Will, is considered by many to be one of the best pickup men in the sport.

He also has spent plenty of time competing in his own right. Will also rode and fought bulls for several years.

Tim's history with the sport goes all the way back to early years when he worked his way through the lower ranks of pro rodeo. Early in his rodeo career, Tim rode bulls in the Wisconsin High School Rodeo Association where he had received a waiver to compete in

Wisconsin instead of Iowa because he geographically lived closer to Wisconsin events. He became a four time qualifier for the High School National Finals.

After high school, he went on to college at Iowa Central Community College and then on to Missouri Valley College. Two times he qualified for the College National Finals Rodeo in 2011-2012.

Many rodeo experts will tell you Tim's success was predestined after he won Rookie of the Year in 2013. He was able to prove this point by winning the World Championship three consecutive years from 2016 to 2018.

Tim went on to win his first world title in bareback in 2016 with an impressive season total of \$374,271, which was \$134,110 ahead of his next competitor. He repeated as world champion in 2017, winning \$371,415, giving himself a \$102,904 gap over the second place man Richmond Champion.

In his world championship bid in 2018, during the 10th round of the WNFR he tore his rotator cuff and labrum on his riding arm. He went on to win the world championship buckle with a year-end total of \$319,801.

Continued on page 22



Tim O'Connell in Sikeston, Miss., where he scored 87 for a fourth place win, taking home \$1,890. (Photos courtesy Phillip Kitts, Avid Visual Imagery Rodeo Photography)

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Continued from page 21

Immediately following the WNFR, he was off to meet with Dr. Tandy Freeman for X-rays and an MRI. He then scheduled and underwent surgery. When the announcement was made that his recovery could take up to six months, many considered him out of the race for the 2019 title.

In typical Tim O'Connell style, as soon as he was given the green light to start therapy, it was nothing but hard work and dedication to recovering. By May he had put himself in position to get back on the rodeo road and make a dedicated effort to make a return to the WNFR. His recovery was slightly stalled due to a buildup of scar tissue that was best treated through massage therapy. This led to Tim and his family moving to Texas to be closer to a highly recommended massage therapist.

The massage therapy did the

trick. Between that and hours of physical therapy, Tim was able to get himself physically ready to get back on the road.

As soon as he slid back into the chutes in professional competition it was on. During the next five months, Tim went on to win a long list of impressive rodeos that included, Ellensburg Wash., Killdeer, N.D., Mountain Roundup PRCA Rodeo, Burwell Nebraska's Big Rodeo, Elk City, Okla., Rodeo of Champions, Tri-State Rodeo Cinch Shoot-Out, Fort Madison, Iowa, Co-champion at the Rooftop Rodeo Estes Park, Colo., Co-champion at the North American Championship Rodeo Louisville, Ky.

Along with these impressive wins, week in and week out he placed in most every rodeo he entered, which included a long list of second and third place finishes.

Within less than three months,

once again Tim put himself in place to make the top 15 in the nation and qualify for yet another WNFR. The PRCA rodeo season came to a close the last weekend of September, and by then Tim had locked himself into his trip to Vegas for yet another WNFR.

When the curtain came down on the season and preparation for the WNFR came to be, he had secured himself in the sixth position in the world. Prior to Vegas, he sat with a grand total of \$113,168 in 2019 earnings. Sitting first on the season is Clayton Biglow with \$181,952 for 2019.

This gap is far from impossible to overcome. Tim has every opportunity to make his run at another world championship buckle, and all it would take is for the guys above him to have a couple bad rounds and him to win rounds.


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who wins the average for the 10 rounds will win \$67,269. Each round will pay through the sixth spot and the average also will pay out six places.

There are several scenarios in which Tim can take home the hardware, but it will all come down to each night getting a good draw and making each ride count. Because the list of bucking horses that makes it to WNFR is a hand selected collection of the best in the world, drawing good should not be an obstacle. It will simply come down to putting out his best rides each round.


All that is left now is waiting for round one of the WNFR and the subsequent nine rounds and seeing if he can place a cap on an amazing comeback to his 2019 season.

We hope Tim had a great ride at the WNFR and wish him all the best.®

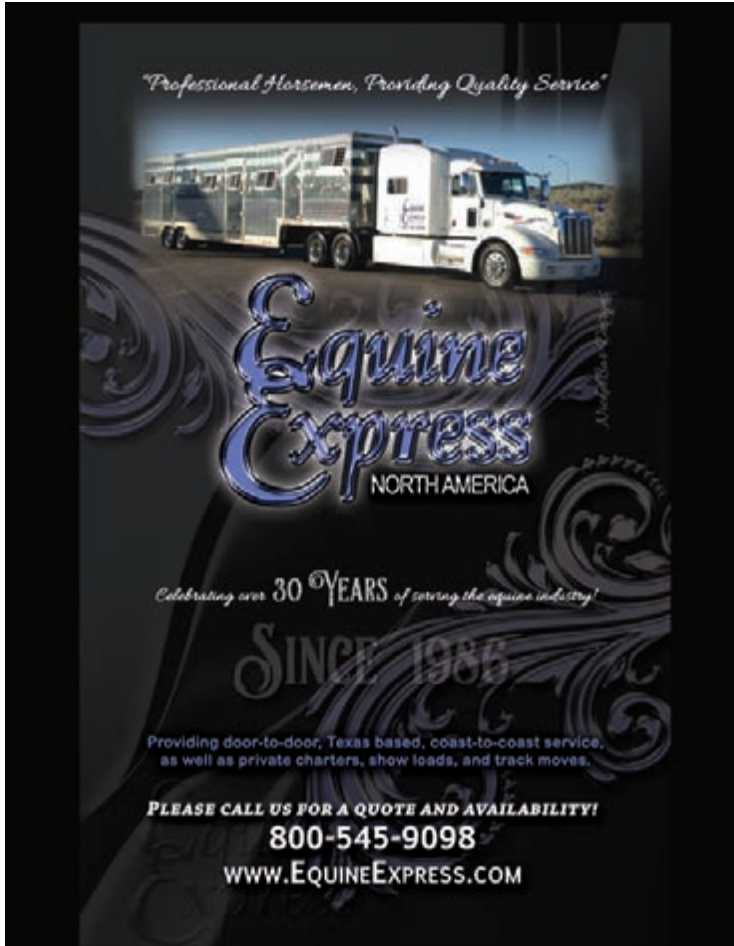


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Breeding Bulls and Bovine Leukemia Virus

By Barry Whitworth, DVM / Area Food/Animal Quality and Health Specialist for Eastern Oklahoma

In most beef enterprises, purchasing a breeding bull is a substantial investment. Most buyers insist the bull pass a Bovine Breeding Soundness Exam. This gives some assurance the bull is in good health and is fertile. However, most buyers do not routinely test bulls for reproductive or health diseases. Trichomoniasis, Bovine Viral Diarrhea Virus, and Bovine Leukemia Virus (BLV) are a few of the diseases that can have unwanted health consequences in a herd for years to come. A recent study evaluated BLV in bulls as possible source of transmission.¹

Bovine Leukemia Virus (BLV) is a retro-virus capable of causing cancer in cattle. The disease that is caused by the virus may be referred to as Enzootic Bovine Leukosis (EBL), malignant lymphoma, or lymphosarcoma. In the United States it is estimated 44 percent of

dairy cows and 10 percent of beef cows are infected with the virus.^{2,3} Most cattle that are infected with the virus are asymptomatic or show no clinical signs of the disease. BLV is responsible for production losses due to increase veterinary cost, reproduction inefficiency, decreased milk production, and deaths. The number one reason for United States Department of Agriculture condemnation of a carcass at slaughter is lymphosarcoma. Another source of lost income is non-export of live cattle, semen, and embryos to foreign counties with control programs in place.

Cattle are infected with the virus when blood is transferred between animals. Lymphocytes, a particular white blood cell, are the specific cells that are infected with the virus. Transfer of blood may occur through contaminated needles, instruments used for castration

or dehorning, tattoo instruments, palpation sleeves or fly taggers. Calves may be infected in the uterus or during the birthing process. Calves also can be infected from colostrum, but this appears to be rare. Some evidence indicates lack of fly control may be associated with the transfer of the virus.

In one study, natural breeding was associated with BLV transmission in dairy herds. Trauma to the penis and vulva or vagina during breeding may account for this. In another study that was previously mentioned, BLV virus was detected in the blood and preputial secretions (smegma) of beef bulls. Smegma contains white blood cells (WBC). As mentioned earlier, lymphocytes are a WBC and are the specific cells that are infected with the virus. This may be another source of transmission of

Continued on page 26

Continued from page 25
the virus during breeding.

Cattle that are infected with BLV have three possible outcomes. The most common outcome is an animal appears normal. Another 30 percent of the cattle will have an elevated lymphocyte count that is referred to as persistent lymphocytosis (PL).

Less than 5 percent of the cattle with BLV will ever develop lymphosarcoma. In the beef bull study, lymphocyte counts were significantly higher in the BLV infected bulls than in uninfected bulls. This would suggest BLV infected bulls with lymphocytosis are at a higher risk for transmitting the virus to uninfected cattle.¹

Currently no treatments exist for cattle infected with BLV. This makes prevention a priority. Prevention of BLV requires reducing the transfer of blood. This may be accomplished by changing needles between cattle, by using a new palpation sleeve for each cow and by keeping instruments clean and free of blood.

Calving pens should also be kept clean and disinfected. If feeding colostrum, feed frozen or pasteurized colostrum to calves since this inactivates the virus. Controlling insects also may be beneficial.

In addition to the previously mentioned preventive measures, BLV testing of bulls used for natural service may decrease the risk of spread of the virus in the breeding herd. Also, artificial insemination might play a role in decreasing the transmission of the virus due to lower potential for trauma during breeding.

Bovine Leukemia Virus will continue to be a problem in the United States until a vaccine is developed or an economic incentive to eradicate the disease develops. Until that time, producer should follow proper biosecurity to do all they can to prevent the spread of the virus. This includes managing the bulls to reduce the transmis-

sion of the virus. Testing bulls prior to turnout should be part of that management. If producers would like more information on BLV, they should contact their local veterinarian or Oklahoma State University Extension Educator.

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EQUINE SUPERSTARS & EVERYDAY HEROES

By Janis Blackwell

The Center of Attention

When looking for the next story for Equine Superstars and Everyday Heroes, I never knew where I might just run across one. As I was walking down through the Stockyards in Northside Fort Worth one pleasant Saturday afternoon, I happened to glance to my left and notice two men on horses in front of the Coliseum.

They were holding two more horses, and I assumed these must be some of the wranglers that help drive the longhorns down the street on the weekends for the tourists. I thought "This might be an interesting article," so I approached them to ask if I could interview them for a potential story.

They readily agreed, but informed me that they were not there to drive longhorns.

My next assumption was that they were rodeo cowboys who had arrived a little early for the regular weekly rodeo in the Coliseum. That also was not the case.

They told me they were just bringing their horses down into the heart of the crowds and the chaos that is the Stockyards on the weekend to get them used to all the people and noise and unusual sights.

About that time, two ladies walked up who were the wives of these gentlemen and whose horses they were holding. The couples were Randy and Colleen Mayfield of Milsap, Texas, and Don and Shirley Patton from Boyd, Texas.

Having owned and ridden rodeo and barrel racing horses for more than 60 years, I understood getting the horses into the activity to get them used to it.

I asked what events they worked that they were trying to prepare the horses for by "seasoning" them in the Stockyards.

The Pattons said they mostly used them for pleasure and trail riding, but they also own Patton Place Angus in Boyd and used them to work their cattle.

In addition to those things, they like to ride in the yearly Fort Worth Stock Show and



Don and Mickie giving a tourist from Liverpool, England a ride in the Stockyards. (Photo courtesy Janis Blackwell)



Randy Mayfield sorting on Sugar. (Photo courtesy Randy Mayfield)

Rodeo Parade and grand entry. These horses were new enough and young enough they needed to be introduced to the noise and confusion and brick streets before they arrived downtown to be a part of all that. A very good idea, I thought.

Time for introductions to the nice horses these people were on. First, the Pattons. Sheila Patton rides Duke, a six-year-old, 14 hand, bay quarter horse gelding, and Don Patton rides Mickie, an 11-year-old, 14'3 hand line back dun quarter horse mare. Mickie's registered name is Ann Royal Hancock. Mickie has a great personality and didn't mind at all giving a lady from Liverpool, England a ride to make her trip to Texas more memorable as she visited the stockyards.

Don said what he loves about her is that she is quiet, dependable and honest. It appeared Sheila's horse, Duke, had all those qualities as well.

Next I talked to the Mayfields about their equine partners. The Mayfields both ride horses trained for cutting and in fact, they compete in cutting contests, as well as sortings and an occasional penning.

Colleen's horse is a roan gelding named Pepto by "Pepto Boonsmal" and Randy's horse is a "Smart Little Lena" mare named Sugar. Like the Patton's, the Mayfields enjoy all the equine activities that are part of the annual Fat Stock Show and Rodeo, and along with these Equine Everyday Heroes, will be right in the thick of it, but better prepared for all the stock show events now after a day of desensitizing in the Stockyards.

The Pattons and Mayfields and their horses were the center of attention as many tourists from China, England, Bangladesh, and several states stopped to visit as they passed by.

Watch for these friendly and well mounted couples if you're in attendance at the Stock Show parade or rodeo grand entries.

With a little sadness I am bidding my faithful Equine Superstars and Everyday Heroes readers farewell. My other responsibilities and activities demand my time and attention and leave me little time for my column. It's been fun writing for you all. Until sometime in the future...Happy Trails. 🐾



Colleen Mayfield on Pepto and Randy Mayfield on Sugar in the Stockyards. (Photo courtesy Janis Blackwell)



Don and Sheila Patton on Mickie and Duke in Caprock Canyons State Park. (Photo courtesy Don and Sheila Patton)



Equine Sand Colic: A Dirty Situation

By Garrett Metcalf, DVM

Many people find the sounds of waves moving across sandy beaches on a nice comfortable vacation enjoyable, but hearing them with a stethoscope on a horse's abdomen is no vacation and certainly not comfortable for the horse. Sand colic is one of many forms of colic owners should be aware of because it can be very preventable and something every horse owner can address easily at the farm.

Sand colic is an accumulation of sand, dirt or gravel the horse ingests during a short or long period of time. The sand accumulates typically in the large colon of the horse where it can lead to colonic irritation (colitis), abnormal colon motility and obstruction similar to an impaction. All age groups of horses are susceptible to sand colic, but younger horses are more likely to preferentially ingest sand or dirt.

Sandy, loose soil or small gravel landscape the horses are housed in can predispose horses to sand colic, especially if the horses are fed on the ground or if the horses are prone to dropping feed on the ground and then proceed to eat the feed from the ground.

Clinical Signs

A horse suffering from sand colic cannot be differentiated from other forms of colic without a clear history from the owner or without performing diagnostic tests. Horses can display a large range of clinical signs from horse to horse depending on the severity of sand accumulated in the colon or if there are secondary complications associated with the sand colic. Common clinical signs can be lethargy, inappetence and loose manure or diarrhea. Of



Sand colic is an accumulation of sand, dirt or gravel the horse ingests during a short or long period of time. (Courtesy photo)

course when the horse becomes painful, classic signs of colic are seen such as rolling, pawing, getting up and down frequently, flank watching or stretching out. Again these signs can overlap with many causes of colic, so further work up is needed to determine the cause of the colic symptoms.

Diagnosis

Sand colic typically can be

diagnosed multiple different ways. Auscultation of the very lowest point of the abdomen over the large colon can produce a distinct sound that sounds similar to ocean waves or water rushing over sand. Ultrasound can help make the diagnosis, but it can be difficult to differentiate the type of material present in the colon. Suspending the manure with water in a clear

plastic bag or rectal sleeve will allow separation of the sand from the manure to help increase the suspicion of sand colic. A rectal exam also can lead to suspicion or diagnosis of sand colon. A definitive diagnosis of sand colic is made by taking an X-ray or radiograph of the abdomen. Sand or gravel will be detected on an X-ray and also can be used to



measure the severity or amount of sand accumulation in the colon. A radiograph also can be used to monitor progress of treatment allowing quantification of the amount of sand being removed from the colon over time, which is rather helpful to determine progress of the treatment.

Treatment

Depending on the severity of the sand colic, amount of sand in the colon or the systemic health of the horse there are a few treatment options. If the horse's pain level cannot be controlled, improvement with other treatments fail or the horse is systemically compromised, surgery is indicated to remove the sand impaction and correct other abnormalities that may occur secondarily to the sand impaction.

If the horse's pain can be controlled and is able to maintain normal motility or passage of ingesta through the colon, medi-

cal treatment can be successful at treating sand impactions.

Medical treatment typically requires IV fluids, pro-motility drugs and administration of mineral oil with psyllium (Metamucil) to help clear the sand from the colon. Research studies have indicated the combination of mineral oil and psyllium had the fastest resolution of sand from the colon when monitored with radiographic measurements of sand in the colon.

Prevention

Basic steps can be taken to reduce the risk of horses developing sand colic at home.

The first step is to monitor the horse's behavior to assess if they are horses that are messy eaters and like to scrounge for scraps of food off the ground. Evaluate the housing situation the horse is in and the soil type that is present on the farm.

Keep horses from dropping



(Courtesy photo)

feed on the ground by feeding in raised feed bunks or feeding on rubber mats. Both can help mitigate the amount of sand or dirt ingested. For horses where environment cannot be easily controlled, feeding intermittent psyllium products such as sand clear will help remove accumulated sand in the large colon before it causes sand colic.

The recommendation is to feed psyllium one week out of every

month to help reduced the risk of sand colic.

While it is rather difficult to control everything in your horses' daily lives or control every environmental factor, steps can be taken to help reduce the risk of this particular cause of colic.

Recognizing signs of colic quickly and seeking veterinary care is always a good idea no matter the cause of the colic symptoms. [®]

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Record Breaking Rodeo

By Krista Lucas

For 40 years, the United Professional Rodeo Association has hosted the annual Cinch United Finals Rodeo at the Civic Center Arena of Sulphur Springs, Texas.

The 63rd CUFR was conducted the weekend before Thanksgiving, Nov. 21-23. According to UPRA president, Jerry Hill, there were several records broken for 2019.

A new record was set for single season payout, finals payout and added money. There also were season earnings records broken in three different events. In the bareback riding, Hunter Ramsey finished with \$34,893 for the year. Bull rider Kyle McDaniel won \$23,306, and ranch bronc rider, Kater Kennedy, earned \$21,120 for 2019. These record-breaking payouts show how the UPRA and the sport of rodeo as a whole are becoming more lucrative with each passing year.

Ramsey added big to his year-end earnings at the CUFR. He won all three go-rounds, plus the average, making him the 2019 UPRA bareback riding champion. In the saddle bronc riding, Logan Cook won the first round and the third round, finishing fourth in the average.

Clint Linderfield, who placed in every round and the average, came out on top to claim the saddle bronc riding championship. The finals champion was Jarrod Hammons, and the rookie award went to Parker Glenn.

Kennedy not only broke the season earnings record in the ranch bronc riding but also finished first in the year-end standings and the average.

He won nearly \$8,000 throughout the 3-day weekend by winning or placing in every round. The rookie title went to Lane Bownds, who placed second in the first



Pictured is Abby Pursifull with her 2019 barrel racing championship saddle. This was Pursifull's third title in a row and fifth overall. (Photo courtesy Abby Pursifull)

round at his first CUFR.

McDaniel hung on to claim this year's bull riding title by winning the third round with an 84.5-point ride. He also finished second in the average, with Zack Laney winning the finals. Jaron Hughes was the 2019 bull-riding rookie.

Whitesboro, Texas cowboy, Chance Howard, had an outstanding weekend in the steer wrestling. Howard placed in two go-rounds and the average, pushing him ahead to win the UPRA year-end championship. Cade Staton won the average title, and Joe York

was the 2019 rookie champion. Another local cowboy, Catfish Brown of Collinsville, finished first in the calf roping average and won more than \$8,000. The year-end champion was Marshall Leonard, and the rookie title went to Cutter Carpenter.

Cowgirls have the chance to compete in two events in the UPRA. At the CUFR, breakaway roper JJ Hampton won another year-end title.

Another well-known name, Kelsie Chace, won the average by placing in two out of three rounds,

while Bryana Lehrmann finished first in the rookie race.

Multi-time barrel racing qualifier, Abby Pursifull, won her third championship in a row on her great mare Pearl. The duo won \$7,500 for the weekend to come from behind to clinch the title.

Pursifull had previously won the title in 2006 and 2007, making this her fifth UPRA championship. The barrel-racing rookie was Emma Nelson, and the finals champion was Alyssa Urbanek.

In the team roping, Dustin Morgan and Nick Rowland won the first and second rounds. Nathan McWhorter and Kirby Blankenship won the average and T. Luttrell and Chris Young were the year-end champions. Luttrell's horse, Sparkles, also was awarded head horse of the year, and the rookie titles went to Kasen Prince and Rance Doyal.

With Luttrell and Young winning in the team roping and Leonard winning the calf roping, three UPRA championship saddles headed back to Louisiana.

The coveted all-around championships went to cowboy Wyatt Muggli and cowgirl Timber Allenbrand. The UPRA high paying rodeo was awarded to Blue Ridge, Texas.

The Blue Ridge Riding Club paid out \$43,460 to its contestants and would like to thank the sponsors, community and J&J Rodeo Company for making the rodeo bigger and better each year.

Many CUFR contestants will go on to compete at the professional level and even the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo. The UPRA is a great stepping-stone toward the next level.

The association will pick back up on Dec. 27-28 for the 2020 membership rodeo at Mesquite, Texas.



WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

A Moment of Clarity

Have you ever had an epiphany?

When I say epiphany, I'm talking about an unexpected, shocking moment of clarity. A magical moment that totally changes the lens through which you view your life. That single moment of such illuminating discovery that you know your life is never going to be the same.

That pretty much describes what happened to me.

I was preparing to speak at a women's business conference and had written down my notes. My notes began with me introducing myself.

Imagine this, I walk up to the podium with my notes in hand and set them down.

I begin to introduce myself when I glanced down at my notes. I paused, and I couldn't speak. I could not believe what I saw. Four words. Four words I had never said before.

What the heck was I thinking when I typed them? Was I even thinking at all?

Are you curious yet?

Trust me when I say I've not only never, ever spoken these words aloud before, I've also never written them or thought them. I'm pretty sure my husband has never used them to describe his wife either.

"I'm a cattle rancher."

I did not say what I've always said, "I'm a cattle rancher's wife."

I said that I – me, myself and I – am a cattle rancher.



Annette Bridges had an epiphany that she was not just a cattle rancher's wife, but a cattle rancher herself. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

I tried to compose myself and continue on with the talk I had prepared, but those four words were like neon flashing lights in my brain. They kept requiring me to say them aloud again and again and again throughout my entire speech.

When I finished my talk, which

had nothing to do with cattle ranching by the way, I couldn't wait to text my husband to give him my big epiphany. I'm a cattle rancher. I'm not just a cattle rancher's wife. After 39 years of marriage and living on a cattle ranch, I suddenly had a drastic game-changing shift in my own

perspective of myself.

I love how Maya Angelou described epiphany.

"It's the occurrence when the mind, the body, the heart, and the soul focus together and see an old thing in a new way," she said.

The truth is this city girl may have lived on a cattle ranch for

two thirds of her life but I had never thought I was a city girl gone country, as the name of my column implies.

When my husband and I were first married and moved next door to his parents on the ranch, I didn't feel super welcomed.

I felt inadequate and ignorant on anything ranch related. There was much that wasn't explained to me. There also was much that wasn't even expected of me. After all, I was a city girl.

I did various ranching chores with my husband when he needed me to, and frankly, there wasn't anything happening on the ranch I wasn't acutely aware of.

I was more observant than anyone ever realized, and I now accept that I've had almost four decades worth of ranching education. I'm not a dumb city girl anymore, by golly.

I do think my husband is pretty tickled with my epiphany.

Maybe he's even relieved and thankful for it, too. I think he's always wanted me to be his ranching partner.


Actually, I think he already thought I was.

Later that night after I spoke at the women's conference I wrote in my journal, "You have to know who you are in order to be who you are."

For the first time in perhaps my entire life, I feel like I know who I am.

I'm so happy to be getting to know myself better. The me that loves her cows.

The me that loves living in the country. The me that never wants to live in the city again.

The me that's happy driving her old red tractor. The me that feels refreshed gazing out on her broad horizon of cattle grazing pastures. The me that is blessed to see millions of stars in her dark Texas sky. The cattle rancher me. 

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By Jesse Kader

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Lacey's Pantry

By Lacey Newlin

Football Spinach Dip Breadsticks

Total Time: 55 minutes

Servings: 12

Ingredients:

- 10 oz frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
- 6 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1-2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon Italian powder
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 cup grated mozzarella cheese, divided
- 1 tube refrigerated thin crust pizza crust
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.

2. In a bowl, beat together the spinach and cream cheese. Add garlic, salt, onion powder, pepper, chili powder, Italian seasoning and beat to combine. Add parmesan cheese and 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese and beat to combine.

3. Unroll the dough on top of a piece of parchment paper or a cookie sheet liner that has been well floured. Fold down the two top corners, and then use a rolling pin to gently roll out the dough as you see below. It should be approximately 11 inches tall and 18 inches wide across the bottom.

Remember to handle and roll the dough as gently as possible, sprinkling it with flour as needed. Once the dough is rolled out, cut the dough in half, then cut a football shape from

each piece of dough.

4. Gently spread the spinach dip on one of the football shaped pieces of dough, spreading all the way to the edges. Sprinkle with 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese. Then fold over the parchment paper to lay the other piece of dough on top. Use a pizza cutter to slice from the center to the edges 11 times to create "breadsticks". Don't slice all the way across the football; slicing from the center out leaves a small section in the middle connected. Finally, pick up each breadstick and twist it.

5. Bake football for about 22 minutes until quite golden brown on top. While it bakes, slice 1 cheese stick in quarters lengthwise. Slice two of the string cheeses in half lengthwise. When the football is baked, brush melted butter on top of baked breadsticks. Arrange string cheese on top to create laces and stripes. Serve warm.

*Comedian***WILLIAM LEE MARTIN***Cowboys Who Care*

TOP FREIGHT ONLY

“From the time you were very little, you’ve had people who have smiled you into smiling, people who have talked you into talking, sung you into singing, loved you into loving.” – Mr. Rogers

If there is one man who can smile both the young and old into smiling it is William Lee Martin. The comedian can be found on stage riling up laughter from audiences across the country as well as in hospital rooms giving the gift of a smile to children battling cancer as he places a cowboy hat upon their head as part of the nonprofit “Cowboys Who Care.”

Formerly known by the nickname given to him by his grandfather as a child, Cowboy Bill, Martin was born and bred in Texas, the youngest of four children. Blue Mound was his stomping grounds, and in 1984 he graduated from Boswell High School.

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*Comedian***WILLIAM LEE MARTIN***Cowboys Who Care***Continued from page 40**

"I was the baby, which most comedians are. I think it's because it is the only way you get attention. I could make my brothers laugh, especially the younger brother, and I could make my mom laugh. My mom was not healthy growing up and she needed that comic relief," Martin said.

Martin explained he wasn't the class clown growing up, but instead was skinny, buck-toothed and picked on relentlessly not only at school, but at home as well.

"As a kid it was pretty painful. Now the kids talk about bullying, and that kind of stuff and people tend to blow it off like 'Oh these soft kids,' but it is still the same. Back then it was called picked on and no one ever gave any sympathy to the kid who was picked on. It was 'toughen up.' It is hard and it was hard, but I tell kids now just keep pushing that stuff down and eventually it festers into a comedy career," Martin said. "I read a quote by Mr. Rogers. He said, 'As a kid who was laughed at, it was nice to be an adult and control the laughter.'"

Martin did find himself performing at a young age, belting out The Old Rugged Cross in church from the age of five and performing impressions of Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley for his parents' friends at get togethers. However, it wasn't comedy that Martin first stepped into after college, but the world of advertising. He would write advertising for nearly a decade – and hated every single minute of it.

"I used to look out my fourth-floor window and think, 'Will the fourth floor kill me or just break my leg?' You spend all this time on copy and then after you get it back, you've misspelled 'normal' and made it 'norman', and I hated working out of a cubicle," Martin recalled.

Still, when the company was sold and Martin found himself, along with his coworkers, without a job just shy of his 30th birthday, it was a tough pill to swallow.

"My grandmother told me to go home and look myself in the mirror and ask, 'Are you happy?' I would like to say I did, but I didn't," Martin said. "I went home and stayed in the fetal position for five and a half months; it would have been six, but unemployment runs out in five and a half."



Comedian William Lee Martin at his office in Rhome, Texas. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

Martin had written a book "Life Under the Neon Moon Now That She is Gone and Took the Dog with Her." The book reads like standup, and Martin was told numerous times by friends and family he should give standup a try.

"I wasn't ready to do any of that stuff. Then one day the UPS driver came next door and I told him I got fired, because when you have a pity party, everyone is invited, right? I told him I didn't know how I was going to make ends meet and he looked at me like 'Good, that's one less box I have to bring out here.' I went home that day and looked in the mirror and said, 'Am I happy?' Then I had a four hour conversation with what I believe was God. That day I called my grandmother and told her since I was five years old, I wanted to be on the stage,

television and print, and she said 'Go for it,'" Martin said.

He was still unsure, and as a father of five, his nerves were understandable. He asked his grandmother, who he had been close to since a young age, "What if I lose the house?" Her answer was simple.

"Buy you another one boy," Martin recalled. "She told me she didn't want me to be 50, 60, 70 or 80 and go through life with could have, would have, should have – and this was from a woman who found out she had a tumor on her lung about the size of my fist and is dying of cancer. She was my very best friend."

Martin took her advice and performed at an open mic at a local comedy club. He hit the stage and couldn't even remember his own name, but soon had the crowd laughing.

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The Stanfield Ranch is about half wooded and half farmland. The east half along Zachary Lane is farmland. The west half is primarily wooded with mesquites, a few scattered oaks, with rolling to sloping terrain and great views. There are two stock ponds and a seasonal creek. The Little Wichita River is approximately 1 mile south and the Red River is approximately 2 miles east. For the most part this ranch is surrounded by large acreage neighbors. Electricity is available and well water appears available.

150 ACRES | JACK COUNTY



NEW LISTING

MCBEE RANCH

\$2,950/Ac

150 acres located in northern Jack County. It is heavily wooded with primarily oaks, some mesquites and scattered open areas. It has gently rolling to steep sloping topography, with a large ridge along its western portion offering tremendous views. Surface water consist of 1 stock pond. Access is off FM 2190 and a private deeded all weather road. Electricity is available on the property and well water is available. Various size tracts available.

473.07 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



MESQUITE HILL HUNTING RANCH

\$2,450/Ac

This is a prime turn-key hunting and fishing property located in Clay County, northwest of Petrolia. It primarily densely wooded with mesquite, scattered open areas and a heavily wooded creek bisecting the property. It has rolling elevation changes offering great views. There are 6 ponds, 3 of them were recently built with a max depth of 25 feet, 1 to 3 acres and were stocked with bass, catfish and crappie. There are 12 blind and feeder set ups that will convey with the property. Electricity is available.

175 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



BYMOND WICHITA RIVER RANCH

\$2,550/Ac

This is a great hunting property with Wichita River frontage, located a short 15 minute drive from Wichita Falls. The land has asphalt road frontage with access to public water and electricity. There is 60 acres of farmland along the road frontage, with the balance being heavily wooded. Bear Creek and other seasonal creek traverse the tract, it also has approximately 1,500' of frontage on the Wichita River. The Bymond offers ample hunting and recreational opportunity.

326 ACRES | BAYLOR COUNTY



NEW LISTING

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\$1,995/Ac

Great combo ranch, primarily native mesquite pasture, 80 acres of farmland, level to rolling topo with various overlooks and steep embankments offering many scenic vantage points, 4 stock ponds, some with fish, Coal Creek and a seasonal creek. There is a 30x50 insulated workshop with 300 sf of finished space, 2 large sliding doors and carports on either end of the shop, a 30x60 metal equipment shed and steel livestock corrals, boundary is fenced and interior is cross fenced.

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Comedian WILLIAM LEE MARTIN

Cowboys Who Care

Continued from page 42

"I couldn't remember anything. I couldn't remember my name. My first line on stage was an adlib. They all laughed, and I hit the line. It was going well and what I didn't count on was the laughs being big laughs for my first time. Now I am going along and the guy in the back is giving me the light and in show business that means wrap it up and get off stage. I didn't know this; I have never been on stage. I kept thinking he was like 'You're a rock star keep going, you're awesome.' I have been accused of not knowing what the light is even now 23 years later," Martin laughed.

Despite the nerves, when Martin came home that night, he knew exactly what he wanted to do with the rest of his life and he never looked back.

His first performance was May 17, 1996, and three years later he was opening for George Strait at the Alamo Dome in San Antonio, Texas in front of a crowd of 75,000 people.

He also has opened for George Jones, Brad Paisley and toured with Chad Prather and all four Blue Collar Comedy guys while making waves himself.

"I had the mentality of the Vikings," Martin explained. "You know the Vikings used to pull up to a country and get everyone off the boat and set fire to it, so you either conquered or you died, but you weren't retreating. That's the same thing I did with comedy. I didn't go get another job, I didn't go search out anything else, it was full time from the get-go."

It wasn't an easy path. Martin lost his home and his truck along the way, but the turning point came with a little faith. The comedian has since made a full time living



The goal of Cowboys Who Care is to put smiles on the faces of children battling cancer and other life threatening illnesses. (Photo courtesy Metro Creative)

and put four kids through college with a fifth in high school.

"I was scared, especially being a father, but I wasn't scared enough to quit. I knew we were going through times, but sometimes you have to believe," Martin said.

There have been many benchmark moments in Martin's career, from opening for Gary Stewart to hosting The Strait Fest, a moment that propelled his career.

"I think a lot of it all turned around 10 years ago. We knew we were going to be okay. We could

tour; up until then we were relying on comedy clubs, and now we are doing theaters. It is a breakthrough to put your name out there and for people to pay the money to come see what you are doing," Martin said.

He also is a regular in Las Vegas, entertains troops overseas and is one of the most requested cruise ship headliners, but theaters of around 500 to 750 seats remain his favorite venue.

"It's not too big and it's not too small, and you can still connect with the audience. There

are several theaters around the country, especially in these rural areas, that were constructed in the 1930s. Many were built by Howard Hughes, and they are just gorgeous on the inside and the acoustics are amazing. That was back before they had microphones and everything, so the sound had to travel. Those are the places I really enjoy playing," Martin said.

The comedian still feels that excitement every time he gets up in front of an audience, and yes, still a bit of nerves.

However, it is a different kind



of nerves from the ones he felt on that first stage.

"Back then it was exciting, and it still is. You still go out and it is you and the mic and the audience. If you're playing in a band, you hit four bad notes, nobody notices, but if you go through three minutes of material that is not good you can take it all down in the pit," Martin explained. "But the unknown is always great, and every time you step on the boards the show is going to be different. Not my part, but that of the audience."

Martin took his career one step further in another leap of faith when just before closing on a new home, he and his wife, Michele, scrapped the idea and instead took their funds for the down payment and put it towards a one-hour comedy special.

Once again, Martin had his doubters and once again, they were proven wrong.

The one-hour special "Cowboy Bill Martin: Let the Laughter Roll" made its debut on CMT and has been viewed in more than 1.7 million homes.

In 2017, Martin made another change when he dropped his nickname "Cowboy Bill" and returned to his given name, William Lee Martin. The comedian also made the decision to remove adult language from his acts.

"Two and a half years ago I rededicated my life to Christ. I started my career as Cowboy Bill, a nickname my grandpa gave me. One day I was mowing the grass and praying about it. I said, you know Lord, why don't you let me grab the brass ring? Other comedians are cussing, and you let the other guys fly around in a G7," Martin said. "As you and I are talking, God was like 'Listen, I put you on a cruise ship for seven years and you didn't change anything about your life or your career. You have only chosen to change your name, and you wanted me to do the miracle? You have been waiting on me; I have been waiting on you, son.'"

"We are truly about the quality of life. I have no idea how to cure cancer, but I know how to make people laugh and how to make kids smile."

- William Lee

I run a kid's charity for heaven's sake, and I was up there with the filth still, and it just didn't make sense."

Martin has added two more one-hour specials to his list of accomplishments. The first, Standing in the Middle, was released in November and covers life, being married, raising five kids, and survival in a middle-class America.

The Nutcracker – A Christmas Standup Spectacular debuted in December. It is an hour dedicated exclusively to the holiday season, something no standup comedian has done before.

The specials can be viewed by video on demand on Amazon Prime, Apple TV, Google, YouTube TV, X-Box, Dish, Sling, and in audio form on Sirius XM, Pandora, iTunes, and Spotify through the Comedy Dynamics Network.

"When we were going to buy the house, we were sitting at the table on a Thursday night, and I told my wife, 'I can go out and do comedy clubs and cruise ships. I can do that until I am 75 years old, or we can take this money we are about to put down on the house and put it on a special.' To her credit, she said 'Let's go for it,'" Martin said. "We put all the

money down on a one-hour special, and everybody lined up to say nobody is going to watch it. Well actually, everyone said you are not going to be able to sell it. CMT bought it and 1.7 million people watched the special. We did the same thing with these two specials here. We put everything out in the middle of the table."

Also new is Martin's podcast, A Standup Dad, where he interviews comedians, businesspeople, athletes, musicians, motivational speakers and more on fatherhood.

"I take being a father very seriously. I asked 19 people how they would describe me, and 19 out of 19 said either being a father or dad. I thought 'Well, then we need to talk about it.' The way I see it is if you ever want to stop school shootings, racism, and all the other bad stuff in the world, it's not up to Congress or the White House. It is with conversations in your own house and that is where it has to start," Martin said.

Martin's five kids were raised with a dad who toured with celebrities and spent their days cracking jokes, but to them their dad was just that – their dad.

"I don't think the job really mattered to them. I think what

mattered to them was me. Comedy was just my job and what I do is totally separate from what I am at home. Most comics aren't funny off stage because it is a serious business, but we do laugh a lot at home," Martin said.

The comedian is excited about the direction his career is headed. His work is done from his office in Rhome, with no agent or manager, only an entertainment attorney to handle any contracts.

However, his days not only revolve around comedy and fatherhood, but running the foundation "Cowboys Who Care." During his years as a comedian, Martin was asked to put his name on a celebrity golf tournament by the parents of a 12-year-old girl battling leukemia named Ashley Miller.

"I got to know Ashley and her mom and dad. Her cancer went into remission, but then it came back with a vengeance," Martin recalled. "Her parents asked me and my wife to come over to the prayer vigil on the night before they turned off all the life support. I got up and spoke for a brief moment, and then on the way home I lost it on 635. My wife had to drive."

Up until that moment, Martin had participated in Wrangler's "Tough Enough to Wear Pink." Although he was not on a rodeo stage, he still donned a pink shirt during his October performances.

"Every Saturday night I would wear pink. It's a great program, but I didn't really know what I was doing to help. Then one day I just googled kids with cancer images, and it opened me up to the universe. I knew I wanted to help, and I didn't know how," Martin said. "It had all these bright, beautiful faces, beautiful smiles and bald heads. In the mirror I could see my cowboy hat and that's when it hit me, that was my 'aha' moment. These kids need cowboy hats."

Martin and his wife prayed about it and made the decision to

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Comedian

WILLIAM LEE MARTIN

Cowboys Who Care

Continued from page 45

start the 501(c)(3) with the sole mission of providing support, smiles and brand-new cowboy hats to kids with cancer. Their only dilemma was where the cowboy hats would come from. Martin reached out to the president of Resistol, a company which owns Stetson, with the thought he would start with the “big boys” and work his way down until he found someone who saw the marketing potential for their company.

“I sent an inquiry letter to the president and the next day I got an email that said, ‘Hey come to my office.’ Two days later I am sitting in the office of the president of Resistol and he said, ‘You know Bill, you didn’t know this when you sent the deal, but my stepson has been in and out of cancer treatments since he was three years old. I have been selling hats for 30 years and nobody has even thought of a program like this. The warehouse is yours.’ They never blinked an eye and they have really become a partner in this thing,” Martin explained.

The next obstacle was finding a way to get the cowboy hats to the kids who needed them most. Martin’s advertising background kicked in, and the foundation soon had a website.

The first request came from a kid’s camp in southern Illinois. The camp was hosting a weeklong camp for kids with cancer and that year’s theme was rodeo, a perfect fit for the new foundation.

Martin, Michele and their youngest daughter loaded up a U-Haul with more than 300 hats and headed to Illinois. Today, the foundation has provided 9,000 hats across the country to kids with cancer and life-threatening illnesses.



“It felt like the right thing to do from the get-go. Not to sound cliché, but it felt mandated by God for me to do this. I lose it sometimes after going home; there are kids that really, really stick with me. There was a little girl who passed not four months after the visit. She was going through treatments and I gave her a hat, but she was a cowgirl, so she was like ‘Eh, thanks.’ I said, ‘That’s not the hat you wanted, is it?’ She responded that it was great, but my wife had just gotten a brand-new Charlie 1 Horse hat that was not part of the program, and my wife had it on her head that morning. I went out in the hallway and took it off her head and said, ‘Is that the hat you wanted?’ Her face just completely lit up, so she got her Charlie 1 Horse.”

The foundation visits hospitals across the nation as well as local hospitals, including Cook Children’s, Dallas Children’s and Medical City Dallas.

Martin is joined at the hospitals by other volunteers who are trained to make visits, including Miss Rodeo America, Miss Kansas, musicians, members of the Rodeo Hall of Fame, and more. The foundation includes five board members, and recently

Lisa Bruce came on as marketing director as the foundation looks to expand.

“We are not here to cure cancer. There are a lot of people out there who are trying to do that. This program is simply to one, put a smile on the children’s faces and two, what we didn’t know is that it was going to put a smile on mom’s and dad’s faces. Heaven forbid you see your kid go through that: you just want to see a smile on their face,” Martin said. “The offshoots of it is for the last seven or eight years, maybe even longer, every time they show someone with a cowboy hat on television it is not in the best light. When I was growing up, the cowboy hat meant honor, bravery, and now with this program it is compassion. That’s an after shoot of all of this; our focus is still the kids.”

If you or someone you know needs a hat, visit www.cowboyswhocare.org. A new addition to the foundation’s website is the link for requesting a hat directly to a child.

If someone knows a child in their neighborhood, church, etc., they can go online and request a hat be sent to the child free of charge, no shipping or handling.

Right now, the foundation

receives around five requests a week, but they would like to see that number grow. Eventually, the board also hopes to see a scholarship program for kids who have survived pediatric cancer.

“We hope to start a scholarship next year because the big word we use here is hope. That’s why we try not to talk on social media about things that are not working well with cancer treatments. We want to give the parents just a smile and hope. We are truly about the quality of life. I have no idea how to cure cancer, but I know how to make people laugh and how to make kids smile,” Martin said.

Funds are always needed, help is needed during the annual golf tournament fundraiser, and eventually Martin hopes they will need volunteers to fill orders from requests received via the website. For now, the biggest help others can give is by spreading the word.

If you know of a child needing a hat, please visit www.cowboyswhocare.org and fill out the form and help Cowboys Who Care put a smile on a child’s face. For more on Martin and upcoming tour dates, visit www.williamleemartin.com.



*Happy
New Year*

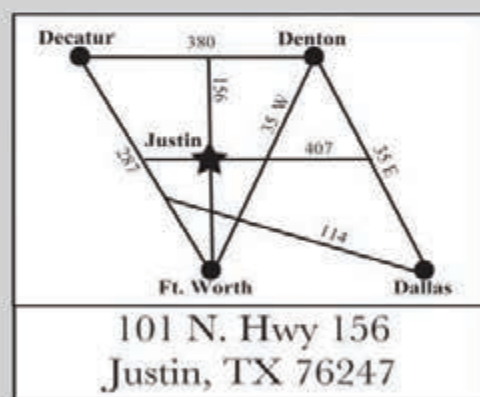


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BEHIND THE CHUTES

Thoughts from a Rodeo Wife

By Lacey Corbett

A cowboy walks into a café in Cody, Wyo., orders up a coffee and sets his sights on a young waitress working there.

In typical cowboy fashion, he gives her a few months of hard time, hooks up his trailer and heads out on the rodeo trail for a while.

Before he leaves, he makes sure to catch that young lady's phone number, just so she doesn't have to go without him heckling her.

"At first I thought he was kind of a jerk, but now I can tell it's him coming by just the sound of his spurs," now says that same waitress with a laugh.

No, this isn't the start to some western romance novel; it's the beginning of the story of Matt and Jazmine Scott, a professional pickup man and his bride.

Jazmine is a gritty rodeo wife and mother of two young boys, and I was honored to get to hear her story and see what it's like to be a rodeo wife from her side of the bucking chutes.

Jazmine didn't grow up in a rodeo family but can hold her own against any working cowboy. Her husband, Matt, works for the Beutler and Son Rodeo Company picking up broncs and flanking bucking stock.

"When you marry into rodeo you're kind of forced into it," she said laughing.

The girl who only once rode horses for fun now takes pride in caring for eight to nine head of horses on the road as well as their herd of cattle at home.

Working for a rodeo company has now become a family gig for the Scotts. Jazmine has always been blessed to travel with her



Jazmine's husband, Matt (front), getting a bareback rider safely to the ground in Tucson, Ariz. (Photo courtesy of Jazmine Scott)

husband, and in the last three years they've been able to add two additional little cowboys, Brice, almost three, and Beau, six months.

"It's great for the kids," she exclaimed, as it teaches responsibility and brings opportunities that most children wouldn't get to have.

They have so many resources at hand as they rub elbows with world champion cowboys and National Finals Rodeo bucking stock on a daily basis.

Brice loves to help his dad via horseback. Jazmine said that he will ride into a pen of bulls and never think twice but also is learning to respect the stock for the

powerful creatures they are.

It's a little different on the rodeo road now that children are present, but Jazmine says they keep the boys' schedule very flexible. Matt is a great partner and they share the load. They keep a routine, but their clock is built around a rodeo schedule.

Mornings mean feeding and

caring for stock, and Brice is learning it's nearing bedtime when the last bull bucks for the night.

When I asked Jazmine if she wanted her boys to rodeo she replied they're pretty much bred to love it, but she would be their cheerleader no matter what avenue they pursue in life.

When she's not saddling and caring for pickup horses, she runs her own jewelry business, Camilla Designs.

Her mother-in-law, Camilla, designed and handmade the pieces she offers. After some encouragement from Camilla, Jazmine realized this could be the opportunity she needed to stay at home with her babies and help Matt on the road.

She is proud to be returning to the NFR in Las Vegas to display her creations. Her designs can be found on social media as well.

When asked her favorite rodeo, she quickly admitted Rodeo Aus-

tin was her favorite.

"It's the closest to an NFR performance in my opinion," she said. "The entertainment is fantastic."

She and I both laughed when she said her oldest son's first concert was Ludacris after the rodeo. They are able to stay at the Southwest Stallion Station and receive phenomenal hospitality while receiving an education on racehorse breeding and maintenance.

It was such a pleasure to chat with such a respectable lady. Being a competitor's wife, I mainly get to see rodeo life from a certain side of the arena.

Although we have a lot in common, Jazmine's world is vastly different. She offered a whole new perspective to the term "rodeo wife" that I admire and appreciate. I believe all successful cowboys have a strong woman supporting them, and that is exactly what Matt, Brice and Beau have in Jazmine.®

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Artist Ernie Lewis:

Combining a passion for the western way of life with art



A painting created by western artist Ernie Lewis.

By Dani Blackburn

Many struggle to find their passion in life, but artist Ernie Lewis has been fortunate enough to discover two that brought him joy: roping and painting. While the two are seemingly opposite, Lewis found a way to pursue both, even mixing his love of the western world into his artwork.

The artist was born in Greenville, Miss., in 1943. His father liked to hunt and fish, passing that on to his son, who found a love of the outdoors early on.

"My dad enjoyed the outdoors but I was the only one in my family who wanted to be a cowboy," Lewis recalled. "Ever since I was a little bitty kid, I would go to the riding club all the time. I went home one time and took my calf horse and a buddy of mine was there. He wanted to learn to rope, so we built a piece of junk arena, at 10 years old. We thought 'Why don't we just get some goats?'"

The young boys took to searching and managed to find a goat.

"I never had roped a goat be-

fore, so here comes this goat trotting out there. I roped him, jerked him and tied him down. We put him in there the second time, that goat left that chute and heard that horse coming, he didn't even run down the pen. He ran to the side under the fence and took off, and we never saw him again. That was the end of our goat roping," Lewis laughed.

While Lewis followed in his father's footsteps with a liking for the outdoors, he also followed in his mother's passion as an artist. He had a love and talent of drawing even in grade school.

A young Lewis moved to Munford, Tenn. as a freshman in high school. After graduation, he joined the Air Force, where he was stationed in Phoenix, Ariz. It was there Lewis fell in love with roping at a little stable at the edge of Glendale, a suburb of Phoenix.

"There was a big ol' timey roping arena with old cross ties. A guy by the name of Tino Lopez lived there with his family, seven

boys. We would practice out there and one day a truck pulls in and a horse backs out. I rode him, and it was like poetry in motion. I was hooked. When they left I told Tito, 'I have got to rope and I have got to find me a calf horse,'" Lewis explained.

The roper went on to rodeo for 30 years. He did indeed find himself a roping horse, and the pair went to many rodeos. Eventually Lewis bought himself what he called a "major" horse, and it was a match made in heaven.

"You could have gone to the National Finals on this horse, he was unbelievably good. When he stopped there wasn't any sliding, it was like he was tied to the building. He was amazing, and I worked on him for 10 years," Lewis said.

At one time Lewis did have a Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association permit and calf roped at Flagstaff, Ariz., in 10 seconds flat. Lewis explained he would have won, but he and his horse

broke the barrier. He also earned all-around cowboy honors in Surprise, Ariz. after winning the bull riding, calf roping and team roping.

"I loved it. Every time I would say my prayers and say 'Thank you, Lord, for letting me be a cowboy,'" Lewis said.

The roper also worked several full-time jobs during his life, including as a draftsman in Chicago. He then joined a union to work on high rises for 10 years in Dallas and Fort Worth. He eventually ran a cow/calf operation for more than a decade. He learned to weld during his time working on high rises, and used that experience to begin a fencing company, Cowboy Welding, which he still does today, building fences for ranches across North Texas.

His passion for painting emerged at the age of 57, with a particular interest in western and wildlife art. His experience with rodeo and ranching provided an

Continued on page 54

**Continued from page 53**

in-depth knowledge of his subjects.

"I love art and I enjoy it, especially the painting," Lewis said.

The artist worked to improve his skills, taking classes from James Spurlock, a bronze sculptor, artist and teacher who passes along his knowledge to other artists across the country.

"I learned more from him than anyone else. He was my main teacher. He is a good ol' boy, and we became really good friends. He even helped me with my favorite painting, one of tie-down roper Brent Lewis. He showed me a really good trick on how to do the dust coming out from behind the horse," Lewis said.


Lewis also has had training from Martine Grelle and Bruce Green. Within two years of picking up a paintbrush, Lewis was selling his artwork.

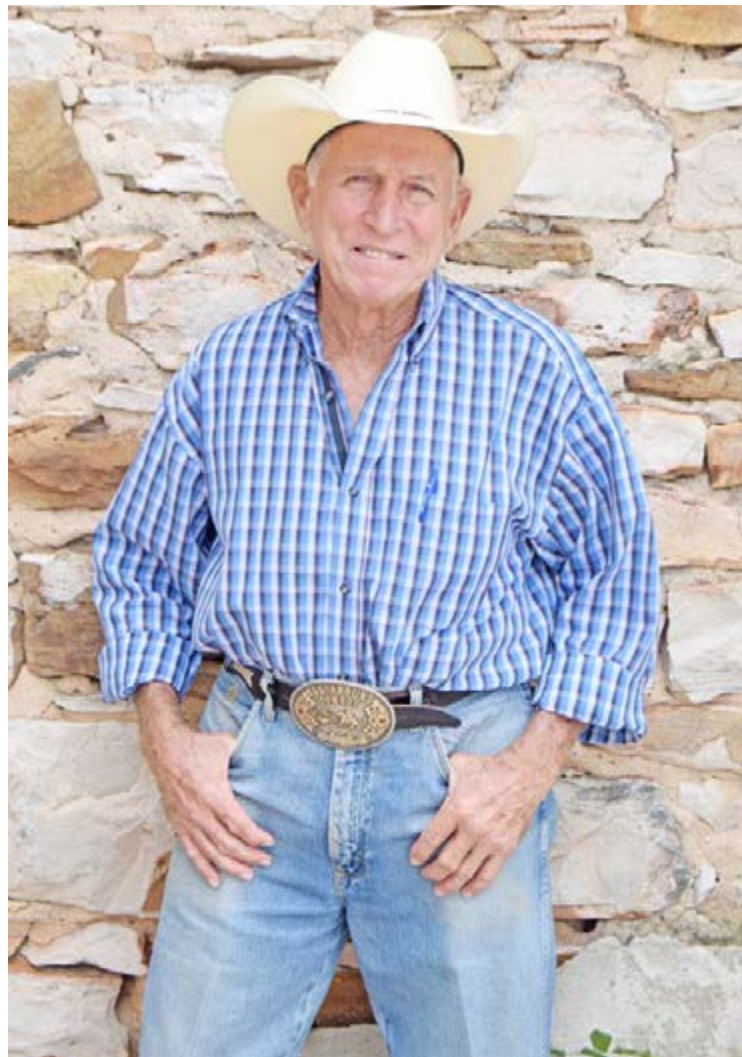
Lewis' work has been seen on the cover of Texas Fish and Game and the Weatherford, Texas, phone book. His art is featured in galleries, including the Adobe Gallery in Fort Worth and the L Bar Western Art in Stephenville, and he enters anywhere from four to five art shows a year.

The artist draws inspiration from all around, with ideas striking at any moment.

"I will see things just driving around. I will see something I want to take a photograph of and pull over and take the picture. Anything to do with cowboys and cattle, and wildlife too, because I like to hunt," Lewis said.

The artist is constantly painting, with 35 to 40 paintings collected in his home at any time. The oil painter specializes in oil painting featuring western and wildlife art, but he also creates equine and pet portraits.

To view more of his work, visit <http://ernielewiswesternart.faso.com/> and follow him on Facebook, www.facebook.com/ernielewiswesternart. 



(Above) Ernie Lewis' favorite piece, a painting of tie-down roper Brent Lewis. (Left) Western and wildlife artist Ernie Lewis.

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On the Road

WITH DAVE ALEXANDER



Howdy Texas Music Fans

It sounds impossible, but 2020 will mark 50 years of existence for one of the most iconic groups ever, Asleep At The Wheel.

It was back in 1970 when my friend Ray Benson organized a little Americana Roots style band and booked their first gig opening for Alice Cooper in Washington D.C.

Eventually the band moved to California. Van Morrison mentioned them in a Rolling Stone magazine interview and it wasn't long before the gigs and money began to roll in.

Later, Willie Nelson would convince Benson to bring the act to Texas. He described Austin, Texas as musician's paradise. Benson took Willie's advice and

after millions of miles on the road, 25 Studio Albums and 10 Grammy awards, the band is turning the corner on 50 years.

I personally have cherished my years with this great group, which began in 2003 while touring with George Strait and ended in 2017, once again with George Strait, at the largest indoor concert in world history.

You can catch them in almost every state in the United States this next year. Be sure and get a good ticket and enjoy a little Texas history right before your eyes. It's something you'll be telling your grand kids about someday.

Long live Asleep At The Wheel.

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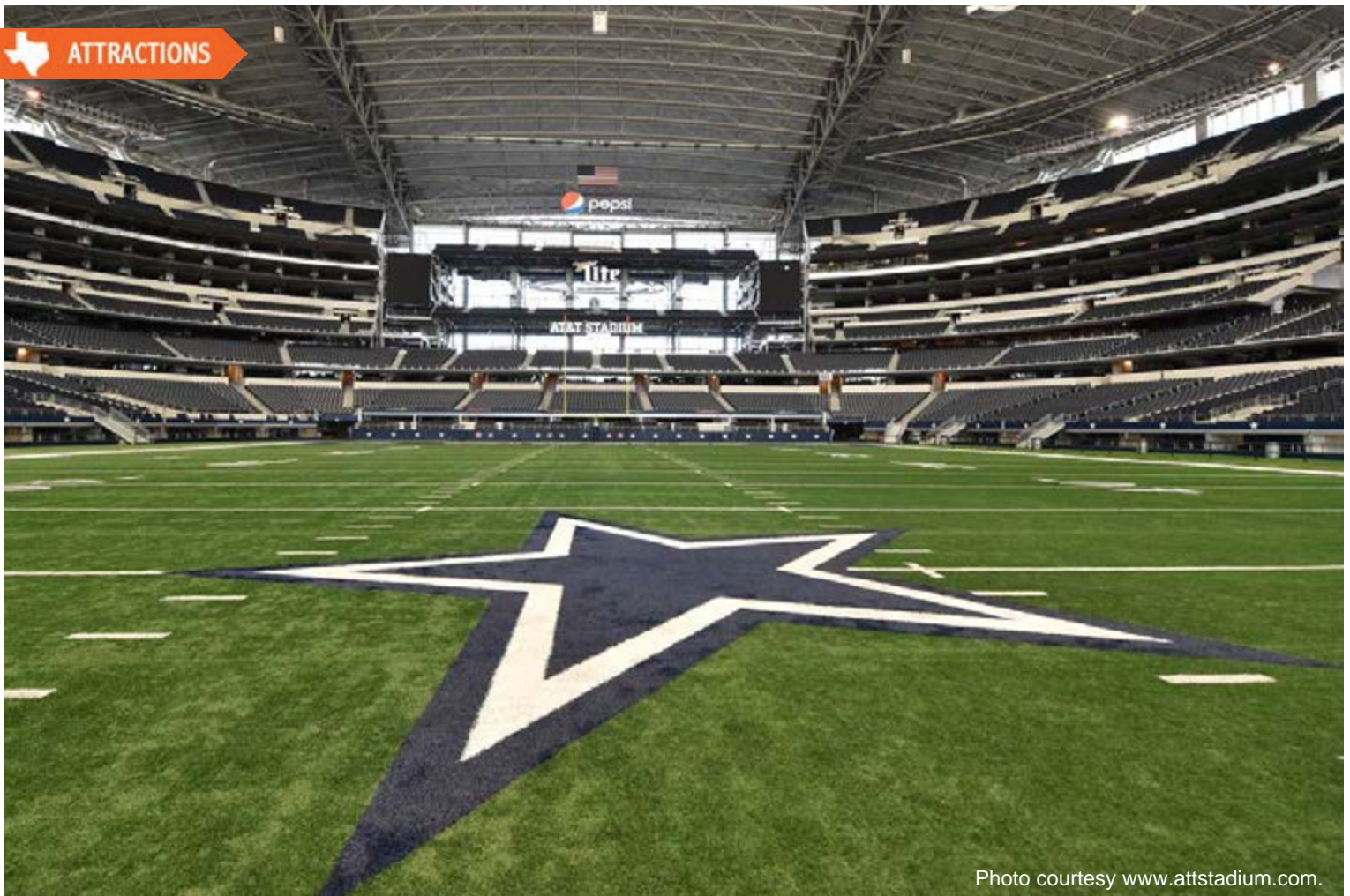


Photo courtesy www.attstadium.com.

Discover Something New in North Texas

By Mandi Dietz

It's a new year and a great time to get outdoors and explore North Texas.

From the counties of Tarrant, Parker, Denton, Wise and Jack, to Young, Cooke, Montague, Clay, Archer, Wichita and Wilbarger, there's much to see and do.

Wilbarger offers Santa Rosa Lake, Red River Valley Museum and north of Vernon, the historical Doan's Store with a May Day picnic celebrating cattle drives of the Great Western Trail.

In Wichita Falls, there's Castaway Cove Waterpark, River Bend Nature Center and the Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum.

Archer County, of course, is well known for its Royal Theater, Spur Hotel, and Novelist Larry McMurtry who wrote the locally-

inspired classics, "The Last Picture Show," "Terms of Endearment" and "Lonesome Dove."

People can enjoy fishing, camping and trails for bird watching and horseback riding at Clay County's Lake Arrowhead State Park in Wichita Falls and have an interesting time touring the Clay County 1890 Jail Museum in Henrietta.

Relax in Montague County with a trip to Old Bowie Lake, the beaches of Lake Amon G. Carter and Lake Nocona, or the scenic, rolling hills and vineyards of Arché Winery. Find fun in Cooke County with time at Frank Buck Zoo, Ray Roberts Lake State Park, and Lavender Ridge Farms. WinStar World Casino and Resort is just across the river in Oklahoma. Graham in Young County boasts the largest downtown square in


America, plus Possum Kingdom State Park, and the 18th-century attraction, Fort Belknap.

The Jack County Museum, where the "Corn Club" turn 4-H Club originated, is one of several stops in Jack County, in addition to Fort Richardson State Park & Historical Site, Lost Creek Reservoir State Trailway and Lake Bryson.

Wise County is home to the Lyndon B. Johnson National Grasslands, Lake Bridgeport and the Center for Animal Research and Education, caring for many exotic animals, including mountain lions, tigers, leopards, bobcats, ring-tail lemurs, lions, llamas and a coati.

Explore Denton County's Arbor Hills Nature Preserve, Lewisville Lake, and Hawaiian Falls.

Parker County presents Lake Mineral Wells State Park & Trailway, and Clark Gardens, a 50-acre oasis with rich horticulture, both black and white swans, peacocks, blue herons, great egrets and more. Tarrant County hosts the Fort Worth Stockyards National Historic District, Six Flags Over Texas amusement park, the Fort Worth Zoo and AT&T Stadium, which is worthy of a tour, considering it's the world's largest domed structure and home to the Dallas Cowboys.

Soon, it'll be spring and then summer before we know it, so start planning a getaway or set out today, taking the scenic backroads, because one never knows what new things await to be discovered in our own backyard, North Texas, offering much to experience. 



Bound for the 2008 Doan's May Picnic, a rider from Oklahoma sets foot on Texas soil on the south bank of the Red River north of Doans, Texas. The river crossing is a yearly Hess-to-Doans tradition that typically attracts 50 or more riders prior to the start of the annual May Day Picnic.



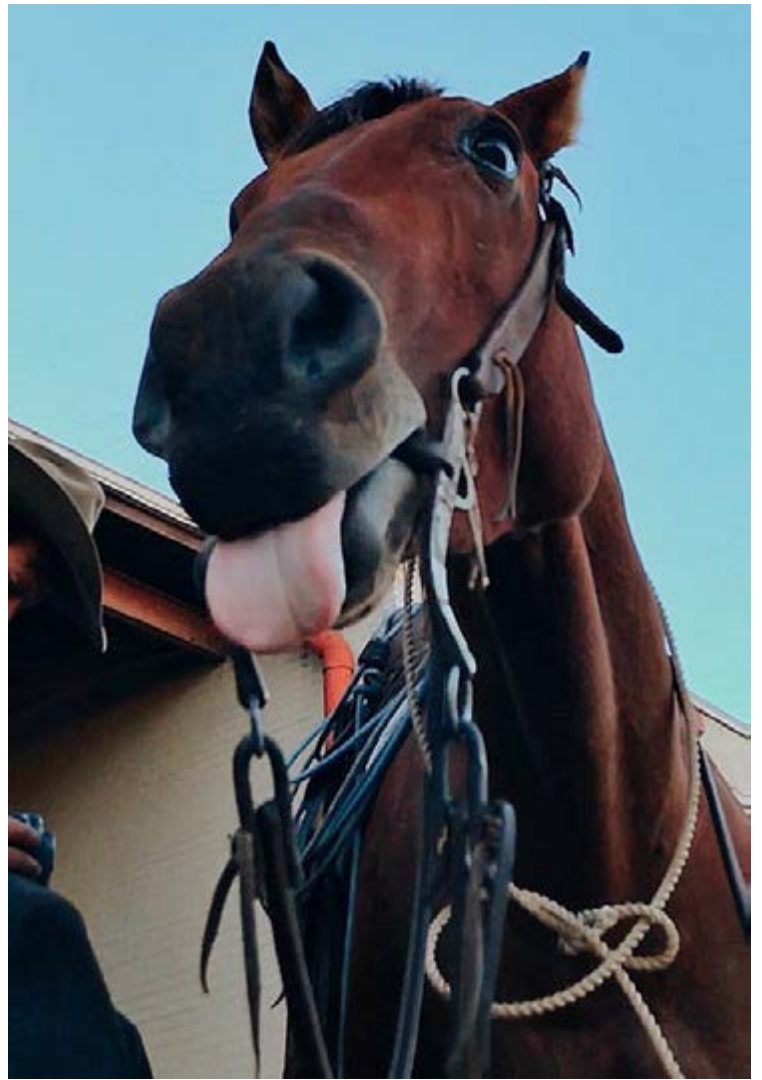
Settlers moving into north Texas plus marauding Indians equaled the need for a protection for the pioneers. The answer: a line of eight forts stretching from north to south across the state. Fort Richardson was one of these. Today, this entrance welcomes guests.



There are few places quite as unique and that smell quite as good as Gainesville, Texas. This 80-acre farm goes back four generations in the Ware family and welcomes guests to the site each year.



There are only 20 national grasslands in the United States of America, with two located in Texas and just one - the Lyndon B. Johnson Grasslands - located right here in North Texas. (NTFR file photos)



THE ROAD GOES ON *Forever*

BY JELLY COCANOUGH

**The Gem
Due North
of the Red River**

Every now and again, I take a journey on up to the big state of Oklahoma for a little weekend adventuring. Each trip wandering through the tiny towns makes you feel hypnotized looking at the dwellings. Each unique home decorated with personalities; changing with what side of the house you're on.


They graciously partner with the curiosity shoppes alongside the roads that are far less travelled. One popping up after the next, but each different from the one before it.

My favorite treasures always turn out to be something other than expected. A Little Debbie grocery covered as an antique shop - we were in for a confused, but very welcomed surprise. Another antique shop waving old Wrangler shirts on the front lawn but also to where no one is allowed in, except on occasion if your name is Jelly.

Now, I'm not one to welcome myself into stranger's buildings, but sometimes you look at yourself in the face and you take a gamble. (With how my luck was going, there might be a hidden candy factory in one of these places).

I peeked inside to find an older gentleman sitting on a goldmine of vintage toys and collectibles. He chose me to share his treasures with, to tell me all about how this is an antique shop, as it may be in appearance, but disappointingly and understandably enough, nothing is for sale.

We come for the beauty of the land, the happy animals, the funky colored mushrooms and the clear skies. Oklahoma has many things, but short of personality it does not.

Towards "somewhere" Oklahoma, there lies untouched roads, waiting for your hand in an adventure. 



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY

January 1

TPWD First Day Hike

State Parks in Texas. TPWD presents the annual First Day Hike. Start the year off on the right foot with a First Day Hike in a state park near you on New Year's Day. First Day Hikes vary from short, leisurely nature walks through forested trails and along boardwalks to climbs into the mountains of the Chihuahuan Desert. State park staff and volunteers will guide most hikes, and will talk about native plants, animals or park history along the way. Many walks average one to two miles long, with shorter or longer treks available. A few parks will even offer runs or paddles. There is something for everyone. Visit www.tpwd.texas.gov for specific details on a First Day Hike at a state park near you.

January 3-4

Archer County Junior Livestock Show

Archer County, Texas. Archer County FFA and 4-H students will showcase their hard work and dedication as the Archer County Junior Livestock Show gets underway. Plan to be there and show support for the local youth. Visit <https://archer.agrilife.org/archer-co-jr-livestock-show/> for more information on the show.

January 4-11

Cooke County Youth Fair

Gainesville, Texas. Cooke County Future Farmers of America and 4-H students will showcase their hard work and dedication as the Cooke County Youth Fair gets underway. Plan to be there and show support for the local youth. For a full schedule of events and times, visit <https://cookecountyyouthfair.com/> for more information.

January 9-11

Montague County Youth Fair

Nocona, Texas. Montague County Future Farmers of America and 4-H students will showcase their hard work and dedication as the Montague County Junior Livestock Show gets underway. Plan to be there and show support for the local youth, whether showing their lamb, steer, heifer or pig. Also be sure to make it out to the sale.

FIRST DAY HIKE

JAN. 1



January 9

Estate Planning for Agricultural Producers

Ardmore Convention Center. 2401 Rockford Road., Ardmore, OK 73401. Farm families work hard to build successful operations and to create estates. Often, however, insufficient time is spent planning for the transfer of an estate to the next generation. This workshop provides information on the need to plan for estate transfer as well as laws governing estate transfer and the tools available to use in estate planning. It is encouraged that all family members, especially both spouses, attend.

What you will learn:

- *How quantifying your inventory and assets serves as the basis for planning your estate
- *The importance of creating your goals
- *The tools and instruments available for estate planning

*A review of the 2017 tax legislation
Guest speakers include Shannon Ferrell, Ph.D., Professor, Agricultural Law, Oklahoma State University and Craig Watson, Elder Law Attorney, Sherman, Texas. For more information visit www.noble.org/events

January 9-11

Young County Junior Livestock Show

Graham, Texas. It's that time of year again. Young County FFA and 4-H students will showcase their hard work and dedication as the Young County Junior Livestock Show gets underway with livestock entries, shop projects, food, contests and more. Plan to be there and show support for the local youth. Visit www.texomashomepage.com for more information.

January 10-12

Second Monday Trade Days

Bowie, Texas. Events will be Jan. 10-Jan. 12. It is one of the largest flea markets featuring about 450 large lots located on five acres. You will find clothing and apparel, candles and crafts, video games and movies, cell phone accessories, antiques of every kind, specialty items, handcrafted furniture, jewelry and great foods and drinks. Free admission. Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Visit www.cityofbowietx.com/241/Event-Schedule for more information.



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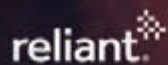
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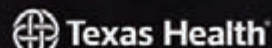
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 11

Bridal Market

MPEC, 1000 5th Street, Wichita Falls, Texas. Everything you need to plan your special day, all in one spot from photographers to caterers. Visit www.texomashomepage.com for more information.

January 17 - February 8

Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo

Will Rogers Memorial Center, Dickies Arena. Join us for the 124-year Texas tradition Jan. 17-Feb. 8. Get ready for rodeo, ranch rodeo, bull riding, horse shows, livestock shows, specialty shows, mustang magic, parades, carnival rides, food for every taste, acres of shopping, children's barnyard, live music daily and much more. Visit www.fwssr.com for more information and a complete schedule of events.

January 24 - 26

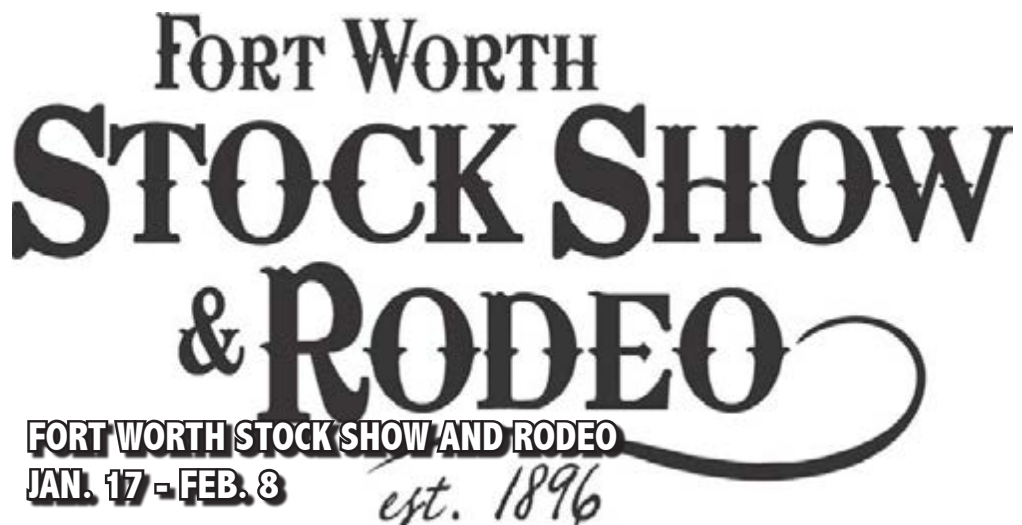
American Finals Rodeo

Tulsa Expo Square. 4145 E 21st St. Tulsa, OK 74114. The American Cowboys Rodeo Association presents the American Finals Rodeo this December at the Built Ford Tough Arena at the Tulsa Fairgrounds. This event will feature action-packed rodeo performances each day. The American Finals Rodeo will feature traditional rodeo events including bareback bronc riding, tie-down roping, breakaway roping, steer wrestling, saddle bronc riding, team roping, cowgirls' barrel racing and bull riding. Come watch the top 15 cowboys and cowgirls compete in a variety of Western events. While you're there, make sure to check out the event's free Western trade show. Call 918-456-9814 for more information.

January 22-26

Denton Black Film Festival

Downtown Square, Denton. The Denton Black Film Festival has grown into a five-day event of engaging and entertaining films and activities. At the Denton Black Film Festival, we share stories of the Black community - its traditions, ideas and experiences - in a multitude of ways. Each festival, conducted annually in January, features Black cinema, music, art, spoken word, comedy, food and fashion. It's our way of bringing the Black experience to life. Visit www.dentonbfff.com for more information.



January 30 - February 16

San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo

200 West 43rd Street, San Angelo, Texas 76903. Beginning in 1932 with the goal of sustaining growth, the San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo Association continually evolves and is now a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. The Association is made up of more than 1,000 hard-working volunteers that are dedicated to continually providing the best events so the Association can continue to provide scholarships to deserving youth. Dedicated to preserving the western way of life and promoting agricultural education to the youth of Texas, the San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo Association works year round to continue to bring top notch events to the West Texas area. Though the primary event the Association hosts is the annual Stock Show and Rodeo, it also produces other annual events, such as the Cinch Roping Fiesta, the Silver Spur Circuit Octoberfest AQHA Show and the Fall Spectacular jackpot livestock show. This annual stock show and rodeo ranks as one of the nation's largest rodeos in total contestants and the livestock show ranked fourth in the nation in entries. The Stock Show and Rodeo provides the largest economic impact of any event in the city of San Angelo. The event attracts more than 5,500 4-H and FFA exhibitors from more than 200 Texas counties and is arguably the largest event in West Texas as it draws more than 150,000 spectators onto the Tom Green County Fairgrounds. For a complete schedule of events, visit www.sanangelorodeo.com.

February 6-23

San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo

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

January 11

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo

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

February 29 - March 1

CowTown Marathon

Fort Worth, Texas. The largest multi-event race in North Texas with distances for everyone including ultra, marathon, half marathon, four-person relay, 10K, adult 5K and kid's 5K races. This race celebrates the 42nd year. Proceeds from every race entry go towards helping low-income children in North Texas receive a free pair of running shoes. Visit www.cowtownmarathon.org.



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Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean

Grazing Old World Bluestems

Three years ago, in the Grazing North Texas edition of December 2016, we learned some facts about an introduced forage grass, King Ranch bluestem. It's time for us to look at "the rest of the story" concerning this family of grasses.

The Old World Bluestem Family

The Old World bluestems (OWBs) are a large family native to Eurasia, Africa and Australia. Although there is strong evidence that Columbus may have inadvertently brought OWBs to the Americas, they were first officially introduced to the United States in the early 1900s. They have been widely planted in the Central and Southern Great Plains for forage production and erosion control.

The Old World family is made up of at least two species, the Yellow bluestems and Caucasian bluestem. The most common Yellow bluestem cultivars include King Ranch, Plains, Ganada, WW-Spar, and WW-Ironmaster. Caucasian has a single cultivar, WW-B Dahl bluestem. All of these cultivars are very similar and identification can usually only be made after a seedhead has developed. Undoubtedly other species and varieties exist that have not yet been identified and categorized. For purposes of this writing, we will usually refer to them together as OWBs.

All OWB species:

- Are warm-season, perennial bunchgrasses.
- Are genetically prone to grow as an erect bunchgrass, but can adopt a sod-type growth no taller



Old World bluestems (OWBs) have established themselves to some extent in almost every pasture in north Texas. Are they a friend or foe? This depends upon what your goals are for your ranch. (Photo courtesy Tony Dean)

than about five inches when under heavy grazing pressure.

- Produce spindly seed stalks two to four feet tall with a reddish-purple inflorescence.
- Can grow rapidly in the spring and reproduce earlier than many native species.
- Are prolific seed producers and extensive seed banks can develop in the soil.
- Are considered invasive and can spread rapidly, sometimes creating large areas supporting nothing but OWB species.
- Can tolerate drought, fire and a limited amount of winter freezing.

The Issue with OWBs

The Texas Department of Agriculture defines a noxious or

invasive plant as any plant species that has a serious potential to cause economical or ecological harm to the agriculture, horticulture, native plants, ecology and waterways of Texas. OWBs are not currently listed on the TDA list of noxious and invasive plants.

However, OWBs are on everyone else's list. Texasinvasives.org is a state-wide partnership of agencies, groups, and individuals interested in addressing invasive species issues in Texas. OWBs are definitely on their list and on many others across the southern plains.

Texas Standard broadcasting related a meeting that occurred when a rancher in Colorado County between Austin and Houston

met up with Stephen Janak, a local Texas AgriLife Extension Agent. The two men spent the morning with Texas Standard, looking at stands of Kleberg bluestem and King Ranch bluestem. The grasses were all sporting their maroon seed heads waving in the wind.

"I mean that's pretty. As pretty as you'll ever see," said the rancher, who was looking at the grass as his source of cattle forage.

"It's a non-native," Janak says. "It's a migrant here. It's not supposed to be here, and as pretty as it looks in the field and on the side of the road, it's having the opposite effect on the land and people."

This conversation represents the two schools of thought about
Continued on page 68

Continued from page 67
OWBs.

Land users, conservation groups and others in states from Texas to Nebraska are expressing concern about the invasive nature of OWBs. The areas in Texas where the issue seems of greatest consequence include the extreme southern parts of the state, mainly south of San Antonio and in Southeast regions of Texas.

While there are real questions from many living in these areas, the majority of us in North Texas don't feel the same urgency. In fact, some of us are still seeding OWBs while our friends in the south and east are trying to figure out how to kill it out.

Although they have invaded into almost every pasture in north Texas to some extent, OWBs don't seem to be quite as aggressive in North Texas as in the southern and eastern areas of the state. This less aggressive invasive nature could be because of the drastic differences in environmental conditions and in land use and management. However, we in North Texas should be aware of the potential threat from this family of grasses.

Old World Bluestem as an Invasive

According to Texas AgriLife publications, OWBs were established throughout the southwest U.S., and they did their job early on in furnishing livestock grazing and erosion control capability. OWB species were seeded by individuals from south Texas to northern Oklahoma and were also used on many thousands of acres of government programs, beginning with reestablishing blown out fields following drought. Planting continued under the Great Plains Conservation Program, EQIP, and the Conservation Reserve Program.

OWBs soon spread beyond the original plantings by dispersing seed into nearby pastures, especially on exposed soil or during



Most of us recognize the Old World bluestem (OWB) seed head. OWBs are a bother when growing in a lawn because these seedheads can pop up in about four days after mowing. This family of grasses also can be considered a pest in our pastures unless we learn to use them to our advantage. (Photo courtesy Tony Dean)

Grazing Value of This Plant

Old World Bluestem

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



The Old World bluestems have good potential as livestock forage, but they are often not managed in a way to take advantage of their capability.

a drought. The seeds also hitched a ride on livestock, wildlife, vehicles and farm equipment.

Throughout the region, the grasses established quickly and began crowding out native species. OWBs can now be found in almost any pasture in North Texas, but in most cases were not seeded there. In some areas, OWBs have created monocultures, or almost a pure stand, over many acres.

The Texas Invasive Species

Institute says that where King Ranch bluestem or other OWB varieties become a dominant species in the landscape, they can pose an ecological threat to Texas grazing lands. OWBs have been repeatedly observed to diminish grassland bird diversity and abundance by reducing insect diversity and negatively impacting pollinator species like bees and butterflies due to reduced forb availability.


Stephen Deiss is Chief Operat-

ing Officer for O'Conner Ranch and a former Grazing Specialist for NRCS in south Texas. Deiss says OWBs are well established, wide spread and increasing in density on the Gulf Coast. He explains that their dominance is due to adaptability, the long growing season in the area, and probably most important, their ability to produce multiple seed crops in one growing season.

Deiss noted OWBs are grazed early in the year in south Texas when still leafy; however, when they shift to the reproductive stage later on, they become very stemmy and are usually avoided by cattle. This avoidance puts extra grazing pressure on the native grasses left in the pastures.

The concern is spreading north. In Kansas, Ron Klataske, Executive Director of Audubon of Kansas, writes the invasive nature of OWBs is becoming an issue in his state. He goes on to say extensive landscapes that were previously native grasslands have now been completely transformed to near monocultures of OWBs.

Klataske states solid stands of OWBs have inferior value as habitat for most wildlife. Native grasslands in Kansas with native legumes and forbs offer far superior nesting, brood rearing and year-round habitat for quail, prairie grouse and grassland songbirds. Old World bluestem species are listed as "priority invasive plants" on the Nebraska Invasive Species Program website.

It appears from south Texas, through North Texas, and into Kansas and Nebraska. A lot of issues being expressed about the invasive nature of OWBs have to do with damage to wildlife habitat when these species become dominant in a landscape. In the next issue of Grazing North Texas, we will explore the issues and benefits of OWBs as forage for livestock and the management aspects of Old World bluestems in North Texas. 

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Confessions of a HUNTER

By Andy Anderson

Bowfishing, Don't Do It!

I've heard about it, watched some television shows with Pigman and others bowfishing in various places across the country. I never really gave it much thought or expressed interest in trying it out. I just didn't fit with me and my interest as an outdoor activity. Then there was the cost; I didn't know anyone that did it and didn't know anything about it to try it on my own. Then one day, I met Austin Davis. Austin is an all-around outdoorsman as an angler, hunter and works as a guide for several outfitters in the area; myself included. He has a boat and all the gear. The best part is he has several years' experience on the water. Austin extended an invitation to go bowfishing one evening, a night I will never forget.

It was late summer, about 8 p.m. when I jumped in the truck with him, headed to the lake. Nothing really different from any other fishing trip, except it was dark. We pull up to the boat ramp and unlike a typical fishing day, no one was there. Not a boat, truck or trailer to be seen. Austin backs the boat into the water, and as he backs the boat off the trailer, I pull the truck out and park it.

I step into the boat about the time Austin fired up the generator and the light around the bow of the boat lite up. I could see 30 to 40 yards out and a few feet deep into the water. I could see shad and other fish darting around. It



Andy Anderson became obsessed with bowfishing after a night out on the water with his friend, Austin. (Photo courtesy Andy Anderson)

was amazing to see so many fish, I had no idea.

Austin fires up the boat and we head out, into the dark abyss of the lake. I had to just relax, give faith and confidence to Austin operating the boat in the pitch black. You could look out across the lake and see plenty of lights on the shore, docks and such, but it didn't do anything for being able to see what not to run into or over. As we were cruising across the water with the lights on, I could see so much shad in the water. They were

so thick, it looked as if you could walk across them. Every now and then you would hear, and feel a thump on the side of the boat. Austin, with a big'ol country grin said, "That's shad jumping into the side of the boat." The lights do attract bugs, bugs attract fish, and the fish smash into the side of the boat. Kind of comical as you start to put a tune together from the rhythm of the shad thumps.

Austin, killed the motor as we drift slowly to a stop, I grabbed a bow and climbed onto the shoot-

ing deck over top of the lights. I was in awe as I looked down to see the bottom of the lake, the various types of vegetation, rocks and such. As he dropped the trolling motor in and started us into a slow troll around the edge of the lake, I could see a few smaller fish, some turtles and, of course, a snake or two.

Austin offered a quick introduction into bowfishing, how to aim, where to aim and how to retrieve with the reel after shooting. It is not hard, pretty easy after

you shoot a few times. The biggest trick is where to aim. You have to aim a little low, below the fish. It's the same as when you put a straw into a glass of water and look at it from the side, it looks like it's cut in half and not in line.

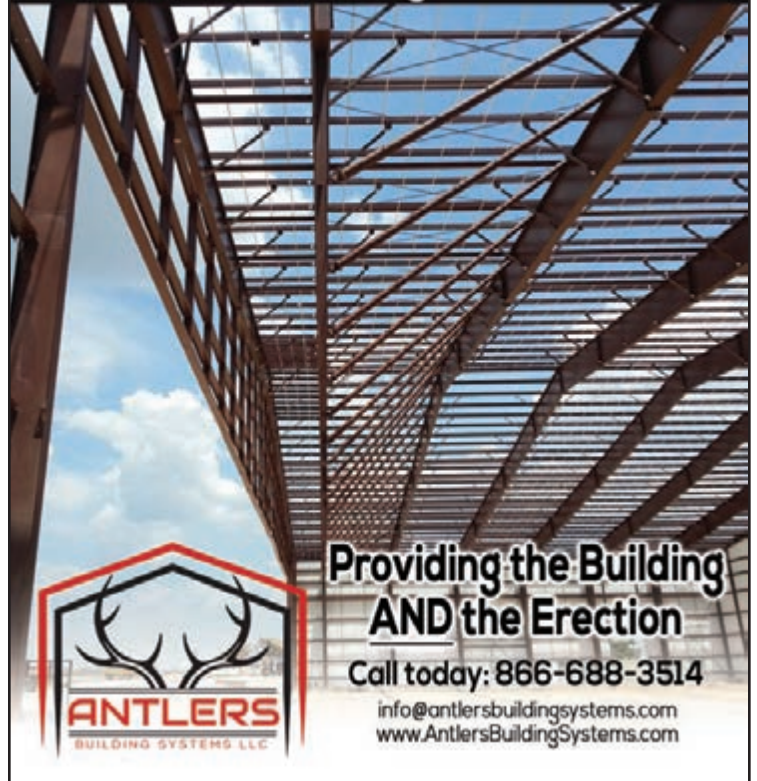
"Just aim a few inches below the fish and you'll hit 'em," Austin belted out.

It didn't take long before we were into some grass carp and I had my chance. Of course I missed, and missed again. Remaining persistent, I finally connected and the fight was on. I reeled in my first grass carp and was instantly hooked. From there on I couldn't miss, and I was having an absolute blast. To me, it was like helicopter hog hunting, non-stop action, radio playing some good tunes and I was helping the ecosystem as the same time. An over population of any species puts a strain on the environment. Carp, gar and such are not a desired game fish and do not see much pressure from anglers. As such, they destroy grass beds and habitat essential for

sustaining bait fish and cover for the game fish. So, like helicopter hog hunting, I was doing my part as a conservationist, and having an absolute blast doing it.

We were only out for a few hours and while I shot hundreds of times, we only put a few fish in the boat. My thoughts soon drifted off to all the people in my life I would like to take bowfishing, especially my boy, Clay. It was non-stop action, fun conversation and razzing each other over misses and clumsy moves, comradery you just can't put a value on. We ended the night with several fish in the boat and a smile on my face. I couldn't stop thinking about it. I became obsessed with it, and it didn't take long for me to find a boat and get the gear. I am ready to share the same experience I had with friends, family and clients that I know, like me, enjoy getting outdoors, on the lake or in the woods. Special thanks to Austin for an exceptional time on the water and taking the time to teach me a new addiction; bowfishing.®


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By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

Peanut butter for the holidays: *A most rewarding gift*

Those of you who enjoy feeding birds in North Texas probably know it is a year-round endeavor that is as rewarding as anything we do in the garden. It is particularly important we maintain the feeders during the winter months when the birds must eat to survive. If you like birds coming to your sunflower or thistle seed feeders, you will be in birdwatching ecstasy with peanut butter.

That's correct. Just like the guys around the house who treasure peanut butter cups, chocolate ice cream with peanut butter and peanut butter fudge, many of our birds will likewise go into a peanut butter feeding frenzy.

My time spent at the National Butterfly Center watching our bird feeders made me wonder if I could duplicate the setup at the Columbus Botanical Garden in Georgia. The answer was yes; it worked like a charm, and you can find success in North Texas, too. In fact, you'll find many more bird species feeding at peanut butter logs than you might expect.

Both the birding area in Mission, Texas, and the one in Columbus, Ga., featured a three to four-foot tall thicket of pruned limbs on the outer perimeter. This served as a wonderful shelter for little birds needing a quick place of escape for protection. Both locales also installed shallow water stations. Water is mandatory and more critically important to the birds than you realize.

The feeders at the National
Continued on page 74



This Pine Warbler sitting on the man made perch approaches a nice clump of a peanut butter and cornmeal in Columbus, GA. (Photo by Norman Winter)



The orange of the Altamira oriole is most stunning. Here one is feeding on peanut butter in Mission, Texas.

Continued from page 73

Butterfly Center were attached to a wire strung across the area while in Columbus we attached them to eight-foot tall tree-like posts. Everyone has their favorite recipes, including straight peanut butter, crunchy and smooth.

If you are like most, it is what's on sale that rules the decision. In Columbus we chose to mix ours with cornmeal and it certainly proved to be a blend loved by the birds.

The peanut butter logs we made varied in size but were generally about 24-inches in length. Six $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide holes were drilled a little less than an inch deep. These holes scattered around the log will be filled with your choice of peanut butter blend.

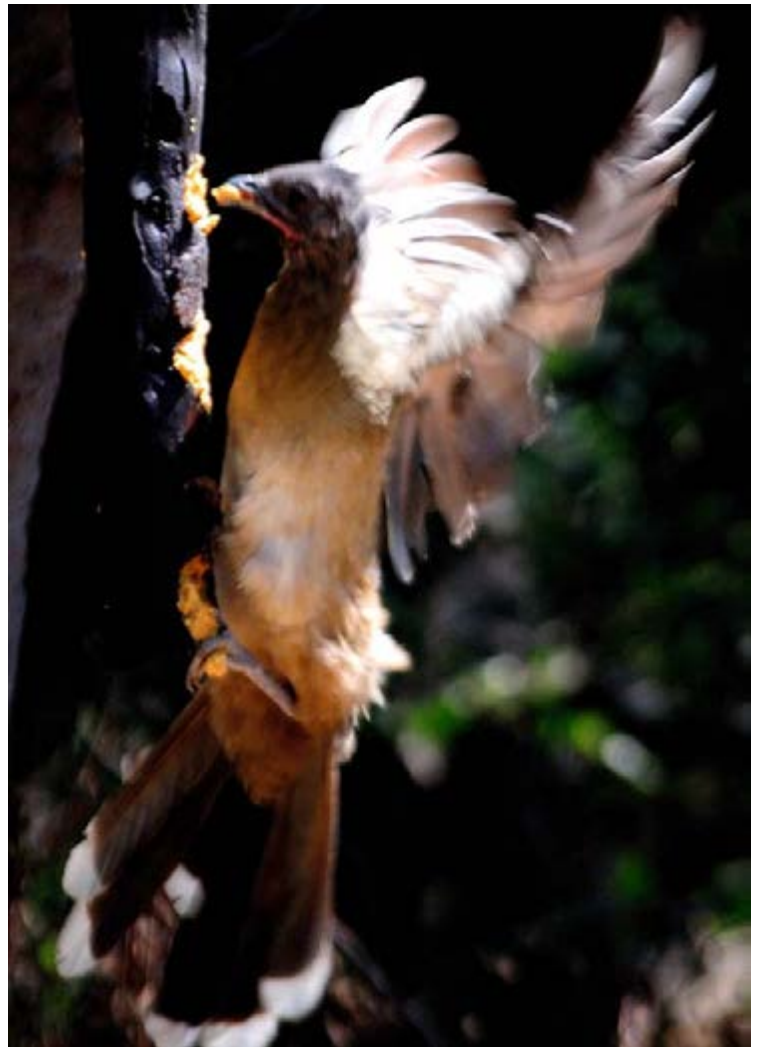
The feeders in Columbus also had little quarter inch holes drilled below the large ones so branch-

like pieces of wood could be inserted for perches. We did not use those in Texas, but they seemed quite useful in Georgia.

The feeders will do their part to get you, your children or grandchildren hooked if you give them a pair of binoculars. The binoculars will become a tool that will forever change their world when it comes to birding.

Once they begin watching the birds' eyes, the rotation of their heads and their graceful motion in flight seen close-up, through the lens, you will have planted the seeds of nature.

The National Butterfly Center redesigned their bird area making it more natural in appearance and to fit the Masterplan. The Columbus Botanical Garden is experiencing incredible growth and expansion with new gardens. It is apparent birds and butterflies



The Chachalaca is a landbird weighing one and a half pounds, and is quite the sight feeding on a peanut butter log in South Texas.




A Great Kiskadee spreads wings in approach to a peanut butter log. (Photos by Norman Winter)

will play an important role.

No matter where you live, you can bring the world of birding to your yard, a park or new public garden, both with feeders, bird-baths or fountains and a strong support from native berry produc-

ing plants.

The birds will no doubt reward your efforts, but many of these children who grow-up watching and learning about these birds will become the environmental ecosystem heroes of the future. 



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