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of the Horse
BY LEE MCLEAN

Cold Weather
Barn Hacks
BY JENN WEBSTER

Remembering
Kevin Pole
BY PIPER WHELAN

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DISPLAY UNTIL APRIL 30, 2019
POSTAGE CANADA
PUBLICATION MAIL REGISTRATION
NUMBER R2204012



03

7 25274 70369 2

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Subscriptions

\$19.95 CDN - 1 year subscription
\$39.95 USD - 1 year Subscription
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Published six times a year by:
WESTERN PERFORMANCE PUBLISHING INC.
Suite 814, 3545 - 32 Ave. NE,
Calgary, Alberta T1Y 6M6
(403) 250-1128
editorial@westernhorsereview.com
www.westernhorsereview.com

Western Horse Review is a proud member of the Alberta Magazine Publishers Association www.albertamagazines.com, abiding by the standards of the Canadian Society of Magazine Publishers



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Dave Elston

Doc West returns to the web to explain the differences between ranch roping and team roping.



McKenzie Fotos

Highlights from the 2019 Skijordue event

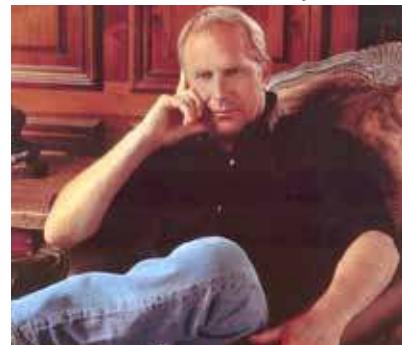


Heartland recently celebrated its 200th episode. WHR got an exclusive interview!"

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WESTERN HORSE REVIEW



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Photo 4 is a design of Horse document, horse day. © 2017 photo by Dreamcatcher Equines.

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A New Age of
Barn Raisin'



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Tara McKenzie Fotos

COMING TOGETHER

The 2018 edition of the National Reined Cow Horse Association (NRCHA) World Championships, held in Fort Worth, TX, this past February 2019, was an emotional rollercoaster for some Canadian contenders. Stephen Cline of Taber, AB, and the mare, Nic It Chic (better known as "Nikki"), finished as; the 2018 Reserve World Champions in the Novice NonPro Bridle; the 2018 National Champions in the Novice NonPro Bridle; and earned fifth place in the 2018 National Intermediate NonPro Bridle division. Nic It Chic is a 12-year-old mare sired by Nic It In The Bud and out of the dam, Montanas Smart Chic. She is owned by Stephen and his ever-supportive wife, Jessica.

The crowning achievements weren't without their hardships however, as Stephen and Nikki received a corrected score in their preliminaries of the Novice NonPro Bridle World Championship class. It was a nail-biting development that advanced them to the finals in tenth position. Then in the finals, Nikki fell at the horn and ended up with a cow score that was held for review by judges. Still, she and Stephen emerged virtually unscathed and were awarded a score that earned them the title of Reserve World Champions. Their win garnered them \$2,508 and a lot of other coveted hardware.

Meanwhile back in Canada, horse enthusiasts of all kinds were taking part in the annual Skijordue event, held at the Calgary Polo Club on February 23, 2019. The day was bitterly cold but that didn't stop the excitement of combining skiers and snowboarders with horse power. Rumor has it, new Go-Pro video

technology clocked horses and skier pairs going as fast as 60 kms per hour in the sprint races. And the *Western Horse Review* team lucked out with a first-place win in the circuit division! A big thank-you goes to all of our team members; Ingrid Schulz, Kenny Millar, Gavin Rae, Pete Bernier, and Kamilia Grabinski!

In this issue we take on the hot-button topic of dwindling numbers of the horse industry. With input from our readers on social media, Louisa Murch White injects an honest look at association costs, formats, youth participation levels and opportunities for growth. The declining trend in horse sports is gnawing away at what's left of our beloved industry. Those of us who care about the Canadian horse industry will read this piece with a vested interest.

On page 36, you'll also find an article featuring our cover cowboy, Boyd Wilson of Mossleigh, AB. I'll admit, this is one of the toughest articles I've ever had to compose. Boyd is fighting the biggest battle of his young life, but I hope he knows how many of us are in his corner.

This brings me to the story on page 39, which recounts the recent medical misfortunes of various individuals in our industry. Coming to their aid were numerous individuals who volunteered time and support in the form of various benefits, to help ease the stress. Helping one another in ways such as this equates, in my opinion, to an old fashioned barn raising. And underlines the very definition of western heritage.

- Jenn Webster

Send your comments, questions, letters or story ideas to me at editorial@westernhorserereview.com. We may include them in an upcoming edition of *Western Horse Review*.



Stephen and Jessica Cline with their Reserve World Champion mare of the Novice NonPro Bridle division, Nic It Chic.



Kamilia Grabinski (skier) and Kenny Millar (rider), two members of Team Western Horse Review at the 2019 Skijordue / Skijor Canada event. Photo by Tara McKenzie Fotos.

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We would like to thank all of the mare owners who have chosen Sindicat for breeding.
We are looking forward to the 2019 breeding and show season!

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INTO THE FIRE

A CONNECTION TO THE WESTERN LIFESTYLE proudly runs through every piece of work artist, Libby Humeniuk, brings to life.

"I want to create pieces that will resonate strongly with those in the lifestyle, and to share the beauty of it with those who may not be able to experience it otherwise," she says.

Humeniuk of Okotoks, AB, grew up in the city, but ran to the heart of a good horse whenever she could. She now is permanently rural.

Using the unique medium of pastel pencils on black paper, Humeniuk loves devoting herself to the images she captures at local brandings, rodeos or horse events. Pictured here is Longview, AB, cowboy, Wolter van der Kamp, on his horse "Alejo," dragging a calf to the fire.

"This is a favourite medium of mine because I love how dynamic it looks. It has a very sharp contrast and the end result is very vibrant.

"The western lifestyle has become such a large part of who I am, and I want to be able to share that with a larger audience."

-Jenn Webster



L. Humeniuk



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Cutting Returns to the Historic Fraser Valley

BRITISH COLUMBIA IS HALLOWED GROUND when it comes to the development of western performance sports in Canada. In 1973, the British Columbia Cutting Horse Association (BCCHA) was formed by the illustrious movers and shakers who made up the western performance and ranching communities of the time. The group that comprised the first-ever board of directors consisted of Chunky Woodward of Douglas Lake Cattle Ranch, George Tidball of Thunderbird Equestrian Centre, Canadian Hall of Fame rider Dave Batty, Bob Threlfall, Barrie Cline, Lynn Sanders, Bob Grimshaw, Len Monical, Bob Zirnhelt and Gary Moore. While the rise of cutting certainly was born within the most western province's borders, the epicentre of the sport has now migrated into Alberta and south into states like Idaho and Washington.

Now 46 years later, the high cost of cutting has seen a decrease in the amount of active members and the number of shows. The province certainly felt the brunt of this, cancelling their only aged event in 2018. In the fall of 2018, a group of cutters from the lower mainland of BC came together with the mandate to bring world class cutting competition back to the Fraser Valley after a decade-long absence. From this initiative, the Mighty Fraser Agriculture Non Profit Society was born.

Board Director, Lois Clough, Aldergrove, BC, notes that the absence of an event in their area and the desire to celebrate cutting's heritage was the catalyst for the formation of a new event. "I hate to date ourselves but some of the board members cut our teeth on the arena fence watching some of the founding members of the BCCHA. A few of us lucky, older folks can even brag about watching the legendary stallion Peppy San work cattle at some of these events."

The members felt the time was right for an event that combines celebrating cutting's heritage while promoting the sport in a modern era. "As the world focuses more on sustainability, preservation of food sources and caring for livestock in a more natural and humane way, the world of ranching and farming is facing more and more public scrutiny. Cutting is one of the equestrian sports that's as organic and deep-rooted as the mighty ranches it originated from. When someone watches a cutting horse do its job for the first time, they will never forget it. The greater Vancouver area is ready for an event like this."

Enveloped in that burning desire, the Heritage Cutting Classic was created. This year it will be held April 27 and 28 at the Chilliwack Heritage Park, a venue created specifically to host equestrian and agricultural events. The facility has the capacity to accommodate a large cutting pen, practice pen, warm up and loping area, indoor stabling, cattle, spectators and vendors and a large reception space all on site and under one roof. A guaranteed \$20,000 added purse and a reception that will coincide with the derby events promises to entice competitors from across the Pacific Northwest, Alberta and beyond to come back to the Fraser Valley to compete.

"The smell of cattle dust in your eyes, kids in cowboy hats and boots, real cowboys and cowgirls doing their job, and ultimate respect for the livestock. That is what we hope to showcase on a big stage," says Clough. "It's our dream to have the Heritage Classic 'brand' become part of a series and evolve into one of the go-to events in the National Cutting Horse Association calendar."

As the date draws near board members and competitors alike are looking forward to the event. Clough laughs, "So, if we build it will they come? Well, we are counting on it."

- Louisa Murch White



Krystina Lynn Photography

Krystina Kowalik congratulates her horse after a solid run in the BCCHA.

FACEBOOK FEEDBACK



What is the best horse-related advice you've ever been given?

“Always be honest when selling. A few extra bucks in the bank is never worth a bad reputation.” - Ranch_girl_hs

“Just because you really like how a horse looks or how it rides does not necessarily mean it is the right horse for you.” - Shanimho

“Reward is always a release of pressure” - Kellyseahorseranch

“You have a schedule. Your horse has all day.” - Krystal G.

“You don’t know anything. The minute you think you do, the horse will prove you wrong.” - Rachel_can

“When asking your horse to do something allow them time to think, as horses think slower than we do.” - Sharlene T.

“Stay in school.” - Lee M.

“Let the horse teach you too. An old ex-circus Andalusian horse taught me how to use my legs properly. Still very grateful to this amazing horse.” - Florine C.

“The slow way is the right way with horses.” - Cyb C.

“Reward every try.” - Karen P.

“A good horse has no colour.” - Gregory G.

“Horses live in the moment.” - Donna S.

OUTWEST western insider



“I thought you spoiled your horse too much, but the full spa treatment confirms it.”

Our condolences to the family and friends of **Wayne Cozart**, Brownlee SK, who passed away on Thursday, January 24, 2019. Cozart was 75 years of age and was a favourite member of the Saskatchewan horse community. He was a recognizable figure in the industry, who participated in AQHA and APHA events, was heavily involved in 4-H, sat on the board of the Central Butte Fair, and was a friendly figure at many other events. Cozart had a great sense of humour and a love of animals. He was a long-time breeder of Percheron Draft Horses and many will remember him fondly for his passion of driving his beloved teams at events throughout Canada. Cozart will be lovingly remembered by his wife of 51 years, Elaine; daughter, Susan (Robert); son, Dwayne (Linda); six grandchildren: Lacey (Kevin), Kim, Dallas, Bailey (Ozzy), Austin and Wyatt; two great granddaughters, Scarlett and Alannah as well as numerous other relatives.



Wayne driving his Percherons, his passion.



Canadian cowgirls, Hailey and Shelby Stewart, modelled in the Wrangler Fashion Show Friday evening.

Art of the Cowgirl kicked off this year at Corona Ranch in Phoenix, AZ, from February 8-10th. Flanked by palm trees, handy cowgirls and female masters of western art and culture, the event is sure to become a must-attend for cowgirls across North America and beyond. The Canadian connection was strong for the inaugural year, with north-of-the-border cowgirls participating in the all-women's ranch rodeo, photography exhibition, evening events and more. Saturday night, esteemed artist of the West, Shannon Lawlor's prints took home top bids at the auction, as it was announced she will be a Master Artist of the 2020 edition of the festival. Proceeds of the auction will go

to the Art of the Cowgirl fellowship that encourages and furthers arts and trades amongst western women, while celebrating and continuing tradition and inspiring innovation. For more information on the event www.artofthecowgirl.com.



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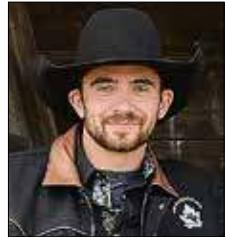
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WACEY ANDERSON



Risa Malakutti

to get these athletes to be household names, so the more we can get these guys into the spotlight the better!

Secondly, the third edition of the PBR Global Cup went down February 9 and 10 at the AT&T Stadium in Arlington, TX. The Global Cup features a team-based format with teams representing Canada, Brazil, Australia, Mexico, and two teams representing the US. This year's Global Cup featured an all Native American team, competing as Team Wolves. This was a really cool feature added to the event this year and it was great to showcase the talent of the Native American competitors on the PBR tour.

On the Team Canada front, we were unable to repeat previous Global Cup performances going a modest 3-for-18 over the two-day competition. On paper this looked to be one of Canada's strongest teams, but unfortunately that's just the nature of the sport – some days are better than others. The injury bug bit the Canadians on the very first day forcing Tanner Byrne and Lonnie West to withdraw from the rest of weekend, which left our crew one man short heading in to the final day. This showing will definitely light a fire under our Canadian boys and they will be hungry to prove the world just how good we are north of the 49!

That's all I've got for you all this time around, stay tuned for next issue where I'll share some more of my insights in the world of rodeo.

See you down the road.

From Super Bowl Sunday to the PBR Global Cup

BY WACEY ANDERSON, PHOTO BY ANDY WATSON

First things first, I just wanted to take a moment to introduce myself and give you all a little background on who I am. Some of you may be lucky enough to know me but for those who don't, my name is Wacey Anderson, I am 26-years-old and I currently reside in Calgary, Alberta. I am a born and raised Saskatchewan kid with deep rodeo and ranching roots. I grew up on a ranch northeast of Saskatoon in the tiny town of Naicam.

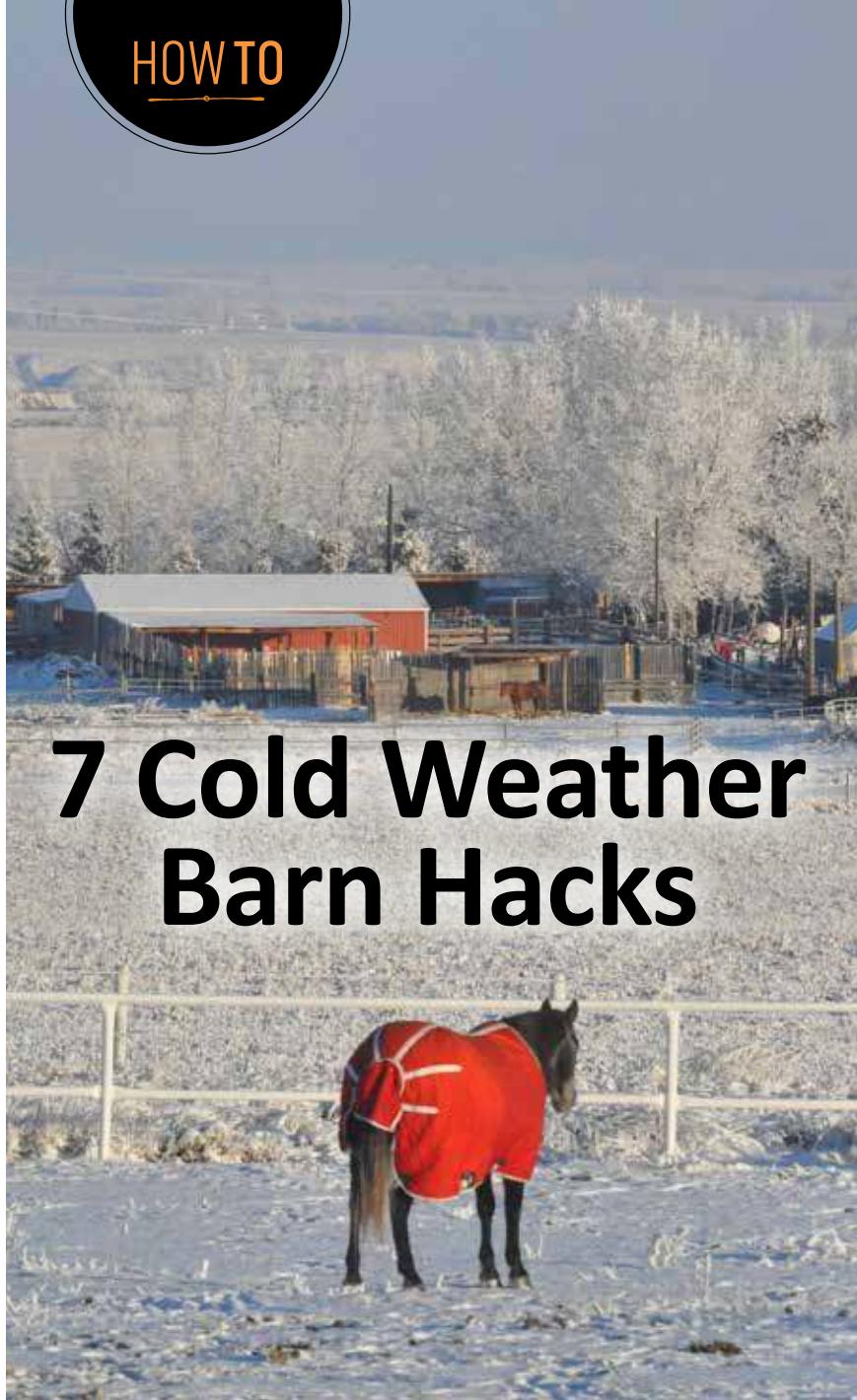
I began my rodeo career at the age of 14 competing in the Junior Bull Riding and Canadian Cowboys Association (CCA) rodeos. As I got older I progressed into the open bull riding (surprise, surprise) where I was fortunate enough to win the CCA Bull Riding Championship in 2014. The following season I purchased my Canadian Professional Rodeo Association (CPRA) and Professional Bull Riders (PBR) cards and decided to try my hand in the pros – that's where things went a bit sideways. During the spring of 2015 I sustained three concussions in four months, which would ultimately force me to hang up my bull rope for good.

I was in a pretty tough spot dealing with the aftermath of the concussions; I had given up on my dreams of being a professional bull rider without any

real backup plan. So I did what any rational person would do, I applied to the University of Calgary to pursue a business degree (yay student debt!). That pretty much brings us up to now. I am currently in the third year of my degree at the U of C, and I am also still heavily involved with rodeo thanks to my roommate and landlord, Ted Stovin of Everything Cowboy Inc.

Enough about me lets get to the real reason you're reading the article! With the PRCA winter run in full swing and the PBR Unleash the Beast tour also on the go, there are lots of things happening in western sports. Two aspects have stood out to me up to this point in the season.

The first exciting concept I wanted to touch upon is the PBR's new "Be Cowboy" campaign, which included the first-ever Super Bowl Sunday ad that aired just before kick-off. The ad featured people from everyday walks of life and contained the message to basically find your "inner cowboy." If you haven't seen the ad yet it is very easy to find on Google. I think it is a huge move by the PBR to get their product into the mainstream, and a great way to attract a new fan demographic. The only thing I wish the ad had included, would have been some more of the riders and bulls of the PBR. The key in my opinion is



7 Cold Weather Barn Hacks

Frozen auto-waterers. Snow build up in hooves. There are many trials that winter time and early spring brings for horse owners. From the heaps of blowing snow, to plunging temperatures, and mud – March and April are two of the most demanding months when it comes to the seasonal challenges they pose. Here are a few practical tips to help get your barn through.

By JENN WEBSTER

CROCKPOTS

If you are without a hot water source in the barn, crockpots can be a lifesaver. Use them to soak feed, warm water or to wash bits and buckets. If you need to soak beet pulp for your horse overnight, consider throwing it in the crockpot and set it to warm or low (not hot), so you don't end up with a beet pulp popsicle by morning. Only use the low settings long-term as higher settings will bring water to a boil.

POOL NOODLES

Foam pool noodles make great insulators for pipes or hydrants. Cut a slit down one side to create an opening and slide it over your pipes. The foam insulation will help keep pipes from freezing.



OIL

Curb the hoof snow build up by spraying the bottom of your horse's hooves either with cooking spray, or Shapley's No. 1 Light Oil to keep snow from balling up. The dollar store cooking spray works just as well as the name brand stuff to help prevent snowballs from forming. However the grooming oil is great for adding condition and shine to your horse's coarse, winter coat.



MILK JUGS

If you have an outdoor water trough without electricity to keep it from freezing over try putting some salt and a small amount of water into empty jugs (old milk jugs work fine). Place the two jugs into the trough. They will help to keep your trough frost free overnight, or at least make it easier for you to break the ice crust in the morning.

HOT TOWELS

Cold weather isn't usually conducive to bathing horses. If however, you find your equine companion needs a washing to his mane or tail, use a hot towelling technique instead. Essentially, you must find a way to get a steamy hot cloth and then wipe the mane down in tiny sections. The steamy moisture will do its best to clean the mane, without drenching it. Add some spot remover to the hot water mix for an added clean.

BLANKET RACK

Storing blankets is always tricky when you have several horses in your care. Craft a blanket rack from old horseshoes, to keep things hanging up (instead of in piles on the barn floor) and your blankets organized.



TAGS

If several of your turnout blankets are the same style or colour, personalizing each of them with a name tag is a great way to keep things straight.

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Back On Track has recently unveiled their newest product, the **Frost Rug**, a cold weather blanket with 330g of insulating fill that is lined with therapeutic Welltex material and has a breathable Polyester outer layer. **\$349.00** www.botcanada.com

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Bobbi's Braids creates uniquely designed halters, side pulls, trailer ties, reins and more. We are currently crushing on these **Bosal and Hanger** creations. **Inquire for Pricing** www.facebook.com/braidsbybobbi

A little bit eccentric, a little bit Wild West, we are fully in love. This 6x fur felt from **Smithbilt Hats** features a cattleman crown with 4" brim, Swarovski crystal band and horsehair crinoline band and bow. **\$395.00** www.smithbilthats.com



Put a Spring in Your Step

Spring is just around the corner! Here are some new and exciting products hitting the western lifestyle market you won't want to miss.



Spring is in the air. Add a hint of flirt and femininity with this **Eyelet Blouse** from the private label collection of **Prairie Couture**. **\$149.00** www.prairiecouture.ca



Thanks to fashion bloggers and other street style stars, western-inspired belts have quickly become fashion's it-girl accessory – we approve! Shop the look locally by purchasing the **Jobeth Double Buckle** from **White Bull Clothing Co.** **\$120.00** www.whitebulleclothingco.ca



Desperately trying to get your horse to shed out for show season? The **Equilume Light Mask** utilizes blue light therapy so that your horse can be "under lights" while still turned out. **\$530.00** www.facebook.com/tlctackandconsignments

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Espresso Granita

Granita is a coarse, Italian-style flavoured ice. Topped with an espresso pudding-like layer and served with beignets for dipping, this is one dish your guests won't be able to stay away from.

By MIKE EDGAR Photos By TWISTED TREE PHOTOGRAPHY

Relax and delight in the company of your friends and family while they “oooh” and “awe” over the opulence of this dessert. Served with warmed beignets on the side meant for dipping, this sweet course has a beautiful presentation after a meal, or is the perfect addition to an afternoon coffee. Little will your guests know, this sweet and savoury creation is as easy to make as it is sinfully delicious.



GRANITA

½ Cup Sugar
2 Cups Brewed Espresso
Add sugar to hot espresso and stir until dissolved.

METHOD

When the espresso has cooled, place into a 9 x 13" Pyrex baking dish and put in the freezer. Let sit in the freezer until ice crystals start to form (approximately 45 minutes.) Remove from the freezer. Using a fork, stir the ice crystals from the edges of the dish to the center. Return to freezer. Repeat every 30 minutes until the liquid has frozen into a nice soft crystal (approximately two hours). Store in the freezer until it is time to serve.



ESPRESSO SYRUP

2 Cups Sugar
2 cups Brewed Espresso
Combine ingredients in a sauce pan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and let simmer for 25 minutes until the liquid comes to a syrup consistency.

About the Chef:

Mike Edgar graduated from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in the Culinary Arts. He stayed in Calgary, AB working at some of the city's top restaurants. In 2007, he opened his own restaurant in Calgary's east end. After eight years of being a chef there, Edgar decided to take a step back and left the industry to spend more time with his son. His son has now expressed an interest in learning his father's skills and in horses simultaneously.



AMARETTO ZABAGLIONE

This part of the dessert is made just before serving the dish.

6 Egg Yolks
1/3 Cup Amaretto
3 Tbsp. Sugar

METHOD

Combine ingredients in a stainless steel bowl and whisk over over simmering water vigorously until thickened (about five minutes total.) When thickened, place over an ice bath and whisk. You need to cool it down before you finish the dessert. Whisk over ice bath for two to three minutes.



BEIGNETS

2 ¼ Tsp. Active Dry Yeast
1 ½ Cups Warm Water
½ Cup Sugar
1 Tsp. Salt
2 Eggs
1 cup Evaporated Milk
7 Cups All Purpose Flour
¼ Cup Shortening
¼ Cup Confectioners Sugar

METHOD

In a large bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. Add sugar, salt, eggs and milk and blend well. Mix in four cups of flour and beat until smooth and then the remaining three cups of flour. Cover and chill up to 24 hours. Roll dough out to 1/8 inch thick and cut into 2 ½ inch squares, fry in 360-degree Fahrenheit oil. Drain on to a paper towel. Sprinkle with confectioners sugar while hot.

TO MAKE THE DISH

Fill a rocks glass half-way up with Granita. Place in the freezer until Zabaglione is ready. Drizzle espresso syrup over the Granita then fill the glass with the cooled Zabaglione. Place on a plate next to the Beignets for dipping. Serve with a spoon and enjoy!



Remembering legendary horseman, Kevin Pole

By PIPER WHELAN

Students and clients of Kevin Pole often recall the memorable words of wisdom he shared related to horsemanship. These include, "A little becomes a lot, and a lot becomes all you'll ever need," and "It's not a problem, it's just a situation."

Pole passed away suddenly on December 28, 2018, in Regina, SK, after complications due to surgery. In his 61 years, Pole built a diverse career as a trainer, clinician and competitor, excelling in several disciplines and giving his time to many facets of the horse industry, all while remaining humble about his countless accomplishments.

Pole grew up on a ranch at Stavely, AB, and began his career working on ranches in British Columbia, Alberta and Nevada. In the late 1970s, he turned his attention to the California tradition of horsemanship, studying under legendary horsemen Tom Dorrance and Tony Amaral before returning to Canada to set up shop as a professional trainer. Here, he began a lifelong career that earned him great respect within the western Canadian horse industry and beyond.

A professional horseman for four decades, Pole and his wife, Dallas, ran Diamond Willow Ranch at Mortlach, SK. As a clinician he was

known for being highly effective and bringing positive energy to his work. In addition to teaching throughout western Canada, Pole also had the opportunity to teach in several European countries, including Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. As a mentor and coach, his expertise and guidance helped many young trainers achieve top honours in their respective disciplines.

"Kevin was not only an incredibly talented horseman and clinician but also the most amazing friend and mentor. He invested so much of himself in an attempt to make us the best horsemen that we could be," said Annette Read, who learned much from working with Pole. "His ability to not only read a horse but also to read people was such a rare talent. That, combined with his 100 percent dedication and passion to help us all succeed, makes him irreplaceable as both friend and clinician. He always stressed to his students that it was horsemanship first."

Barry Clemens, a long-time friend of Pole, hosted his clinics for several years and appreciated his perspectives on effective horsemanship. "He wasn't the kind of man that ever got abusive with a horse; he tried to show them the way," said Clemens. "He really had a gift."



As a competitor, Pole illustrated the range of his skill set by winning 21 Canadian championships in cow horse, cutting, English pleasure, halter, reining, western pleasure and western riding. He made a name for himself in the reining world by capturing numerous National Reining Horse Association championships, as well as taking top honours at the Saskatchewan Reining Horse Association Stakes and Futurities and the Canadian Reining Breeders Classic.

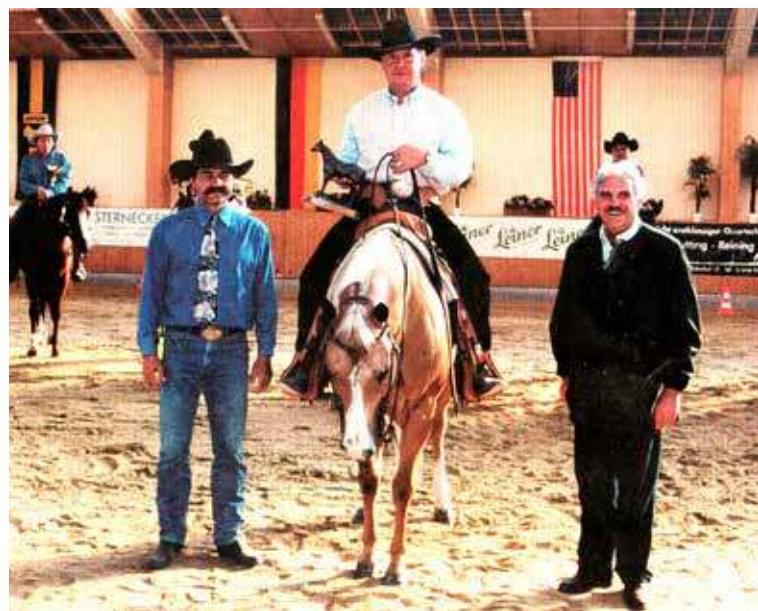
Pole also won several champion titles in cutting, cow horse and ranch horse versatility, and shone on the international stage by winning the European Super Horse Champion at Europe's largest Quarter horse show in 1998, on board a Canadian-bred horse that he had sold to Europe, SR Cream N Sugar. He was given honorary lifetime membership status in Reining Alberta and the British Columbia Interior Cutting Horse Association for his role in helping to establish both organizations.

Joan Lockie, who worked with Pole during his time as a pleasure and halter trainer, credits him for helping her acquire her stallion, Zips Famous Amos. Pole and 'Amos' went on to become a successful team in the show pen. "He only had 60 days on him, and he took him to the (Quarter Horse) Nationals and won the Gold Rush on him and was Reserve, I think, in Two-Year-Old Pleasure," said Lockie. "He was a great guy to be around, and we thoroughly enjoyed him. He definitely had a good eye for horses and definitely had a good feel for horses."

Pole gave his time as a judge of many disciplines and was recognized as a Senior General Performance Judge with the Saskatchewan Horse Federation. He held this distinction with several other organizations, such as the SRHA, the Saskatchewan Reined Cow Horse Association and the Alberta Ranch Horse Versatility Association, and he judged everything from youth events to the Canadian Western Agribition's Canada's Greatest Cow Horse competition. Pole's ability as a judge was honoured when he joined the Agribition Ranch Horse Panel in 2008, providing his expertise for several years as the panel selected horses for the ranch horse competition and sale.

In addition to his equine pursuits, Pole bred and trained border collies and Australian kelpies, competing in open-level stock dog trials and judging beginner-level events. "He was the same way with dogs as he was with horses. He was always letting them figure it out," said Clemens.

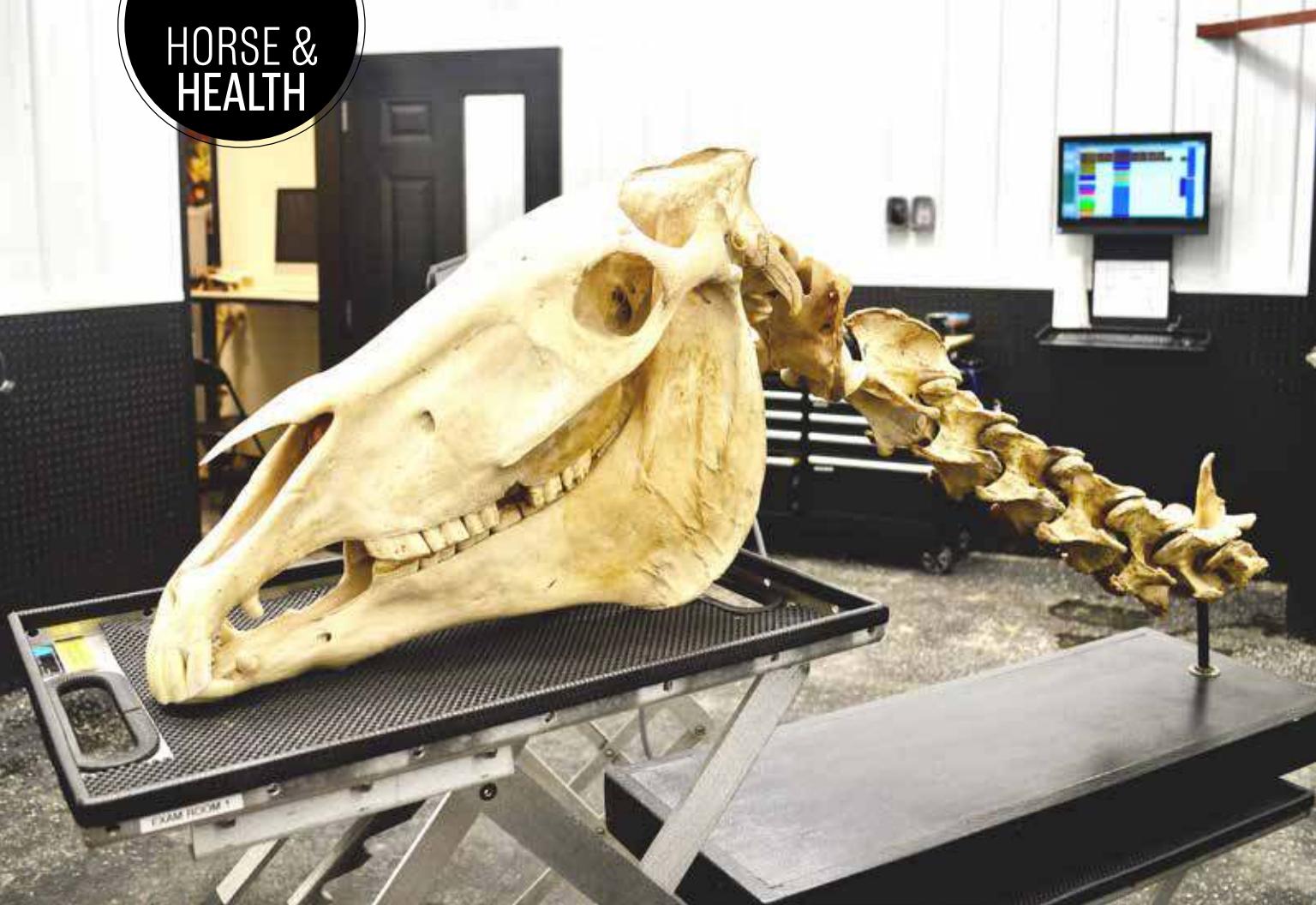
Though his achievements are a testament to his abilities and knowledge, Pole's clients and students remember him as a genuine friend who applied his horsemanship philosophies to all aspects of life. "As a friend he taught us to enjoy every aspect of life and to slow things down," Read recalled. "His heart was so big, and he gave us so much love and support. He would often say, 'remember, it is all about



OPPOSITE PAGE: Clients and students remember Pole as a true horseman and a genuine friend. **TOP LEFT:** Described as a gifted clinician and trainer, Pole and his wife, Dallas, ran Diamond Willow Ranch, where they also raised stock dogs. **TOP RIGHT:** Pole excelled in a range of equine disciplines, including reining. He won several championships at home and abroad, and was instrumental in the founding of Reining Alberta. **ABOVE:** Among Pole's many achievements was winning the title of European Super Horse Champions in 1998 aboard SR Cream N Sugar.

the journey.' He wanted us to be the best that we could possibly be but also to enjoy every step of the way."

Clemens describes his legacy simply: "He was a horseman. There's a lot of horse people out there, but there's not many horsemen...To me, that's one of the biggest compliments you can ever give a person involved with horses. If you were going to write an epitaph and you said, 'he was a horseman,' my God, that says a billion words, and he was." 



Bridging The Gap:

The equine neck was once an over-looked area in veterinary medicine. Now an up-and-coming treatment is being utilized to reduce pain and increase range of motion in the performance horse.

By LOUISA MURCH WHITE

Injections are typically administered to the lower limb of the performance horse. Hocks and stifles are the most common culprits for maintenance injections. However, new ultrasound-guided procedures focused on areas like a horse's sacroiliac (SI) joint, or to the neck, are making breakthrough advances in the veterinary world. To further elaborate, these injections are made at a horse's SI joint (the meeting place of the pelvis and the spine), or to the neck (specifically, the cervical vertebrae called cervical facet joints) because of the critical roles they play in the horse's body.

Dr. Chad Hewlett of Energy Equine in Airdrie, AB, says that the cervical facet area of the neck, the joints that lie between the transverse processes of the vertebrae, is a metaphorical bridge between the power centres of the horse – the head, the neck and the back. The vertebrae, the bones that make up the spinal column and protect the spinal chord, are divided into five groups. The first seven cervical vertebrae are located from the back of the skull to just in front of the first rib. Ligaments extend between these individual vertebrae and keep the spinal column aligned. Dr. Hewlett says that the vertebrae are the size of a medium-sized human fist. They are

linked, one after another, in the horse's neck and connecting those blocks are the cervical facet joints. The nuchal ligament extends from the back of the skull to the withers and the supraspinous ligament extends from the withers to the sacrum. Both ligaments are located on top of the vertebral column and act as a spring when the horse rounds its neck and back. Finally, the large muscled area you see on the neck, underneath a horse's mane, are the epaxial muscles. This group of muscles run along either side of the vertebral column and enable a horse to bend from side to side. The cervical facets drop down to the base of the neck, surrounded by the epaxial muscles and this area is where a cervical facet injection is done.

In a healthy horse the neck should move smoothly both up and down, and be able to move in a circular motion from side-to-side. A horse should be able to turn and place its head in an infinite amount of positions. A healthy horse should be able to reach around sideways, as if touching their rider's leg, drop their head and tuck their nose. "The facets are semi circular. They are almost like a shoulder joint in a sense that you have a cap and ball which cause that really nice freeing movement of the horse's neck," explains Dr. Hewlett.

Injuries and areas of concern in the neck can be “anywhere from the poll to where the nuchal ligament attaches to the withers.” Dr. Hewlett continues, “For us, the main injuries and cases of arthritis we see are in the lower third or bottom half of the neck. The horse does so much to brace through the base of their neck, so the muscles in that area end up pulling a lot on the neck.”

Signs and symptoms your horse may have pain or inflammation in their neck can be seen if they are having difficulty travelling in one direction over the other. “In most cases of front end lameness we look to the neck area, but interestingly I also see it a lot with horses that are having issues rocking back and utilizing their hind end. At first you may assume it’s a hocks and stifles issue but the neck is such a bridge and it all connects.

“The cervical area is that bridge between the head and shoulder and is a big lever for a horse’s movement. Up until recent times that area was fairly ignored from a veterinary perspective just because we felt we couldn’t do a lot with it.” Dr. Hewlett credits Dr. Jean-Marie Denoix, founder and current president of The International Society of Equine Locomotor Pathology (ISELP) for the modernization of how we treat the equine neck. “Dr. Denoix started taking radiographs of the neck with performance in mind. Previously we were only taking radiographs if the horse had Equine Wobbler Syndrome or if a horse broke its neck. Now we are seeing cervical facet x-rays, and follow up injections, becoming way more popular. I would say that up until two to three years ago, I wasn’t taking more than a few cases a year. Now it’s much more prevalent.”

It seems that the English crowd are always the first to pick up on newer treatments, but western riders are close behind. “When we started doing the ultrasound guided SI injections it was already very common in the jumping and dressage community. It has now really transferred into the western disciplines. I feel as if good horses are using their bodies similar, whichever discipline they participate in. With a cervical facet injection I really feel western pleasure and reining horses can benefit from this treatment. Reining horses have to break at the poll, they have to drop their haunches and really come underneath themselves. Barrel horses use their neck to come through a turn, and bull dogging horses could also benefit greatly.”

The injection itself is generally Triamcinolone or sometimes Betamethasone with the aim to reduce inflammation in the area. Cervical facet injections are ultrasound guided. “It’s a challenging injection to execute,” says Dr. Hewlett. “With an SI injection if the horse moves slightly your needle can still get into that optimal area, but with the neck it’s best if the horse is straight as an arrow. You are trying to hit a 2-3 mm joint space and you are watching the needle via ultrasound. So anytime the horse moves, it distracts the needle from your destination.”

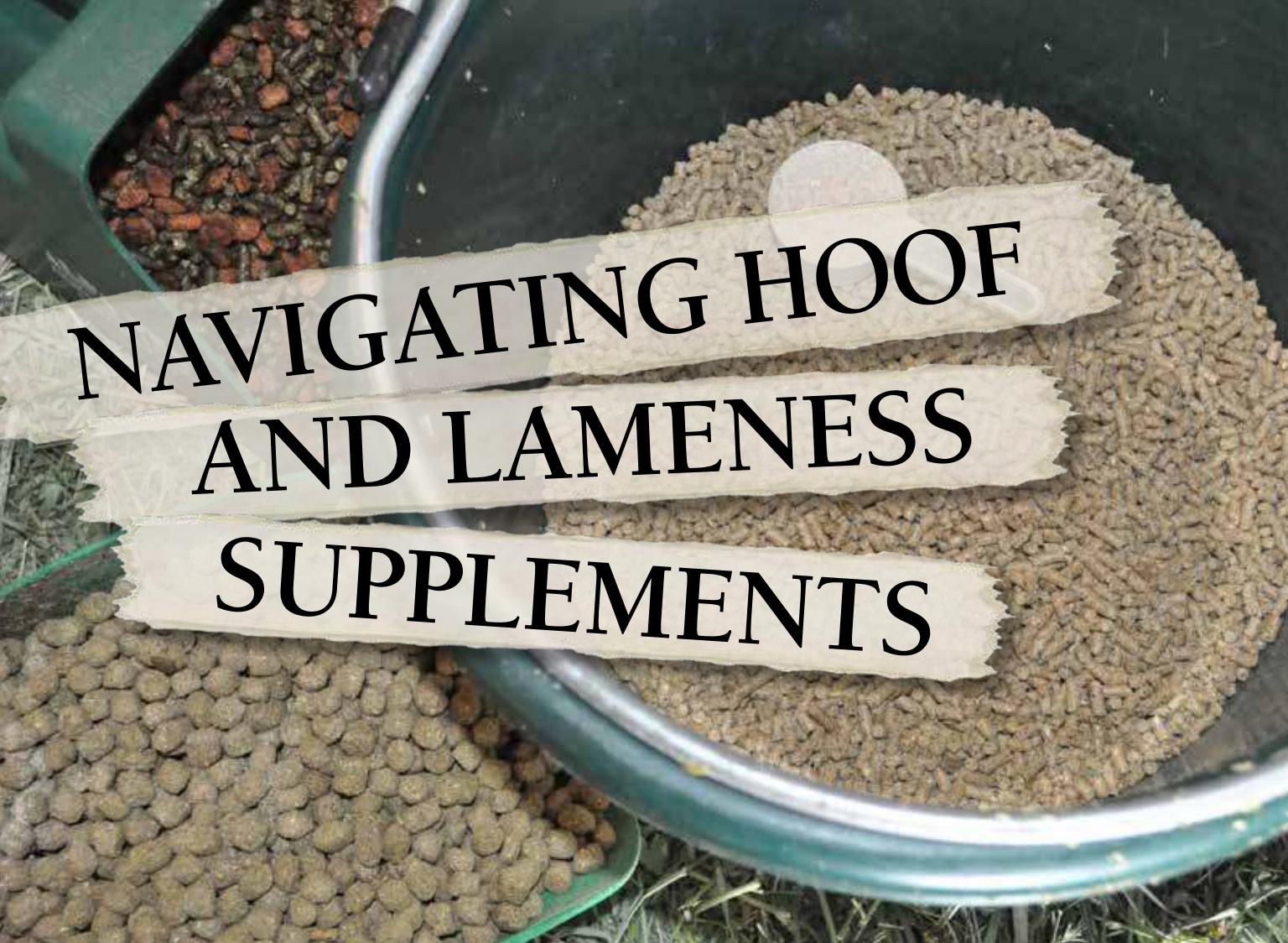
Perhaps surprisingly due to the difficulty of execution, this injection does not require heavy sedation. “We try to find the zone where the horse is not able to feel me, but isn’t completely out of it. Generally we don’t use a twitch, we have the owner hold the horse’s head and nose and they look down the horse to make sure they remain straight.”

Post-injection Dr. Hewlett says it can take up to two weeks for owners to see results, “It’s a heavily muscled area so the muscles have to return to their normal function. We recommend two days off, but afterwards I believe that warming up the body is a good thing and an increase of blood flow to the area is positive. With these types of injections if the horse is staying relatively fit in performance, we tend to have more success with longevity than the lower extremity joints.”

Finally Dr. Hewlett says that following up with chiropractic treatments and equine massage can also extend the longevity of injection and help a horse who has problems in the neck area. “After a cervical facet injection I think a great follow up program is routine bodywork and making sure those horses are warmed up properly. We are wanting to break that pain cycle they are struggling with.”



OPPOSITE PAGE: The equine neck is a complicated structure that provides a bridge to multiple power sources in the horse’s body. **TOP:** Dr. Hewlett first places the needle alongside the ultrasound to ensure proper placement of the injection site. **ABOVE:** Dr. Hewlett demonstrates the optimal placement on the neck for a cervical facet injection.



NAVIGATING HOOF AND LAMENESS SUPPLEMENTS

Evaluating your supplement choices can be overwhelming. Here are a few tips for discovering products that best meet your horse's hoof and lameness issues.

By JENN WEBSTER

When it comes to a horse's nutritional well-being, there are many lengths an owner will go to help their equine feel better or gain a competitive advantage. However, cutting through the supplement mire and breaking through to a product that meets an individual's needs, can be daunting. Horses are as unique as humans when it comes to dietary requirements. Add that to specific training regimes, health status and geographical considerations and it's crucial to properly evaluate what's inside a bottle before leaving it in the feedpan for your horse to consume. Here's what you should look for, to ensure you're getting the most of out of supplementation. Additionally, we'll highlight a few

products from reputable companies that can assist for hoof and lameness issues.

BEST PRACTICES

There are certain standards to which supplement companies in Canada, should be held before products are allowed in the marketplace. However, that is exactly the problem with the supplement conundrum. Not all products marketed for equine consumption are required by the Canadian government to endure testing processes proving their efficacy, before being offered for sale. Meeting label claims and guaranteeing their own ingredient analysis is something consumers would expect their equine supplementation products to do, however that isn't always the case. Specific classification for

equine supplements does not exist for horses the way it does for people in Canada.

So how can you spot a quality product on your tack store shelf? Firstly, reputable equine supplement companies will have a list of best practices they adhere to, before marketing their products. Their high manufacturing standards are evident in using the best quality ingredients available, carefully sourcing out raw materials and by offering a guaranteed analysis on each of their products.

Next, reputable companies will want to ensure there is no cross-contamination of products within their production factories. They should also respect the rules and regulations of Canada – even if their products are manufactured out of the country. Trustworthy companies will prioritize highly bioavailable



Reputable supplement companies have high manufacturing standards, use the best quality ingredients available and offer a guaranteed analysis on each of their products.

ingredients and work with experts in sports medicine and nutrition to create products that properly meet an equine's requirements.

In Canada, the manufacture, sale and import of all livestock feeds are typically regulated in Canada under the Feeds Act and Regulations administered by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Feeds requiring registration in Canada are those made by companies who are, "...manufacturing or importing complete feeds, supplements, and macro premixes, for all livestock, labelled with nutrient guarantee levels outside the ranges indicated in Table 4 (Schedule I) of the Feeds Regulations." Products that are registered as a feed by CFIA must display a registration number on their label.

However, in November of 2017, the Health Canada Veterinary Health Products (VHPs) Notification Program came into effect. This program builds on a previous program (the Interim Notification Pilot Program for low-risk veterinary health products) and ensures that a product meets specific safety and quality criteria established by Health Canada. This program provides a user-friendly process to help companies meet the rules for importing and selling VHPs for companion and food-producing animals in Canada. VHPs are drugs in dosage form that are used to maintain or promote the health and welfare of animals. They are not for use to treat, prevent or cure disease. VHPs contain ingredients such as vitamins and minerals, botanicals, traditional medicines and homeopathics with a history of safe use. When relevant conditions are met, the product is issued a Notification Number.

All this is well and good, but getting back to the original question – how does one choose

an appropriate supplement for the horse in their care and its needs at the time?

Firstly, choose a product that is manufactured by a trusted company. This means they will have extensive knowledge about their supplements, adhere to manufacturing standards in production, will have quality controls in place and have performed efficacy studies. Next, a reputable company should be able to stand behind their nutrition label and have a complete and adequate amount of ingredients inside the container, as they claim on the label. Every supplement product should also have an expiry date on the outside of the container. Lastly, the palatability of the product to the horse and bioavailability of ingredients inside might be something you want to consider. And when in doubt, consult your local equine nutritionist or pick up the phone and consult the supplement company with your questions. The good ones will always take time to answer your queries properly.



Products that are registered as a feed in Canada by the CFIA must display a registration number on their label. However, Canadian equine supplements may also be recognized by the Notification Program for Low-Risk Veterinary Health Products, which ensures that a product meets specific safety and quality criteria established by Health Canada. When relevant conditions are met, the product is issued a Notification Number.



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When faced with joint problems, a veterinarian's treatment goals always include controlling clinical signs, minimizing pain, and improving joint mobility. The prevention of advanced degradation of the articular cartilage might also be considered an objective. Glucosamine, chondroitin, MSM (methylsulfonylmethane), hyaluronic acid, silicon, and other supplement ingredients are all commonly used to enhance joint health.

Supplements that promote hoof health typically contain biotin (a B vitamin) and keratin-promoting ingredients such as zinc and methionine – to help grow stronger hoof horn. Other typical hoof supplement ingredients include copper, lysine and fatty acids as each plays a role in healthy hooves.

Here are a few of our favourite supplement products to give horses an added advantage against hoof and lameness issues.



Core Balance Motion

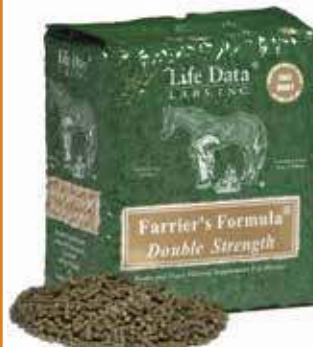
Core Balance takes the do-it-yourself pharmacist out of the equation of equine nutrition. Dr. Chad Hewlett of Energy Equine in Airdrie, Alberta observed his clients feeding multiple supplements, sometimes up to six different products, and felt there had to be a solution. Core Motion is a high quality hyaluronic acid that is a perfect compliment for the horse that needs a little extra joint support. In the joint, hyaluronic acid is responsible for directly lubricating the joint through the production of synovial fluid. Synovial fluid support increases joint mobility and protects joints and cartilage while continuously working to quiet the inflammatory process within the joints. Hyaluronic acid in the oral form, when absorbed by the gastrointestinal tract, is more bioavailable and will be absorbed by all the joints in the body. Treating joints on a daily basis will reduce the risk of joint deterioration due to tough competition demands. energyequine.ca/product/core-motion/



HoofPro

No foot, no horse. Horse's hooves are exposed to high levels of concussive impact and can be susceptible to infection. HoofPro from Equine Fit supports a strong, healthy hoof by nutritionally supporting protein synthesis and cellular function and thereby, assisting in the faster growth of hoof tissue. Compounds in HoofPro increase blood flow to the lamina.

Beta-glucans 1, 3 and 1, 6 in HoofPro are known to support the horse's immune system. A strong immune system allows the horse to resist infection and reduce chronic inflammatory changes. Natural antioxidants in this nutritional matrix have the potential to reduce structural damage to cells caused by free radicals, toxins and environmental stresses. www.equine-fit.com



Farrier's Formula

The concept of "feeding the hoof" was unheard of in 1979 so when Farrier's Formula was unveiled in the same year, the product was ahead of its time. Now 30 years later, farriers have realized how effectively this pelleted feed can help build strong connective tissue proteins with its phospholipids and omega fatty acids. Ingredients included are things like soy protein concentrate which furnishes the amino acid Tyrosine and has been found to be the natural means of regulating hoof problems and obesity related syndromes. Additionally, DL-Methionine is a sulfur-containing amino acid which is commonly deficient in grains (corn, oats, barley), but is important for the body's proper utilization of lipids and for building the sulfur crosslinks that add strength to connective tissue proteins. www.lifedatalabs.com



Pureform Full Stride

Pureform Full Stride (All-In-One Supplement Concentrate) from SciencePure Nutraceuticals Inc. offers not only the joint and bone maintenance benefits of Glucosamine HCl and MSM in the formula, it delivers essential amino acids and complete vitamins and trace minerals to compliment and balance a horse's diet of fresh pasture or a mixed grass and alfalfa hay diet. This formula helps to maintain the integrity of cartilage, tendons, muscle, skin, hair, hooves and promotes health gut microflora, muscle maintenance and a willingness to work without a hot mind. Just add salt and a small amount of whole oats and you will be very happy with the outcome in your equine companion. www.sciencepure.com



JointPro

JointPro from Equine Fit supports healthy cartilage in extreme conditions as well as supporting normal and healthy joint function. The carefully selected, high quality natural ingredients in JointPro have anti-oxidative and anti-inflammatory potential. Nutrients in JointPro support a healthy tissue immune response, facilitating high intensity training and competition. This product is also recommended for aging horses needing nutrient support to maintain an active lifestyle. www.equine-fit.com

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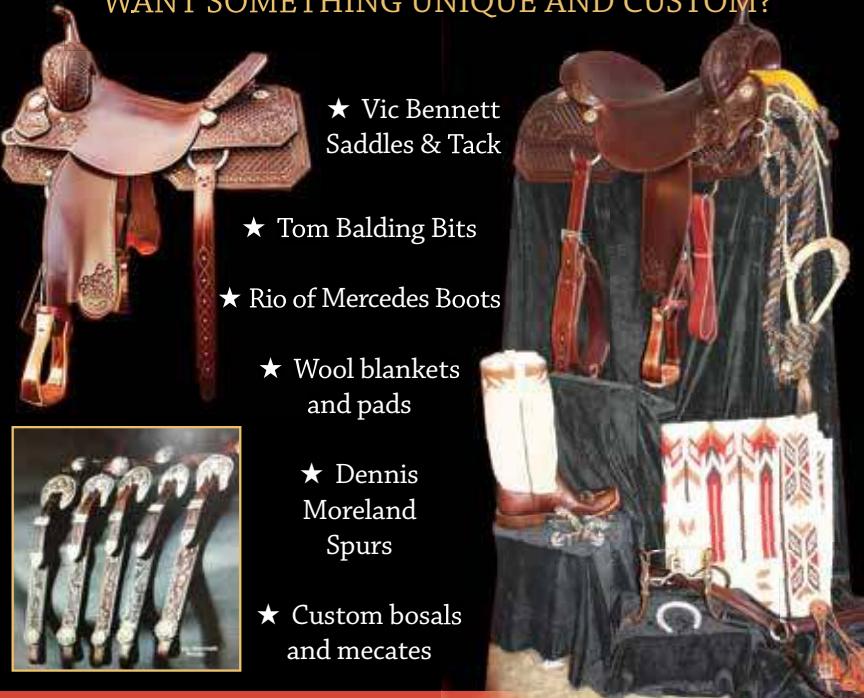
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A photograph showing a close-up of a horse's lower leg and hoof. A person's hands are visible, one holding a hoof pick and the other using a rasp to trim the hoof wall. In the bottom left corner, there is a bag of "Farrier's Formula Double Strength" supplement. To its right is a circular badge with the text "FARRELL RECOMMENDED" around the top and "#1 HOOF SUPPLEMENT" at the bottom. To the right of the badge is the brand name "Farrier's Formula" in a bold, serif font, enclosed in a thin rectangular border. Below the brand name is the website "www.lifedata labs.com". At the very bottom right of the badge area is the phone number "1-800-624-1873".

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Sound-Off: How Do We Grow the Horse Industry?



It's an important question that the horse industry should pay attention to. So WHR took to social media to ponder the query. Our readers returned with a plethora of answers that gave us pause.

By LOUISA MURCH WHITE



1

LOWER THE COST

It's no secret that the crazy horse habit we all share is exceptionally expensive. Board, feed, vet bills, the list goes on – essentially if you have horses, it also means you are spending money, and likely lots of it. The main issue that came up when we polled our readers was the cost of participating in different disciplines. They have horses, they love them – but they can't afford to take the leap into certain sports.

Heather Gagne, AB, highlighted this well.

"My two cents on getting people interested?"

"Make it affordable. People love to try new things, but a \$20,000 horse is the low end and then you try to learn and you have to take lessons. Not many can foot that bill to break into different disciplines. The fun stuff like practices also become costly too, but try to do even a low level competitive activity to 'try it out' and you can donate hundreds to find out that you're in the bottom five."

Gagne highlighted The Bull Pen, an arena located in Airdrie, AB, owned by the Thorlakson family as a fantastic facility to try out team penning in a low cost, low stress environment.

"Despite the fuel," Gagne laughs. "It's cost effective, you can go up to work and try a new sport in a laid back environment. There's many people there who will help you along by kindly telling you what to do and talk you through what you did wrong afterwards. The cost effective price tag makes it so you don't mind trying out riding with different teams."

Gagne highlighted an equine sport that is exceptionally cost effective and beginner friendly. Due to this, members are on the rise. Laurie Black-Haughton agrees, "Team penning has had some real growth and success. In our group, the British Columbia Team Cattle Penning Association, the key is a dedicated group of people willing to get their hands dirty in a fun and encouraging environment for new and novice members. Plus there is a large amount of added money to entice seasoned penners and our penner friends in Alberta to make the trip across the Rocky Mountains to compete. In BC, we have tailored a few of our lower-numbered classes to provide opportunities for young, beginner and novice penners to ride at big shows. Then we partner them with Open level penners and use their expertise and experience to help 'coach' their team members during the run. Our BC membership is bursting at the



Team Penning is a discipline that is experiencing growth and success due to its low cost and fun environment.

seams. Our shows have had to be 'capped' due to the huge number of teams that enter."

In the mixed-breed show world, Anita Gillard, Clive, AB, agrees.

"I am an amateur involved in the Lacombe Light Horse Show, a smaller, open community show which offers an affordable alternative to show your horse at a very low cost and have fun. There's less stress and it's a good place for beginners or green horses." Gillard asks, "Who can afford the cost of a trainer and the expenses of top tier shows? A lot of us cannot."

In wrapping up our first argument on how to grow the industry which is to lower the cost of participating, it appears that some associations are already working diligently to do so. One example is that the Alberta Cutting Horse Association (ACHA) announced for the first time they will be hosting an open jackpot ranch class at their shows. This "ranch class" means riders can show their cutting horses two-handed for a much lower fee. This class opens the door for cow horse aficionados who may want to try out cutting, but don't want to swallow the large fees and huge commitment that comes with it. Interestingly, the ACHA has been observing smaller un-sanctioned organizations utilize ranch classes for many years, and have decided the low cost option may be a great stepping stone for their own organization. It's a breath of fresh air, and the right direction of movement, for one of the many western sports that people claim is, "...just too dang expensive." To lower the cost, it seems we must start really stretching ourselves to think outside the box.

2

BECOME AN AMBASSADOR FOR YOUR SPORT

Time and time again we hear that new members don't feel welcome within the horse industry.

Joyce Scobey, Fairview, AB, touches on this from a top down perspective.

"I think all organizations need to encourage and promote their sport by educating the trainers, professionals and experienced competitors that they should respect, encourage and welcome the entry level and beginner competitors because those people are what build the sport."

This level is the one that hires the trainers and the coaches and goes to shows with the hopes of improving themselves and their horses. Their expectations are not necessarily to go to the World Shows. Just having the 'big cheeses' being friendly or helpful at shows to the 'newbies' will keep people coming back to shows."

In defence of the big guys, reining horse trainer, Austin Seelhof, Cochrane, AB, argues that the entire community needs to involve themselves in the horse industry.

"I think the biggest problem is a lack of help from the members. I have been on the Reining Alberta board for seven years and for every compliment that is made to the volunteers, I would say there are five complaints. I will call them complaints because people like to point out a problem but more often than not, they have no solution to fix the problem and/or they don't want to try to help. I honestly believe people forget that we [as board members] are volunteers who have families, jobs,

businesses, health issues etc. A 350-member association cannot ride on the backs of eight volunteer board of directors year after year and expect growth."

Jessica Cline, Taber, AB, backs up Seelhof's comments. "Austin Seelhof does a marvellous job of leading by example.

Leading by example may have been a missing piece in management and leadership in the past and Seelhof took the steps to correct it." Cline continues, "Creating a culture of volunteerism is what all associations should be striving for. Members, no matter how busy they are at a show, should WANT to pitch in."

Janice Hepburn, Cochrane, AB agrees and highlights the proactive approach that volunteers should have.

"I have taken on the role of 'banner person,'" Hepburn says. "We all want to get set up, horses settled and ready to ride but we also need to get the sponsor banners up before the arena is open to ride. I like our secretary, Kathie Wilson MacKenzie's approach – if the banners aren't up, the arena isn't open for riding. There have been many times no one shows up to help, although it is getting a bit better. It takes less than an hour and with more volunteers it would make life easier for everyone." Hepburn does give kudos to her association, "Reining Alberta does recognize volunteers with awesome swag and that is much appreciated."

3 WHERE ARE THE YOUTH?!

There are two groups of people who become involved in the horse industry – new riders and the youth contingency.

Marc Garner, Lethbridge, AB, owns Rocking Heart Ranch which offers an innovative colt starting program that awards youth, female and male competitors.

Rocking Heart Ranch also heads up the Youth Weanling Challenge, where the ranch donates a weanling as a part of the Mane Event in Red Deer, AB. They ask youth to submit essays on why they should win a beautiful Quarter Horse. Garner says, "Our Youth Weanling Challenge has worked well in attracting youth to the horse industry. Rocking Heart Ranch has found success with this program and we now have three of these events under our belt with more planned for the coming year."

Tina Prescott, of Carstairs, AB, also contributes to the youth conversation.



Reining trainer, Austin Seelhof, raises the argument that the horse industry needs more involvement from members across the board.

Caleb Tipton

"[When it comes to youth to amateur retention] out of all of the events outside of rodeo I have seen retaining these members is the Alberta Paint Horse Club. The youth who compete are all phenomenal riders, horsemen and are actively involved in the club. Second to that is the Alberta Barrel Racing Association, especially the series run by Brenda Delaney in Carstairs, AB. Finally, the Canadian Team Cattle Penning Association has the most kids in the youth divisions that I have ever seen in one place in the same arena. I think what is key with all three of these associations is that they are affordable, horses are often able to do multiple classes and it is usually entire families that are taking part in the event."

When aiming to grow the industry by increasing youth member numbers, associations would be wise to continue the theme of keeping the cost manageable while targeting family-friendly classes and events.

4 WELCOMING AND INNOVATIVE FORMATS

When people think outside of the box, great things tend to follow. When people feel welcome and included, they are more likely to return.

Aaron Lagaden, AB, highlights one perfect example of this in the Double S Barrel Series in Strathmore, AB.

"Sandy Gerencer and Denise Sluggett are a fantastic example of event producers

doing a great job." Lagaden says it's the atmosphere that makes it so special, "They do an amazing job of making everyone feel welcome. Sandy [Gerencer] runs the gate and makes sure every competitor gets cheered on and leaves the arena with a smile on their face. If a run doesn't go as expected they will let you go again and get it right. They play music and have a great food truck on site and go above and beyond to make sure everything runs smoothly. At the end of the day their Facebook page is full of compliments from competitors saying how much fun they had and how they know why everyone drives the distance to join them."

Lagaden explains that it's the extra effort the producers put in that takes the Double S Barrel Series to the next level. "At the end of the series they have a finals with phenomenal prizes, embroidered full neck blankets, a draw for all members for a saddle, belt buckles, Pendleton fringe purses, Yeti cups, I could go on. They have awards for Rookie of the Year, Most Improved and Most Dedicated. At the finals in Strathmore last year they dug into their own pockets to have belt buckles made for two teens who have physical challenges and only felt comfortable coming out and gaining confidence improving their riding skills with Double S. When they were presented with their buckles there was not a dry eye around."

Lagaden summarizes just why the series is so special, "It is truly one of the best jackpot series around, as well as one of the most fun, welcoming and encouraging horse events I've ever been lucky enough to attend."

Corinne Toronchuk, AB, argues that a welcoming format for beginner riders is the answer the horse industry is looking for.

"Offering entry level classes in any discipline is necessary. There is a huge need for people just starting out to be able to grow in their chosen discipline. Those people who find themselves in the upper echelon of experience can tend to be a pretty closed off group. It's really about an organization moving away from the clique/superiority complex mentality to an attitude of humility and inclusion of those starting out."

When it comes to innovation, Bailey Kolsun, AB, makes an excellent point that all levels need to be bolstered. "I'm the most familiar with the reining industry."

Kolsun says, "But it seems like the beginner level classes always have plenty of entries and new people coming in at a steady rate. I think the problem is that while grassroots members are consistently coming in, others are leaving. Creating an organization that is pretty much staying the same from year to year but over time, with the recession and such, has actually caused the organization to shrink. It seems to me that when most members leave an organization is when they are out, or almost out of the beginner level classes and are having to move a level up."

It's the levelling up, says Kolsun, where problems arise. "Having to move up a level can mean possibly purchasing a better horse, getting more lessons, keeping the horse in training somewhere and going to shows that cost more and are further away from home. All of which can come at pretty substantial costs with both money and time to the average person."

Kolsun summarizes, "Not really a solution here, just a different idea for organizations to think on because getting new people into the sport is great, but I feel that they also need to figure out a way to make these new members truly want to put the time, money and effort into staying with the organizations for an extended period of time."



Want to grow your association's youth numbers? Keep western sports fun, family-focused and cost effective.

5

INTEGRATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Finally, to round out our top five list, our readers suggested that a boost in learning opportunities would provide a more open door into the horse industry.

Ellie Ross, AB, has a great reminder,

"Opportunities for new riders to be tempted and not feel intimidated, like intro clinics held frequently and even short video tutorials. I remember the first time I went to a reined cow horse event and had zero clue how to even fill out the entry form. A good reminder that not everyone knows the lingo and it can be overwhelming to say the least."

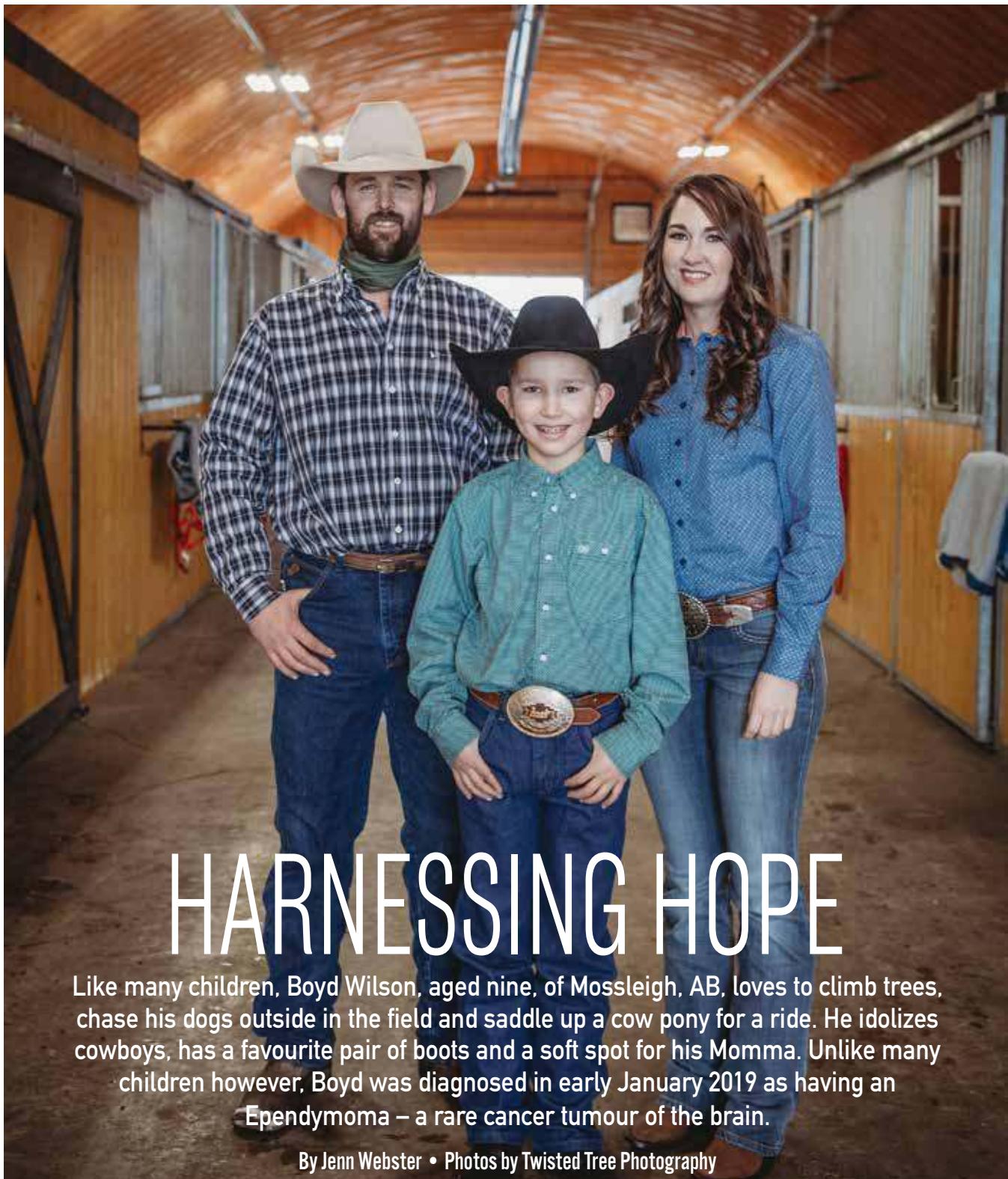
Meagan Leslie-Blackmore, Kitchener, BC, agrees,

"As someone wanting to expand into different disciplines I would love to see more clinics and opportunities to learn more and meet people in the industry. Also it would be nice to see more classes for novice horse and rider pairs, as many novice classes only seem to pertain to the rider, so the people wanting to try out the beginner classes aren't ready or able to buy finished horses. It means that they are already out of their league in the most beginner classes available."

Leslie-Blackmore continues, "Newbie' clinics and classes would be a fun way for people to learn about a discipline and get a chance to actually try it out at a suitable level there for giving more people the opportunity to have fun and fall in love with the sport." 

IN SUMMARY

Social media can often be a double-edged sword but when it comes to this particular exercise on Facebook, *Western Horse Review* feels that it shows our readership has innovative and exciting ideas pertaining to growth in the horse industry. The above quotes, and the many other fantastic ones we weren't able to include, show a positive mindset towards the way of life we love. These basic tenets remain as a way to grow our disciplines; embrace beginners, lower the cost and always be welcoming. Innovative formats and ideas can grow the many different levels from open, to non pro, to amateur competitor. When all the ideologies come together, great things happen.



HARNESSING HOPE

Like many children, Boyd Wilson, aged nine, of Mossleigh, AB, loves to climb trees, chase his dogs outside in the field and saddle up a cow pony for a ride. He idolizes cowboys, has a favourite pair of boots and a soft spot for his Momma. Unlike many children however, Boyd was diagnosed in early January 2019 as having an Ependymoma – a rare cancer tumour of the brain.

By Jenn Webster • Photos by Twisted Tree Photography

In December 2018, life was normal for Veronica Swales, Kiel Wilson and their nine-year-old son, Boyd Wilson. The family had travelled down to Las Vegas, NV, for the World Series of Team Roping. Kiel had some team roping horses with him and Veronica (better known as "Ronnie"), was entered in barrel racing events at the same time. Their young cowboy, Boyd, regularly

travels to competitions with his mom, who is a professional barrel horse and cow horse trainer. He is no stranger to life on the ranch, nor on the road and is happy to be completely immersed in the western lifestyle.

Things had proceeded with the events in Vegas as normal, until Boyd started experiencing some strange "black out" episodes. Some of the black outs lasted longer than others

and many were accompanied by painful headaches. Ronnie and Kiel realized their son was experiencing seizures, but they had no idea what to do for him.

The family had driven down to Vegas in their trailer with horses in tow and originally, the plan had been for them all to return to their home in Mossleigh, AB, together. However, both Ronnie and Kiel knew Boyd couldn't

endure the drive back, so they made arrangements for Kiel to drive the horses home while Ronnie flew home with their child.

"That airplane ride was horrible," Ronnie recalled.

The pressure from the plane combined with Boyd's headaches and seizures made the trip home excruciating. By the time they were able to get to the airport, Boyd's seizures had increased to about eight a day. Boyd would scream out in pain, so loudly that airplane attendees called ahead for an ambulance to meet them on the tarmac. Boyd was taken directly from the Calgary airport to the Alberta Children's Hospital. That was on December 16.

At the hospital, Boyd was assessed and given seizure medicine. Ronnie was told to return home. The hospital staff would call when they could get an MRI scheduled. Christmas was coming in a few days and Boyd would probably relax better at home anyways. Kiel made good time driving home with the horses and made it back by the early morning of December 18.

Upon returning home however, Kiel realized Boyd's seizures were continuing and intensifying. The medication he had been prescribed did nothing to ease his pain. The parents decided to return with their son to the hospital, on that same morning and Kiel did the driving to rush Boyd to emergency. Upon their re-appearance in emergency, Boyd was admitted. Doctors put a rush on his MRI. They discovered that Boyd had a tumour in his brain which was clearly affecting his central nervous system. He was rushed for emergency cranial surgery on December 20.

"The one thing that lifted our spirits during that time was when the doctors asked Boyd what music he wanted to listen to, when they put him to sleep just prior to his surgery," Ronnie said.

"Boyd told them, *A Country Boy Will Survive*, by Hank Williams Jr. The staff said it was definitely a first for a request like that."

Doctors were confident they had removed 99% of the squash-ball-sized tumour in Boyd's head however, the last 1% couldn't be removed because it was wrapped around an artery. If they had removed it, doctors feared it would have caused Boyd a stroke. Additionally, everyone had to wait for pathology results to come back in the two weeks following, to know for certain if the tumour was cancerous or not.

As the family had spent all of their time in the hospital on the days leading up to Christmas, friends and extended family came together to put up a tree for Boyd in his home, so it would be there when he returned. They also got busy acquiring the gifts and things the family would



OPPOSITE PAGE: The family of Kiel Wilson, Veronica Swales and Boyd Wilson. **ABOVE:** Veronica "Ronnie" Swales recently contended in the 2019 NRCHA World's Greatest Cowboy competition in Fort Worth, TX.

need to celebrate, given their lack of time to shop. Boyd was discharged from the hospital only a couple of days after his surgery.

In early January, 2019, the report came back from pathology. Boyd was diagnosed as having an Ependymoma – a rare cancer tumour of the brain. Further testing would be required to check for additional cancer cells in his body, or tumours of his spine.

It was the worst news any parent could imagine. The world of Ronnie, Kiel and Boyd entirely shifted on its axis. They knew from this point forward, nothing would be the same. Every time Boyd climbed a tree, chased his dogs outside in the field or saddled up a cow pony for a ride – every moment would be precious. Both of them begged the universe to let them trade places with their young son, but it was a futile request. In the future, Boyd would have to undergo radiation treatment five days a week for two months, at the Alberta Children's Hospital. He would also be sent for hyperbaric chamber treatment. His dietary needs would change drastically and signal a lifestyle revamp for the entire family. Boyd would have to begin home-schooling in between appointments.

On top of it all, Ronnie was entered to compete in the World's Greatest Horseman (WGH) competition in Fort Worth, TX, in February 2019. Riding her own Annies Playin Cat (Annies Cat x Bob Playin), Ronnie would ride alongside her two brothers, Clint and John Swales. History would be made as it was the first time a group of siblings were entered to compete in the gruelling competition that involved herd work, rein work, steer stopping

and cow work. However, with Boyd's new diagnosis, the decision to go through with the Texas trip was a difficult one.

That's when Boyd piped up.

"I am so excited to go cheer my mom and my uncles on in Texas! I think it might be good for me to go have a little fun down there, before I have to come home and go through some things that might not be so fun," he said, back in a January 2019 interview.

Once Ronnie and Boyd arrived in Texas, Boyd was welcomed with open arms everywhere he went. He had the opportunity to practice his roping skills with one of his idols, JD Yates, a professional team roper and steer roper with over \$1.5M in career earnings. Then J.B. Mauney, a professional bull rider with the Professional Bull Riders (and a World Champion in 2013 and 2015) had a special buckle sent directly to the National Reined Cow Horse Association (NRCHA) show office at the Will Rogers Event Centre, for Boyd to pick up. Although Ronnie didn't make the finals of the World's Greatest Horseman competition like she had hoped, the overall experience of Texas was the breath of fresh air they needed.

"We had a good visit with Corey Cushing, after he won the World's Greatest competition. We congratulated him," Ronnie said. "He asked me a bit about Boyd. And we told him that Boyd's goal is to be at the World's Greatest Youth competition next year. Corey then asked if he could turn back and help Boyd out at next year's show. That put Boyd over the moon."

Boyd also got the opportunity to help bring the cattle up for the steer stopping in the WGH competition. "He was pumped about that!" said Ronnie.

"The fact that he got to help out at that show was a pretty awesome feeling for him. He also met another of his idols, Boyd Rice. And we had the chance to go for a tour of a western pleasure barn in the area that also had an exotic zoo on the property – there Boyd met 'Gerald the giraffe' and had a wonderful day."

The biggest fight of their lives now remains for the family of Ronnie, Kiel and Boyd, here in Canada. A group named #TeamBoyd has come forward to create a Facebook benefit for the family and the support has been overwhelming. In the face of his life threatening disease, it will be important for the family to stay positive, keep their chins up and remember that what may seem to be the most devastating news in one's life, can open doors to a whole new world of possibilities.

We'll all be waiting to cheer you on at the 2020 World's Greatest Youth competition, Boyd!



A New Age of Barn Raisin'

How a few groups of rural folk recently came together to support peers in need and help ease the stress of unforeseen medical issues.

By JENN WEBSTER

Recently, several individuals in the Canadian horse industry suffered unforeseeable medical issues and like a moth to a flame, it was the western horse industry who came to their aid. Without the safety net of government assistance, many horse professionals who are self-employed would find themselves experiencing great hardships, if the unthinkable were to happen. And that's exactly how life played out for Marty Gardner of Stavely, AB; Deseire Rieu of Blackfalds, AB; and Natalie Weichel of Carseland, AB, in the last six months.

Given a diagnosis of lyme disease on May 24, 2018, life will never be the same for professional trainer Marty Gardner of Flattop Horsemanship. Requiring supplements that cost \$700-\$1,110 a month that are not covered by Alberta Health and unable to work, Gardner has a long road ahead of him. Quickly the horse industry recognized the battle Gardner and his wife Yvon were facing, and rallied for a benefit concert.

"It truly was beautiful thing they did for us. It turned out to be more than we ever expected!" exclaimed Yvon. Over 250 people came out to Silver Slate Arena on January 19 to raise funds for the Gardners and awareness about Lyme disease. Dr. Rebecca Risk was also invited to do a presentation about the disease.

"I swear, the whole working cow horse, ranching and roping worlds plus all the clubs we've been a part of for the last 20 years came out! Once you're part of the horse world, you're part of that family forever!" Yvon said.

"Marty could hardly walk that night. So I got up and spoke to the people who all came for the benefit, to thank them," she explained. "Going through something like this – it's



Life completely changed for trainer Marty Gardner, upon discovering he had lyme disease.

lonely. But that night boosted our morale. It humbled us to see how many people actually still cared! There were people there we hadn't seen in 20 years! We're very fortunate the horse

world is like that!"

An epic gathering of Alberta's finest western musicians and songwriters came together in the arena dirt that night and the funds



ABOVE: An epic gathering of western musicians and songwriters came together at Silver Slate Arena in January, 2019, to benefit Marty Gardner. **RIGHT:** A fluke accident put Deseire Rieu into ICU in December 2018. Thanks to a big group of supporters, Rieu will be able to take the necessary time she requires to heal properly.



A screenshot of a Facebook page for "Deserie Rieu Benefit Auction". The page features a profile picture of a woman with blonde hair petting a horse. The main post on the timeline reads: "We would like to thank each and everyone of you that participated in this benefit auction. You all are amazing." Below the post, there are several comments from users. On the right side of the screen, there are sections for "Community" and "Events".

they raised will help make life a little easier for Marty and Yvon, as they navigate the new chapter in their lives.

"It doesn't matter whether you can give a tiny little bit of yourself, or an auction item. When people are going through something like this, every little bit helps. It keeps people going! We can't even begin to express our gratitude," Yvon stated.

December 14, 2018 began as a normal day for trainer Natalie Weichel, but things went drastically sideways when her partner, Blair, was admitted to the Strathmore, AB, hospital after he started feeling unwell. Later, Blair was transferred to a Calgary hospital.

"The doctors told me, 'Get yourself prepared for a hard road. It's going to take everything we've got to keep him alive..."' recalls Weichel.

Once in Calgary, Blair was put into a medically induced coma because his lungs were failing. The doctors had to bypass his lungs and heart and wanted his body, undistracted by maintenance or mind, to focus on the fight ahead.

"His lungs were basically shut off for seven days," tells Weichel. "We were praying to God that it would help give him get some renewed function in his lungs."

Originally, Blair was also a candidate for a lung transplant as he narrowly cheated death.

"The doctors told me that the percentage of people who survive after being on a heart and lung bypass machine, sometimes can't be saved. Their other organs start shutting down," she said.

However, over time, things started improving and Blair was finally brought out of his coma. Today, he can breathe room air with assistance, but he too, has a long, hard road ahead. Since December, Weichel's customers came together with all kinds of support. From offerings to feed horses and clean stalls, to a GoFundMe page that raised several thousand dollars – it all helped the trainer pull through a very difficult time in her life.

"Blair has been sick since the middle of November and in the hospital since December 14. And if rehab goes well, we're hoping he can come home on April 1. But there are no guarantees.

"I don't have the words to properly relay how thankful I am for the support people have offered us. The horse community is a great community! I'd like say to say thank you – but I feel like it's not enough," she states.

On December 28, 2018, Deserie Rieu, a professional western pleasure trainer, was

severely injured when she sustained a kick to the face from a horse. Rieu was airlifted to the University of Alberta hospital in Edmonton, AB, and put into ICU. With many surgeries in front of her and a long road to recovery, the horse community also came to Rieu's aid.

Friend Shannon Peacock, was one of the first to put the good-will wheels in motion.

"The Des Rieu Benefit Auction was put together after my best friend, Lisa Schiestel, asked me what I knew about doing a benefit auction. Her and veterinarian Brian Heide had a discussion about possibly doing something for Des. I jumped in head first and said, 'I will figure it out!'"

Peacock started researching and asking questions to others who had previously done something similar. She let the Rieu family know what the group wanted to do and created a Facebook auction.

"Des's mom donated the first item and from the moment I hit share on the page, it went

viral. So viral that I sat in awe listening to the 'ding, ding, ding' coming from my inbox. It would not stop!" Peacock chuckled.

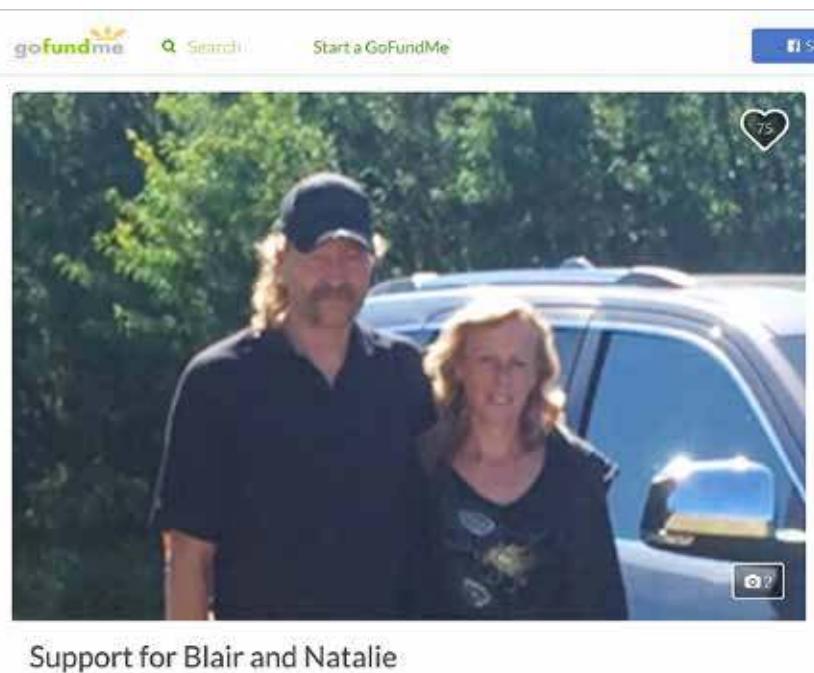
Over the course of that weekend, Peacock had to enlist help from others to post the items that were coming in from donors, as it was becoming impossible for her to keep up.

"I believe we logged about 18 hours at our computers those first two days, just getting the auction items up. We were receiving donations from across Canada and the USA, and the bidding was absolutely amazing to watch!" she said.

"We had everything from stallions, to stained glass available to bid on. And people from outside of the horse community participated, donated and bid too. I think people just wanted to help – to be a part of the spirit of community in helping someone. Someone who is genuinely a wonderful person but was now in a very tragic, impossible position. It is astounding to watch an outpouring of support in a way that you never thought was possible – to be a part of orchestrating a forum that allowed community to come together," Peacock relayed.

The proceeds from the Des Rieu Benefit Auction will enable Rieu the time she needs to heal – and heal properly without financial worry.

"I would say the horse community showed everyone involved, just how much we support and



Support for Blair and Natalie

ABOVE: Support came to Natalie Weichel for her partner Blair, in many different forms.

take care of our own."

Like an old fashioned barn raising, people in today's society still come together when help is really needed. It's inspiring to see the lengths rural folks will go to when

someone is hurting - offering a hand, or the donation of time or money. It's amazing the figurative barns we build, when we come together. In fact, it's the perfect definition of western heritage. 

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GRULLASAN | SMART LITTLE KITTY | SMART LITTLE LENI
DOCS KITTY

Dame: LENAS LUONDA | DOC CLENA | DOC JAKE
POCO CLENA | MOON CRISTAL | READY UNIVE
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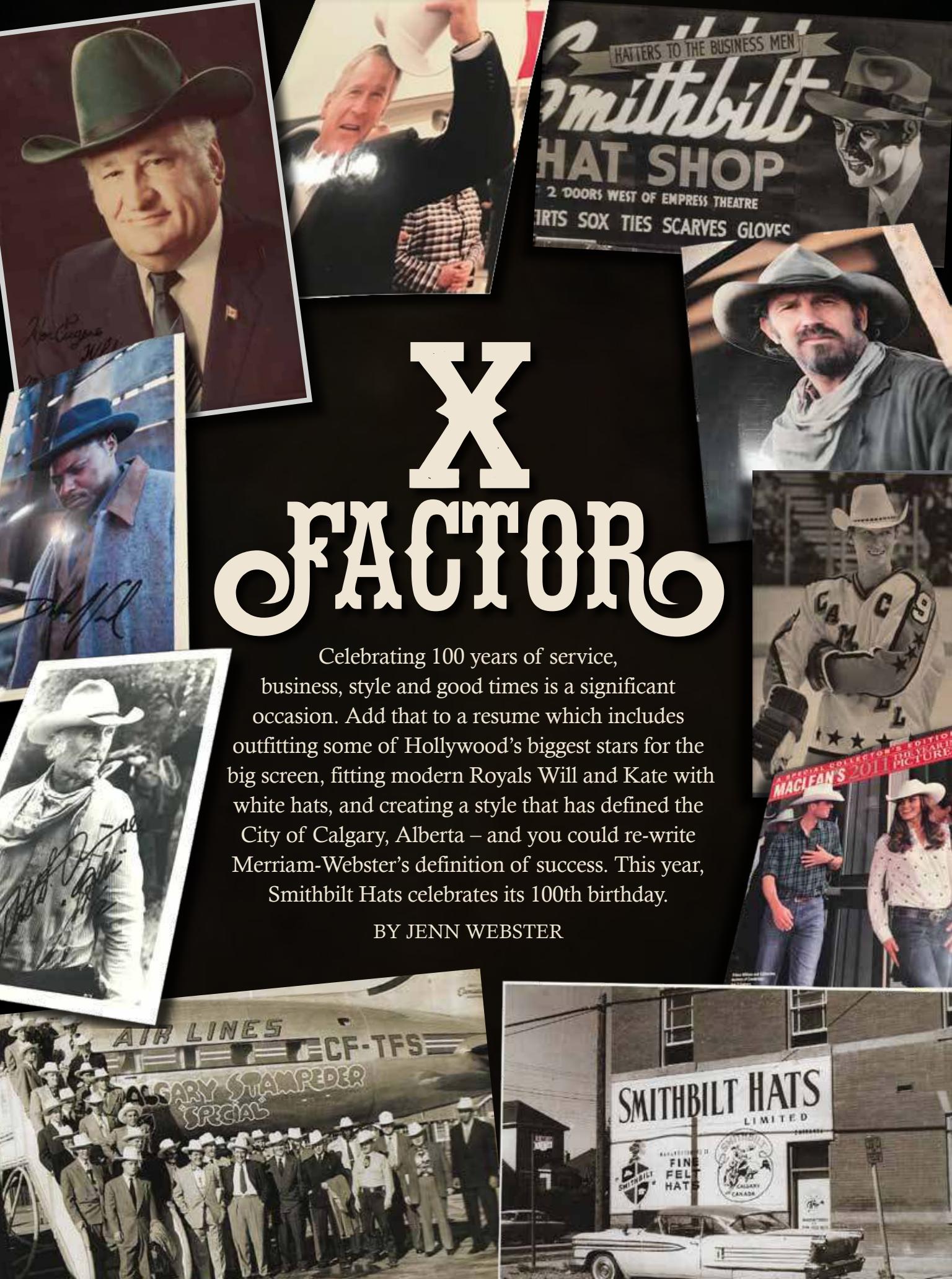
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Thanks to the mare owners who bred to Im a Catolena in 2018!



X FACTOR

Celebrating 100 years of service, business, style and good times is a significant occasion. Add that to a resume which includes outfitting some of Hollywood's biggest stars for the big screen, fitting modern Royals Will and Kate with white hats, and creating a style that has defined the City of Calgary, Alberta – and you could re-write Merriam-Webster's definition of success. This year, Smithbilt Hats celebrates its 100th birthday.

BY JENN WEBSTER





LEFT: Cowboy hat styles have changed a great deal over the years and Smithbilt has been there for nearly every one of them. **ABOVE:** Smithbilt Hats offers a wide variety of hats, in a range of styles and colours.

Writing a business plan that could last 100 years, seems like a gargantuan feat and somewhat irrelevant in a rapidly changing world. So who knows if Smithbilt Hat's founder, Morris Shumiatcher was actually thinking that far in advance when he borrowed \$300 from a local bank to buy Calgary Hat Works in 1919. Shumiatcher had arrived in Canada at the age of 18, after convincing his father to move their large family from Russia. The English language was somewhat of a barrier and in an effort to integrate smoothly, the family was renamed "Smith." Determined to take control of his own narrative, Morris spent eight years researching commerce in the Calgary area and decided upon the hat business. Smithbilt Hats was born. Morris concentrated on his local market and made western hats a specialty.

Now 100 years later, Smithbilt Hats has stood out from the beginning. Unbeknownst to many, the corporation was founded on the production of dress hats with small brims and to this day, maintains a selection of fashionable chapeaus that range in couture categories. Still, Smithbilt Hats has also redefined western fashion, over and over again.

In 1926 for instance, Morris began a cooperative effort with local businessman and the Calgary Stampede board to promote western wear for spectators and participants. Then in 1946, Morris created the very first "White Smithbilt." The signature white hat would go on to become an iconic symbol of the Stampede, of Calgary and a small contribution to Canadian identity. Through the years, white hats have proudly been presented to visiting dignitaries and royalty.

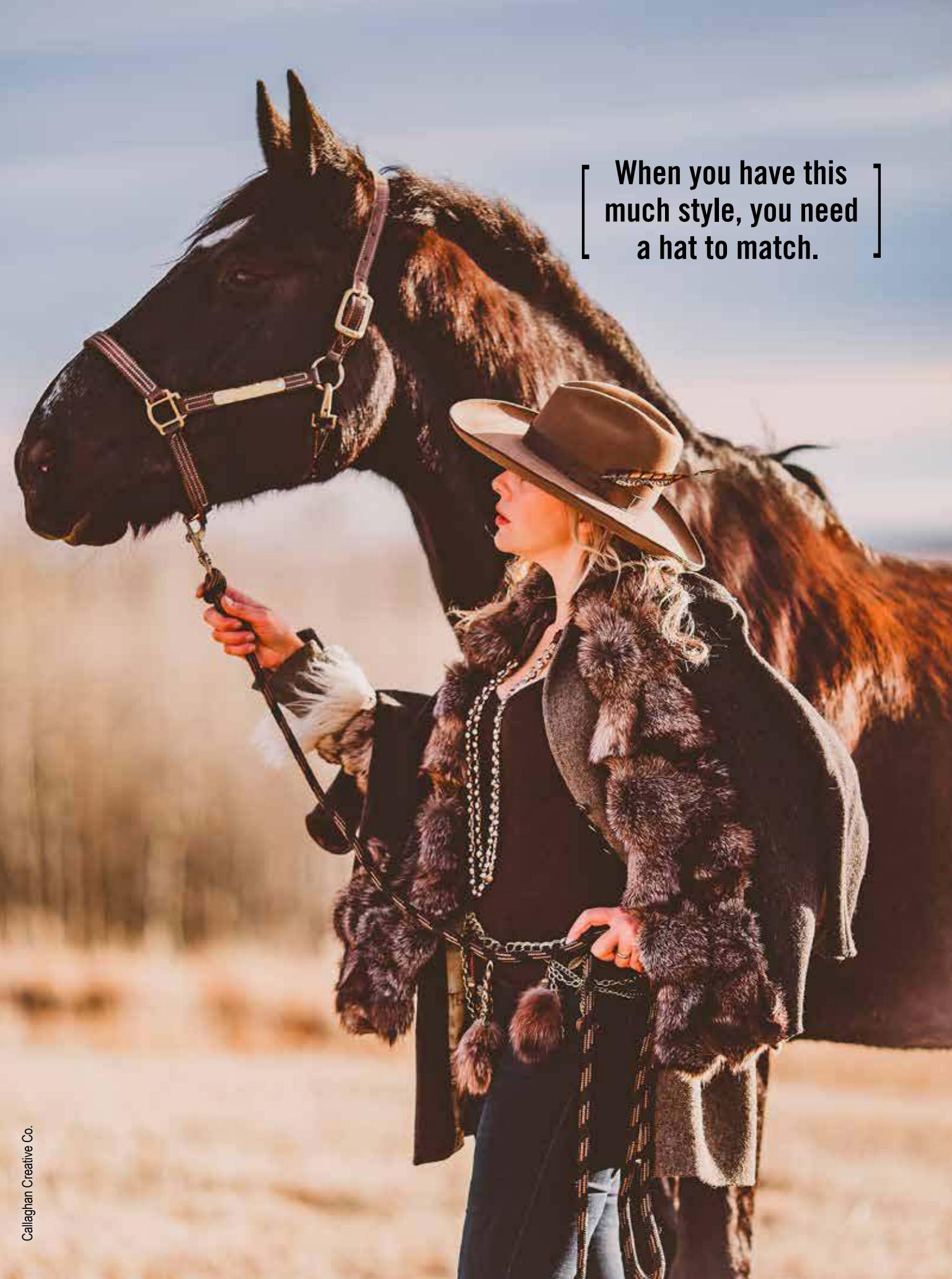
Smithbilts are also a common sight in western movies. They have been featured in such blockbusters as *The Revenant*, *Unforgiven*, *Open Range*, and *Brokeback Mountain*. Interestingly enough, one of the signature Smithbilt styles called "The Gus," was named after Robert Duvall's character of "Gus" in the movie, *Lonesome Dove*.

Over the last century, Smithbilt Hats has continually improved its product and adapted to the times. As the years have gone by the business has changed hands, passing first to Morris' son Judah and then on to longtime employee, Marshall Harvey. In 2003, the Harvey family passed the business on to a family friend. Now in 2019, Smithbilt Hats is owned by a group of Calgary area businessmen.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

From the outset, the historic neighbourhood of Inglewood in Calgary has been home to Smithbilt Hats. The company's first location was based just off of 12th Street S.E. but in 2017, they moved into a new base at the renovated, historic Fletcher Elevator Ltd. building site. With so much rich history of its own, the Fletcher Elevator recalled the significance of the grain and livestock industries in Calgary's past. Comprised of inter-connected buildings constructed between 1914 and 1964, the complex included the initial two-storey warehouse/feed-mill, single-storey additions, a covered truck loading dock and a concrete block. The original 75-foot tall, 25,000-bushel elevator burned down in 1963.

After purchasing the site in 2015 and undergoing a massive renovation, Smithbilt re-opened in a modernized space that paid homage to the historic nature of the original structures. Character defining elements that include things like metal cladding reminiscent of the grain elevators and original warehouse, pitched and shed roof structures and an overall "rustic contemporary" look, breathe new life into the historical site. Smithbilt Hats now has an attractive home that is almost double the size of the original location and includes offices, a sanding area, a shopping space, a private event room and a production facility. Interestingly enough, century old machinery is still used in the production facility to make the Smithbilt hats of today.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a wide-brimmed tan cowboy hat and a dark brown, fur-trimmed coat, stands next to a dark brown horse. She is holding the horse's reins. The background is a bright, open landscape under a clear sky.

When you have this
much style, you need
a hat to match.

MAKING A HAT

All Smithbilt Hats are made from either wool or fur felt. Felts of varying colours and composition are sourced from selected manufacturers throughout the world. As a sidenote, if you've ever wondered what the "X" means on a cowboy hat, it indicates the mixture of furs used in the felt. Essentially, the finer the fur of the felt used to make the cowboy hat, the more Xs the hat will be. Materials are then brought to the Calgary factory, to be fashioned into Smithbils by a team of hatters.

Felts are then placed onto a classic hardwood hat block, to form a crown-shape and size for the finished hat. The felt is put over the block, steamed and pressed into a blocking machine. Fur felts are dried on the block for approximately one week and then sanded for a smooth finish. From there, blocked felts are pressed in a hydraulic machine using a die and saddle, or hand-shaped by a hatter to the patron's specifications. Brim-shaping is a fine art as it is specific to each client, and requires a well-trained eye. Once hats are fully formed, the sweatband, lining and hatband is hand-stitched into the hat. Details such as a customer's initials can also be punched into the sweatband, using a 100-year-old monogram punch. Finished products are then placed inside a protective bag and specially constructed hatbox.

THE "WHITE SMITHBILT"

Anyone who has spent time in Calgary knows the significance of the city's "White Hat." The White Smithbilt is proudly presented to visiting dignitaries and Royal guests and is now recognized throughout the world as symbolic of Calgary's western heritage. However, the history of the white hat is long and storied.

White has never been the standard colour for "true" cowboy hats. Anyone who has spent time on the range, herding cattle or managing livestock knows that light coloured hats become dirty very quickly. The "good guys" in early westerns of the silver screen often wore silver-grey or off-white hats, but none of them actually wore a pure white one. World War II changed social values, resulting in the youth of the day wanting to look radically different from the previous generation. Therefore, light-coloured hats started to increase in demand.

In 1946, Morris decided to produce pure white cowboy hats. He had to send all the way to Russia to obtain the white felt to make these spectacular pieces. During the Stampede parade of 1947, oilman Bill Herron and his family debuted the white hats with matching black and white outfits, horses, saddles and bridles. Their parade outfit won the "best-dressed" award. After that, Morris invested heavily in white felt and 1948 became the first Stampede to debut white hats.

Later that same year the Calgary Stampeders football team earned the chance to compete in Toronto against Ottawa for the Grey Cup. The city of Calgary was so excited about the prospect of their team playing in the Grey Cup that a group of prominent citizens organized a special train to take fans to Toronto. A chuckwagon, 12 horses, a group of entertainers and 250 fans headed east aboard the "Stampede Special."

This boisterous group wore the unofficial costume of a white Smithbilt and a colourful neck scarf, throughout their two-day trip on the train. Though it was rumoured no one got much sleep along the way, the Calgarians swept off their iron horse with just as much energy as they had started and kept up with "a constant flow of western high spirits." There was square dancing in the streets of Toronto, pancake breakfasts from the chuckwagon and riders on horseback in full regalia. The group presented the mayor of Toronto with his own, 10-gallon white Smithbilt hat. The people of Toronto were envious of the white hats and many Calgarians had their hats "liberated." As a result, a cardboard knock-off became available to meet the demand, for \$4 a hat.



OPPOSITE PAGE: Smithbilt is dedicated to the preservation of western heritage and traditions. **ABOVE:** Master-Hatter and co-owner Brian Hanson, monograms a customer's initials on the inside sweatband of a hat.

The Calgary Stampeders won the Grey Cup that year and the Stampede Special once again loaded up with its fans, entertainers and horses and headed back west. The group continued with their celebrations all the way home. A young alderman and radio announcer named Don MacKay had been aboard the Stampede Special. In 1950, MacKay was elected as Calgary's new mayor. MacKay continued presenting Smithbilt hats as gifts to visiting dignitaries and the tradition of the white hat was established.

Though the tradition has faced some challenges since then, the Smithbilt white hat is presented to hundreds of visitors to Calgary each year. These have included the likes of former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, George W. Bush, Vladimir Putin, Bill Clinton and Tony Blair. In 1987, visiting Royalty Princess Margaret, Prince Charles, Andy and Fergie also each received one, as did Will and Kate in 2011. Master-Hatter and co-owner of Smithbilt, Brian Hanson, had to send over three versions of each hat with precise measurements for Will and Kate to England, before they arrived in Canada.

Also notable is the white hat Oprah Winfrey briefly wore onstage during her presentation at the Calgary Saddledome in 2013. And Paul Anka, Bob Hope, Dalai Lama, Bruce Springsteen, Wayne Gretzky and Pope Jean Paul are all members of the white Smithbilt hat club.

100 CANDLES

Measured, subtle and wise beyond their 100 years, Smithbilt Hats is steeped in tradition. Committed to preserving western heritage and the production of legendary hats, the company is poised to remain as one of the most culturally influential Alberta corporations of the next century.



ROUND
PEN



RAISING A REINER

Horses in reining trainer Amanda Self's barn, range in age from two-year-olds to some over the age of 18. Here's her secret to maintaining them all in great health.

By JENN WEBSTER

Reining trainer Amanda Self of Kamloops, British Columbia, has a long list of credentials. Yet perhaps one of her most impressive accomplishments, is the longevity of the horses in her care. In a day and age when the discipline of reining – a futurity driven industry – has been given a bad rap, Self is someone who considers the health and welfare of her horses as paramount. Yes, Self has youngsters in her barn, but she also has mounts as old as 18-years, still ready and willing to do their jobs each day. Health and soundness are major concerns for all and as such, the youngsters have as much value to Self as do the seasoned veterans. Broken down in age group categories, here Self imparts her valuable insight for helping her horses hold up to the sport and a life beyond.



Olivia Gullibault

YEARLINGS

Reining prospects are chosen based on several factors such as pedigree, conformation and temperament. As a yearling the expectations are basic. Yearlings must learn ground manners and concepts such as learning to be tied up and patience while they stand. Self sets boundaries with these young horses and teaches them how to move off of pressure. They get blanketed, they learn to be lunged a little bit and get their feet and deworming done regularly. This phase takes a lot of time and money invested, because an owner is not doing a lot much with these young horses, other than taking good care of them and raising them correctly.

TWO-YEAR-OLDS

After spending a lot of time on the handling basics with her horses as yearlings, Self will typically get on a horse in January of their two-year-old years. She spends only about 15 minutes on their backs for the first couple of months and the goal is to simply move body parts. She knows that horses who train too heavily in their juvenile years can show early signs of soundness issues and therefore, Self focuses on longevity of the animal instead. A little bit of training each day to stimulate the horse's mind is the equivalent to equine Kindergarten, without pushing his body past his physical limitations.

"Health is the key to my horses staying happy," she states. "As the second year continues, those young prospects will be mounted and lightly ridden five times a week. As time goes on, they are asked for more – but only as their minds and body mature."

The trainer stresses that it is very important to her that all equipment is properly fitted to young horses, with smaller, growing bodies. Saddle fit is a critical element because Self does not want her mounts to experience any pain or discomfort – especially in the very beginning – as this would create a negative learning experience for the animal.

Working on a young horse's fitness levels is really important during this phase of the training, before Self asks them for anything strenuous. She believes a lot in the long trot and begins teaching the young horse about collection early on, to improve their back strength. She believes a young horse must first have a strong back and hind quarter muscles before it can begin to learn any maneuvers.

Yearlings are an expensive investment but their care and training is an important step in the finished reining prospect process.

"They must also always wear boots and protective equipment on their knees, once we process to the point of learning maneuvers," Self states. "When a horse learns to spin for instance, it's important that the knees are covered so the horse does not knock himself there and cause any pain or injury. A horse in pain won't willingly want to spin."

FUTURITY HORSES

While individual divisions in horse show competition vary within their sanctioning organizations, a three-year-old is known in the reining world as a futurity horse. Special classes are limited to horses of specific



LEFT: 17-year-old gelding, Slide On Chic, aka "Ethan" and also lovingly referred to as "The Godfather." Slide On Chic is owned by Rob and Renee Lacheur of Pritchard, BC, and is currently teaching eight-year-old Shealyn Lacheur how to rein. **ABOVE:** Three-year-old stallion Final Evolution, in training with Self, owned by Olivia Tremblay and Marcel Guilbault of Taylor, BC.

ages in National Reining Horse Association (NRHA) competition and the futurity classes are among the highest paying at NRHA events. While Self will often compete in futurity classes, her sights are not entirely set on these divisions.

"Depending on where each three-year-old is as an individual, will determine if, or when they are shown in their three-year-old year,"

~ Amanda Self

Three-year-old training horses in Self's barn will continue to be ridden three times a week and work on the improvement of reining maneuvers. As training increases, Self will haul her horses to different venues before going to a horse show, to see how each mount will react to different situations. They will be asked to spin harder, stop harder, counter canter, execute lead changes and roll backs and Self will gauge each animal with the pressure increases. A reiner will have one-and-a-half to two full years of training with her, before they ever go to a show.

During this time, Self takes great care to ensure her mounts are equipped with proper nutrition to meet the needs of training and are in excellent physical and mental health. She specifically focuses on the gut health of each animal, which means testing for ulcers routinely with a vet and administering stomach medication if necessary. Self maintains a very good diet of alfalfa, minerals and rice bran to the three-year-olds (and older horses) in her barn.

This year, Self has her sights set on three futurity prospects that she will be showing throughout British Columbia, Alberta and Montana.

DERBY & AGED HORSES

Derby reining horses are those aged four to six-years-old. Similar to futurity horses, derby horses have class divisions available only to them in NRHA competition. In Self's program, derby horses continue with their training and progress up to five days a week. They carry on with the same feed, vet, and farrier program, as they are shown more extensively.

Self shows at all the West Coast Reining Horse Association (WCRHA) shows in British Columbia, as well as several shows in Alberta, Montana

and Idaho. These horses travel many kilometres during their derby years, but are cared for and maintained with a close eye on them at all times. Self calls it "micro-managing."

"The health and care of each horse is paramount during travelling and showing to ensure their happiness, health and performance," she says. "While three-year-old futurity horses may be shown two-handed, derby horses must be shown one-handed. Therefore it is important that they have mastered each maneuver of the reining pattern; spins, stops, rollbacks, circles and speed control – before we get out there."

AGED HORSES 7+

Self is very proud to say that she has five horses in her barn that are each 17-years-old or older, and all are still healthy and showing in the discipline of reining. She attributes this to the health care regime they experience in her care and receive throughout their life. The trainer regularly utilizes an equine chiropractor, pulse therapy (PEMF), and Back On Track products. She says the PEMF therapy helps all of her horses by increasing blood flow and decreasing inflammation. All horses also have routine vet checks, farrier and teeth floating and a very good diet of alfalfa hay, rice bran, beet pulp and minerals. During riding, Self likes

Continued on page 50



ABOVE: Lokota Fox, aka "Oscar" is one of Self's derby horses. Self says the health care of each of her derby horses is paramount during travelling and showing to ensure their happiness and performance.

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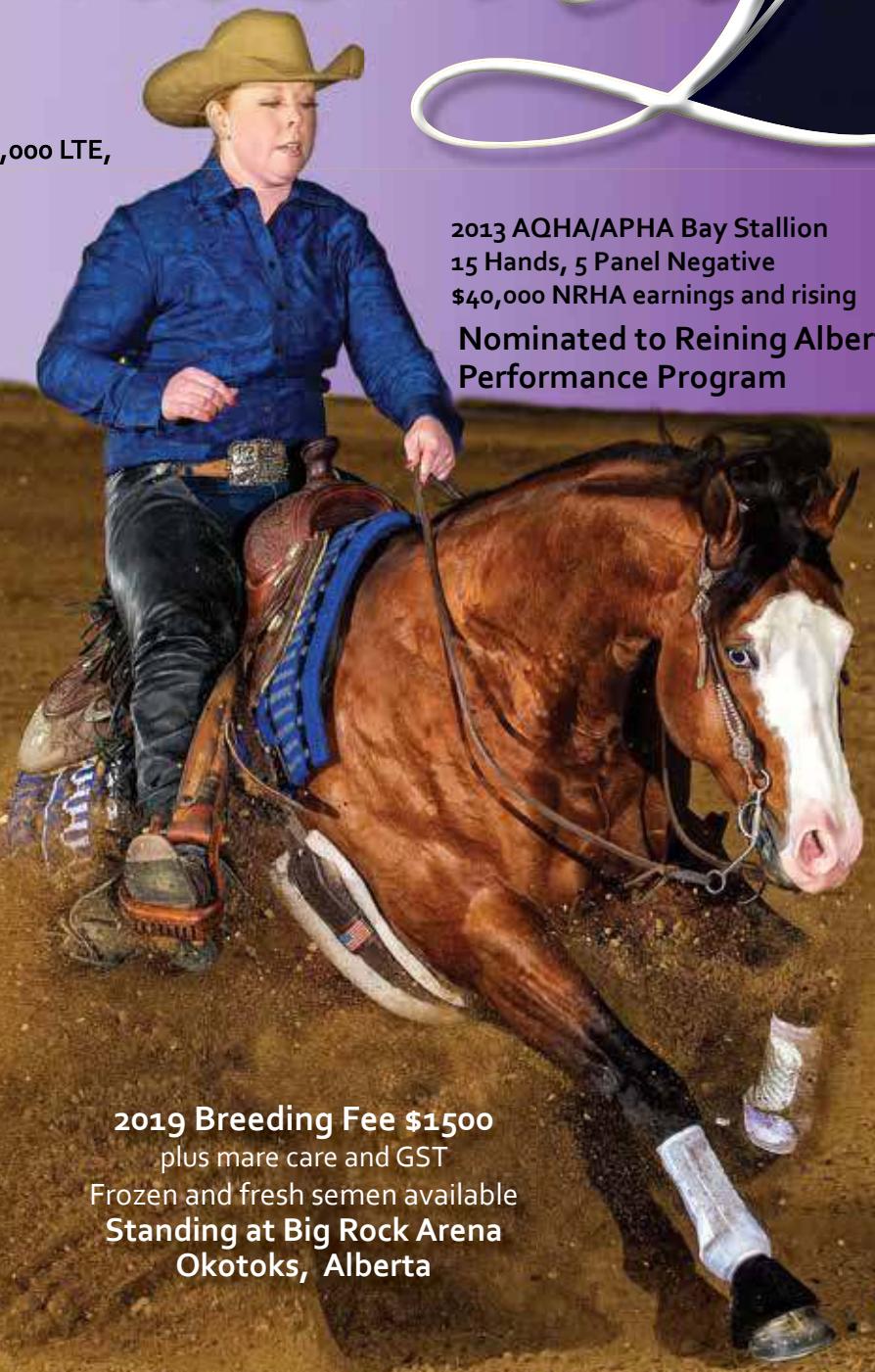


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Continued from page 48



Olivia Guilbault

ABOVE: Self has several older horses in her barn who are not only happy and healthy, but still showing and winning! She attributes this great accomplishment to the constant care and "micro management" of her athletes.

to use Coopers Ridge saddle pads on all of her horses, but especially with the older guys, to keep their backs comfortable. With special shock absorption and weight distribution properties, these pads help ensure saddles fit the riders and horses in Self's care properly. After exercise they are properly cooled down and cold-hosed.

Specific to the elder horses aged seven and up, springtime brings another visit from the veterinarian to Self's barn.

"We do flexion tests and see if anyone might require joint maintenance. We do our best to keep our older horses super comfy and happy, so they can keep performing later in life," she says.

"The older ones aren't ridden as hard. They aren't working five days a week at home but instead, maybe we'll have them working on maneuvers only for a few days a week. The rest of the time we might spend it working on straight lines and keeping up fitness levels."

Self says the older horses in the barn need to stay in a two to three-day-a-week light fitness program. Especially throughout the winter, to keep their joints and muscles strong.

"When people give a horse a whole six months off, it's not good for them. Their back muscles weaken, their joints don't stay limber and I feel it is harder for them to recover in the spring," she says.

Conversely, a two or three-year-old can easily take a winter off. "The younger horses recover easily, but the older horses need to be carefully maintained. They don't need to spin and slide all winter but they do need to do lots of straight lines and collection."

A shining example or one who benefits from this type of regime includes 17-year-old Slide On Chic, known in the Self barn as "Ethan" and also, "The Godfather." Slide On Chic has won over \$23,000 in earnings and has been recycled through non-pro riders for four cycles, while staying in the care of Self. He is currently teaching an eight-year-old child the sport of reining.

"Rum" is a 17-year-old mare who just won her owner a couple of classes at their last show together. "Doc" who has also been recycled, is a 16-year-old who has won many classes for the clients on his back. Then there is "Magnum," who is 17 and does not act a day over the age of eight, and "Einer" who is 15.

"These horses are well cared for and are not left to fend for themselves in the winter. I believe the key to their great health is also their continual fitness maintenance, even if it's just a light fitness program," Self explains.

"Our older horses receive the best diet, best maintenance program, and best veterinarian. They are treated as elite athletes. This helps keep them happy and loving what they do," she declares.



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Ride Hard ... Stay Grounded!

Continued from page 54

needed polishing. All day and evening, the stands were packed full of people who simply wanted to watch horses.

The jumpers and cutters, the glorious six-horse hitches. Trail horses, park horses, we watched them all.

Times change. Disciplines become big business, horses grow more athletic, training methods evolve. Or do they? In becoming so specialized, have we held fast to our first broad thirst for knowledge? Have we remembered that despite our differences, we all just love the horse?

Each of us has chores in the dark. Never-ending chores. We worry about the price of hay. We toss and turn all night before we show. We wonder about the footing. We wonder about our sore hip. A grey-muzzled dog may ride on the seat of our truck. How will we cope when our sidekick is gone? How can we have ageing parents at the same time we're worried about our children? Maybe we're feeling ashamed of how we dealt with a difficult horse today.

No matter our sport, we have to fix the barn roof after that last big wind. We may lose money. Faded photos in the tack room drive us on to do better. We hope like heck

that the good horse we sold has gone to a worthy home.

We miss the concert because the old mare colicked. We wish that dear friendships hadn't grown sour. We weather the audit. We court the new client. We cheer for a competitor's victory, vowing and praying that next year, it will be ours. We lose the foal. Might be, we lose our temper. We fix fences and thaw the waterers. We ship the cows. We plug in the tractor so that we can climb out of bed and do it all again tomorrow.

We laugh and joke, we swear and cry. Some of us are riding high, while some of us battle loneliness and depression. Relationships struggle when we have given our all at the barn. We throw the hay, then stand silent. Watching, listening, basking in the warm glow of a healing heart.

It is easy, in the horse world, to look amongst ourselves and see differences. In fact, we are all in this together. English or western. Weekend warrior, grizzled old-timer,



junior, amateur or pro. We are here for only one reason.

We are here for our love of the horse. 

Lee McLean is best known for the storytelling on her facebook page, Keystone Equine and for her trained ponies. These have gone on to compete in dressage, junior rodeos, combined driving and working hunters across North America. One of eight women to race, sidesaddle, at the Calgary Stampede, Lee is resolved to write, teach and represent other ordinary riders with hopes and aspirations. The people who ride despite illness, injury, fear and changed plans! She lives with her husband, Mike, in the rolling hills southwest of High River, AB.

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For the Love of the Horse

When all the gear is stripped away, it might surprise us to learn we're all here for the same reason.

BY LEE MCLEAN, PHOTO BY MIKE MCLEAN

It's easy, in the horse world, to look amongst ourselves and see differences.

In our tack, the various breeds, the methodology. In those who travel and compete, versus those who stay home. In the old-guard and the up 'n' comers. Before we know it, people become "us or them." The challenge, then, is to see where we are the same.

I hauled one of my ponies to an upscale new dressage barn, a buying trial for a talented junior rider. This place was so gorgeous, it made most homes look shabby. I swung my rig around the asphalt drive to the timbered front door, just as I'd been told. Our hard-working deck truck, festooned with a wad of orange twine behind the cab, was pulling a new Wilson trailer. I'd been proud of this outfit until right about then. Suddenly, the truck seemed ancient. The stock trailer – rattly and ranchy as all-get-out.

A well-groomed woman, stony-faced in a Mercedes rag top, watched me unload.

I'd brought my best pony. When he stepped off the trailer, he shrilly announced his arrival, then proceeded to dump his calling card in front of the beautiful door. Again, that niggle of shame.

I was to ride him first, of course, so that the teacher could see him. I'd already given fair warning that I would use my stock saddle. At home, I'd carefully chosen the silver bridle and a nice set of reins. But now, these felt wrong somehow, as though I was out of my league. I heard myself apologizing.

Red-faced while saddling, I led my little gelding into the splendour of the mirrored riding hall. A Warmblood at the far end appeared to be schooling Grand Prix.

Instead of thinking about our demo ride and what needed to be done, I was painfully

aware of the dressage horse. I noticed my fading jeans. I put my foot in the stirrup and felt all those extra pounds. My gelding, bless him, just rolled his bit. He did not know or care about being a fish out of water. He listened, grew round and soft, then went to work for me.

When I was done, we swapped the tack to allow the trainer and student to try him. The teacher mounted up, slim and efficient in custom boots and European breeches. Her face gave nothing away. She started out walking on a long rein, then picked the pony up and felt his answer. I saw her knowing smile. No matter our saddles or disciplines, all riders share the same joy in a soft and willing horse. Within minutes she was cantering figures, her smile constant, changing her legs while the gelding obediently did the same. By the way, I didn't haul that pony back home.

This generous young woman, somebody else's teacher, sewed a seed in me that day.

"Gear is just gear," she said, "but a good horse will always be a good horse." Hearing these words, I was no longer out of my element. Could we belong to the same tribe, simply from sharing the bond of horsemanship? Yes. It was a reminder to look beyond the trappings and really learn to see.

How often do we hear that someone "just trail rides?" Or never leaves the arena? Or runs barrels? Or team ropes on weekends? Or bought the winning horse ready-trained? Or that English horses always have bad manners? Or that mulehide wrap is what makes you a better hand than the guy who dallies on rubber? That Arabs are hot and Thoroughbreds hotter? That driving is for old people, western pleasure is for losers and that cowhorsin' really rules? Hey, you still going to that same old trainer?

Sigh.

Years ago, there was an unspoken emphasis on versatility. I think perhaps because the horses, themselves, were not dripping with such raw talent as are the stars of today. Man or beast, everyone wanted the jack-of-all-trades. The same pro might have both cutters and jumpers in his barn. A rider might show in reining and sorting, then show up later to drive a Hackney, or show an English pleasure horse saddle seat. It was the grand era of the large open show. All wore evening dress, there was live music and a roving spotlight. Men doffed their hats. The trophies were silver and

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