



"BOWLEGGED H" MAGAZINE

FALL 2015 • VOL. XXIII NO. 3 • HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™



TABLE OF Contents

FEATURES

2 First Timers at the Show

This might not be your "first rodeo," but for some taking in all that the Show has to offer can be a feat. Meet a few fans who visited the Show for the first time in 2015, and step into their shoes as they relay their experiences firsthand.

6 Celebrating the Future

Each year, the Show dedicates one night at the Rodeo to celebrate the hard-working scholarship recipients it invests in annually.

8 Chillin' Out

We found some of the fan-favorite spots to kick back and relax during a trip to the Show. Check out these hidden gems, and see if your top location made the list!

10 Houston Disc Dog Trick Show

Did someone say flying dogs? Yes! These disc dogs literally soar through the air to catch discs thrown by their handlers. Take a look inside this entertaining event.

18 Earliest Show Memories

The Show means something different to everyone. We caught up with several volunteers and asked them to describe their earliest memory of the event. What is your first memory of the world's largest livestock show and rodeo?

MORE

4 2015 Scholarship Donors

12 By the Numbers: Rabbit Show

13 Incoming Executive Committee

Member: Joe Van Matre

14 Incoming Vice Presidents

17 Incoming Committee Chairmen

21 Heritage Partner Salute: Mattress Firm



Some Bunnies Cute!



FALL 2015
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6



8



10

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Greetings, fellow Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ volunteers! As the relaxing days of summer give way to the new school year, it's a good time to reflect on the results of what you've put your heart and soul into as we prepare for another fantastic event in 2016.

I am excited to share with you that "The Show with a Heart" expects to reach the \$400 million mark in total giving this fall! It will be a few weeks before the annual educational commitment is finalized, but all the scholarships, grants, assistantships and other community support the Show has provided since 1932 should make us even prouder to be a part of an organization whose educational program is truly in a class by itself.

More than 600 new freshmen are attending classes on Show scholarships this semester. Because we are an organization that changes in response to the needs of those we serve, the Show provided \$200,000 in assistance to non-traditional students entering two-year trade-specific programs with Technical Scholarships. This new program will assist area employers by supplying much-needed industry and technical employees.

Over the summer, the Show also awarded nearly \$13 million in scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are entering their first year of college and current scholars who have completed 60 hours of coursework and have maintained a 3.0 GPA. These bright students will soon enter the workforce and we look forward to the day they'll come back to join us as members of the Show, where they will continue to Live the Brand, just as each of you are.

"Live the Brand" — you will be hearing and seeing this phrase throughout the Show. This tagline embodies the spirit and passion of all those involved with the organization: from the 32,000-plus volunteers to the millions of fans who step through our gates year after year. We are all supporting education, agriculture and the youth of Texas, and together we all "Live the Brand." We'd love to see how you #LiveTheBrand

throughout the year. Share photos on your social media outlets of yourself in your Show-branded merchandise, at committee meetings, wearing and displaying your gold badges, and more. As volunteers, we are the biggest advocates for the brand and the organization — share your passion with all of those around you.

I'd like to welcome all of our incoming committee chairmen who were appointed in July (page 17) and say thank you for your dedication to this organization. I also would like to congratulate the six incoming vice presidents (page 14 – 16) who will represent the Show on numerous levels throughout their tenure. We also are thrilled to have Joe Van Matre come aboard as a new member of the Executive Committee (page 13). His support and love for this organization are nothing short of amazing, and he will represent the volunteer base with great pride.

Along with the Show's president, Joel Cowley, and COO, Dan Cheney, several of the 18 vice presidents and I will make visits to college campuses throughout the fall months, visiting with recent scholarship recipients and learning about programs the Show supports through grants and assistantships. In particular, we will visit The University of Texas at Austin, University of Houston, Texas Tech University and Texas A&M University. We look forward to representing the volunteer corps and the Show.

Should you ever have a story idea for an upcoming issue of "Bowlegged H" Magazine, please send comments and more to magazine@rodeohouston.com. We want this publication to be the voice for all aspects of the organization.

Let's all show how we Live the Brand as we kick off the 2016 Show season! 🤠

All My Best,

Jack A. Lyons

FIRST-TIMERS AT THE SHOW

*It may not be your first rodeo,
but for some visitors, it is.*

By SARAH TUCKER



Photo by Lisa Norwood

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ attracts millions of visitors each year, some of whom have never been to a rodeo or seen livestock. For first-timers, the experience can be overwhelming and exhilarating.

Erica Ciszek, an assistant professor at the University of Houston and a New England native, moved to Houston in June 2014.

Although she had been to a rodeo or two in the Northwest, Ciszek had never been to Houston's major annual event, so she attended twice to get the full experience.

"The first thing we did when we got to the Show was get a fried OREO®," Ciszek said. "We documented the moment with selfies." After eating, Ciszek and her partner headed to the stadium to get out of the rain and catch the Brantley Gilbert concert.

Ciszek expected a chaotic, country fair but, was happily surprised at the organization of the event and variety of people attending. "It was the most diverse experience I've ever had," she said. "It was amazing to see the racial and cultural diversity and other same-sex couples holding hands. It was very encompassing of what Houston is. It defied my stereotype. It was very awesome."

Ciszek returned to NRG Park later on to see Florida Georgia Line with her extended family. The nice weather allowed them to explore more of the Show. This time they checked out AGVENTURE and opted for healthier food options.

"The sheer volume of it was pretty amazing to me, and how the [organization] can make this event happen so seamlessly," Ciszek said. "You go big on everything. You don't [mess] around."

Many first-timers to the Show are like Ciszek — transplants to Houston who have never had the chance to attend. Some first-timers are international visitors and in town for only a day or two.

Ingrida Smailyte was visiting from Lithuania with a group of young professionals on scholarship from the Baltic American Freedom Foundation. The group was hosted by the Show's International Committee, and for Smailyte, the cowboy culture was a shock, but she appreciated how kind and open everyone was at the Show.

"I feel like I'm in a movie," Smailyte said. "I'm learning new things every minute."

Other young professionals in the group echoed her thoughts and were alternately impressed and shocked. Tarmo Rahmonen, visiting from Estonia, was surprised with the variety of livestock the group saw at NRG Center.

"I'm a country boy. I've seen lambs and goats before. There are more breeds here," Rahmonen said.

Audra Leseckaite, from Lithuania, had seen animal expositions before but never anything like the Show. Leseckaite enjoyed the goat competition. One thing that stood out for her was the passion people felt for their animals and the care they put into them. "In Lithuania, people have animals and farms. But, we aren't proud of it. You wouldn't say, 'I'm proud to be a farmer,'" she said.

Vaidotas Vaiculis, also from Lithuania, was amazed by the Rodeo events. "I've never seen anything like it. Before coming here, I didn't think the U.S. had culture. [There is] a very strong culture here in Texas. I think it's amazing," Vaiculis said.

During their trip to the Show, the young professionals took as many photos as they could — Smailyte especially. "I'm trying to share everything on Facebook with my family; I'm sending pictures all the time," Smailyte said. "I can't find words to explain; it's amazing, it's so amazing." 📸



Photo by Lisa Norwood

Baltic American Freedom Foundation group before heading into RODEOHOUSTON®.



Erica Ciszek and her daughter, Quinn, enjoying Breed Row in AGVENTURE.

*"You go big
on everything."
- Erica Ciszek*



Photo by Lisa Norwood

Members of the BAFF group were in awe of the RODEOHOUSTON events.



Each year, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ awards hundreds of scholarships to deserving Texas youth! Through generous donations to its Educational Fund, the Show is able to award more than 750 scholarships worth a total of \$12.981 million dollars. These individuals, companies and organizations help the Show invest in the future of Texas and to continue being one of the most significant scholarship programs in the country.

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HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™

By MOLLIE LASTOVICA

Photos by Debbie Porter

CELEBRATING THE FUTURE AT

SCHOLAR

The goal of supporting education embodied by the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ runs deep. Show officials gathered with current scholarship recipients and alumni for the fourth annual Scholar Night, March 14, 2015, to express their mutual appreciation and gratitude for each other.

Scholar Night is an opportunity for the Show to host current and former scholarship recipients. The scholars and their guests watched the Rodeo action and concert in NRG Stadium, experienced the carnival, networked, and celebrated being a part of the Show family.

“We talk about family, and the single most important part of our family is our scholarship recipients,” said Show Chairman of the Board Jack A. Lyons. “There is not a better representative than the scholarship recipients joining us for their day at the Show.”

Recipients include Shyanne Wolfe, a freshman at Tarleton State University, who is studying agricultural economics and



“ We talk about family, and the single most important part of our family is our scholarship recipients. ”

— Jack A. Lyons, Show Chairman of the Board

NIGHT



industries, among others. While growing up, Wolfe was involved in Texas 4-H and FFA and was grateful to receive a Show scholarship upon graduation from high school. “This scholarship meant that I could go to school,” Wolfe said. “Otherwise, I would have had to take out loans and would still be paying them off [long after graduation], but instead, I have been able to pay for my first semester at Tarleton without any loans.”

She is not alone. As current and former scholars mingled in the Chairman’s Club, it was clear that the Show has truly and positively impacted the lives of the students it supports through scholarship dollars.

Tam Tran, a freshman biology major at the University of St. Thomas, traveled to Vietnam to visit her cultural roots. She noticed a handful of kids fighting diseases and disabilities without people to help them. This spurred her interest in medicine, and her current dream is to join the nonprofit organization Doctors Without Borders to provide medical care to children who would otherwise go without such services. The Show is helping to make this possible by investing in Tran’s future with a scholarship.

“When I first applied for scholarships, I kept getting rejected. The Show’s scholarship was the first scholarship I received, and it helped me realize that I could do more,” Tran said. “Now, I can focus more on school. I admire how such a big organization can still help students and give back to the community, especially since that’s what I want to do — give back through medicine.”

Enhancing these and other students’ educational aspirations through scholarships has had a long-lasting impact. Just ask scholarship alumna and speech pathologist Michelle White. “Because of what [my Show scholarship] provided, I [was able to] get my master’s degree. That wouldn’t have been possible without the financial support for my undergraduate degree,”

said White, who graduated from Texas A&M University in 1995. “I own my own business now and couldn’t have done that without the educational foundation that the Show scholarship provided.”

For Adrian Heredia, who graduated from Texas A&M University in 2014 and now works as an operations analyst for Smart Energy at NRG, Scholar Night is a great opportunity to reflect on the Show’s generosity and meet others who have had the same experience. “It’s really cool that Scholar Night gets all the scholars together and is a great opportunity to meet others from different areas,” he said.

For some, Scholar Night is the first chance for scholars to experience the Show first-hand. “It is incredibly exciting to offer our current scholars and alumni the opportunity to attend the Show and participate in such a large aspect of what makes our scholarships possible,” said Amy Moroney, the Show’s executive director of educational programs. “As a Show scholarship alumna, myself, it is very rewarding to be able to share this amazing experience with our scholars and my fellow alumni.”

Each year, current undergraduate scholars and registered alumni, as well as their guests, are invited to attend. It is one event that adds to the overall experience of Show scholars and their families.

“She works so hard at school, and this scholarship is a blessing,” said Amy Clement, whose daughter, Rachel Gonzales, is a current scholarship recipient studying accounting at Texas A&M University. “When you cannot afford to send your daughter to school and something like this comes along, it’s a relief. I always told her she’d go to school, and this scholarship allowed her.”

Scholar Night is definitely a family affair, as recipients and their families join the Show family for one big celebration of their accomplishments and bright futures. 🏠

CHILLIN', OUT

By SANDIE MARRINUCCI
Photos by Debbie Porter

While a day at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ can be exciting, it also can be exhausting. So, every now and then you might need to take a break, put your feet up and watch the world go by. "Bowlegged H" Magazine sought out a few fans who found some key areas to "chill out" around the grounds. Did we find your favorite spot?

THE BISHOP Family

Shirley & Brenda

Shirley Woodard and Brenda Garney have been enthusiastic RODEOHOUSTON® fans since the 1960s. We found them chilling out near the entrance of Hall D in NRG Center, sipping Coca-Colas and laughing hysterically as only longtime best friends can do. They live 100 miles apart — one in Bryan, Texas, and the other in Houston — so for them, the best part of coming to the Show each year is the opportunity to spend time together. The duo also enjoys shopping, seeing the animals in the livestock area, and attending the Rodeo and concert. On this day, they were headed to see Brad Paisley perform on the rotating stage in NRG Stadium. "The entertainment is great, and the cowboys aren't bad either," the two agreed with smiles.



Near the food court area in Hall D of NRG Center, we found Ashley Bishop taking a break with her husband and their three children, ready to enjoy a fair-food delicacy: corn dogs. The family of five traveled from Mabank, Texas, to attend the Show and to support a family member, one of the event's commercial vendors. This was not the Bishops' first Show. In fact, it was their fourth year to attend, and they expect to return again in 2016. Carsyn, one of the Bishop's three children, jumped right in to say that he was looking forward to going on the carnival rides as soon as possible. When asked about his favorite ride, he broke into a big, contagious smile and said, "A lot of them out there." Carsyn also had a ready answer when asked why he liked coming to the Show. "Spending time with my family," he said, some surprisingly wise words from such a little cowboy, surrounded by the sights and sounds of the world's largest livestock show and rodeo.

Lorraine **LOBO**



We found Lorraine Lobo savoring her barbecue under the food tents with friends who had just moved to Texas from California. Lorraine is a 19-year-old pre-med student at the University of Houston, and said she has been attending the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo every year since she was born. This year, she brought her friends to experience all things Texas. Hands-down favorites included the livestock show, where they could have close encounters with the animals, and, of course, some amazing Texas barbecue. "What's really great about the Show is that there are activities for all ages," Lobo said, and we could not agree more!

Victoria **MARLIN**

Victoria Marlin, wrapped in a blanket on a lounge chair, munched on a sandwich while taking in the sights and sounds of the livestock exhibition area in NRG Center. She brought eight of her students to exhibit a 10-foot bumper-pull, single-axle trailer they created for the Show's Agricultural Mechanics Project Show. Marlin hails from Crockett, Texas, and has been coming to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo every year since she was 13. While she loves to indulge in the famous fried OREO® upon her visit, she tells us that the very best part of her experience this year was seeing the children show. She said that they were really excited by the judging process. Marlin and her team all agreed that this was an amazing experience for the students and the staff and that they plan to compete again in 2016.



Mills **MEIER**

We found Mills Meier, a tall, soft-spoken young man, camped out by his cattle stall in NRG Center. Mills' Charolais steer had not placed favorably in a previous livestock show this year, but he remained confident and knew that his calf had potential. He said he knew his hard work in the weeks before Houston would pay off, and, boy, did it! "It's always a good time to come to Houston, especially since this time I won Grand Champion Charolais [steer]," Mills said. He sold his project at the Junior Market Steer Auction for a whopping \$60,000 and said he plans to apply his earnings toward his college education. Congratulations, Mills!



Houston Disc Dogs TRICK SHOW

By LYN STEWART

All types and sizes of animals are on display at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ each year. One performance in the NRG Center Tractor Supply Main Arena, however, features man's best friend as the star.

"Disc dogs," also known as Frisbee dogs, have been a part of the Show for the past five years. Houston Disc Dogs were originally hired by the Show for a one-night exhibition, however, due to popularity, the event has expanded to four nights over the course of the Show.

The pets and their owners really know how to please a crowd. The dogs perform freestyle—back flips, jumps and other tricks; run relay races—two dogs race at the same time to catch flying discs; and catch flying discs in a long-distance toss.

The four-legged stars are accustomed to the spotlight. They perform at football and basketball games, fairs, festivals and other events throughout the year. Nine dogs are rotated frequently during the 30-minute show.

"They play with such high energy that each dog is in the show for only 2 or 3 minutes because they are running so very, very hard," said Eugene Hensley, who founded Houston Disc Dogs.

For Hensley, it is a family affair. His 16-year-old daughter, Brittany, was named second in the world for disc dog distance. She throws the disc 75 yards or more. "Your dog has

to catch it [for it] to be a record and to count," Brittany said.

Brittany has been a part of the act since she was 10 years old. "I was nervous at first, and then I thought, 'Why be nervous? I'm having fun,'" she said.

After the show, the dog owners are proud to provide a meet-and-greet between the audience and the disc-loving stars. Many fans wonder what type of breed can become a disc dog.

"The herding breeds — the Australian shepherds, border collies, blue heelers — are probably easiest to train. Their natural instinct is to herd so you get them to herd into the Frisbee®. Any dog that has any type of drive — a food drive or a toy drive — you can almost teach how to play Frisbee," Hensley said.

Most of the Houston Disc Dogs were rescued from shelters. Their owners gave them up because they had too much energy.

"That's what we're looking for. Some see a Border collie on TV and think it's just an amazing dog. Then they bring it home, and they wonder why this animal wants attention 24/7. They need the interaction and stimulation," said dog trainer Mike Hanson.

Hanson travels from Denver, Colorado, to take part in events with Houston Disc Dogs. "I got a dog and we went to a competition. She sat there and watched. The next day, she caught a disc, and it has been 'on' ever since," he said.

So, how can a dog owner teach a beloved pet to be a disc-catching canine? "It only takes 5 or 10 minutes a day to train a dog, but it's ongoing. It's kind of like a baby. Their mindset is like a 2- or 3-year-old. When they start getting bored, you quit and put it up. If they make any type of progress, you praise them. Then put it up and wait until the next day. A trick can take two or three days or two or three months [to master]," Hensley said.

Despite the old adage, you can teach an old dog new tricks. "One of the dogs is 12 years old. If their body is able and they are willing to play, they can do it," Hensley said.

Pennie Mahon is in the dog training industry. She started teaching disc-catching tricks to her first dog 14 years ago. "I got a blue heeler puppy for my husband for Father's Day, and she had excessive energy," Mahon said.

She now has six dogs in the production. "Any breed can do this. You don't have to have papers. [Dogs] have brains. As long as you keep it fun and entertaining, and it's something that the dog is enjoying, I think that any dog can learn," she said. "We find dogs, save them, turn them into superstars, and most importantly, our family members." 🐕



you
CAN teach
an **old dog**
new **tricks**

BY THE NUMBERS: RABBIT SHOW

4

Rabbit Show categories: youth rabbits, youth meat pen, open breeding rabbits and open breeding cavies (guinea pig)

46

breeds of rabbits and cavies shown in the youth (27) and open (19) show categories

153,136*

number of times the sound "aww" has been heard during the rabbit and cavy costume contest

**This is a fictional estimate, because how could you not think a rabbit dressed as a hotdog isn't an "aww" moment!*



1,321

entries in the youth, meat pen and open show during the 2015 Rabbit Show

INCOMING EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER JOE VAN MATRE



By TODD ZUCKER

For years, Joe Van Matre has been “all in” in terms of devoting talent and financial support to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™. As an incoming Executive Committee member, Van Matre brings the perspective of a successful entrepreneur, a tireless volunteer and an auction buyer willing to “go big” year after year. Van Matre understands not only what the Show does, but how to get the job done.

Jack A. Lyons, the Show’s chairman of the board, has been asked on several occasions the definition of a Show volunteer. “We have volunteers who give us money and volunteers who give us ‘sweat equity.’ Both are very important to our overall success. Joe Van Matre is [both] a giver and a hard worker, and as all of us know, he will continue to make a positive impact on our Show and, now, on the Executive Committee,” Lyons said.

A Louisiana native, Van Matre attended his first Show after work brought him to Houston in the 1970s. In 1978, he formed Specialty Rental Tools, Inc., headquartered in Lafayette, Louisiana, and he has maintained a dual residence in Houston and Lafayette ever since. Van Matre’s willingness to drive three and a half hours regularly to and from committee meetings exemplifies his dedication to the Show.

“I think the scholarships are the best thing we do,” Van Matre said. He applauds the recently implemented vocational scholarships designed to benefit students interested in pursuing technical degrees. “These kids are the ones who need it more than anybody,” he said. “They learn how to weld and do electrical work and plumbing and the like. They

are the ones who really get down in the ditches, and they don’t get a lot of glory.”

Van Matre also is a permanent fixture on the front row of the Show’s auctions. “I’ve been a grand champion and reserve grand champion School Art buyer since day one,” he said. He also has purchased grand and reserve grand champion poultry, lambs, goats, swine and wine. His support includes substantial time in addition to money. Van Matre recently completed a three-year term as a Show vice president, serving as officer in charge of the Judging Contest, Sheep & Goat, Wine Competition, Wine Garden, Wine Sales and Events, and Winery Relations committees.

Van Matre finds the social aspects of the Show especially rewarding. “I enjoy the friendships and family you make out at the Rodeo. I am in a business where my customers are my best friends, and that’s how the Rodeo is. You make a lot of friends and do a lot of things together, and you appreciate all the volunteers that you meet,” he said.

Van Matre’s Show “family” reference is more than a metaphor. In fact, he met his wife, Jennifer, at the Show, and she shares his high energy and enthusiasm for the Show as a volunteer and auction supporter. Van Matre’s son, Joseph, serves on the Calf Scramble Committee, and his brother, Johnny, is active on the Horspitality Committee. He has two grandchildren, Zoie and Joe II, who enjoy attending the Show every year.

Van Matre works at Workstrings International and owns JEVN Rental Properties, LLC. 🐾



HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™



ANDREW "PRIMO" CANTU

By KATE GUNN PAGEL

Andrew "Primo" Cantu joined the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ in 1983 as a member of the Corral Club Committee after being introduced to the Show by one of his friends. With his long history of working with youth and non-profits, the Show was a natural fit.

After serving more than 20 years, he decided to expand his involvement with the Show, joining the Calf Scramble Committee in 2004, the Grand Entry Committee in 2005, and the Parade Committee in 2012. He was elected to the Show's board of directors in 2009. In that capacity, and as an ambassador for the Show through the Area Go Texan Committee, Cantu has enjoyed attending events in the outlying communities.

He said that he is impressed by the students giving their all, notes the sacrifices they make in order to participate in the Show, and is grateful for the opportunity to give back to these deserving young people.

As an officer, Cantu will work with the Commercial Exhibits, Go Tejano, Grand Entry, Rodeo Merchandise and Special Attractions committees.

A native of San Antonio, Texas, Cantu lives in Conroe, Texas, with his wife, Judy, and has two sons: Clayton Gerken of Fort Worth, Texas, and Grant Gerken of Spring, Texas. Cantu is a graduate of the University of Houston and earned a master's degree in finance from the University of Houston-Clear Lake.

He is an executive vice president in lending at First Bank in Conroe, where he has worked for 21 years. He enjoys playing golf and working outdoors at his family's property in Carmine, Texas.

He has been a volunteer with the Montgomery County Fair Association since 1984, where he served on the executive board, as past president and as chairman of the board. Cantu also has extensive experience working with young people as a high school football referee. 🤠



GREG MILLER

By KATE GUNN PAGEL

A native of Kansas City, Missouri, Gregory Miller joined the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ as a life member in 2000 after being a longtime supporter of the Show's junior auctions, purchasing the Grand Champion Turkey in 1998 with his late wife. He has been a member of the Poultry Auction Committee since 1999, serving in the roles of vice chairman and chairman. He also served on the Junior Commercial Steer Feeding and Management Committee and as an appointed member of the Show's internal budget committee since 2006.

"I have always felt blessed to be able to purchase and support the Show's efforts for youth education, but it wasn't until I became active within the organization that I truly realized the real impact of what we do and the difference we make in so many lives," he said. "I am just one of more than 32,000 volunteers. That is truly remarkable."

Miller was elected to the Show's board of directors in 2005 and now serves as officer in charge for the Corporate Development, Information Services, Poultry Auction and Western Art committees.

He has one daughter, Shelly Dimero, who lives in Austin, Texas, with her husband, Dan, and their two children, Blakely and Dax.

Miller is a graduate of the Finlay Engineering College in Kansas City, Missouri, where he received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. He moved to Houston upon graduation and served in the U.S. Army Reserves, earning the rank of staff sergeant. He sold his company, Pipeline Inspection Co. Ltd. in 2014. He volunteers with Emmanuel Episcopal Church, where he has served in various roles, including vestry, finance secretary, choir member, and member of the building and endowment committee. In his spare time he enjoys golfing, boating, music, friends and living life. 🤠

INCOMING VICE PRESIDENTS



GARY NESLONEY

By KATE GUNN PAGEL

After attending the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest in 1982, Gary Nesloney was so impressed with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ organization and mission that he wrote a letter to then-Show president Norwin Gerhart, requesting to join a committee. Nesloney had recently moved back to Houston from Louisiana, and was surprised to receive a letter back a few months later notifying him of his placement on the Calf Scramble Committee. A native of Corpus Christi, Texas, Nesloney was no stranger to the calf scramble, having had a cousin who caught a calf at the Show in 1974.

Nesloney has been a member of the Calf Scramble Donors Committee since he joined the Show, and has been the chairman of both the Calf Scramble Donors and Calf Scramble Greeters committees. He also serves on the Grand Entry Committee. As a vice president, Nesloney will work with the Armed Forces Appreciation, Calf Scramble Arena, Calf Scramble Donors, Calf Scramble Greeters and Rodeo Contestant Services committees.

On becoming an officer, Nesloney said, "It is a huge honor. I've met a lot of good men and women involved with the Show, and I hope to pass on what I've learned from them. I want to make sure that everyone understands why [the volunteers are] here — for the scholarships and for the kids." He expressed his admiration for the scholarship recipients he's met, and said, "We're in good shape for the future."

In his spare time, Nesloney enjoys spending time with his wife, Karen, and sons, Matthew, a senior chemical engineering major at Texas A&M University, and Andrew, a recent recruit in the U.S. Army. A graduate of Texas A&M himself, Nesloney and his two brothers own Powertherm Company, Inc., an industrial equipment supply company. He also enjoys playing golf and spending time at his family's ranch in Gonzales, Texas. 🤠



MIKE O'KELLEY

By EMILY WILKINSON

Mike O'Kelley joined the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ in 1983 at the urging of a fraternity brother from The University of Texas at Austin. This, however, was not O'Kelley's first association with the Show — he had been involved with the Over the Hill Gang cook team at the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest since 1981. O'Kelley began volunteering on the Breeders Greeters Committee, and it is still a family affair for him to this day.

As a Show vice president, O'Kelley oversees the Equipment Acquisition, Facility Services, Membership, Recycling, and Sheep & Goat committees. "I'm elated to be an officer," he said. "I'm excited to see first-hand how the work of so many volunteers benefits the kids through [Show] scholarships. And, I'm really looking forward to getting more involved with so many aspects of the Show that are behind the scenes."

He is president of O'Kelley and Company, Inc., a home building and remodeling company he began 25 years ago. His son, Kevin, also works for the family business and is a captain on the Breeders Greeters Committee and a former captain on the Mutton Bustin' Committee. O'Kelley's daughter, Carrie Prati, is a current vice chairman of the Breeders Greeters Committee, and her husband, Martin, also serves on the committee. O'Kelley has two grandsons, Kyle and Jack, who he said enjoy mutton bustin' and AGVENTURE. O'Kelley's wife of 38 years, Terry, is an eager participant at the Show, as well, and an integral part of what Mike does.

He was elected to the Show's board of directors in 2004, and also has helped volunteers with the Downtown Rodeo Parade for 20 years and with the Special Children's Committee events. "Seeing the smiles on these kids' faces when they arrive at the Show for the first time with their animals, or meeting the lucky ones who receive our scholarships, is priceless and makes this all worthwhile." 🤠

INCOMING VICE PRESIDENTS



PAT MANN PHILLIPS

By EMILY WILKINSON

In 2001, having just moved to Houston from Midland, Texas, Pat Mann Phillips and her husband, Tim, decided to meet up with some friends at the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest.

"[The] next thing I knew, we had given our credit card to someone to become life members. It's one of the best things we've ever done," she said. Their first step as Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ members was to join the Directions & Assistance Committee, where she joined the Tours Subcommittee. When the Tours Committee was made an official committee in 2008, she was its inaugural chairman.

As a vice president of the Show, she oversees Communications & Special Services, Ladies' Go Texan, Magazine, Souvenir Program and Special Children's committees. "Everyone has been so warm and welcoming," said Phillips, who also is a director of the Show and was honored as a recipient of the Trailblazer Award in 2012 by the Trailblazer Committee.

She is the seventh female vice president in the Show's history, and her election also marks the first time two women are serving as officers simultaneously. "It's such a privilege to have the opportunity to represent 32,000 generous, hard-working volunteers. And, it's a special honor to attend the scholarship banquets where I get to meet the students and tell them how proud we are of them," she said.

Phillips graduated with a degree in petroleum land management from Texas Tech University and has worked in the oil and gas industry for 30 years. Currently, she's an independent consultant working with Revenade. She and Tim, who just finished his third year as chairman of the Jr. Rodeo Committee, own and operate a ranch near Waller, Texas. She also is a director of Ladies of Texas Tradition, a women's trail ride group that travels all throughout Texas. 🐎



ROBBIE SMITH

By EMILY WILKINSON

Robbie Smith first joined the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ as a member of the Carnival Ticket Sales Committee in 1996, and later served as its chairman. He also has served on the Area Go Texan, Calf Scramble Donor and Judging Contest committees.

Smith, a native of Splendora, Texas, a small town just northeast of Houston, was no stranger to the Show prior to becoming a member. He grew up attending the event, and even after leaving home for college, Smith found connections to the Show — his roommate at Texas A&M University was a Show scholarship recipient. "I was very surprised and very honored when I received the phone call [to serve as vice president]," Smith said.

As a vice president, Smith will serve as officer in charge of the Events and Functions, Judging Contest, Llama and Alpaca, and Rodeo Ticket Sales committees. "It was extremely rewarding to see all the students who accepted their scholarships," he said, reflecting on attending his first Texas 4-H scholarship banquet in June with his fellow officers. "They were so thankful, and so were their families. One of the most gratifying experiences is seeing the impact our work has on the students," said Smith, who is looking forward to traveling to other colleges throughout Texas to meet scholarship recipients during the next three years.

Smith is vice president at Norman Smith Equipment, a family-owned construction equipment rental company for refineries. He and his wife, Annette, have four children: Audrey, 11; twins Eva and Luke, 8; and Beau, 6. Smith describes all of them as "Rodeo junkies."

"They get extremely upset when we don't take them to the Rodeo every night," he said. Smith, whose father was a farmer, grew up raising cattle and horses, something he also enjoys sharing with his own children. "I'm trying to teach [them] the responsibilities of raising an animal," he said. 🐎

INCOMING COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN



Ben Awalt
Winery Relations



Robert Becker
World's Championship
Bar-B-Que



Kristy Broughton
Graphics & Signage



John Causey
Cutting Horse Show



Patrick Coveney
Safety



Clayton Dallas
Wine Sales & Events



Mike Diezi Jr.
Calf Scramble Arena



Drew Doebbler
Ticket Services



Jerry Fabian
Western Heritage
Community Challenge



Sally Gupton
Special Attractions



Steve Hansen
Corral Club - Level East



Phyllis Hensen
Rabbit



Erick Key
Corral Club - Main Club



Tucker Knight
Ranch Rodeo



Tommy Kohlmaier
Rodeo Merchandise



Gary Kramer
Corral Club - Division II



Lauren Luethold
Jr. Rodeo



Katie Lyons
Magazine



Tom Mach
Poultry Auction



Gary McHenry
Speakers



Marjorie Moreland
Communications &
Special Services



Dru Pease
Directions & Assistance



Kristie Ratliff
Houston Metro Go Texan



Bridget Reid-Wood
Team Penning &
Ranch Sorting



Sharon Reno
Events & Functions



Ken Rickett
Equipment Acquisition



Carey Robertson
Rodeo Contestant Services



Jimmy Sartwelle
All Breeds Livestock Sales



Ray Schmidt
Premium Seating



Julie Shannon
International



Leon Sontag
Corral Club -
Beverage Services



Rob Sorenson
Corral Club - At Large



Clayton Stewart Jr.
Youth Horse Show



Rodney Storms
Corral Club - Chute Club



Tim Thomas
RODEOHOUSTON®
Sports Medicine



John Wengler
Corral Club - Suites West

SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND SMELLS: EARLIEST RODEO MEMORIES

By AMY TANNER • Photos by Chris Spicks

AS A **HOUSTON STAPLE** SINCE 1932, THE HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™ HOLDS A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE **HEARTS OF SO MANY**, AND EVERYONE HAS A FIRST MEMORY OF THE EVENT — WHETHER IT WAS SIX DECADES OR SIX MONTHS AGO. **TWENTY COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS** OF ALL AGES AND WALKS OF LIFE SHARE THEIR STORIES INVOLVING THE **SIGHTS, SOUNDS AND SMELLS OF THE SHOW.**



MARTHA "QUEENIE" SUTTON RODEO MERCHANDISE COMMITTEE

Martha "Queenie" Sutton, a 13-year member of the Rodeo Merchandise Committee, remembers her mother dressing her and her sister in matching cowgirl outfits during their first trip to the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. She said she could not stand the identical red skirts, felt hats or boots, but looking back, she remembers the fond memories they had together, despite being "miserable" in their twin-like attire!



MARY HARRIS FACILITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Mary Harris, a two-year member of the Facility Services Committee, recalls seeing country-western singer Sylvia at the Astrodome during the 1983 Show. She vividly details one memory when Sylvia performed "Snapshot," about a photograph of a cheating beau. During the chorus, everyone took photos, lighting the Astrodome with flashes.



SHIRLEY NORTHCUTT RODEO EXPRESS COMMITTEE

Shirley Northcutt has adored the Show for decades. Her husband, Ken, is a 14-year member of the Rodeo Express Committee. Fifty years ago, Shirley attended the Show in the Sam Houston Coliseum. Shirley recalls strutting her Western wear on the Rodeo red carpet as photographers snapped photos.



LARRY FORT COMMERCIAL EXHIBITS COMMITTEE

Larry Fort, a Commercial Exhibits Committee member for four years, remembers the Show when it was still called the Houston Fat Stock Show and Livestock Exposition. His family piled into their old Mercury to enjoy Roy Rogers in 1960. As East Texas sharecroppers, his family was not rich, but he said they always left the Show rich with memories.



KENDRA PALIN EVENTS & FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE

Kendra Palin, a three-year member of the Events & Functions Committee, recalls venturing from Dallas to Houston for the Show at the age of 10. Kendra badly wanted a picture with a horse — any horse — and after finding a filly for the photo, Kendra refused to face the camera for fear the horse would eat her ponytail.



KATHY HEATH SPECIAL CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE

Kathy Heath, currently on the Special Children's Committee, often visited the Show with her parents in the 1970s. Kathy recollects watching as reporters interviewed Conway Twitty, one of the star entertainers that year. Mid-sentence, Twitty stopped, looked hard at Heath's father, and waved. She said he gestured back like they were long-lost friends. Although funny now, as an 11-year-old, Kathy was mortified!



RITA GOUDEAU CORRAL CLUB COMMITTEE

A faithful Corral Club Committee member for eight years, Rita Goudeau's most vivid memory hits her every time she visits the Show. "[I was] very pregnant," she said, remembering how nauseated she felt from the manure smell and Houston heat during her first time at the Show. "I'm thankful for the memory. Every time I walk on the grounds, I remember being pregnant with [my daughter] Martina." (Pictured here with Rita.)



DENNIS ITZEPALSO HOUSTON GENERAL GO TEXAN COMMITTEE

Dennis Itzepalso also associates the Show's distinctive smell with his early memories, which include seeing his first Rodeo and concert performance as a teenager. A member of the Houston General Go Texan Committee for two years, Itzepalso said he was inspired to volunteer because his brother was a 2005 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo scholarship recipient.



DONA DYER DIRECTIONS & ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

Dona Dyer hails from a long line of die-hard committee volunteers and has served six years on the Directions & Assistance Committee. Dyer is one of 14 family members involved with the Show, and she remembers one of her earliest childhood memories as seeing Elvis Presley perform in the Astrodome.



PEYTON BENSON LAMB & GOAT AUCTION & AGRICULTURAL MECHANICS COMMITTEES

Peyton Benson, with two decades' service on Lamb & Goat Auction and Agricultural Mechanics committees, followed in the footsteps of his father, who began volunteering with the Houston Fat Stock Show in 1948. Peyton recalls riding in the 1963 Salt Grass Trail Ride on a mule as one of his earliest memories of the Show.



GEORGE HENRY INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

George Henry, currently on the International Committee, has 68 years of Show memories. Every year, George and his grandfather would watch the cowboys work the cattle and load the chutes at the Sam Houston Coliseum. Now, Henry brings his grandchildren to NRG Stadium to enjoy the sights and sounds of the event that has been such a major part of his life.



SHANNON PHILPOT CALF SCRAMBLE GREETERS COMMITTEE

Shannon Philpot was born to rodeo. His mom went into labor with him Feb. 15, 1969, while riding in the Salt Grass Trail Ride. Twenty-two years later, Philpot joined the Calf Scramble Greeters Committee, and his mom still recounts that unforgettable experience. (Shannon, far left, is pictured with Rachel and Vernon Witten.)

VERNON & RACHEL WITTEN CALF SCRAMBLE GREETERS COMMITTEE

Vernon Whitten scrambled and caught a calf during the 1973 Show. Years later, he began serving on the committee that afforded him that opportunity. His daughter, Rachel, remembers all the walking and stairs that tired her little 4-year-old legs at her first Rodeo. They both serve on the Calf Scramble Greeters Committee.



LINDSEY JONES CORRAL CLUB & WINE COMPETITION COMMITTEES

Lindsey Jones has served on the Corral Club Committee for four years and the Wine Competition Committee for two years, and she vividly recounts riding her first pony at age 7 at the Show. She fell in love with the grace, beauty and freedom she found atop those four strong legs. She's been an avid equestrian ever since.



MARIO RIOS DIRECTIONS & ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

Mario Rios' first Show memory was not too long ago. A transplant to Houston from Laredo, Texas, Rios wanted to make new friends. Because of his love for country music, he thought the Show would be a logical place to start. He has been an active member of the Directions & Assistance Committee for five years now.



NOEL LEZAMA GO TEJANO COMMITTEE

Noel Lezama, a member of the Go Tejano Committee for five years, moved to Houston from Nicaragua at age 9. He recalls watching wide-eyed as a trail ride headed down Interstate 10 in February 1991. New to Texas, he figured chuck wagons, horses and cowboys were an everyday occurrence along that busy thoroughfare.



STEPHANIE AND CHRIS JONES TOURS COMMITTEE

Stephanie and Chris Jones are charter members of the Tours Committee. Stephanie details her calf scramble experience at age 14: "I remember bleeding. The calves were released, and I was determined to catch. Instead, I ran right into the chutes, bloodied my head and couldn't see anything. I got a hard luck calf [certificate]." Chris caught a calf the year before Stephanie without any bloodshed. Both agriculture science teachers now, the two enjoy bringing students to the Show to create their own scramble memories.



YASMIN BROWN COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Yasmin Brown, a high-energy member of the Communications & Special Services Committee, experienced her first Rodeo in 2010. "The heart of the Show called to me. I jumped on the chance to get involved when I heard a friend's committee was recruiting," she said.

HERITAGE PARTNER

Salute

Houston-based and -founded, Mattress Firm joined the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ as the event sponsor of steer wrestling at RODEOHOUSTON® in 2010. It continues to hold that sponsorship, and in 2012, it joined the sponsor ranks as a Heritage Partner.

Mattress Firm has exclusivity in furniture and mattress sales at the Show and in 2016 will add hot tub exclusivity rights to the list. Fans can experience all Mattress Firm has to offer throughout the grounds with several different commercial exhibits set up in NRG Center and around NRG Park.

The specialty mattress company has become a major supporter of the rodeo industry and has ties to other events around the state of Texas and the West.

Mattress Firm also is a supporter of rodeo athletes awarding each winner of the RODEOHOUSTON Super Shootout®: North America's Champions with a voucher to purchase a new mattress from one of its retail locations.

"We're honored to continue our partnership with RODEOHOUSTON® this year," said Ken Murphy, co-chief operating officer of Mattress Firm. "They share our passion and commitment for serving the communities in which we live and work, and we're proud to help them carry out this great tradition in our own hometown."

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