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John Jennings

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Stay Cozy...

Hello OKFR readers, and welcome to the December issue of the Oklahoma Farm & Ranch magazine. The Christmas season is in full swing, and we hope you stay warm and cozy this holiday season. First, check out the OKFR Calendar of Events for a full list of holiday events taking place across the state.

This season, Barry Whitworth reflects on his career as a veterinarian and how it has impacted his family. All but one of his children have left home, but Whitworth said his most treasured moments are when his children worked alongside the veterinarian. Read more in "Being in a Veterinarian Family" in the Farm & Ranch section.

Next, read about the girl who was a cowboy. At a young age, Mary Lou Barnard spent her days in the barn, jumping off the hayloft onto the back of her horse. Many moons later, Barnard trained one of her first barrel horses named "Waco." After an accident left Waco partially blind, she competed at reining events. The girl who was a cowboy went on to compete in other events including team roping. To learn more about Mary Lou Barnard, read "That Girl was a Cowboy" in the Equine section.

For the December feature profile, I had the pleasure of visiting with John Jennings, owner of Jennings Bits and Spurs. A California native, Jennings moved his family to Shawnee, Okla., 10 years ago. He met neighbor Bill Madole, who was a local bit and spur maker. With the help of his mentor, Jennings has honed his craft as a buckle and spur maker. Today, he devotes many hours into creating spurs, buckles and more. Learn more in "Art with Sparks."

This issue, Kristi Hawks and a few friends traveled the backroads to visit Blake Shelton's newest restaurant in Tishomingo, Okla. Inspired by his breakout hit "Ole Red," Ole Red had its grand opening in late September. The restaurant showcases Shelton's personality with photographs of his dogs, his record albums and tractor seats. Learn more in "Backroad Bites: Ole Red" in the Attractions section.

Old world bluestem grow in various soil types across the plains of Oklahoma, providing fair to good grazing for livestock. Learn more in "Grazing Oklahoma: Old World Bluestem" in the Outdoors section.

If you have an event, photo or topic idea that you would like to see in Oklahoma Farm & Ranch, email editor@okfronline.com. Keep up with new OKFR updates on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. Subscribe to the digital version of OKFR on our website: www.OKFRonline.com.

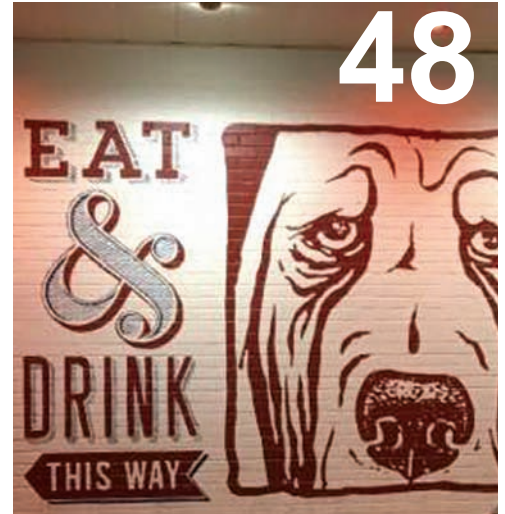
Have yourself a merry little Christmas!

ON THE COVER

Born and raised in California, John Jennings moved to Shawnee, Okla., 10 years ago. He met neighbor Bill Madole, who is a local bit and spur maker. Madole mentored Jennings and spur making became his side-business. Inspired by old-fashioned patterns, Jennings spends 20 to 100 hours creating the perfect Texas-style spurs, recently earning the first-place prize at the Cowboy True Art Show in Wichita Falls, Texas. (Photo by Laci Jones)



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John Jennings began his spur craftsmanship journey four years ago.

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Backroad Bites

The featured restaurant Ole Red is owned by country music artist Blake Shelton.

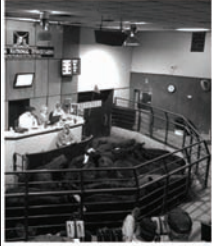
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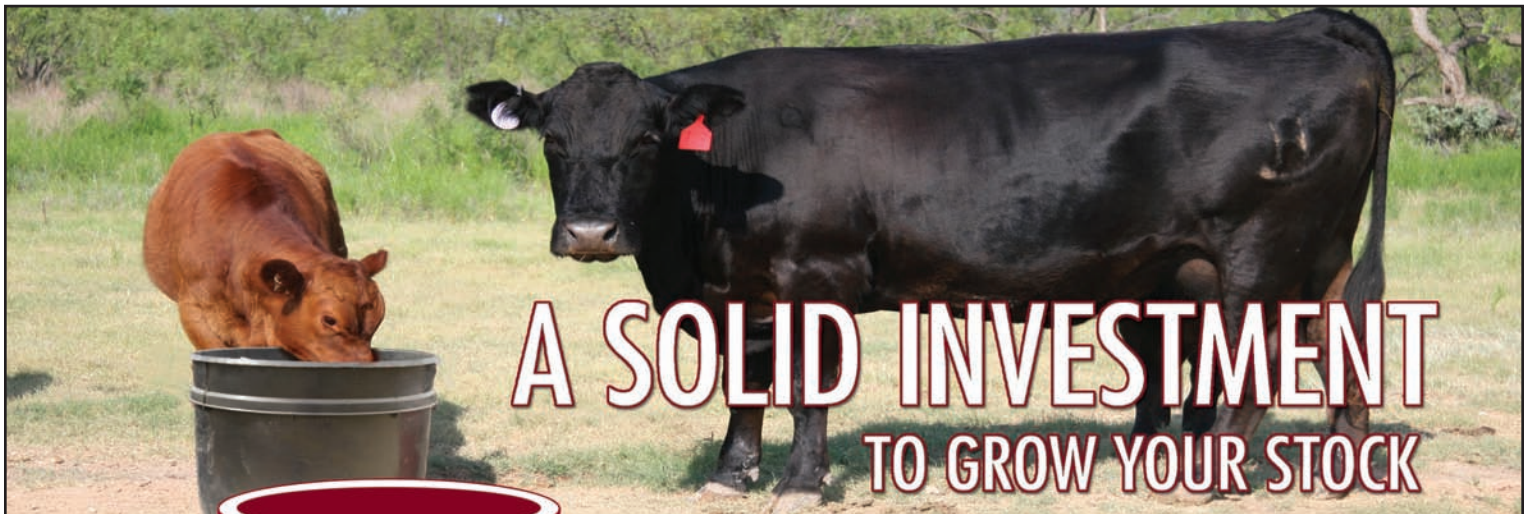


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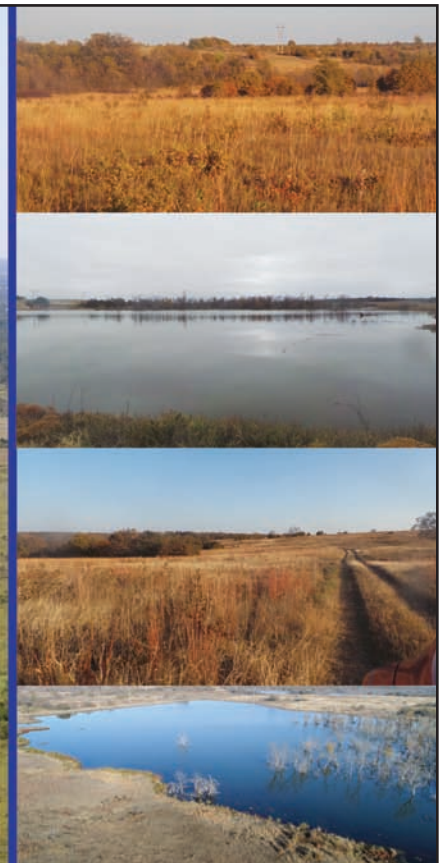
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CORRECTION

In the November 2017 Life of a Ranch Wife article, the Mills' family brands their cattle on the right hip and ear rather than the left hip and ear.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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

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

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Being in a..... VETERINARIAN FAMILY

By Barry and Lauren Whitworth

The holiday season is upon us. I hope that this time of year is full of happy memories spent with people you love and hold dear.

As all of my children but one have left the nest, the holidays are a special time when I tend to reflect on memories of past experiences with my kids.

Although I look back on our holiday memories with much happiness, my most treasured moments with my children are when they were working with me side by side.

Being the child of a veterinarian might be a curse or a blessing. It just depends on how you look at it. My kids had a unique “growing up” experience and were used to having plenty animals around. Even to this day when my oldest daughter Lauren sees a new puppy the first words out of her mouth are, “I want one!”

During her college days, when she spent the summers working in my practice, she would say the same thing about the little “cute” white baby pigs at some of the farms that I would visit on calls. She quickly changed her mind when I finally showed her the sows.

Like most other jobs, I inevitably ended up taking some of my work home with me. My kids never quite knew what they might find inside of our house. On a recent visit home, Lauren walked in to discover that a newborn bottle-fed lamb had taken up residence in our family room. She smiled and said, “A lamb in the living room; it is good to be home.” Aside from farm animals in the house, the Whitworth home has some other unique quirks. One holiday

tradition that my children were accustomed to was the practice of Christmas morning kennel duty. My children woke up Christmas morning to the words, “Christmas can begin as soon as the dogs are walked and cages are cleaned.”

As are most, my kids were extremely curious about the world around them and ask lots of questions while working with me. Veterinarian kid questions may seem a little bit out of the ordinary for most parents.

The questions tended to be about how much blood an animal can lose and still live or about the fairly foul odors that accompany veterinary practice. My son Walker was particularly offended by those smells. Once on a highly distressing farm call, Walker was holding the tail of a steer with an infected scrotum that both smelled horrid and had a large amount of purulent material.

As I proceeded, the smell became too much for him and he began to gag. I laughed and instructed him to “toughen up and hold on to the tail.” Pale faced he replied, “You may be used to this, but I am not.”

Life of a veterinarian is messy, but mess is not always a bad thing. Some of my favorite memories are those spent performing C-sections with the help of the whole family. I am not sure why dogs with dystocia tend to occur after hours when help is scarce, but they do.

Being the sole veterinarian in my practice, I relied on my family to assist in these late night cases. When the distressed patient arrived, my wife and I got everything ready for surgery. Then just before administering the anesthesia, Mom made a call to the

house for reinforcements. I am not for sure why my teenage children were tone deaf to the landline phone ringing, but they were.

After several rings, my wife hung up and called one of their cell phones. An almost immediate answer followed. Mom then gave the instructions, “It is puppy rubbing time!” Reluctantly my teenage children piled out of bed and filed through the clinic doors.

Once the surgery began, my helpers took their positions. Mom be waited like a big league baseball player preparing to catch a fly ball. Her hands were covered with a towel ready for me to hand

her that first pup. She then handed off to one of the kids who began vigorously rubbing the life into these little dogs. The procedure was repeated until all the puppies were born.

In my many emergency C-sections, it never failed that some puppies were reluctant to wake up and join the world. We usually assigned the stubborn puppies to my middle daughter Madison. She was always up for the challenge and worked tirelessly to stimulate their breathing. We surmised that she was gifted at irritating her brother and sister, so she should be able to irritate the pup to wake

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After all the puppies had nice red noses, were crying, and mama dog was being stitched up, my wife dismissed the troops with instructions to get to bed because it was late. As my assistants headed home, most of my clients commented on what hard workers my children were and how proud I must be of them. I would simply smile and say, "Yes, I am very proud of them."

I hope that as you go through life that you are making memories with your children. In my experience, they grow up and leave home.

Do not wait for special occasions to spend time and share life with your kids. Every day is a good time to make a memory.

My family and I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas. May God bless you with good health and happiness in the New Year. ☺



Barry Whitworth's children including Lauren and Madison Whitworth had a unique childhood. (Photo courtesy of the Whitworth family)




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CASH CROPS ARE

King

The SREC researches the best cropping systems for producers

By Everett Brazil, III

Cotton has long been the dominant crop in Southwest Oklahoma. Many area communities, such as Hollis, Altus and Carnegie, were built through the crop, and it remains the biggest cash crop in the region today. Many other cash crops grow well in the region, however, including wheat, canola and grain sorghum, offering producers a chance to diversify their operations in the face of declining markets.

Oklahoma State University researched cropping systems across the state to find what works best. In Southwest Oklahoma, that research is being performed at the Southwest Research and Extension Center (SREC) in Altus, Okla. The work they are performing there may help area producers find the best systems for their operations.

The SREC works in conjunction with the Tipton Valley Research Center, Tipton, Okla., and the Caddo Research Station, Ft. Cobb, Okla.

The SREC focuses primarily on cotton. Many research plots relate to the study of the crop in the region, which not only includes new varieties to see how well they produce in the area, but basic studies like fertilization.

Randy Boman, SREC director, wades his way into a heavily-bolled cotton plot south of Altus, which includes experimental varieties, coupled with current varieties available on the market through the Dow AgroSciences Enlist System, marketed under the PhytoGen cottonseed label. The



Gary Strickland and Randy Boman analyze cotton bolls in southwestern Oklahoma. (Photo by Everett Brazil, III)

Enlist system was developed with tolerance to the herbicide, 2,4-D. Boman was impressed with the boll load in the 2017 crop.

PhytoGen is not the only cottonseed variety under research at the SREC. Bayer CropSciences has their own cottonseed brands, FiberMax and Stoneville, and these varieties have also been studied, although with mixed results, Boman said, as some varieties may not be the best suited to Southwest Oklahoma and the Texas Panhandle.

They have also held small plot trials, which include 21 varieties

of Deltapine cottonseed, the flagship brand of Monsanto. Boman indicated that Deltapine varieties looked good for Southwest Oklahoma.

Cotton research at the SREC goes beyond testing new varieties, however, and seeks to study a variety of concepts, all related to cotton.

One unique project is an irrigation termination project, which attempts to find the best time to stop irrigation at the end of the season. The project is being performed with Saleh Taghvaeian, a researcher in the OSU Biosystems

and Agricultural Engineering department.

“The project is to evaluate the different termination dates for irrigation,” Boman said. “When do you water for the last time, and shut it off?”

One way to do that is through soil profile sensors, which can help determine the overall amount of moisture found within the soil profile.

Those sensors can help save water, as it is found that there may be enough moisture for the crop within the soil profile. The sensors were set at depths of 10 inches, 20

inches and 30 inches.

"Irrigation sensors tell us what the profile moisture looks like," Boman said.

Modern cotton cropping systems, including Monsanto Round-up Ready XtendFlex varieties, use Boll Gard II traits to protect against insect parasites. Further research is looking at Bollgard three varieties from All Tex and NexGen.

Cotton is not the only crop studied at the SREC. Gary Strickland, OSU Cooperative Extension Service agriculture educator in Jackson County, Altus, performs his own research related to grain production for Southwest Oklahoma. Strickland previously served as the OSU Grain Sorghum Extension researcher. He looks out across several study plots south of the head office, where grain shoots are peeking through the soil. The project looks at a variety of crops, including wheat, cotton and grain sorghum.

"This study was established back in 2002," he said. "We started off looking at cotton, wheat and grain sorghum rotations, in a conventional and no-till system."

The research has been expanded to include canola, which works well in wheat rotations.

"Probably about spring 2013, we switched it and started including canola in the research, and had a cotton-wheat-canola rotation," he added. "You can use the same equipment with canola. It also works well in controlling grassy weed situations."

However, while many other areas of Oklahoma have taken advantage of the benefits canola offers, it hasn't been a big crop for Southwest producers.

"Part of it was related to the management of the crop itself, and how much producers can make off it," Strickland said. "They didn't feel like they were making enough crop to make it pay."

The goal, however, was to look

at cotton production in irrigated and in dryland systems as well as with cover crops.

"Cotton is our baseline crop, whether it be irrigated or dryland. Probably our next baseline crop would be wheat," Strickland added. "We're looking at cotton with a cover crop. The cover crop will be wheat, and then looking at cotton with and without a cover crop, then to wheat."

Looking at the plots at the research center, Strickland saw many differences between the plots, and said those with cover crops between seasons had better yield than the plants without cover crops.

"One of the things we're looking at is what rotations work best with dryland cotton. We also look at weed control in the fields," he said. "The long-term aspect of this is comparing no-till and conventional cropping systems."

One unique study looks at guar, a crop that has long been grown in Texas, but has only recently made inroads into Oklahoma. Multiple varieties have been grown at the SREC through the past few years to see how well they produce in the state, both for grain and forage.

"We're also looking at clipping dates: 30 days after planting, 45 days after planting, 60 days, 75 days, and 90 days," Strickland said. "We're looking at yield and quality on of all those dates. The last thing we're looking at is planting population data."

Strickland said the last guar study in Oklahoma was performed in the '70s, so they were trying to update the data.

The studies will continue for many years, as the researches attempt to improve cropping systems for the area.

"The base at the site is cotton, but there is a lot going on here," Strickland said. "The station serves as a base for quite a bit of research." ☞

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OKLAHOMA Healthy Soils PROJECT

By Sarah Blaney

For more than 100 years, demonstration farms have been set up across the United States to give farmers and ranchers an opportunity to see practical application of new and evolving agriculture practices. From Seaman Knapp's first demonstration farm in Vinton, La., in 1884 to the T&T Ranch in Nevada that showed farmers how to set up an irrigation system in 1917, the belief that farmers/ranchers serve as the best teachers for each other still holds today.

The Oklahoma Healthy Soils Project is a voluntary effort to conserve natural resources that is also firmly rooted in Mr. Knapp's hypothesis that farmers and ranchers are the best folks to determine what adaptations can be made to improve their own operation. It is in this spirit of locally led leadership that the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts began the "Oklahoma Healthy Soils" demonstration farm project in 2014.

Through a generous grant from

the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service "Regional Conservation Partnership Program," OACD is able to provide selected producers with cash incentives to try multi-species cover crops on their farm ground.

To date, the project has established five demonstration farms on privately held lands ranging in size from 45 acres to 80 acres. The farms are located throughout the state to allow for more learning opportunities in different

communities and to showcase the effects that cover crops can have on the health of the soil across Oklahoma's diverse eco-systems. The project allows producers to try out a conservation practice in a low risk environment.

"The OACD Healthy Soils project was a great learning opportunity for me," said Phillip Adkins, Healthy Soils participant and farmer from Goldsby, Okla. "I was able to try a new approach to farming and after seeing the positive results, I'm using cover

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crops such as Sudan grass and soybeans following my wheat harvest.”

OACD is currently seeking applications for four demonstration farms for 2018. The project is a one-year commitment that provides selected producers with up to \$115 per acre in fair rental compensation, seed cost, equipment rental and technical assistance. To learn more about the project and to submit an application, please visit okconservation.org/healthy-soils or visit your local conservation district office. Applications are being accepted now through Dec. 31, 2017.

The Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts is also committed to providing educational and leadership opportunities to those farmers and ranchers interested in soil health. This project offers a network of farmers and ranchers who have made or are thinking of making the change from conventional tillage to no-till to cover crops. The producer network hosts learning opportunities and forums to share ideas and ask questions. This soil health producer network currently has 112 members across the state and is open to any farmers/ranchers who are interested in learning more about improving their soils. To learn more about the producer network, visit okconservation.org/soil-health-producer-network. 



The OACD Healthy Soils project was a learning opportunity for Goldsby, Okla., farmer Phillip Adkins. (Photo courtesy of the Oklahoma Association of Conservation Districts)

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THE OLD MAID

By Ralph Chain

Of all the men who worked for us throughout the years, one fellow really stands out in my mind. His name was H. Rhodes, but we called him “H.” H, I guess, could be called a drifter. He was an outstanding person when it came to breaking mules, which we had a lot of. You never knew he was coming, and you never knew when he was leaving. He might come and stay a week or a month or more.

He had a room in my grandmother’s house upstairs where he slept. He always stayed with my grandparents. He knew he always had a job here because he was such a good hand. H was jolly, always laughing, and always brought his guitar and a saddle. He taught me to play the guitar and taught me several songs. One of them was the “Old Maid,” which I never heard before or since.

H taught me that song when I was a little boy, along with some other songs—”Birmingham Jail,” “Frankie and Johnnie” and other old songs.

H also enjoyed the occasional drink. A dance hall was located in Chester, Okla., and another one in Longdale, Okla. One Saturday night H went to Chester and got high on “joy juice.”

He came home Sunday morning to my grandparent’s house. He had gotten married to a girl while they were both drunk, but H said he wanted to stay here and work. We had a small house where they lived for about six months. I do not remember whether H left or the girl, but the marriage didn’t last.

H stayed here awhile and then vanished for some time. We did not know where he went, but one day he came back with his guitar and saddle. He took me out to the car he was driving and said he wanted to show me something. In the trunk was a brand new saddle he had just bought. H stayed for a day or two and then left.

Later on, I found out he had gone to Nevada and worked on a large ranch, more than a million acres, for seven or eight months. He came back, took me out to the car and showed me the saddle. It was nearly worn out.

He said, “That saddle has been my home ever since I left here.” H stayed awhile and then came by one day and said, “I’m going



The Old Maid Song:

*Let me tell you a story of a burglar man who started to rob a house.
He peeked in the window and then he crept as quietly as a mouse.
He was thinking of the money he’d get as under the bed he lay.
But he saw an awful sight that night that made his hair turn gray.
About 9 an old maid came in, “I’m so tired,” she said.
She was thinking all was well and forgot to check under the bed.
She took out her teeth, her big glass eye and the hair right off of her head.
This burglar man had 19 fits and came from under the bed.
From under the bed the burglar came; he was a total wreck.
The old maid didn’t holler at all—she just grabbed him around the neck.
From the drawer she drew a revolver and to this burglar said,
“Young man you’ll have to marry me or I’ll blow off the top of your head.”
He looked at her teeth and her big glass eye, and he had no room to scoot.
He said to the old maid standing by, “Woman, for the Lord’s sake shoot!”*

to the U.S. Army. The next time you see me I will be in a wooden overcoat,” meaning a casket. He thought he would get killed, but to his surprise, he survived the war. After a brief visit following his return from the war, I never saw him again. I think he went to Idaho and died there.

A year or so back, I was asked to give a speech at the Kingfisher County Cattlemen’s Association. I had my guitar and sang two or three songs after my speech. One of the songs was the “Old Maid” that H had taught me. The owner of the Kingfisher County newspaper was there and heard my story and songs, and wrote an article about me.

About a week after the speech I gave in Kingfisher, I received a call from a lady. She said that she used to live in Kingfisher and

received the Kingfisher newspaper.

She read my story about the song of the “Old Maid” that I sung. She went on to say that she used to live on a ranch in Nevada, and she remembered a cowboy singing a song about an old maid.

She wondered if that could be the same song. I told her the words to the song over the telephone, and she was amazed and said, “That is the same song I remember the cowboy singing that one night when I was a girl living on this ranch.”

I have often wondered if that could’ve been H. Rhodes who sang the song that the girl heard. She told me her name and the ranch she lived on.

I have never heard the song sung to anyone before or after. That’s the end of the story. ☞

LAMINITIS PART 2

Treatment and prevention of laminitis

By Lauren Lamb, DVM

As mentioned in last month's OKFR article, the key to having a successful outcome in a horse with acute laminitis is rapid diagnosis and aggressive therapy.

As soon as you notice your horse displaying the clinical signs of laminitis (heat in the front feet, increased digital pulses, walking on egg shells, rocking back on their hunches when turning, etc.) call your local veterinarian.

The faster you contact your veterinarian and institute therapy, the less damage that will incur to lamina in the hoof and the better chance the horse has to make a full recovery.

Laminitis is usually caused by some other disease within the body—severe infection, grain overload, grazing on fresh green grass in the spring. The key to therapy, for laminitis, is to identify the underlying cause of the infection or inflammation and initiate therapy towards the disease.

An example of this may be a horse with severe pneumonia, which needs to be administered antibiotics, anti-inflammatory medication, IV fluids, etc. Another example would be administering mineral or activated charcoal to a horse that has overloaded on grain.

The mineral oil or activated charcoal will absorb the excess carbohydrates and/or toxins within the colon and prevent them from being absorbed into systemic circulation.

Equally important is the prevention of further damage to the lamina. Treatment directed towards the lamina includes icing

the feet, especially within the first minutes to hour of noticing clinical signs. Putting your horse in a stall with deep bedding of sand or fine wood shavings is another therapy directed toward protecting the lamina.

Sand is the best bedding for horses with laminitis. The sand will mold to the bottom of the horse's foot, which will help relieve some of the stress on the horse's hoof wall.

Administering an anti-inflammatory such as Bute is also indicated. The Bute will help relieve some pain as well as protect the lamina from further damage secondary to the inflammatory cytokines. The horse should be taken off all feed, especially feeds that contain molasses or complex carbohydrates. Generally, horses with laminitis can be fed free choice grass hay.

Hoof care is another critical branch of therapy for a horse with laminitis. Within the first few days of a horse developing laminitis, your veterinarian will work with a farrier to place a support shoe on the horse.

This support shoe will transfer the weight from the hoof wall to the sole and frog of the foot. The support shoe is a better long-term remedy for a horse with laminitis compared to putting a horse in a stall with deep bedding of sand or wood shavings.

Prevention of laminitis

Laminitis is a painful and debilitating disease. Prevention of laminitis is always better than trying to cure the disease. One good prevention technique is to recognize horses that are predis-



This horse has an equine metabolic syndrome. The fat is accumulated at the typical locations for a horse with this type of disease. (Photo courtesy of Stance Equine)

posed to developing laminitis. Horses with endocrine disorders like equine metabolic syndrome or, Cushing's disease are more prone to developing laminitis than the average horse.

Horses with equine metabolic syndrome are considered easy keepers. They will also have regional fat deposits around the tail head, crest of the neck or behind the shoulders. A horse with Cushing's disease can have similar clinical signs as a horse with metabolic syndrome, plus they will have long, coarse hair coats that do not shed in the summer.

Horses with these endocrine disorders should be fed diets low in starch and high in fat and fiber. Equine Senior feeds are good examples of a feed that is low in carbohydrate and high in fat and starch.

Also feeding these horses sev-

eral times a day helps to mimic the natural feeding habits of a horse. Horses with endocrine disorders need to be placed on medication to help stabilize their hormone imbalances.

Consult with your veterinarian to decide which medication your horse may need.

Another potential cause of laminitis is severe systemic inflammation or infection, which can be seen in mares with a retained placenta. The mare should pass her placenta within one to two hours of parturition. If the mare has not passed her placenta in this time, you should contact your veterinarian as soon as possible to initiate therapy to get the placenta passed.

Using black walnut shavings as bedding is also a known cause of laminitis in a horse. This type of bedding is uncommon in Okla-

homa and Texas and usually is not an issue.

Overloading a limb secondary to a severe lameness in the opposite limb is a known risk factor for laminitis. The horse will develop laminitis in the limb that is being overloaded. This is also known as support limb laminitis. The reason the weight bearing limb develops laminitis is unknown.

One theory is a lack of blood supply to the foot. As a horse walks, it will mechanically push blood to and from the foot and the lamina within the foot.

Without walking, stagnant blood will accumulate within the hoof, which could cause damage to the lamina. Another theory is the shear mechanical force of supporting all of the horse's weight will cause damage to the lamina and the horse will develop laminitis.

To help prevent support limb laminitis, a support shoe should

be placed on the foot of the sound limb to help transfer the weight from the hoof wall to the sole or frog. This support shoe needs to be placed prior to the sound limb developing laminitis.

In order to place the shoe on the sound limb, the lame leg may need a temporary nerve block so that the horse will allow the farrier to pick up the sound limb while supporting its weight on the lame limb.

In conclusion, laminitis is a disease that can be scary for horse owners, trainers and veterinarians alike. This disease claims hundreds of horse's lives each year. As we begin to better understand the exact cause of laminitis, new and more effective treatment techniques are being used to help save horses' lives.

It cannot be stressed enough that the best way to deal with laminitis is to prevent it altogether. ☒



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That Girl WAS A COWBOY

By Ddee Haynes *Mary Lou Barnard*

Sitting between two of my long-time dear friends in the Leedey, Okla., gymnasium, we chatted quietly as the auditorium filled to capacity. As I watched the people file in and take their seats, my emotions ran from sadness to joy. My heart ached with sadness because we were not there to attend a school function. Instead we were all gathered to say “see you again” to a legend of a lady, Mary Lou Barnard. Mixed in with the sadness of saying goodbye, I felt joy for having been blessed to have known Mary Lou.

Mary Lou was a tiny thing, barely standing 5 feet 4 inches. Although small in stature, she was a giant of a person and left a boot print on this world that can never be filled nor forgotten.

Mary Lou was born with an adventurous soul, a strong will and a special gift, which could not have been learned or taught, when it came to riding and training horses. I would bet my life savings that tiny little lady forgot more about training a horse than most will ever know. She was the real-deal, a true cowboy, and it showed even at a young age.

When Mary Lou was just a child, the horses would stand under the hayloft of the barn and eat. One of Mary Lou’s favorite things to do was jump out of the loft onto the back of her horse while he was eating. One day instead of jumping onto her usual mount, she chose to jump onto another horse named Trixie. Trixie did not take kindly to this and took off running and bucking. With nothing but a mane to hold onto, Mary Lou held on with all her might and eventually rode Trixie to a stop.

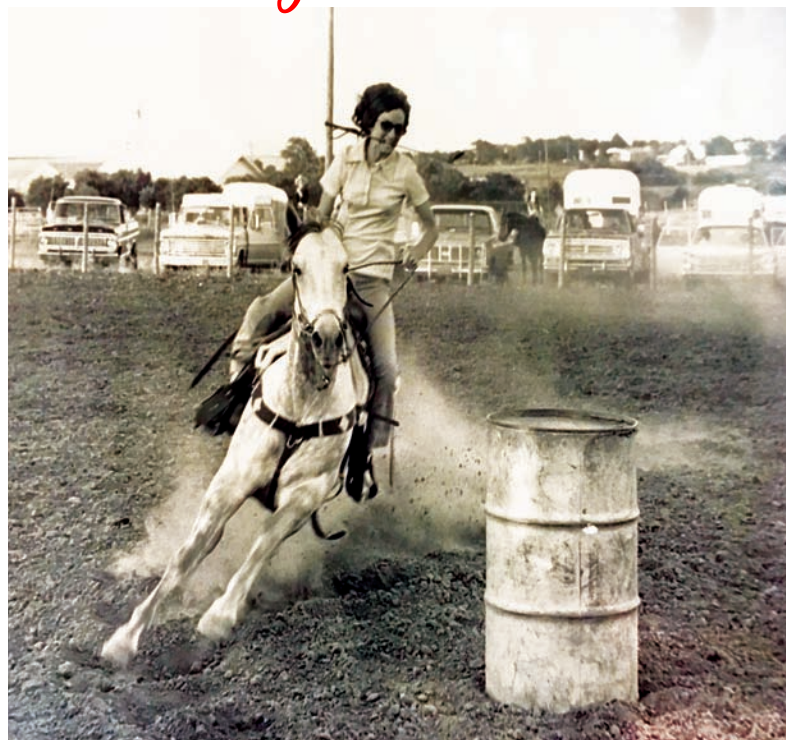
Mary Lou met the love of her

life, Eddie Barnard, when she was in high school. A few months after graduating, Mary Lou and Eddie tied the knot and began their life together. From this union they had two daughters, Monica and Jackie, and nine grandchildren.

Mary Lou was most happy in the saddle helping Eddie with their cattle and training horses. One of the first barrel horses she trained was a horse named “Waco.” She and Waco were the team to beat and traveled many miles up and down the highway to rodeos. Not only was Waco a wicked barrel horse, Eddie also used him for team roping.

Eventually Waco was passed down to Monica and Jackie who began using him in junior rodeos. One day while changing his saddle at one of the junior rodeos, Waco dropped his head to graze. The reins were still on his neck and when he moved his foot he stepped through the reins. Startled, Waco reared and fell over backwards. When he got up he was blind and only able to see shadows. With speed events no longer an option, Mary Lou starting riding him at reining events, even competing at the American Quarter Horse Association Show at the Oklahoma State Fair.

One day, Mary Lou told Eddie she was going to a horse sale “just to watch.” Instead, she came home with a “cheap” bay mare she paid \$900 for. When Eddie got home he was “not happy.” It was one of the few times the girls could remember their parents fighting. Mary Lou’s defense was the mare was pretty and she was out of a stud by the name of “Dr. Glover.” That little mare that caused such a stink was registered as “Dr.’s Nurse,” also known as “Nurse.”



Mary Lou and Waco competing in a barrel race in 1974. (Photo courtesy of the Barnard family)

Nurse proved her worth over time. During her lifetime, Nurse worked every event known to rodeo from barrel racing to team roping, and she did every event well. When Jackie was 12 years old, she and Nurse won their first saddle.

Throughout the years, Nurse made numerous trips to the National High School and National College Rodeo finals. Not only did she carry both Monica and Jackie to success, she carried five of the grandkids, Erin, Elli, Baili, Ethan and Ean, during her 20 years as a rodeo horse. Nurse and Jackie even placed and won money at a Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association in 1986. That cheap bay mare was as unique and smart as the lady who purchased her. I can’t help but think that Mary Lou, said a few “I told you so’s”

at poor Eddie.

Mary Lou’s natural ability with a horse was uncanny. Her favorite bit to use was a mule bit. To anyone not familiar with a mule bit, it can be a harsh bit for a horse, especially in the wrong hands. But Mary Lou never put the bit in the horses’ mouth. Instead she placed it over the horse’s nose.

Nothing Mary Lou did was by force. She was blessed with a natural feel for a horse and seemed to be able to get into the minds of the horses she rode.

Aside from that special ability, Mary Lou could not have used force even if she had chosen, because she had no strength in her hands. Mary Lou had been diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis in her early 20’s. RA is a form of arthritis that causes pain, swelling, stiffness, weakness and loss of

function in the joints.

Around 2005 Mary Lou had a stroke. She was forced to use a wheelchair for mobility, but that did not stop her. Not long after she had begun using a wheelchair, Eddie purchased a new roping horse.

As life goes, Eddie had been working a lot of hours and much to Mary Lou's dislike had not had much time to ride his new horse. One day, Eddie came home from work to see barrels set up in the arena.

Upon further inspection he found wheelchair tracks in the arena, a wet saddle pad and his roping horse looking sweaty. Seems Mary Lou had taken it upon herself to exercise Eddie's new horse.

Mary Lou spent countless hours in the arena passing her knowledge down to not only to her family but anyone willing to learn. A few years back her

grandson Ean had been working a young horse. Ean could not get the horse to work off his backend. Ean went over to Mary Lou who had been watching from beside the arena. When Ean asked her, "Why does he keep turning on his front end?" She looked at him and said, "Because you aren't doing it right!"

Throughout the years Mary Lou could have easily given up and taken a seat on the side-lines. Instead she chose to live her life to the fullest.

She loved hard, laughed hard and enjoyed each moment she was given. In all the time I knew her I never heard her complain about the cards she had been dealt. She never stopped experiencing life.

Thank you, Mary Lou, for showing me the true meaning of Cowgirl Tough and to never make excuses not to chase your dreams.

Until next time...🐾



Mary Lou and Waco after winning the reining event at a Quarter Horse show. (Photo courtesy of the Barnard family)

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Life of a Ranch Wife

By Lanna Mills

It is hard to believe that it is already Christmas time again, and we are wrapping up 2017. We are all hurrying to purchase those Christmas gifts, wrap them and place them under the tree. We all have those family members who are just a little harder to buy for than others.

Cowboys and ranchers can be difficult to shop for. First, if they need something, most often it is an urgent right now type of situation and there is no waiting around in hopes that Santa will bring it; they just go get it themselves.

Second, cowboys and ranchers can be particular. They have certain styles and brands that they like of almost everything and they don't stray. Last, cowboys and ranchers are known for using things until they are no longer useable: I mean 100 percent worn out and then they will probably find a new "use" for it. So what gifts do we give these not so easy to buy for folks? Here are some ideas:

A new pair of handmade boots always makes a great gift. Just make sure you know the correct size, height of the tops, heel preference, the type of toe, the color and type of edge for the tops, color for vamps (foot) and whether they like rough out or smooth and stitching design. If they already own a pair they probably have a maker that they prefer.

Perhaps he needs a new hat. Be sure to know what size, brim size, color, and what brand they like best. Whether straw or felt, the hat will need to be shaped, but it's probably best to let him do that. If buying him a new straw hat for the coming spring, you may even get it on sale this time of year.

When it comes to cowboys, saddles, tack and ropes never dis-

appoint. Saddles are quite pricey so get ready to shell out some cash. Like with everything else there are so many choices: maker, seat size, tree style, rough out or tooling, seat rigged, and round or square skirt. No matter how much tack a cowboy has, it will never be enough. Handmade bridles, bits, spurs, buckles, leggings, cinches, hobbles and collars are sure to please. If it is something they already have they can always swap it for something else they've been wanting. Ropes do not last long especially if they are used often, so they can always use a new rope or two. Just keep in mind that cowboys most often have a preferred brand and stiffness.

Get your rancher husband some equipment and you will probably get wife of the year award. A new chute to work cattle, a new trailer, or a set of portable pens will make him love you forever, but get ready to spend several thousand dollars. Well, he may not love you so much when he finds out that you spent that much money! Some less expensive tools for around the ranch include calf pullers, de-horners, knives, hot-shots, sirens, fence stretchers, post drivers and water tanks.

I do not know a single cattleman or cattlemaster who wouldn't mind getting free hay or feed. So for that person who has it all, this may be the best bet. Cattlemen can never have too much feed or hay, and it will get used.

Clothes are a good go-to when all else fails. Just don't be surprised to see that nice new \$50 pearl snap shirt ripped up or covered in cow manure and dirt. I hide my husband's "good clothes" in the back of the closet and only bring them out for special occa-



Merry Christmas from the Mills' family. (Photo by Lanna Mills)

sions because to him, all clothes are work clothes.

We cannot leave out the little cowpokes and ranchers! If your kid is anything like my two-year-old son, they will love anything that has to do with cows or horses. Millions of different farm/ranch toys are on the market today from sets that include animals, barn, fence and even windmills to handmade metal trucks and trailers that look just like daddy's. If your house already looks like a toy store blew up, then maybe you are looking for something besides toys this year. A few ideas that kids are

sure to love include a pony, a new cow dog pup, a rope and roping dummy, a bottle calf, new boots, hat or cowboy clothes.

Last year my husband and I bought ourselves a new cattle chute for Christmas and it sure has been nice. Let's all try not to stress too much about gifts and forget what Christmas is all about. No matter the gifts, we will all enjoy our time with family making memories. Looking back, we won't remember what we got or gave but the time we spent with each other.

Merry Christmas y'all! ❄️

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Holly Cluster COOKIES

Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 15-20

Ingredients:

3 Tablespoons Margarine
1 10-ounce package (10 ounces) Marshmallows
Green Food Coloring
5 cups Cornflakes
Vegetable Cooking Spray
Red Hot Candies

Instructions:

Melt margarine in large saucepan over low heat. Add marshmallows and stir until completely melted. Add green food color until desired color is achieved. Remove from heat. Mix in cornflakes and stir until well coated. Spray wax paper with cooking spray and drop mixture by the spoonful. Add 3 to 4 red hots on each cluster. 🍪

My Aunt Jody has made these cookies every year for Christmas since before I can remember, and they have always been my favorite. She always makes extra so there will be plenty for me to take home and enjoy after the festivities. Christmas just wouldn't be the same without them. Beware, they do turn everyone's mouth dark green so it is impossible to sneak one and go unnoticed!

- Lacey



HOWARD RANCH

Parley Vous Francais? (Do you speak French?)

By Judy Wade

It is 4,896 miles from Ringling, Okla., to Paris, France. This is the story of how one young man made that journey.

His great-great-grandfather Noah, his great-grandfather Wilton, his grandfather Paul and his father Randall "Randy" were all ranchers. Shawn Howard grew up on a ranch, riding horses, doing all the things a cowboy does. In high school he played baseball and became interested in rodeo, where he team roped.

In 1991, working as a welder after graduating from Ringling

High School four years prior, he saw an advertisement in a rodeo magazine for try-outs for positions in the soon-to-open Euro Disney outside of Paris. As a lark, he and some friends went to Mesquite, Texas, and tried out. Returning to work, it was several months before he got a phone call asking if he was still interested.

"I was at the barn getting ready to go rope and my mom yelled at me and said someone from Disney was on the phone," he explained. "Because it had been so long since the audition, I had forgotten about

it and thought it was a joke so I hung up. Mom yelled out again, 'It's that same woman calling back!' I'm thinking what if it really was Mickey Mouse calling and I'm already fired because I hung up on the Mouse?"

That's where Shawn Howard's life took a different direction.

Howard was soon on a plane headed for Orlando, Fla., where he joined the group who had all been selected for this adventure before the flight to France.

"He'll be back soon," his father Randy thought.

He was wrong. More than 25 years later, Howard is still working for what is now Disneyland Paris.

"There were about 35 cowboys and 30 Indians," Howard added. "Some of those Indians had never been off the reservation let alone in a taxi or airplane. I thought, 'Oh, boy, is this going to be fun, or is this going to be like the battle at Little Big Horn?'"

Arriving in Paris after an 11-hour flight, they found two obstacles. First, it was cold.

"The coldest I had ever been,"



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Eagle Lake Estate; 767 acres, m/l, Estate home, guest house, cabin, 42 acre lake, ponds, live creek, fencing, improved grasses, Beautiful flat meadows to rock climbing cliffs \$4,895,000



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Two Lakes Ranch; 1,728 acres, m/l, Two 11-acre lakes, 32 ponds, runs 300 cow/calf pairs & 2k bales of hay, custom home, several outbuildings, excellent hunting \$4,924,800



Agri Enterprise; 3,750 acres, m/l, Multiple income producing entities; ranch, farm, feedlot, sod farm, arena, & irrigation \$34,950,000



Silver Eagle Preserve; 1379 acres, m/l, Modern lodge, exceptional hunting, ponds, atv trails, beautiful views, 300 net mineral acres included \$1,712,500



Canadian River Ranch; 854 acres, m/l, Mostly open pasture, Bermuda and native grasses, modern brick home, barn, shop, steel working pens, ponds, some minerals included. \$2,500,000



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he explained.

Next was the language barrier.

“Some of the guys thought if you spoke louder, the French people would understand. They did not,” Howard recalled.

First came working with the stunt coordinator, Mario Luraschi, one of the most famous horse stunt men in Europe. The first day everyone lined up to check out a saddle. The line was so long and it was so cold Howard went back to the bus to warm up. By the time he got in line, all the saddles had been issued and more would not be available for three weeks so “I had to ride bareback. The horse I was assigned was named “Snowflake,” but it should have been “Cocaine.” No saddle, cold, wet and rainy—no problem. After my riding without a saddle for three weeks, they left me as an Indian.”

“Luraschi is amazing with horses,” Howard continued. “I learned a lot. As a rodeo cowboy and team roper, I had spent all my life trying to stay on a horse, and now he’s wanting me to fall off and pull the horse over for horse falls!”

Disneyland Paris is actually about 30 miles east of Paris. The 4,800 acre park that opened in April 1992 has a multitude of attractions and draws over 13 million visitors each year.

Howard’s role began with Buffalo Bills Wild West Show.

“I played an Indian for eight year and sometimes was a cowboy, he explained. “Now I drive the stagecoach.”

He can expertly handle a four-up and a six-up hitch to drive a wagon.

Michael Eisner, the CEO of the Walt Disney World Florida Company, loved the western way of life. He wanted something real and unique for the opening of the new Disney Park in Paris. The Europeans are fascinated by the cowboys and Indians, but all they have seen is on television or the internet. So he put together a remake of the

Buffalo Bills Wild West Show. The original Buffalo Bills Wild West Show toured Europe eight times, the first four tours between 1887 and 1892, and the last four from 1902 to 1906. The new show has been an enormous hit.

“I was part of the history-making reenactment of a show that started back in the 1800’s,” Howard remarked. “Not a lot of people can say they are a part of history like this—bringing this all to life with actors like Peter MacLean who played Buffalo Bill, Tim Reeves as Sitting Bull and one of the best hands I’ve seen on a horse is Sonna Warvell who plays Annie Oakley. Working with actors like this only brings out the best in you. You could not have chosen any better actors to play these roles. They are the best!”

The show has toured all over Europe.

Howard has also been seen jousting, fencing, Roman riding, team roping, wrecking wagons and doing all sorts of stunts on horses. All of this led to another opportunity—doing stunt work in Hollywood. He has appeared in the television series “Highlander” as the stunt double for Adrian Paul who played the role of Duncan Macleod, “Taken,” “Wild Wild West,” “Transporter,” “Sahara,” “Grand Champion” and “Magnificent Seven” the series. He has also been to Australia and New Zealand.

All this does not come without a toll on the body. Howard has had four knee surgeries, a hip replacement and shoulder reconstruction among other surgeries to combat his work injuries.

“A lot of people only see the glamour part of what I do for a living,” Howard went on. “Doing anything great comes with a lot of sacrifices. It can be hard on a family, being gone all the time, having to put up with the ups and downs of work or not working at all. I have been very lucky because my mom and dad gave me the gift
See HOWARD page 28



Howard as a stagecoach driver. (Photo courtesy of Shawn Howard)



Three generations of Howards. Shawn, his son Levy, and his father Randy. (Photo courtesy of Shawn Howard)

HOWARD

Continued from page 27

of not giving up no matter how bad I was hurt. Some people will not do something or not take a chance if they know they could get hurt. Sacrifice has made me a great living.”

Now Howard is trying to take his professional life in a different direction. He is creating, producing and directing videos. Some are music videos, one shows bull riding in France, one gives the highlights of Buffalo Bills Wild West Show, one is about the Spanish bull leapers and another is a soccer show called Second Chance, just to name a few.

His major project is a reality show made for television that he is calling True Grit right now, but the title may change. Formatted as a series, it features two teams of young cowboys and cowgirls—

one from Oklahoma and one from Texas—paired with well-known professionals from the rodeo world who will mentor them. The teams will compete in a sort of tournament style with eliminations each week. The winner will receive \$25,000 to be paid after that person completes a college degree. Howard explained that a new series would then begin, pitting teams and mentors from two different states.


“I owe a lot to rodeo because if it were not for rodeo I would not be in the place I am now,” Howard explained. “I want to give back to the sport.”

The Howard family lives outside Paris. Daughter Tatum Jo is 16, speaks French, English and Dutch and is learning Spanish. She is studying to make a career

in the fashion industry, specifically in hair and makeup. Son Levy Randall is 15 and speaks French, English and Dutch and plays tennis.

“There’s a saying in the West that in his lifetime a man is entitled to one good horse, one good dog and one good wife,” he concluded. “I’ve been blessed to have two good horses, two good dogs, two good women, two good kids and two great super heroes. I’m proud to call them Mom and Dad. Working for the Disney Company has opened doors for me, but being able to do a job and do a job well has opened more doors for me.”

It is a good thing he did not hang up on the mouse.

For more information about Howard’s projects, find him on Facebook. 



Howard as a “bad Indian.”(Photo courtesy of Shawn Howard)

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ART WITH SPARKS

John Jennings

Jennings spends 20 to 100 hours working on a pair of spurs. (Photo by Laci Jones)



ART WITH SPARKS

John Jennings

Raised under the city lights of California, John Jennings is not your typical Californian. Born in El Centro, Calif., Jennings considered himself a “redneck,” spending many days hunting and fishing on the many California golf courses in Palm Springs, Calif.

“I would get kicked out of golf courses,” he said followed by a chuckle. “The security guards would run us off, and we would go to a different one.”

He was always “tinkering” with knives, guns and other items. Jennings recalled using circular saws as a child, saying it was “second nature.” At 17 years old, he dropped out of high school and began working full-time. Like his father, Jennings worked in construction.

“I was making \$500 per week 30 years ago, which was pretty good money,” Jennings explained. “I moved out to my own apartment and just started doing my thing. Looking back, I wish I had gone to school because my son’s going to Oklahoma Baptist University, and he’s got so many opportunities.”

Jennings “bounced around” from job to job, never working at the same place for more than 18 months. His career took a backseat when he was diagnosed with Idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura in his mid-20’s. ITP is an autoimmune disease where the immune system sees blood platelets as foreign object.

“We were fixing to deer hunt out in the desert,” Jennings began. “I had these big ole bruises, and I didn’t think much of it.”

Jennings chalked the bruises up to clumsiness, but his wife suggested he visit the doctor to be sure. After his results came in, his doctor told him he needed to stay home, but Jennings was in denial.

“I felt 100 percent perfect. There’s nothing wrong with me,” he said. “I said, ‘No, I’m going deer hunting.’ They said, ‘Well, go ahead, but even a jar against a seatbelt could kill you.’”

Jennings underwent many surgeries and chemotherapy treatments as well as took a daily concoction of pills to cure ITP.

One chemotherapy treatment increased his appetite, causing his weight to rise to 250 pounds.

“I did this for three years, and it finally just

went away,” Jennings added. “By the grace of God, it went away.”

“
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NOT WORK ON
THE AIRPLANE
THAT HE’S FLY-
ING ACROSS THE
COUNTRY. A GOOD
HORSEMAN DOES
NOT EQUATE TO
BEING ABLE TO DO
SILVERWORK AND
VICE VERSA.”

John Jennings

The southern California native said the experience changed his outlook on life. Ten years ago, Jennings and his family moved to Shawnee, Okla. He said the expense, traffic, regulations and the mounting doctor bills as well as his parents influenced his decision to relocate to the Sooner state.

“My parents wanted out of California 30 years ago, so they headed east on I-40 to look around,” he explained. “They originally were

going to look in Arkansas, but they got stuck in a hail storm in Shawnee and stayed the night.”

Jennings said he lived in Shawnee, Okla., when he was eight years old, but moved back to California following the oil crash in the ‘80s. His parents later retired in Oklahoma.

“When I was kind of fed up with California too, my mom called and said, ‘There’s this really cute little house right across the street,’ Jennings recalled. “It was a dump. My wife cried when she first saw it.”

Moving to Pottawatomie County allowed the California native to meet Bill Madole, a local bit and spur maker and neighbor of the Jennings family. Madole owned the land adjacent to Jennings, which overlooked the North Canadian River.

“[Madole] owns three corners of this river,” Jennings explained. “Once I found that out, I thought, ‘Man, I would like to hunt that.’”

Jennings worked out a trade with the landowner for hunting privileges. The construction worker completed projects like fixing Madole’s roof or installing a new door. Jennings began watching Madole work and thought it would be “cool to try.”

Jennings was quickly discouraged once the talented blacksmith told him how much the equipment cost. After, he didn’t give spur making as a side-business another thought. Then things changed. Four years ago Madole was preparing to leave for the National Finals Rodeo where he had a booth.

“I said, ‘I’ll help you get ready for the NFR, and you show me how to make spurs,’” Jennings recalled. “He was sitting there, engraving while we were talking, and he said, ‘okay.’”

The apprentice was tasked with filing spur rowels, which he described as a “monotonous” task. He continued to learn from the expert, copying his style of spur making.

“We do what is called ‘Texas-style spurs,’” Jennings explained. “The Texas-style is a bit more utilitarian than the Mexican- or California-style spurs.”

The Mexican and California-style spurs are more ornate with more silverwork, and they have a larger rowel than the Texas-style, he added. The Texas-style is more subdued.

Continued on page 34

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ART WITH SPARKS

John Jennings

Continued from page 32

Jennings said he did not experiment with other styles, contributing most of his influence from his teacher.

“I rely heavily on his style because, to me, that’s how it gets passed down,” he stated. “There’s a guy named Kevin Burns whose spurs are pretty expensive. He learned from a guy named Jerry Cates. If you look at a Burns spur, it looks a whole lot like Cates.”

Jennings said the same could be said of Billy Klapper, who learned from “the Godfather” of Texas-style spurs, Adolph Bayers.

“I remember I sold a couple pair to a guy in Stillwater, Okla., who was a trader,” he recalled. “He was carrying a pair of mine around a big spur show in Abilene, Texas. Another spur maker said, ‘Oh, you’ve got a pair of Madole spurs,’ and he said, ‘No, this is Jennings’ spurs, but he learned from Madole.’ This is how distinctive my buddy’s style is.”

He said the distinction of the spurs could be seen in the details. Many spur makers do not engrave in the steel, but Jennings and Madole make individual cuts in the steel to create a distinct design. Also, the area between the band and the shank is squared off, which requires more effort.

While he is inspired by Madole’s work, Jennings also has more resources available than his mentor had.

“I look all the time on the internet, seeing what’s out there and getting ideas,” Jennings explained. “If [Madole] wanted to see spurs, he had to drive to Amarillo, Texas, to a show. I think it’s just easier for people to get started across the board nowadays.”

Jennings said he never thought he would pick up the art of spur making because his background did not include horsemanship. The spur maker sent a pair he was proud of to a friend, who took them to a horseman. The horseman complimented the spurs, and Jennings’ friend mentioned he does not ride horses. The horseman said, “Well, that’s kind of a fraud.”

“My take on it is the guy who builds NA-SCAR cars probably can’t drive them or a pilot does not work on the airplane that he’s flying across the country,” the spur maker explained. “A good horseman does not equate to being



The distinction of Jennings’ spurs can be seen in the details. (Photo courtesy of John Jennings)

able to do silverwork and vice versa.”

Jennings said his first pair of spurs were “good” for a first pair.

The spur maker has improved since then, stating a good set of spurs takes time and attention to detail. Lately, Jennings has been inspired by old-fashioned designs including the 100-year-old design, gal-leg spurs.

“The gal-leg spurs are a really old-fashioned patterned, but every guy has to draw his own,” he explained. “Every guy’s gal-leg spurs are a little bit different.”

On average, Jennings spends 20 to 100 hours on a pair of spurs. The process begins with design. His background in sculpting ceramics helped him become the spur maker he is today.

Jennings traces his new designs on paper, then copper before cutting it out. The design is traced on the steel, which is then cut with a bandsaw. Once the bands are cut, the spurs are placed in the forge until the metal is red-hot. They are then formed into the shape of a spur. The shank is then welded to the band and filed to smooth out any indentions.

The design for the silver is planned, then cut with a small saw and soldered on the spur. Once the spur maker cleans the spur, it is ready

for engraving.

“It’s like another well-known spur maker said, ‘You want to have a really nice, delicious cake,’” Jennings explained. “The metaphor is about having a real quality spur before you ever put silver or engraving on. The decoration is just that, the icing on the cake.”

Jennings said what differentiates his and Madole’s spurs from other spur makers is their spurs are sterling silver mounted while others use nickel silver. For a swan-design spur, Jennings uses 925 silver or pure silver, which is considered more malleable than other metals.

In the past four years, the spur maker has completed more than 50 projects ranging from buckles to spurs. While buckles take less time, his spurs earn Jennings more money. His spurs cost anywhere from \$650 to \$2,500. Jennings has also competed in spur shows, stating winning is what drives him forward.

“When I’m sitting here, thinking filing on all of these spurs sucks, I think about how I want to win,” the spur maker commented. “That’s why I do it. That’s what keeps me going.”

Jennings earned the first place prize at the Cowboy True Art Show in Wichita Falls, Texas, and plans to compete again next year.

To keep his patience while working, the spur maker listens to old outlaw country including Waylon Jennings and George Jones while working on projects. He is currently working on spurs featuring a horse head, which he has invested 20 hours in thus far.

Jennings still works in construction full-time. However, he said rainy days and other construction delays allow him ample time to devote to his craft.

Jennings still lives in Shawnee, Okla., with his wife, Candace, who also helps contribute to his side-business. Together, they have four children ranging from ages six to 26—Char, John, Kate and Ella. When asked what advice he would give to a new spur maker, he referred back to the advice given by his mentor.

“[Madole] told me a while back, ‘Slow down, do a nice job, which we both know that you can do,’” he recalled. “Don’t be in such a hurry.”

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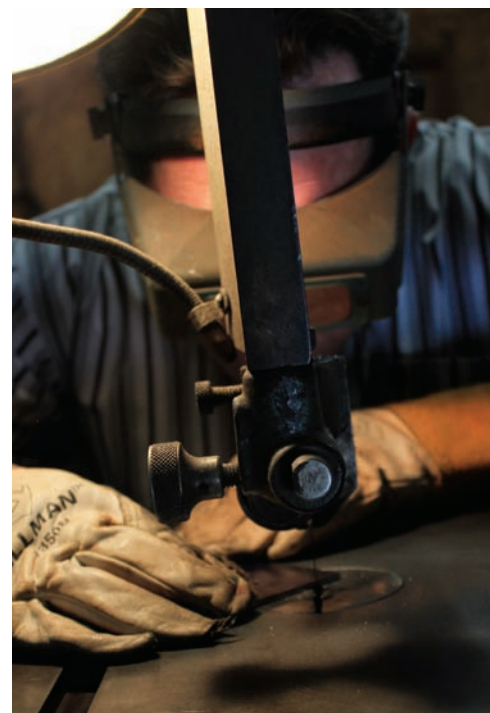


PHOTO DETAILS

(Top to bottom) John Jennings has spent about 20 hours working on this horse-head shank. Jennings welds on a pair of spurs. The spur maker files on his current project at his home. Jennings cuts a buckle at Bill Madole's shop in Shawnee, Okla. Jennings heating a spur in the forge. (Photos by Laci Jones)

WHERE THE PAVED ROAD ENDS

TIS THE SEASON

BY BETH WATKINS

My first-born daughter Jessica's birthday is Nov. 30. In honor of her birthday, I never let the Christmas season begin until we are finished celebrating her. So, on the morning of Dec. 1, I break out Elvis' "Blue Christmas" album and begin transforming our home into a Winter Wonderland.

When the kids were growing up, we lived in a neighborhood where everyone decorated their houses with Christmas lights. Mothers baked and decorated cookies before rushing their kids off to church for their Christmas Pageant practice.

We didn't have Pinterest back then, so we "homeroom moms" would huddle up at the one-and-only Hobby Lobby to come up with a special craft for the kids to make at their school Christmas party. Oh, the pressure to be perfect! I think I just broke out in hives re-living those magical moments. No wonder I looked forward to popping a cork on that champagne bottle on New Year's Eve.

My Decembers are slower these days. I still transform my home into a Winter Wonderland. I still bake and decorate cookies, and I still buy Christmas cards I never get around to sending.

The birth of Jesus is still the reason for the season, the center of our celebration, but five days after we celebrate our Lord and Savior's birthday, we celebrate mine, and as if this month needed just one more reason to celebrate, our anniversary is in December.

Throughout the years I've collected a plethora of Christmas paraphernalia, which are carefully stored in big Rubbermaid tubs. When I lived near my kids, my son and sons-in-law were responsible for retrieving the tubs out of the attic. I always thought it would be a great idea if we had a lift that would lower the tubs down through the garage ceiling, sort of like a tub elevator. That way I could just do it myself.

And now, living away from my son and sons-in-law means the task of bringing in all those Christmas tubs is left up to me and Ole "Ba-Humbug!" But, I now have my lift. The tubs are stored in the shop's attic space. The lift is our John Deere tractor, GW puts the bucket



up to the attic level, I slide the tubs into it, then they are transferred over to the flatbed of the feed truck and hauled over to the house.

Scrooge counted them last year as he brought them in the house and again as he hauled them back out of the house. He counted them again after Christmas as he hauled them back in the house and finally again as he hauled them out of the house to return to storage. Ebenezer doesn't see the need for my six themed Christmas trees either. I've collected ornaments for almost 40 years, and I admit, it might be classified as a bit anal, but I cannot mix themes on one tree! He should understand that because he is a little obsessive about his farm equipment: it should all be green and yellow.

GW and I eloped on Dec. 13, 2014, so our first Christmas together wasn't very elaborate. Most of my things had been taken to storage waiting on the new house to be built. I managed to decorate one small tree and set out a nativity scene. I was hoping we would be in our new home for our next Christmas.

I was going to need two new trees, so I took advantage of the "half price after-Christmas sale." In order to avoid the crowds, I went online to shop for my new trees. I do my Black

Friday shopping online also, for the simple reason I don't look good in black and white stripes, and orange is definitely not my color. I detest standing in line, and I don't shop well with others.

I found the perfect trees online, the price was right, but the timing was wrong. The house took a little longer to complete. The two huge Christmas tree boxes took up space in Mr. Krank's garage for almost two years. We moved in last year, the weekend before Thanksgiving. The living room tree has "A Homespun, Country Christmas" theme, so I had picked a very "real looking" pre-lit tree.

The picture of the tree was beautiful. The description said it had "a dusting of frost." Last year, when I opened the box, I discovered the tree itself had been dipped in red, green, silver, and gold glitter. I was horrified at the mess it would create for years to come. After constructing and man-handling this tree into place, we had glitter everywhere, I mean everywhere.

Then, there is the nine foot tree I had ordered for my parlor, which was supposed to have been somewhat of a slim line tree. We opened the box; it wasn't. Therefore, furniture had to be moved to get it into position, which caused the Grinch's heart to shrink down to the size of a cranberry.

He was a bit cranky during the decking of the halls with boughs of holly. But, after the last branch of mistletoe was hung and the first of many Christmas kisses were shared, the Grinch's small heart grew three sizes. I could tell he was warming up to my Winter Wonderland. I chose that moment to mention expanding the magic to the outdoors this year. The Grinch's eyes squinted, and through a snarl he said, "I'm pretty sure it's a law in Pittsburg County that you don't hang Christmas lights on your house if you live at the end of a dirt road." My response was, "You better not lie; I'm telling you why; Santa Claus is coming to town!"

From my family to yours: We wish you peace and joy as Christmas Day draws near and lots of love and laughter to last throughout the year. Merry Christmas y'all! ☞

Editor's Picks

CHRISTMAS GUIDE 2017



1.



2.



1. Give her the gift that will make her feel warm and cozy. This 7S Hampton sweater is ideal for those cold winter days. Visit www.SavannahSevens.com.

2. This khaki speckled pom beanie makes the perfect gift for the holiday season. Plus, 50 percent of profit from the sale of all Love Your Melon products is donated to help the fight against pediatric cancer. Visit www.loveyourmelon.com to learn more!

3. Yeti's are great for hot apple cider or hot chocolate. Customizing it with her initials or brand makes the perfect gift for any age. Visit bbarjcustomdesigns.com or visit Facebook.

4. Purses from Holy Cow Couture make the perfect gift that is functional and can be used year-round. Visit Holy Cow Couture on Facebook for more designs.

5. Nothing says, "I love you" like a personalized gift. Brooke & York offers customizable jewelry including bracelets, necklaces and more! Customize each piece with your wedding date, names of loved ones and much more. Visit www.BrookandYork.com for more designs.

5.



3.



4.



Editor's Picks

CHRISTMAS GUIDE 2017

1. Dale Wear from the clothing line of Dale Brisby, can be seen on all ages of men this season. Whether it is a cap, pullover or t-shirt with sayings like "Rodeo Time," or "On to the Next One," it is the elite rodeo gear to be wearing this season. For more pieces visit dalebrisby.com

2. For the guy who has it all, think outside the box and gift him something custom. A customized Yeti with his brand or phone case, the sky is the limit on customization. Visit bbarjcustomdesigns.com or visit his Facebook page for more designs.

3. Cowpuncher Bit, Spur and Saddlery makes these great ear-tag key chains. Add a name, brand, initials or number to give the perfect item to any guy's stocking this Christmas. See more designs on Cowpuncher Bit, Spur and Saddlery Facebook page.

4. These Anderson Bean cowboy boots will surely put a smile on his face Christmas morning. See other styles at www.Langstons.com.

5. Give him the gift that will last a lifetime with the RedHead Fire-Resistant 44-Gun Safe. View more options at www.BassPro.com.



1.



2.



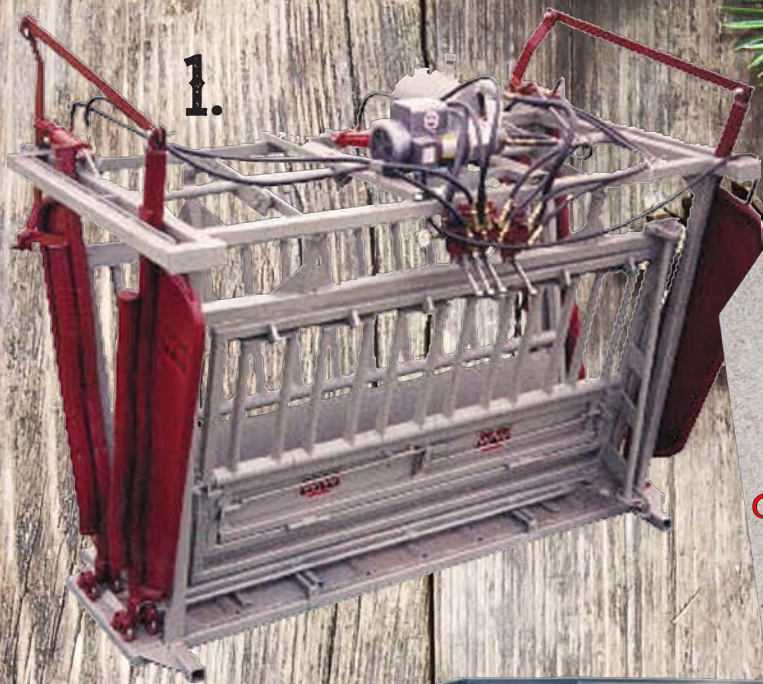
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1.

For
the
Ranch



2.

3.



4.



1. This WW Livestock Systems Ranchmaster Chute makes a great addition to any operation. It includes a pressure gauge, super quiet hydraulic system, fold-down bars that are saddle cut for extra strength and features spring-loaded latches and more. This chute and more are available at morganlivestockequip.com.

2. This Gooseneck Manufactured Roper Special Trailer is available at Texas Custom Trailers. With Schedule 40 heavy duty vertical pipe gates, one piece outer bow frame, electric brakes (all axles), 2-Dally Balls and 1 spring-loaded drop leg jack, this trailer is ready to go to work. To see other models, visit txcustomtrailers.com.

3. Chip and Joanna Gaines just released their new line, Hearth & Home. These items make a great addition to any home. See more at www.target.com.

4. The Pioneer Woman Ree Drummond bedding line is a must have this season. Add colorful linens with bold print to complement any rustic, western or farmhouse-themed room. See this style and more at walmart.com.



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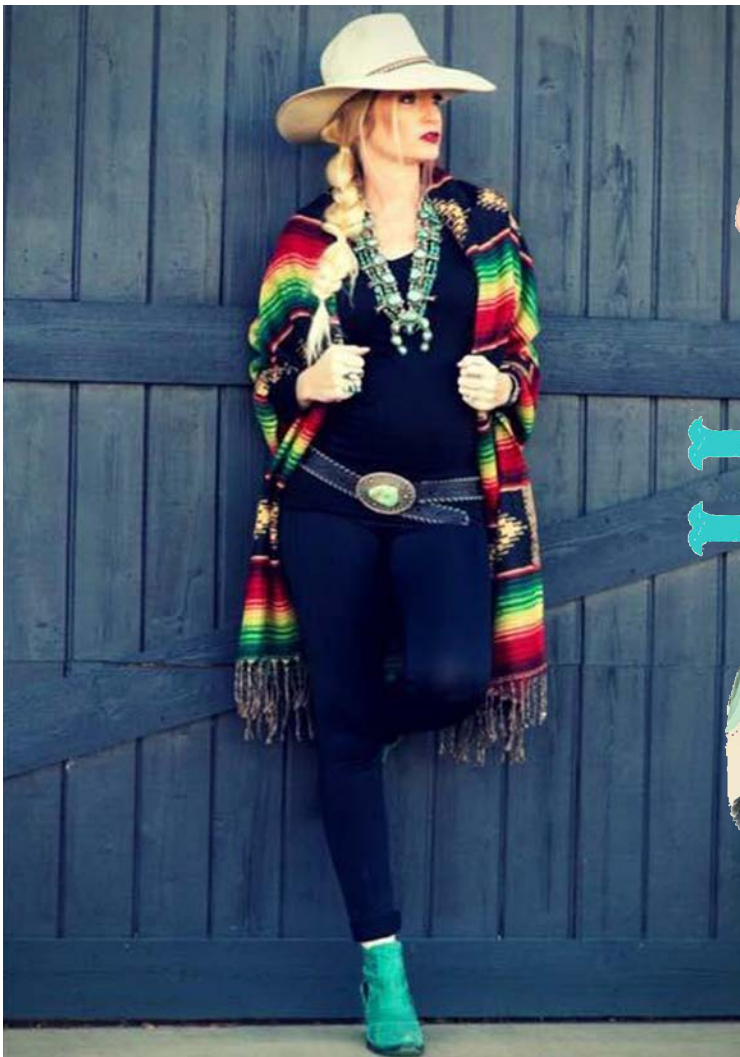


What's Christmas time in the south without a little serape? I love serape prints for so many reasons, one being you can wear it with so much and so many ways. I have some fabulous bold prints in stock right now that are sure to brighten up your holidays! Vests and shawls are great because you can dress them up or wear them casually. These also makes great gifts. Head over to the website and check out these looks and more at www.jessesjewelz.com. ☞

Happy holidays!!
 Jessica Kader
 John 3:16

A UNIQUE BOUTIQUE EXPERIENCE

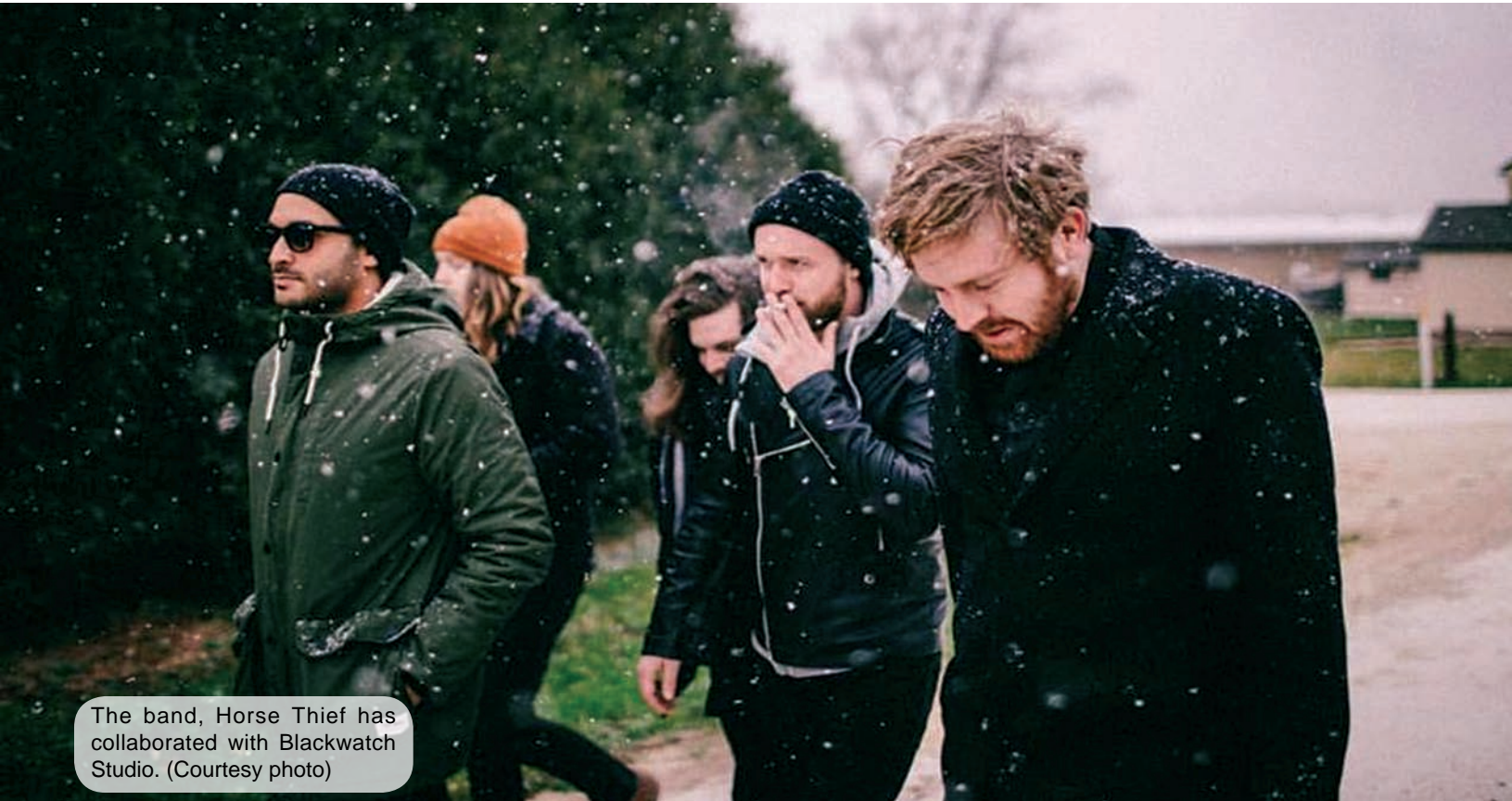
JESSE'S JEWELZ



PHOTOS BY
 © Jo H Photography

OKLAHOMA LEADING THE WAY WITH independent christmas music

By Jan Sikes



The band, Horse Thief has collaborated with Blackwatch Studio. (Courtesy photo)

Did you know the first Christmas Carol ever recorded was Jingle Bells? Banjoist, Will Lyle, made history by recording it on Oct. 30, 1889. It started a trend that still goes strong today.

Few notable carols were produced from the beginning of the 20th century until the Great Depression Era when a stream of American-originated songs came on the scene. Interestingly, most of these songs did not explicitly reference the Christian nature of the holiday. Perhaps it was a sign of the times. They included songs aimed at children, such as "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town" and "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer," which may well have begun the Christmas gift-buying frenzy. During this same period,

sentimental ballad-type songs emerged, performed by famous crooners of the era, such as "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" and "White Christmas," the latter of which remains the best-selling single of all time as of 2017.

Traditionally, most artists record Christmas songs in July. Why is that? Logically, there has to be enough time to record the album, produce it, design the album cover and send for distribution. But, can you imagine what an artist must have to do to get him or herself in the mood to sing Christmas songs when it's full-blown summer outside?

I've heard stories from fake snow and Christmas trees brought into the studio to turning the thermostat down and putting on jackets and scarves. Dolly Parton

said this to a journalist: "If I'm going to do a Christmas album—especially since I'm like a kid about Christmas anyway—I like to get into the spirit of things. I thought, well, we can't go in the studio when it's 89 or 90 degrees Fahrenheit outside and really get in the spirit of things! So, we got in, and we decorated."

And, what does all of this have to do with Oklahoma?

Several years ago, Norman, Okla., auto dealer, Jonathan Fowler, wanted his home state to be known as the Independent Christmas Music Capital of the world. So he collaborated with Chad Copelin and Jerod Evans, the owners of Blackwatch Studio in Norman, to create a Blackwatch Christmas album.

The idea was to use original

music and only Indie artists. The first album found collaborations from Oklahoma artists, Samantha Crain, Ryan Lindsey, The Workweek, Ben Kilgore, Chrome Pony, Ol' Savior, Colour Music, Sherree Chamberlain and Hector Camancho.

The second year, they stayed with the title, Blackwatch Christmas Vol II, but the third year found them branching out and calling the record Blackwatch Christmas Vol III Holly-Tonk & Jingle Beats.

The Naughty List was the title of the album in 2014 followed by Fowler VW Presents Blackwatch Christmas Vol V. They released Volume VI in 2016.

Other Indie artists who have worked on this project throughout the years are Parker Milsap, Brine

Webb, Horse Thief, Jacob Abello, Graham Colton, Denver Duncan, Beau Jennings, David Allen, Nathan Price, Ben King, Josh Evans, Jacob Tovar and many others. Sherree Chamberlain, Hector Camancho, and Samantha Crain have appeared on multiple albums.

Each album showcases some of Oklahoma's leading musical talent. And, each is unique in that the music is original even if the song is a cover because it's that artist's interpretation.

Blackwatch studio owner, Jerod Evans, was quoted saying, "It was fun goofing off with a concept approach with this, and we will definitely do that again in the future, but we were excited to put more creative control into the artists' hands and go a bit more traditional. Additionally, we've included artists outside of the region, which we hope will help broaden the audience for this an-

nual tradition."

In the true spirit of Christmas, 100 percent of the proceeds from Indie Christmas Music project goes to the Norman Elementary School music program.

Fowler told a reporter from *The Oklahoman*, "As it stacks up, it gives me faith we can work for years on this stuff and still have ideas that are out there." Fowler added, "That's what makes me know that this concept – making Oklahoma the Christmas Music Capital of the World—it's legit."

If you'd like to know more about the Blackwatch Christmas projects, you can visit: www.fowlervwchristmas.com.

So, is Santa Claus coming to town? You betcha! All over Oklahoma, you will find spectacular light displays and activities to enjoy while you listen to your favorite Christmas Carols.

Arvest Winterfest in downtown

Tulsa has quickly become the traditional kickoff of the holiday season for Tulsa area residents. The seasonal celebration is open to the public for 45 days, Nov. 24 through Jan. 7, giving everyone a chance to enjoy ice skating beneath Tulsa's skyline. With 9,000 square-feet of perfectly layered ice, it is larger than Rockefeller Center in New York City.

Just north of Tulsa in Bartlesville, Okla., you'll find the Woolaroc Wonderland of Lights at the Woolaroc Museum and Wildlife Preserve.

The grounds and buildings of Woolaroc will soon be covered with over 750,000 lights as the historic ranch transforms itself into a magical winter wonderland. The lights will be turned on Friday, Nov. 27 and will be on every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday through Dec. 20.

And if that isn't enough, the

Rhema campus in Broken Arrow, Okla., presents a yearly spectacular light extravaganza. This brilliant display of twinkling lights first began in 1982 with about 60,000 lights.

Today more than two million lights adorn the campus from Thanksgiving Eve through New Year's Day.

The glittering lights will shine every day from 5:30 to 11:30 p.m. The display typically draws more than 200,000 visitors from Oklahoma and surrounding states. Rhema's Christmas lights display was designed to be a safe, peaceful, and fun atmosphere in which people can enjoy the Christmas season.

So, pick up your favorite Indie Christmas music from Blackwatch Studio, load up the kiddos and enjoy all of the Christmas festivities Oklahoma has to offer.

Merry Christmas! 

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Chickasha Festival of Light

NOV. 18-DEC 31 • CHICKASHA

Shannon Springs Park. Chickasha, OK 73018. The Chickasha Festival of Light has been recognized as one of the top 10 holiday light shows in the nation and features more than 3.5 million twinkling lights. For more information, call **405-224-9627**.

NRHA Futurity & Adequan Championship Show

NOV. 23-DEC. 2 • OKC

Oklahoma State Fair Park. Oklahoma City, OK 73107. Each year the NRHA hosts one of the fastest growing equine events and the largest reining event in November. For more information, visit www.nrhafuturity.com.

Sulphur Horse Sale

NOV. 20-DEC. 18 • SULPHUR

Sulphur Livestock Auction. Sulphur, OK 73086. Come on out to the Sulphur Livestock Auction for horse sales on Nov. 6, Nov. 20, Dec. 4 and Dec. 18. For more information on the sales, visit www.sulphurlivestockauction.com.

2017 POKER RODEO WORLD FINALS

NOV. 30-DEC. 3 • GUTHRIE

Lazy E Arena Guthrie, OK 73044. Come on out to the 2017 Poker Rodeo World Finals where cowboys and cowgirls put their skills to the test in 2-Man PokerSort, PokerPenning, PokerSort & Rope, PokerSheep Sorting, PokerSort & 4Star Trailer Load. For more information, visit www.pokerrodeo.com.

AMERICAN FINALS RODEO

DEC. 1-3 • CLAREMORE

Claremore Expo Center. Claremore, OK 74017. The American Cowboys Rodeo Association presents the 41st American Finals Rodeo this December at the Claremore Expo Center. This event will feature action-packed rodeo performances each day in an NFR sized arena setting. The American Finals Rodeo will feature traditional rodeo events including bareback riding, ladies breakaway roping, steer wrestling and more. Call **918-456-9814** for more information.

USTRC OIL CAPITAL STAMPEDE

DEC. 1-3 • TULSA

Tulsa Expo Square. Tulsa, OK 74114. At the Oil Capital Stampede, you're sure to see some of the best team ropers in the state go toe-to-toe at the Tulsa Expo Square. Come see teams of cowboys and cowgirls use their skill to roping calves as fast as they can during three days of competition. There will be fun and entertainment for the entire family at this USTRC event. For more information, visit www.ustrc.com.

WILL'S COUNTRY CHRISTMAS

DEC. 1-2 • OOLOGAH

Will Rogers Birthplace Ranch. Oologah, OK. Bring the whole family for pictures with Santa, storytelling, hayrides, Wild West shootouts, kids crafts, carolers, music, vendors, food and more. Admission, pictures with Santa and kids crafts free, hayride free 14 and under, \$5 each 15 and older. For information, call **918-343-8129**.

OKLAHOMA SELECT BULL SALE

DEC. 2 • ATOKA

Atoka Livestock Auction. Atoka, OK 74525. Gather up and head to Atoka for the Oklahoma Select Bull Sale on Dec. 2. We will be selling 100 breeding-age Limousin and Lim-Flex bulls. The sale begins at noon, so don't miss out! Call **580-597-2419** for more information.

MINCO HONEY FESTIVAL

DEC. 2 • MINCO

Downtown Minco. Minco, OK 73059. Satisfy your sweet tooth at the Minco Honey Festival with pure Oklahoma honey. Known by locals as the land of milk and honey, Minco dairy producers will be set up on Main Street with free samples of local cheese, whole and chocolate milk. For more information, call **405-352-0518**.

COWBOY CHRISTMAS WITH SANTA

DEC. 2 • OKC

Historic Stockyards City. Oklahoma City, OK 73108. Saddle up and ride into Historic Stockyards City this holiday season for the annual Cowboy Christmas Celebration. The first Saturday in December, Santa will come to this historic district to meet children and bring cheer. Kids can visit Santa, pose for pictures and receive a gift. Parents and other visitors can sample stew from the chuck wagon, ride a horse-drawn carriage or stagecoach, listen to carolers or just enjoy the festive atmosphere with actors wandering the streets in time-period clothing. Also, don't miss the Guthrie Gunfighters thrilling street show. This wonderful Christmas celebration is sure to be a blast for the whole family. For additional information, visit www.stockyardscity.org.



CHICKASHA FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BARREL RACING FUTURITY WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

DEC. 4-9 • OKC

Oklahoma State Fair Park. Oklahoma City, OK 73107. The annual Barrel Racing Futurity World Championships come to Oklahoma State Fair Park. Put on by the Barrel Futurities of America, this five day event is one of the premiere barrel racing events in the country. Visit www.bfaworld.com for more information.

SOLA Sale

DEC. 6 • ADA

SOLA Livestock Market. Ada, OK 74821. Come on out every Wednesday at 9 a.m., where we will be selling calves, yearlings, bulls, pairs and cows. For additional information, visit www.solallc.com or call **580-436-5033**.

Enlow Ranch Auction

DEC. 6 • TULSA

Enlow Ranch. Tulsa, OK 74131. Come on out to our monthly auction. Enlow auction service has more than 50 years of experience. Call **918-224-7676** for more information.

TULSA HOLIDAY MARKET

DEC. 8-10 • TULSA

Tulsa Expo Square. Tulsa, OK 74114. Come to Tulsa's Expo Square for this fun and unique holiday market benefiting the Junior League of Tulsa. At Tulsa's Holiday Market, both local and national vendors will be offering great deals on all kinds of holiday items including crafts, decorations and food. For more information, call **918-760-1376**.



(DEC. 2) COWBOY CHRISTMAS WITH SANTA

Ultimate Calf Roping

DEC. 9 • DUNCAN

Stephens County Fairgrounds. Duncan, OK 73533. Watch as ropers show off their skills at the Ultimate Calf Roping at the Stephens County Fair & Expo Center in Duncan. The best of the best will be on hand to rope and tie as quickly as possible, competing against each other's times. See all the fast-paced action at the Ultimate Calf Roping. Call **580-255-3231** for more information.

LIVE NATIVITY

DEC. 16-18 • LAWTON

Elmer Thomas Park. Lawton, OK 73506. See Elmer Thomas Park transformed into a live nativity scene this December. Backlit by Holiday in the Park light displays, the live nativity scene will take on a truly festive atmosphere. Watch the story of Jesus' birth unfold live before celebrating the winter holidays with a trip through the light display. For more information, call **580-284-6864**.

TULSA HOLIDAY WINTER CIRCUIT

DEC. 28-31 • TULSA

Tulsa Expo Square. Tulsa, OK 74114. The Tulsa Holiday Winter Circuit will be at the Built Ford Tough Livestock Complex at Tulsa's Expo Square and is an equestrian event not to be missed. Featuring junior, senior and amateur Western pleasure and trail riding as well as high point and amateur roping among other classes, this event includes a wide variety of activities that showcase the skills of both the horse and rider. Call **405-743-0869** for additional information.

DANGERZONE BULL RIDING & FUTURITY

DEC. 31 • CLAREMORE

Claremore Expo Center. Claremore, OK 74017. The Claremore Expo Center comes to life with exciting bull riding on New Year's Eve. Visit www.visitclaremore.org for additional information.

NEW YEAR'S EVE BALL DROP ON THE SQUARE

DEC. 31 • PAWNEE

Courthouse Square. Pawnee, OK 74058. Bring out your family and friends to start the New Year with a huge party complete with live music and fireworks. Sip on steamy hot chocolate around the bonfire, or eat some black-eyed peas for luck. Make sure you have someone special close by as the ball drops and ring in the New Year with a kiss.

WORLD'S RICHEST CALF ROPING

DEC. 31-JAN. 1 • TULSA

Tulsa Expo Square. Tulsa, OK 74114. Come see some fast-paced, high action barrel racing and calf roping during Mike Johnson's annual World's Richest Calf Roping event at Tulsa Expo Square. Put on your cowboy hat and boots to look the part while enjoying a day full of equestrian competitions. For more information, call **405-880-2751**.



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BACKROAD BITES

OLE RED – TISHOMINGO

By Kristi Hawks

ATTRACTIONS 

This month's backroad bites adventure was only about 30 minutes from home, but we did travel on back highways through two small towns, over the Washita River, crossed a train track and traveled to 214 W. Main Street of Tishomingo, Okla., to find the home of Grand Ole Opry member Blake Shelton's new restaurant – Ole Red.

It's not hard to find with the big red awning, and both the restaurant and shop are connected. If you happen to get lost, just look for the red and white wall with a painted mural of Ole Red. The name was inspired by Blake Shelton's breakout hit "Ol' Red."

Before walking in, I expected it would have a country feel being in small town Oklahoma, and I was not disappointed. A variety of seating was available including the bar area, booths, high top tables, and regular tables. We were told it would be a 30-minute wait, gave them our phone number to get the text when we could be seated and barely made it into the shop before we received the text: "Woohoo! We're ready for you at Ole Red!"

After a friendly greeting, we were seated at a high-top table and started looking around at all the items that make this place Blake's. He has pictures of dogs, tractor seats, his record album awards, TVs to watch the sporting events and much more.

The menu was unique in a neat wooden folder with Ole Red on the cover and everything easy to read once you opened it. We started with an appetizer of tri-color tortilla chips, spicy smoked sausage cheese dip and Ole Red salsa. The outstanding part of the appetizer was the spicy sausage cheese dip. It's a must-try if you go. A previous visitor suggested ordering the bloody Mary, which my friend tried and considered it one of the best she has ever had. Of course, Ole Red has plenty of other specialty drinks to try.



Ole Red was inspired by Blake Shelton's breakout hit "Ol' Red." (Photos by Kristi Hawks)

For our main courses we ordered the ribeye steak, fried catfish and brisket tacos. The 12-ounce center-cut ribeye came cooked as ordered with seasoned herb butter and with one side. Although there were no baked potatoes on the menu, the red skin garlic mashed potatoes were a pleasant choice. It also came with a homemade garlic herb biscuit that was so good we all shared. It was a great steak and left my friend licking his lips for more!

The fried catfish was breaded with lemon pepper cornmeal and served with fries, house-made hushpuppies and pickled green tomatoes. We all tried some, and I have to say it was some of the best fried catfish I've eaten in the area. It was cooked perfectly, not too dry and not un-

dercooked. The cornmeal breading was crispy but didn't hide the natural flavor of the catfish. The hush puppies were equally as good.

The brisket tacos came with chopped brisket, shredded lettuce, and spicy barbecue ranch and pico de gallo served with chips and salsa. Again, this was an excellent choice and the brisket just melted in my mouth. Three tacos came on the plate, and it was enough to share with my friends.

None of these menu items were unreasonably priced considering the food was made fresh to order and tasted fantastic. While we were waiting for our food, a performer got on stage about 8 p.m. and entertained us with his voice and guitar. To be honest, it was so good



FRIED CATFISH



PECAN PIE



BRISKET TACOS



CHOCOLATE CAKE

and homey that I couldn't even tell you how long it took to get our food, but it didn't seem very long as we listened to music and munched on our chips with cheese and salsa.

Of course we couldn't leave without trying the desserts. We had pecan pie that was a mouthwatering piece of traditional southern pecan pie, and we agreed the crust was as good as our mama's homemade crust.

We tried the triple chocolate cake. Two of us had a bite to taste it while the third party enjoyed it and struggled to share because it was that good.

The last dessert we tried was the Ole Red ice cream sandwich, which was distinctive. It was made with two large marshmallow charm sugar cookies and vanilla bean ice cream and topped with whipped cream. The ice cream was wonderful.

The menu has a variety of choices, and I do plan to go back to try "The Bull!" which is a one-half pound Bison burger served with a variety of toppings.

A few other items that look appetizing are the salads, the Nashville hot chicken and waffles, pan fried meatloaf, coffee crusted pork chop and on Friday and Saturday nights they have Prime Rib dinners.

Even though the restaurant was open and music was playing, we had easy conversation at our table and did not feel like we needed to talk loud to be heard. It still gave me the feeling of sitting around our family table enjoying good food and conversation.

Find your way on the backroads to Ole Red and experience this high-quality restaurant in this friendly town of Tishomingo, Okla. You know it was a country town because as we were

leaving, trailers of round hay bales were being pulled through town. Blake you did well!

Visit Ole Red on their Facebook page and website where you can find the full menu, see any specials and follow all the happenings.

They have live music on the weekends you can enjoy as you get together with friends and family and enjoy the food. The hours are Sunday through Thursday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

While you are there, don't forget to wander into the Ole Red store where you can get a variety of items to remember your trip to Ole Red.

For this former Iowan, the place is a short drive on country backroads for me and I will plan to go back—many times. An added plus is that you might be lucky enough to run into Blake some day while you are there. ☺



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Oklahoma Indian Nations



Choctaw Nation

By Laci Jones

Traditions and cultural heritage exceed language and art in Oklahoma Indian Nations like the Choctaw Nation. The Choctaw Nation stays true to their cultural heritage through agricultural practices.

“We look at the best uses of the land,” said Shannon McDaniel, executive director of agriculture, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. “What the Choctaw culture told us was they would use the land and then take care of the land in a conservative manner, which means never overgrazing land or never over-farming. Farming and ranching were what we would have done as early-on Choctaws, and we want to maintain that.”

Their conservation methods trace back to before the Choctaw Nation arrived in present-day Oklahoma. When the Choctaw Nation were removed to Indian Territory, the tribe established themselves as farmers.

“The major staple was corn,” McDaniel explained. “Everything derived basically from corn, so corn meal was used in almost everything that they did.”

The nation also brought cattle to Indian Territory from Mississippi in their removal. McDaniel said this breed of cattle was not necessarily any of the continental breeds, weighing 750 to 800 pounds full-grown.

“The group at the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Poteau, Okla., actually have what is derived from that same strand of cattle,” McDaniel said. “They just call them a Shorthorn, but they are not necessarily any of the English

breeds. They were more from the Spanish influence.”

On the second round of the nation’s removal, the Choctaw Indians brought a smaller Spanish-style horse. They also raised swine for pork production, the executive director added.

During this time, the Choctaw Nation’s agricultural practices were a tribe effort. By the turn of the 20th century, the Choctaw Nation lost all their agricultural means except for small farms and gardens around their homes.

“No more large crops of corn were along the rivers,” he added. “Yet there were families who continued to grow in farming and ranching, but the tribe itself kind of lost the way it was.”

Today, the Choctaw Nation owns 65,000 acres. Of that, approximately 50,000 acres are dedicated to agricultural practices.

The nation owns and operates 35,000 acres across seven different beef cattle ranches in southeast Oklahoma. Located in Tom, Harris, Tuskahoma, Daisy, Sawyer, Hugo and Idabel, the Choctaw Nation raises black Angus cattle on each of these ranches.

“Six of those are cow-calf operations, except for Hugo,” McDaniel said. “Our registered herd is at Hugo.”

The spring herds are located at each of the ranches except for the Tom and Idabel ranches, which are their fall herds. On average, the Choctaw Nation runs about 5,000 head of cattle each day. However, the Choctaw Nation is more than a cow-calf operation.

“We maintain the steers and

heifers that we don’t use as replacements,” he explained. “We retain them all the way through the feedlot and sell directly to the harvest facilities, which are typically Cargill and Tyson.”

The Choctaw Nation owns and operates six different pecan locations. Three are considered pecan orchards while the others are native trees.

“They’re just intermixed within the property,” he added. “One of the improved orchards is Red River Farms, which is south of

Idabel, Okla., and it’s 1,400 improved trees.”

The Choctaw Nation also recently closed on a property in September called Waterfall. Waterfall is also located south of Idabel, Okla., and has 1,750 pecan trees.

“The total census of population of pecan trees is about 10,000,” McDaniel said. “About 4,000 of those being improved and the rest being natives.”

This number continues to grow as they have planted more than
See CHOCTAW page 52

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Choctaw

Continued from page 51

2,500 improved trees in Garvin, Okla. All these pecan trees are under irrigation, he added. The Choctaw Nation harvests the pecans themselves, and then market under the label “Choctaw Farms.” They offer natural pecans, roasted and salted pecans and cinnamon sugar pecans to consumers.

“In the past few months, we have sold about 40 cases to the Pioneer Woman in Pawhuska, Okla.,” he explained. “The only pecans we’ve wholesaled are the natives, and we sell them after they have been cleaned.”

The Choctaw Nation uses the money earned from selling products to “take care of our people,” he added.

Agriculture outreach is important to the Choctaw Nation, hosting workshops and field days throughout the year. McDaniel

said the tribal government oversees a program with the mission to help farmers and ranchers succeed in the agriculture industry.

“They do actually work with Native American farmers and ranchers, helping them to set up their own practices or helping them to improve their practices,” McDaniel explained. “That’s been in place for two years now.”

The Choctaw Nation has a mission to conserve the land and to leave it better than they found it.

The Choctaw Nation also partners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Noble Research Institute in Ardmore, Okla., to help with this mission.

“This is something that our chief Gary Batton wanted to put back into the rural communities, which most of our land is very



The Choctaw Nation raises black Angus cattle in southeast Oklahoma. (Photo courtesy of the Choctaw Nation)

rural,” McDaniel added. “It’s providing jobs for people out there in those areas that wouldn’t otherwise have this type of job. Rebuilding something that shows the cultural side of the tribe as far as taking care of the land and animals and the products that come

off of it is important to the Choctaw Nation. I think over the next 10 years, it’s going to continue to grow. I think you’ll see Choctaw Farms products throughout Oklahoma.”

For additional information, visit www.ChoctawNation.com.

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DEVASTATION OVERNIGHT

By Jessica Crabtree

Fall armyworms, *Spodoptera frugiperda*, are not an uncommon nuisance across north and central Texas crops. The tiny torturers have a wide variety of hosts or food sources they migrate to. That includes pasture grasses, corn, grain sorghum, rice, wheat, even turf grass and landscaping plants. Although they are small, their size holds no reflection of their life cycles and population produced per generation.

Wet weather is a good indicator to producers that fall armyworms are to follow. Across North Texas and southern Oklahoma, mid-October brought producers a bitter pill when winter wheat crops were compromised from fall armyworm infestations. This year in North Texas, ample moisture and timing were really to fault. As Helena Sale's representative T.J. Oatman said, "A lot of farm ground didn't get plowed this year. The extra rain provided ample forage and a safe haven for the moths in Bermuda, grass and even weeds. It kind of set up the perfect storm." Oatman explained moths are attracted to the best, most lush green tender vegetation. As wheat emerged, the moths followed. 2016 saw pockets of armyworm issues. While advising growers and custom applicators on both sides of the Red, Oatman said this year the affect of armyworms is more wide-spread.

The fall armyworms are great travelers, beginning their path of destruction in South Texas and Mexico, moving north, generation by generation. They even travel as far as Canada. Producers can begin surveying their fields at the end of August for signs. Signs may include spots where the surface of a leaf has been chewed on, but not all the way through. Experts in Texas AgriLife Extension refer



These are dead worms after an application of cobalt advanced in Randlett, Okla. Worms are about a half to three-quarters of an inch. (Photos courtesy of T.J. Oatman)

to this as window paining. At this stage they are too small to chew any further.

An infestation begins with an adult moth flying in and laying eggs in clusters on various foliage. Those eggs hatch and emerge into six larval stages. The most damage done to plants is during the larval stage as they consume foliage.

According to a recent video produced by the Noble Research Institute "Fall Armyworms: Identification, Damage Indications and Control," experts explained the first four larval stages make up 20 percent of what the larval will eat during their entire life cycle. This is all before they are even a half inch in size. During their last two larval stages, the fifth and sixth, the armyworm will grow up to one and a half inch long.

"Larval" or "instars," as they get older, progressively do more damage and are considered the most severe. What once they could only chew on, now can be chewed through, almost down to the mid-rib of a leaf. During this last larval stage, 75 to 80 percent of their total foliage or biomass consumption during their life span is completed. Once the sixth stage is completed, they will begin to burrow within the soil and pupate, which takes between 10 and 14 days. After, they will emerge

from the soil as a new moth, begin breeding, laying eggs and start the life cycle all over again.

Identifying the caterpillar, producers should look for broad bands running down the caterpillar's body with a light inverted "Y"

on its head, yellow in color. Also, there will be four distinct dots on the last segment of its body.

Adult moths have a wingspan of an inch and a half and have wings that are molted grey in color with light translucent hind wings. An adult moth lives 10 to 21 days according to the Texas AgriLife Extension. During that time, a female adult moth may lay between 1,500 and 2,000 eggs, most of which is during the first part of her life.

Cold weather ultimately eradicates the pest. However, insecticides can be used to aid in efforts to save crops. Experts allow during midday the larval are hiding from the heat under dirt clods and dead vegetation. It is best to treat them

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either first thing in the morning or late in the evening. "Depending on the chemistry you're applying, if for instance a contact kill I would recommend spraying morning or evening to direct it to the caterpillar when most active. Otherwise, if using a chemistry with no residual on the plants, especially considered time necessity, you can spray during any part of the day," Helena Sales Representative T.J. Oatman said.

Several insecticides are available for use. Each warrants different applications; therefore, it is pivotal producers read the label and follow instructions. If at all costs, especially in this case, call a custom applicator or your County Extension Agent to have them direct you in a appropriate application. As Oatman said, "Treating armyworms is one of the most time sensitive applications that can be made to a young wheat crop." Pyrethroid can be sprayed

when armyworms are less than three-quarters of an inch. Residual affects are minimal and it acts promptly with good control. Another insecticide is Carbaryl, seen as Carbaryl Sevin. Others include Lorsban, Malathion and an older insecticide called Dimilin. It is good for control when worms are small as well as an insect regulator. It must be administered before the worm exceeds a half inch. Anything larger and it will not be as effective. A newer insecticide is Prevathon; upon contact the worm ceases to eat.

The bottom line to an armyworm infestation comes down to assessing the area affected, size, cost of chemical and population. Noble Research Institute experts suggested in Bermuda grass or forage grass, where two to three grown adult armyworms are found in 1.5 inches in length per square foot lies the common threshold for treatment.


In small grains that are first emerging, one to two armyworms per linear foot of row is the typical threshold. As those smaller grains grow, the larger they are the more defoliation they can withstand. Oatman said if a field has been eaten down beyond recognition, it is probably to late to spray and is beyond help. But if a producer is noticing encroaching populations where wheat has spots along edges, he recommends spending the money to apply spray. "On average you'll be spending \$10 and acre on chemical and application.

"If you have had your wheat planted two to three weeks with roots established when armyworms invade, there's something to save. Especially because that time and growth is something you can't get back," Oatman explained. Finishing he stated, "The cost of buying more seed, moving equipment, time and fuel will cost you,

it would be advantageous of the producer to consult a custom applicator."

Constant investigation of crops to catch infestations early and treat early will benefit producers. It is a domino effect for winter wheat producers intending to graze out yearling cattle. It is a staggering sight to see a stand of wheat one day, and overnight armyworms damage the crop so that by morning it is none existent, bit down to the ground.

Whatever your method of treatment, be it insecticide, read labels carefully prior to application. Or, if choosing to spray by commercial application, visit with the professional to learn all the chemical information.

For a complete list of insecticides from the Texas AgriLife Extension, view the following document <http://bosque.agrilife.org/files/2015/07/Armyworm-Fact-Sheet-2015.pdf>. 

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Grazing Oklahoma

Old World Bluestems

By Rob Cook, Noble Research Institute pasture and range consultant/rdcook@noble.org

Characteristics: Old world bluestems are introduced, warm-season, perennial bunch grasses. Mature height is about two to four feet tall. The leaves are up to 3/16-inch wide and four to eight inches long.

The leaves are linear and have hairs on the surface that get thicker towards the stem. The stems are often yellowish in color. The seed head can contain two to eight branches and can sometimes be confused with native bluestem varieties such as silver bluestem and big bluestem.

Area of Importance: Old world bluestems are now a common grass, growing on various soil types across the plains of Oklahoma and Texas, but it is typically planted on heavier textured soils. It has an ability to establish and flourish in bare soils.

For this reason, it was commonly planted in monocultures in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) plantings, and to stabilize soil along roadsides and right-of-ways. Old world bluestem is a name given to a group of several different bluestem varieties.

There are two different species that make up the group. *Bothriochloa ischaemum* are the yellow bluestems that include varieties commonly known as Plains bluestem and King Ranch bluestem. *Bothriochloa bladhii* are the

bluestems that include varieties commonly known as Caucasian bluestem and WW B-Dahl bluestem.

It provides fair to good grazing for livestock. Old world bluestems provide poor forage values for wildlife, and the seeds are not used by grassland birds.

Attributes: Old world bluestems have escaped from the areas originally planted in and invaded into native rangeland across the Southern Great Plains. It is commonly seen in pastures, fields, ditches, roadsides, pipelines, and even yards across Texas and Oklahoma. It is so well adapted to establishing from seed that it is seen as a weedy grass at best and an invasive species by many land and wildlife managers.

Some studies have shown that old world bluestems are able to change a soil's chemical composition, reduce seed germination and slow the growth of other plants around it. Many varieties are considered increasers under continuous grazing because the plant is able to tolerate grazing better than many native forage species.

When heavily grazed, old world bluestem will take on a decumbent growth form where the leaves will grow close to the ground and spread out from a flattened base before the

stems bend up to raise the seed head. This makes the leaves difficult for cattle to graze.

Varieties such as Plains and WW-B.Dahl have high production potential when managed correctly. The production potential and relative ease of establishment on even degraded soils make these grasses a popular choice to plant for establishing grazing or hay lands.

However, other species of introduced or native forages should be considered and the planting of old world bluestems should be discouraged because of its ability to invade even properly managed native rangelands. These grasses are present in widespread areas, and chances are many pastures have them in some density.

Control with herbicides and fire have been shown to be greatly ineffective. When it is present, grazing and wildlife managers often have to manage what they have. Proper grazing utilization of the native plants will allow them to compete with old world bluestems and serve as the best management technique to slow its invasion. ☒

References:

Coffey, C.R., R.L. Stevens. *Grasses of the Great Plains: A Pictorial Guide*
 Linex, R.J., 2014. *Range Plants of North Central Texas*

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Vulture or Hawk...

Photographer Kathie Freeman was out with a friend who was showing her around Canton, Okla. They came across what appeared to be a large hawk. Upon further inspection, they realized the bird was actually a vulture. Freeman added, "They are actually pretty cool looking birds. When their wings are stretched out, they are even bigger."

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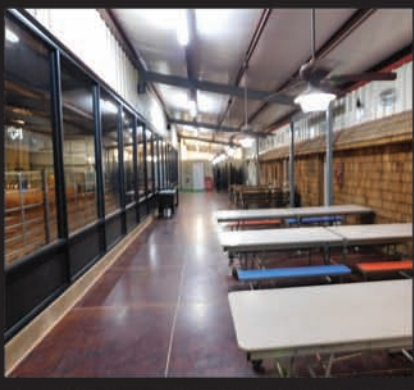
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