



"BOWLEGGED H" MAGAZINE

WINTER 2015 • VOL. XXIII NO. 4 • HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™



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Since the establishment of the Houston Fat Stock Show, the progression of market livestock has changed immensely. From fatty and squatty steers to lean, muscular grand champions – the evolution of these market animals is a testament to the livestock and production industry's progress.

6 That Time I Had a Llama

Did you know we loan out llamas around here? Well, not technically, but the Show's Llama and Alpaca Show does hold an amazing event that gives patrons the chance to get up close and personal with these unique creatures, and learn a little more about the exhibitor process.

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Ranch Sorting has quickly become one of the most popular events of the Houston Horse Show, and it might have something to do with the appeal to a younger audience. Children, parents and grandparents alike can dominate this equine activity; it just takes practice, determination and a love for the sport.

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Don't miss the Llama and Alpaca Show, March 17 – 20, 2016.



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AGRICULTURE

EDUCATION

ENTERTAINMENT

WESTERN HERITAGE



FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Congratulations! With the Executive Committee's approval of the 2016 Educational Contributions Committee's recommendations, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has surpassed the \$400 million mark in educational support since the Show began in 1932. What an incredible milestone that you helped accomplish!

Also, we hosted our first Scholarship Alumni Association reception in October, with more than 100 people attending. One remarkable attendee was our very first scholarship recipient, Ben Dickerson, Ph.D., who received his Show scholarship in 1957.

Dickerson, a Show life member, was a professor of sociology and gerontology, and director of Baylor University's Institute of Gerontological Studies. He also served on the Texas Board on Aging until the summer of 2002.

Read more about our first scholarship recipient and our spectacular levels of educational support in this issue of "Bowlegged H" Magazine.

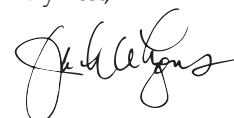
We have some exciting things coming up in the next few months, including the much anticipated announcement of the entertainment lineup. Mark your calendars for 12:05 a.m., Monday, Jan. 11, 2016. Trust me, it's going to be another great year!

As you represent the Show in your communities by participating in your committee activities, or as you drive to NRG Park for Show activities, please stop and remember all the positive outcomes of your actions. You may be helping a recent high school graduate be the first in his family to attend college, or reducing the financial burden of a student so she can focus on getting the best education possible. Your volunteer service transforms students into professionals whose accomplishments could lead to a cure for cancer, a trip to Mars, or ways to provide drinkable water on a global scale. The power and the significance of your countless volunteer hours are truly life- and world-changing.

As a volunteer, I hope you, as I have, find your service to the Show has impacted your life in a positive way. The individuals whose lives you have touched over the years surely feel that way!

Have a wonderful holiday season and I look forward to seeing you in 2016! 🤠

All My Best,



Jack A. Lyons

OVERHEARD AT THE RODEO:

Kids' Edition

By CRYSTAL MCKEON

Photos by Lisa Norwood

Year after year, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ has a huge impact on the children who make their way through NRG Park, wide-eyed and in awe. They experience things they may have never had the chance to enjoy without this agricultural extravaganza. Families come from as near as inner-city Houston to as far away as across the country, just to experience these unique activities with their children. "Bowlegged H" Magazine decided to see what we could learn from the Show's tiniest fans.



KATIE

KATIE

5 years old • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Katie and her family come down to the Show every year from Philadelphia. On this day, she was found weighing her options of which animal she would take home from the Show: "I wouldn't take a dog because I already have two and a horse wouldn't fit in my suitcase."

ISAIAS AND PETER

6 and 10 years old • Houston

Isaias and Peter came to the Show to see the livestock, which excites most children. Isaias had visited the Show twice before and showed his cousin, Peter, the ropes.

"My favorite animals are the goats; they eat everything. They felt like fur when I pet them [in the petting zoo]. There is a lot of poop with animals." - Isaias

"The horse is my favorite, 'cause they are fast." - Peter

"Bison are faster than horses - I saw it on TV." - Isaias



ISAIAS

CALEB

3 years old • Rosharon, Texas

This was Caleb's first time at the Show and he visited the birthing center in AGVENTURE. He was very impressed with the noises the animals made, but during his animal noise demonstration he took the time to say "cheese" for a picture with us.

"Cow says 'moo.' Bunnies hop hop!"

STASH

 5 years old • Anderson, Texas

Stash came to the Show in 2014, but he said he could not remember because it was a long time ago. "Cows are a lot bigger than I thought they would be, but I'm taller than a baby calf and I'm taller than a sheep."

MILO

 5 years old • Austin, Texas

Milo thought the petting zoo was great and that getting to pet the animals was the best part. "I got to feed them. They licked me 'cause they were hungry."

AMARI AND ALAYIH

7 and 5 years old
Houston

Amari and Alayih's family recently moved to Houston from Jacksonville, Florida, and they visited the Show with their grandmother. It would be an understatement to say they were excited to ride the ponies.

"My favorite part of living in Houston is the Rodeo. It is super awesome to ride a pony. I rode the tall pony because I'm the tall one. I would take home a pony and keep it in my drawer." - Amari



CALEB



ELYSSA

ELYSSA AND KATELYN

2 and 5 years old
Clear Lake, Texas

Elyssa and Katelyn both enjoyed getting close to all the fun animals in the petting zoo. Elyssa decided it was almost as much fun using the automatic hand sanitizer as it was getting her hands dirty.

"I liked the piggy because it was cute. Pigs say 'oink.' The piggy ran away from me." - Katelyn

"I need more soap." - Elyssa

Evolving WITH Time:

By ABIMBOLA FARINDE



The evolution of market livestock (animals raised for meat) throughout the past 80 years is filled with interesting stories, perspectives, trends and events that have led to the animals that we see today. A unique staple of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ since its inception, the market livestock shows remain one of the top attractions for Houstonians and people from all over the world.

From one decade to the next, changes in the way market livestock, such as barrows, goats, lambs, poultry and steers, look and function have been influenced by consumer demand, new technology, breeding techniques, the evolution of animal feed, and other factors.

As an example, because poultry only has about 20 weeks for each generation, genetic selection can move faster and changes can be seen more quickly. “A broiler female has the ability to produce about 150-plus settable hatching eggs in the first year of production, providing several offspring to select from, compared to one calf in nine months,” said Dale Hyatt, Research Center manager and undergraduate lecturer at the Texas A&M University Poultry Science Department.

Although selective genetics play a large role in the production of market livestock, advances in nutrition, housing and environment also have contributed to the development of market livestock. Industry advancements for the poultry market include better ventilation and more comfortable, less stressful environments, which can help increase production.

The changes in consumer demand throughout the years also have impacted the climate of how market animals are bred

THEN

1940s

1950s

1960s

1970s

Market Livestock Progression

and produced. Stanley Young, a now-retired agent of the Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension Service, reports that the change observed with market animals since 1932 — the year of the first Houston Fat Stock Show — is largely influenced by the combination of consumer demand and feed availability.

“As consumer demands moved toward juicier and fatter cattle, they were bred in accordance with this desire,” he said. “When there was a shift toward leaner and muscular cattle, improved efficiency was the outcome.”

“While it might take about two and a half years to see the end product from most animals, the use of technology makes it faster to determine genetic potential among market animals,” said Dr. Shawn Ramsey, associate professor and assistant department head of animal science at Texas A&M.

In addition, with new developments in agriculture, such as computerized feed formulation programs, beneficial nutrients have been optimized in animal feed. One hundred years ago, 4 pounds of feed was required to produce 1 pound of meat. Today, it takes about 1.67 pounds of feed to produce one pound of meat.

Feed makes up 70 to 80 percent of the costs of raising market animals, whether it is cattle or poultry, so the ability to optimize the quality of feed has had a significant impact on the appearance of today’s market livestock.

The combination of many types of science, including genetics, environment, and nutrition, are vital to raising more efficient market animals today and into the future. 🤖



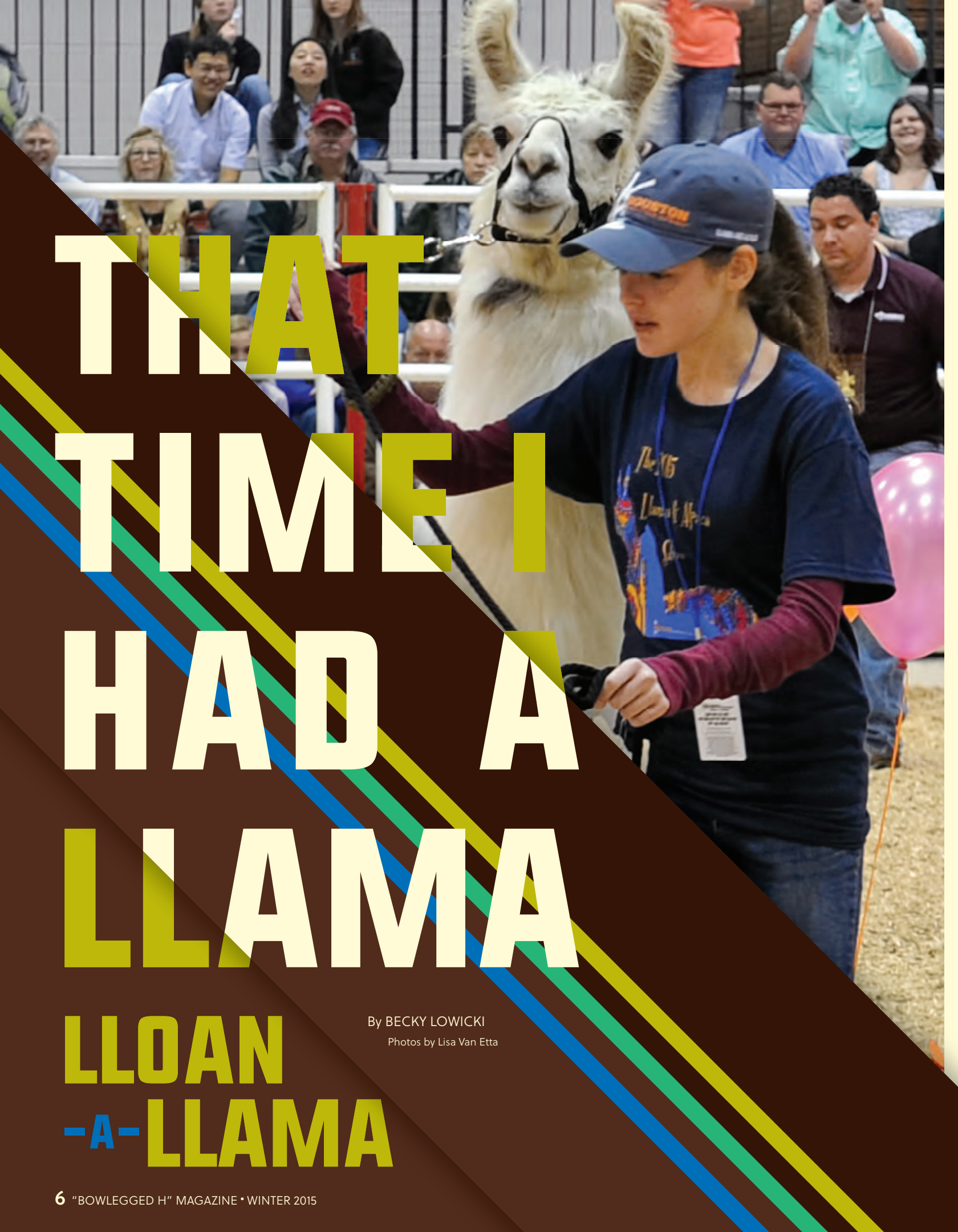
1980s

1990s

2000s

2010s

NOW



THAT TIME I HAD A LLAMA

LLOAN -A-LLAMA

By BECKY LOWICKI
Photos by Lisa Van Etta

With names like Chick-a-Poo, Brad Pitt and Lightning, watching youngsters at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ get the experience of meeting a llama up close and personal is a sight to behold.

In 2015, more than 40 exhibitors, experienced and beginner, participated in the high-stakes competition where the fleece was flying, competition was fierce and there was more llama-drama than you could stand.

Conducted by the Show's Llama and Alpaca Committee, Lloan-A-Llama is a hands-on opportunity for young exhibitors and hopefuls to strut their stuff alongside one of these unique animals. Llama breeders "loan" the animals to the participants at no charge every year.

Contestants range from 5 to 18 years old, and they are eligible only if they do not already own or lease a llama. The "no experience required" criterion makes it a popular event for these competitors, who are divided into age groups and experience categories according to their advanced — have shown a llama once before — or beginner — have never seen a llama in real life — status.

Jennifer Lewis, vice chairman on the Llama and Alpaca Committee, said, "We try to reach out [to] different groups of children each year so that everyone [who] wants to participate has an opportunity."

You would think that the bright lights, noise and other ongoing distractions would be intimidating, but these llamas, and most of the competitors, are certainly cool under pressure and seem to take it all in stride.

Each contestant must lead his or her llama successfully through a maze of several obstacles. Challenges include a

covered tunnel, a series of stationary objects decorated in bright colors and balloons for weaving inside and around, and an enclosed sandbox filled with plastic colored balls.

Near the finish line is a series of horizontal, ground-level posts for the llama to jump over, designed to test the exhibitor's skills in handling and the animal's demeanor around unknown objects.

Not only does the experience teach these young exhibitors new skills, you also could feel the confidence and pride as each one proudly led his or her "lloaned" llama through the course. Obstacles are repeated if something goes awry, such as a balloon distraction — llamas like to munch on the string — or the momentary fear of the giant hat atop Howdy, the Show's official "Bowlegged H" mascot, who cheers everyone on at the finish line.

"The benefit [of the event] is to provide children an opportunity to show an animal when they might not otherwise be able to do so," said Jake Allee, chairman of the Llama and Alpaca Committee.

As part of their application to participate, contestants must state what the contest means to them personally.

"Last year I had a lot of fun showing a llama," said one participant. "I didn't win, but it's OK because it's all about the fun. What better way to spend your 13th birthday than at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo showing a llama?"

One youngster summed up the experience quite eloquently: "I love seeing animals and getting to interact with them makes me feel grateful for what God has created." 🐫

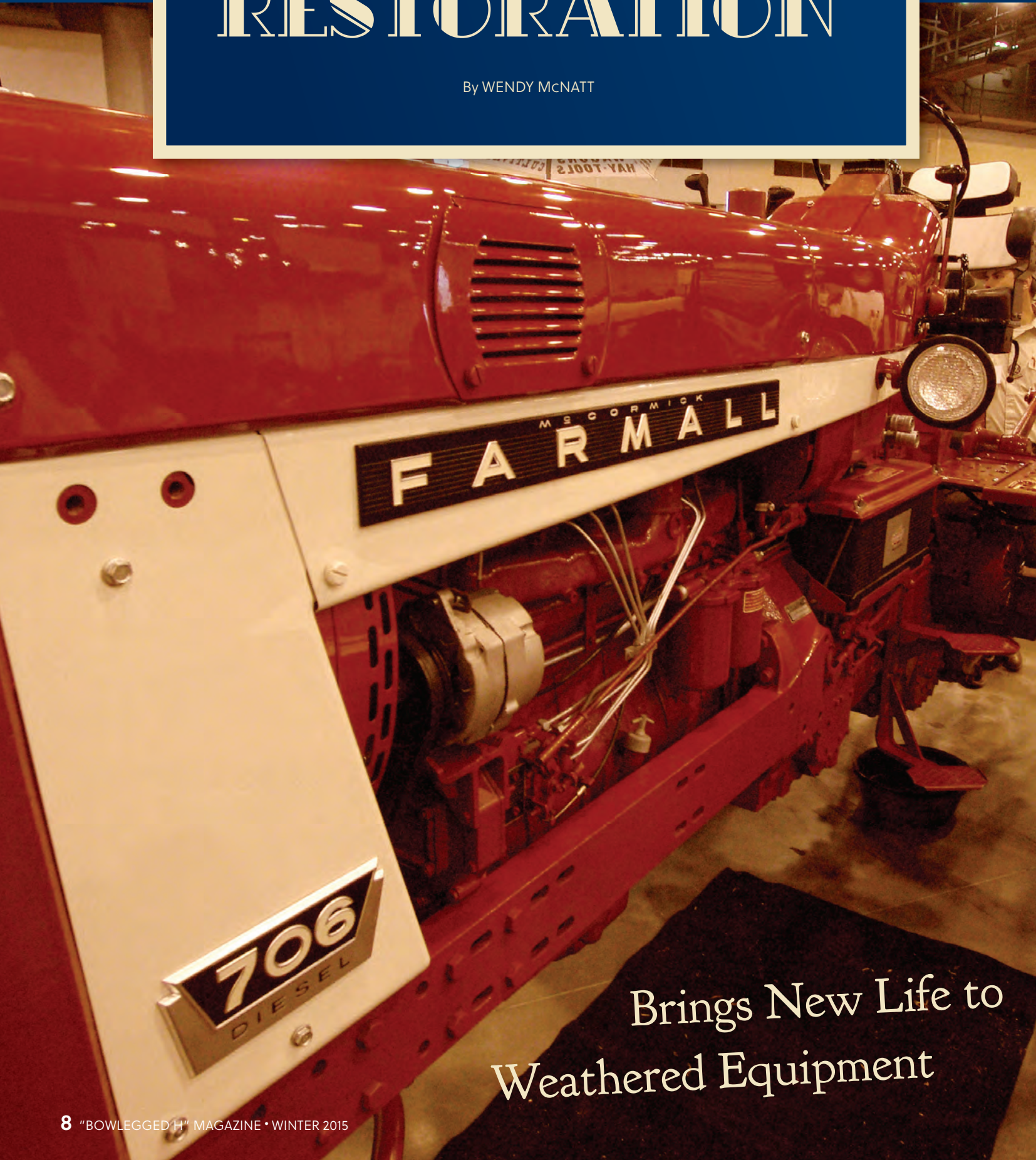


“THE BENEFIT [OF THE EVENT] IS TO PROVIDE CHILDREN AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW AN ANIMAL WHEN THEY MIGHT NOT OTHERWISE BE ABLE TO DO SO.”

— JAKE ALLEE, CHAIRMAN OF THE LLAMA AND ALPACA COMMITTEE

TRACTOR RESTORATION

By WENDY McNATT



Brings New Life to
Weathered Equipment

2015 was a **RECORD YEAR** with 42 restored tractor entries

Makeovers captivate audiences of every age. Whether a home is being renovated from the inside out, or a person is challenged to lose half of his or her body weight, these stories intrigue and inspire. At the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™, the Agricultural Mechanics Committee hosts the ultimate do-it-yourself challenge with the Tractor Restoration Project Show.

Students, mostly Texas 4-H or FFA members, work individually or as a team to restore an old tractor back to its original condition. Each exhibitor has exactly one year to complete the restoration, and no tractor can be submitted for consideration more than once. Full mechanical restoration of the engine, including the transmission, fuel system, cooling system and other major components, account for half of the points awarded in this contest. Aesthetics — or the overall appearance of the tractor — is another major factor in the competition. Judges consider metal preparation; paint and finish; completeness of sheet metal; and completeness of components, such as steering wheels, seats and decals.

“These students take something unusable, and not only do they restore the integrity of the machine, but it’s also an incredible art project. The paint on these tractors is flawless,” Agricultural Mechanics Committee Chairman Gus Smith said. “To start this kind of a project and finish within the time limits is a great life lesson.”

Additionally, the competition’s judges consider a one-page description of the overall project, an expense report identifying all costs of restoration, and photos of all phases of the restoration that depict a safe working environment. The judges also examine all safety equipment original to the tractor. The documentation also includes a detailed description of all mechanical work performed. Finally, the judges assess originality, including unaltered serial plates, paint color, and mechanical and exhaust systems. Exhibitors



are encouraged to re-create the tractor as close to its original state as possible.

“My tractor was a very large research project,” said Shane Kirts, grand champion tractor restoration winner from Era High School. “I looked on the Internet, through catalogs and I checked out other tractors to see what was original on my tractor and what was added. I wanted every nut and bolt to be original, and that took a lot of research and work.”

Kirts was approached last year at the Show by a local farmer from Sherman, Texas, who had a 1966 tractor in need of a complete restoration. Kirts accepted the challenge and spent 783 hours disassembling and restoring the tractor piece by piece.

Finding tractors to restore and the finances to restore them are the biggest challenges in attracting new competitors, according to Smith. Students appeal to the community, family and friends for tractors to restore, and schools are finding new channels for financing the projects, such as donations from tractor manufacturers and local community businesses.

“[The committee has] been hosting this event for over 30 years now,” said Smith. “The number of entries grows every year. [In 2015], there were 42 restored tractor entries, and that’s the biggest year so far. [Houston is] the leading show in the U.S. for tractor restoration.

“There are definitely limiting factors,” he said. “The availability of tractors and finding students with the patience and ability to restore them is a challenge, but [the Show] is still the leader, and we are already scrutinizing ideas for next year. We want to stay on the forefront of technology.”

When the newly restored tractors are lined up during the Agricultural Mechanics Project Show in NRG Center, it is hard to imagine the glossy, brightly painted machines were at one time rusting away in a barn or a field. Makeovers never looked so good. 🛠️





20 EDUCATIONAL 16 COMMITMENT

Houston
Livestock
Show and
Rodeo™

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's annual pledge of **nearly \$26 million** drives the organization's total educational commitment to more than **\$400 million since its beginning in 1932.**

“Thanks to generations of Houstonians, Show volunteers, donors, buyers and sponsors, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is one of the top scholarship programs in the nation, and our contributions to our junior market exhibitors and grant recipients have impacted countless youth over the years,” said Jack Lyons, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo chairman of the board. “The Show’s total educational commitment is a milestone we all take great pride in.”

SCHOLARSHIPS

Metropolitan: \$4,284,000
238, \$18,000 scholarships

Opportunity: \$2,052,000
114, \$18,000 scholarships

Texas 4-H: \$1,260,000
70, \$18,000 scholarships

Texas FFA: \$1,260,000
70, \$18,000 scholarships

Area Go Texan: \$1,404,000
78, \$18,000 scholarships

School Art: \$270,000
15, \$18,000 scholarships

Exhibitors: \$540,000
30, \$18,000 scholarships

Hildebrand Family:
\$270,000
15, \$18,000 scholarships

Military: \$90,000
Five, \$18,000 scholarships

Achievement: \$1,200,000
100, current college junior and senior Show scholars

Ag Mech Technical: \$45,000
Five, \$9,000 scholarships

Technical Scholarship Funding:
\$200,000
Funds awarded to colleges/
institutions for disbursement

**Texas A&M University College of
Veterinary Medicine:** \$96,000
Six, \$16,000 scholarships

**Texas Christian University Ranch
Management Program:**
\$10,000
Four, \$2,500 scholarships

\$12,981,000

\$525,400

\$4,888,610

\$7,463,250

2016 TOTAL
EDUCATIONAL COMMITMENT

\$25,858,260

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

Angelo State University

Sam Houston State University

Stephen F. Austin State University

Sul Ross State University

Tarleton State University

Texas A&M University

Texas A&M University – Commerce

Texas A&M University – Kingsville

Texas State University

Texas Tech University

West Texas A&M University

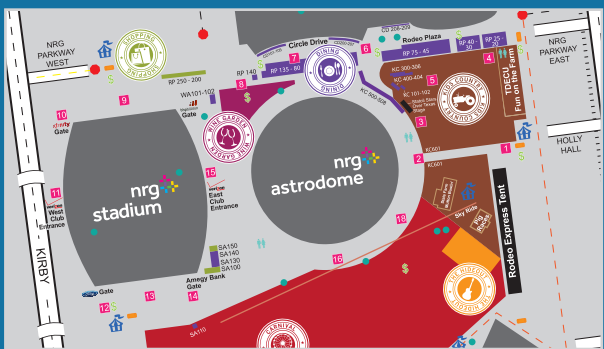
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM GRANTS

AFA • Alley Theatre • Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans • Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation • Baylor Research Advocates for Student Scientists • Books Between Kids • Borderlands Research Institute – Sul Ross State University • Breakthrough Houston • Brookwood Community • Camp for All • The Center for Hearing and Speech • Children's Museum of Houston • Comp-U-Dopt • Crime Stoppers of Houston • Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston • ESCAPE Family Resource Center • Girl Scouts of San Jacinto • Glassell School of Art • Greater Houston Partnership – Opportunity Houston 2.0 • Housing, Entrepreneurship and Readiness Training • Harris County Hospital District Foundation • The Hobby Center Foundation • Houston Area Women's Center • Houston Ballet Foundation • Houston Community College Foundation – Public Safety Institute • Houston Grand Opera • Houston Hispanic Forum • Houston SPCA • Houston Symphony • John P. McGovern Museum of Health and Medical Science • Medilife of Houston • Memorial Park Conservancy • Miracle Farm • NASA – Texas Aerospace Scholars Neighborhood Centers • Neuhaus Education Center • Pro-Vision Academy Charter School • Project GRAD Houston • Reasoning Mind • The Rise School of Houston • Schreiner University – Western Art Academy Workshop • Shriners Hospitals for Children – Houston and Galveston • SIRE Therapeutic Horsemanship • Small Steps Nurturing Center • Spring ISD Elementary Reading Program • Teach For America – Houston • Texas 4-H • Texas A&M University: Beef Cattle Short Course, Bush School of Government & Public Service, Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans, Dr. Joe Townsend '67 Leadership Fellows • Texas FFA Association • Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation • Texas Rangers Association Foundation • Texas Wildlife Association Foundation • Theatre Under The Stars • The University of Texas at Austin – UTeach • To Educate All Children • United Way • University of Houston – Clear Lake – Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities • UThHealth School of Nursing Writers in the Schools • Yellowstone Academy YMCA of Greater Houston

JUNIOR MARKET SHOW & SCHOOL ART AUCTION EXHIBITORS/ CALF SCRAMBLE PARTICIPANTS

Learn more about the 2016 educational commitment at
RODEOHOUSTON.COM

An area covered by 400 million \$1 bills would cover 1,017.6 acres. NRG Park is 350 acres, so it would cover the park 2.9 times.



A single stack of 400 million \$1 bills would reach 27.16 miles high. This is four times the approximate flying altitude of a commercial jetliner.



cover NRG Park nearly three times

reach higher than a plane can fly

400 MILLION \$1 BILLS CAN...

stack taller than multiple capitols

fit around the Earth more than once

A single stack of 400 million \$1 bills would reach 143,404 feet high. This is about 465 Texas Capitol buildings stacked on top of one another.



End to end, 400 million \$1 bills would span 38,762 miles. The Earth's circumference (at the equator) is 24,902 miles.



A SINGLE \$1 BILL IS

.0043 inches tall, 16.0254 square inches and 6.14 inches long.

Source: ehd.org/science_technology_largenumbers.php

WHAT MY HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™ SCHOLARSHIP HAS MEANT TO ME...

"It meant being able to see my parents worry free about financial issues and become the first college graduate in my family. I am now happy to say that I am a first grade bilingual teacher. Thank you so much, HLSR!"

Karla Avila,
2010 Metropolitan Scholar

"It means knowing that people believe in you!"

Alejandra Rangel,
2014 Metropolitan Scholar

"The scholarship represents the fruits of my efforts. It represents the hard work and multiple sacrifices that my parents have had to make to give me a better future. It means I have made myself proud, but most importantly, I have made my parents proud."

Merline Gonzalez,
2012 Metropolitan Scholar

"As a HLSR Achievement Scholar, no words can express the amount of gratitude I have for those who have a hand in making these scholarships possible. Because of you, I have the privilege to focus more on my academics without needing to worry as much about the financial side of college, ultimately allowing me to focus on saving funds for graduate school. I am continually grateful and proud to represent HLSR as a student at Texas A&M. HLSR has provided me support throughout the majority of my life, and I cannot wait to begin giving back to the Show that has given so much to me."

Emily Mahalitic,
2013 4-H Scholar

My Rodeo scholarship allowed me to not only obtain my undergraduate degree without any student debt, but to continue on to graduate school without any worries. My scholarship continues to provide me with great pride in being a current [Show] volunteer and giving back to the organization that gave me this opportunity. I have made lifelong friends through Rodeo, something that I can't begin to put a value on!"

Berry Summerour,
1985 4-H Scholar

"My Opportunity Scholarship allowed me to earn my undergraduate degree, and gave me a jump start on my first master's degree. I am now an assistant principal. I know that I would not be where I am today without my HLSR scholarship!"

Jackie Boyd,
2002 Opportunity Scholar

"My scholarship allowed me opportunities I never would have had otherwise, and set my life on a whole new path. I was able to not only get my bachelor's degree because of my scholarship, but because of what it covered, I was able to go on and get my master's degree, which allowed me to become the speech pathologist I am today. [I] love my job and count my blessings every day!"

Michelle Peterson White,
1991 Metropolitan Scholar

RANCHO

SORTING:

It's Anyone's

Game

By WENDY MCNATT



A horse described as “having a lot of cow in him” is an ideal competition animal for the fast-paced event of ranch sorting. Cattle-instinctive horses and riders compete in a dynamic, time-based event that continues to increase in popularity at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™. Approximately 1,500 teams will compete March 13-15, 2016, in nine divisions, to take home a share of more than \$100,000 in prize money.

Ranch sorting happens in two round pens that are linked with a 12-foot open gate to make a figure eight-shaped pen. Two riders simultaneously enter the sorting pen, which contains 10 cattle numbered from zero to nine and one unnumbered cow. Once the judge drops the flag, one rider crosses to the other pen and a number is called. The rider quickly herds the designated animal to the opposite pen. The team members rotate until all of the cattle are sorted and penned in numerical order or until 60 seconds have elapsed.

“What makes this event so popular is the fact that anyone can compete,” said Ranch Sorting National Championship President Dave Wolfe. “Ranch sorting is an exciting, family sport. Anyone who can ride a horse can be competitive with other members of their family. It just takes the ability to work on a team and the perception to anticipate the movement of cattle.”

With more than 23,000 members across the United States, the RSNCH boasts growth every year, with the ranch sorting

being the most popular division in the entry level category.

“Our rating system allows novice riders to compete, which is fairly uncommon for most events,” Wolfe said. “The riders are confined to a 50-foot pen, and the competition is not just about speed, but also finesse.”

Most rodeo competitors train for several years before they enter a single competition. Ranch sorting aims to encourage horse enthusiasts of all ages to compete. Teams composed of family members are quite common.

“Children to grandparents and men and women can be competitive,” said Paul Shollar, immediate past chairman of the Team Penning and Ranch Sorting Committee. “This sport is open to all abilities and age groups. With a good cow-working horse, anyone can compete.”

Selecting a competent partner and an intuitive horse seem to be the key factors to success in ranch sorting. Once teams develop good cattle reading skills and arena awareness, they can compete at the top levels of the increasingly popular sport. Ranch sorting encourages youth and families to participate as often as seasoned professionals.

“We have a popular saying in ranch sorting,” Wolfe said. “The most dangerous competitor can be grandma on a trail horse!” 🐎

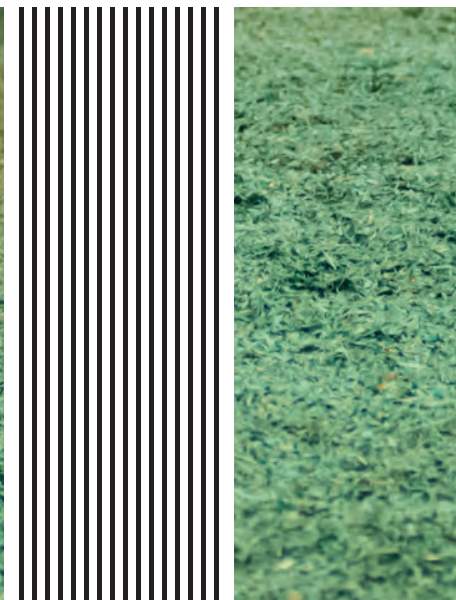
“Ranch sorting is an exciting, family sport. Anyone who can ride a horse can be competitive with other members of their family.”

— Ranch Sorting National Championship
President, Dave Wolfe

SH-SHEEP DOG

By GIGI WARK

Photos by Lisa Norwood



Although livestock noises are commonly heard throughout NRG Center during the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™, it is rather unusual to hear barks and whistles; unless, that is, you are one of the many spectators of the Sheep Dog Trials.

“Arf! Arf!” David Grahmann gives a command in Old English, meaning “Come by.” Grahmann is the handler for Eve, a 2-year-old border collie, the breed of choice for this particular sport. Eve rockets toward a small herd of three sheep. Crouched down, with her tail low to the ground, she herds the sheep through the ranch class competition, a timed event that must be completed in less than three minutes. As Eve works the sheep through the course, we hear a multi-pitched whistle, followed by “whee-hee” from Grahmann, instructing Eve to run the sheep counter-clockwise around the pen and herd them around another obstacle.

Following another series of whistles, Eve brings the sheep back toward the pen where Grahmann awaits with the gate open. “Stand,” he says. Eve stops her drive and takes control of the sheep by giving them “the eye,” which Grahmann said is a direct stare that intimidates the sheep into the pen. Grahmann then closes the gate. “That’ll do,” he says, and Eve returns to his side. They have finished the course in a first-place time of 1 minute 29 seconds.

Grahmann grew up on a ranch, so raising livestock is in his blood. Ten years ago, he decided to raise sheep so he could train dogs to participate in the trials. “It’s a great sport and partnership,” said an emotional Grahmann. “There’s such a great sense of pride that you share with your dog in the

accomplishment of the course and doing it in a winning time. We have been training hard for eight months, running the competitive circuit, and we are both proud.”

Sheep dog trials date back to 1873 in Bola, Wales, and are an immensely popular sport in Europe. Border collies were used on ranches in the U.S., but interest in the sport grew slowly. E.B. Raley, past president of the Texas Sheep Dog Association, saw the Show as an opportunity to showcase the sport and introduce it to a new audience.

In 1985, Raley called his good friend P. Michael Wells, past president and current member of the Executive Committee of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Raley recalled his conversation with Wells: “I have an idea, and I know it will fill up the stands. Let’s bring something new to the Rodeo audience: Sheep Dog Trials. We will run an indoor course that challenges the handler and dog, and judge the event within a set timeframe. I know it will work. After all, everyone loves dogs.” The Sheep Dog Trials remain a Show fan favorite, and spectators continue to fill the stands.

The Sheep Dog Trials are hosted by the Sheep and Goat Committee. Members help set up the course, recruit the judges and handle the sheep. Volunteers work hand-in-hand with Joy Hall, also of the Texas Sheep Dog Association, who handles all the entries, awards and communications with the competitors.

“The Sheep Dog Trials are a sport, and the handler must have the reflexes demanded of athletes without the actual physical exertion,” Hall said. “It’s the dogs that do all the running!”

TRIALS:

A CANINE HIGHLIGHT



Border collies are usually selected for herding because they are bred for their intelligence, sensibility, agility, speed, good nature and stock sense.

The course is designed to challenge the nature and training of a herd dog. Border collies are usually selected for herding because they are bred for their intelligence, sensibility, agility, speed, good nature and stock sense.

"You want to see the sheep walk in straight lines, walking gently," Hall explained. "The course should include driving the sheep away from the handler, because it goes against the natural instinct of the dog and is a great test of [the canine's] training. The handler communicates calmly, using voice commands, whistling and giving directional cues with a shepherd's hook. All of this pays homage to the sport's humble beginnings: acres of land, a working ranch and a herd of sheep."

For this event, Hall partnered with a sheep dog named Jammin'. Just like the athletes and livestock of RODEOHOUSTON®, the herd pairings are the luck of the draw and, unfortunately, this left Jammin' and Hall with a very rambunctious group of sheep. Hall still managed to experience success during the 2015 Sheep Dog Trials: Maid, her border collie, imported from Wales, placed first in the novice class, a course that must be completed in less than two and a half minutes.

Bill Jordan, chairman of the Sheep and Goat Committee, said, "The stands are always full, and the crowd really gets into cheering on the dogs and handlers. We see more families at this event eating and drinking and cheering on their favorites. Raley was really onto something, bringing the trials to the Show. Everyone really does love a dog, especially such well-trained ones." 🐕



HOW TO BE A RODEO COWBOY:

SADDLE BRONC RIDING

By KATE BRADLEY

Zeke Thurston had no idea that destiny was calling him when he answered the phone in March 2015. On the line was the RODEOHOUSTON® managing director, Catherine Schultz, asking him to fill in for an absentee rider in the final two rounds Super Series II.

Two rides later, Thurston had won enough money to advance to the Super Series Semifinal 1 and eventually to the Championship Round. Thurston drew Burch Brothers Rodeo Company's popular young bronc, Lunatic From Hell, and put together a picture-perfect ride to take home the 2015 RODEOHOUSTON Saddle Bronc Riding Championship.

"I just wanted to win a little money and maybe get a foot in the door for next year," Thurston said. "When I came out on top, it was a great experience. RODEOHOUSTON is an awesome rodeo, one of the most prestigious out there.

Winning really helped a lot, especially the confidence knowing I could ride against the top guys."

Thurston took home \$52,500, and the same title that his father won at RODEOHOUSTON in 1986. Coming from a rodeo family, Thurston grew up competing; however, he said, this win was close to his heart.

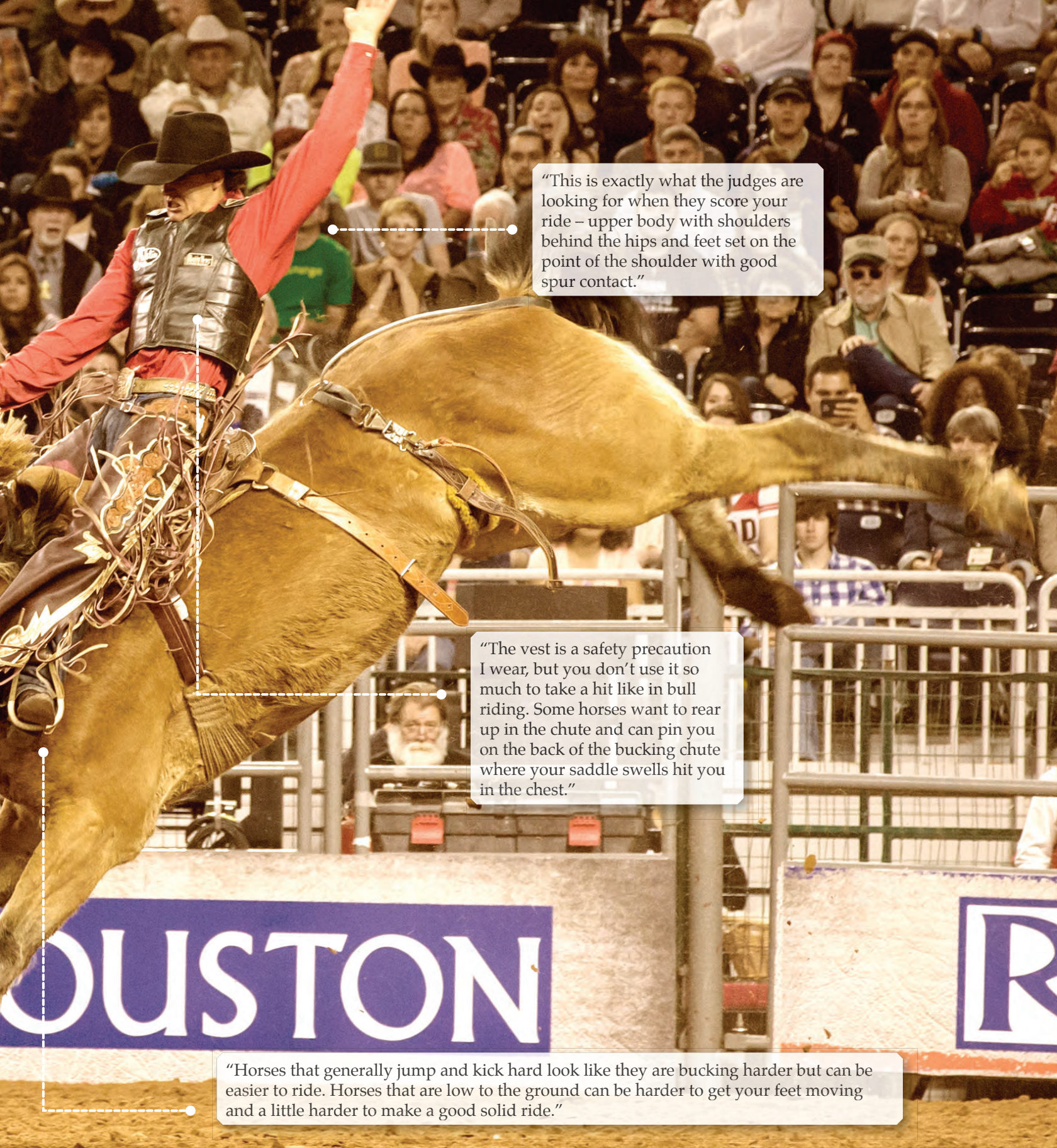
Thurston describes the technical precision needed to earn a high score in the saddle bronc riding event.

"The bronc rein is like your leverage point and what keeps you in the seat of your saddle. If you get slack in the rein, it can sit you up and get you bucked off. You really want to be lifting the rein when you come out and then you can kind of poke your rein out there, and make it look good."



THE HISTORY

BEHIND RODEO'S CLASSIC EVENT: SADDLE BRONC RIDING

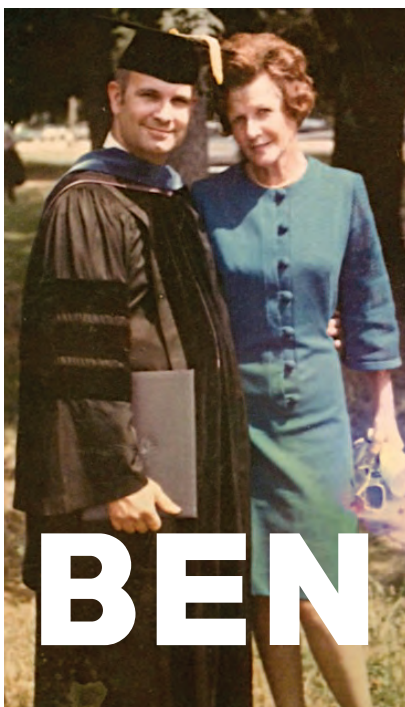


“This is exactly what the judges are looking for when they score your ride – upper body with shoulders behind the hips and feet set on the point of the shoulder with good spur contact.”

“The vest is a safety precaution I wear, but you don’t use it so much to take a hit like in bull riding. Some horses want to rear up in the chute and can pin you on the back of the bucking chute where your saddle swells hit you in the chest.”

“Horses that generally jump and kick hard look like they are bucking harder but can be easier to ride. Horses that are low to the ground can be harder to get your feet moving and a little harder to make a good solid ride.”

The saddle bronc riding event is as old as the first cowboy to step into the stirrup on an unbroken horse. Deemed the “classic event” because of its close ties to working Western ranches, saddle bronc riding requires strength and precision from the rider. Typically, saddle bronc horses are larger than bareback bronc riding horses. To score well, the rider must maintain control during the ride, exhibit proper form and not touch, or foul, the horse with the free hand that is not holding the bronc rein. The rider wants to synchronize his leg movement with the horse’s jump. When the horse’s front legs stretch forward, the cowboy’s legs should be at the point of the horse’s shoulder.



LEFT: Dickerson and his mother, Lois, at his Ph.D. graduation ceremony at Louisiana State University, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

BELOW: Dickerson with his dog, Bean, who lived to be 17 years old and competed regularly in agility competitions.



Dickerson is currently a life member of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, as well as a member of several other professional organizations. A former professor of sociology and gerontology, Dickerson currently serves as an adjunct faculty member at North Central Texas College and Weatherford College, and is a professional consultant. Throughout his career, he was appointed to serve in state and national positions by two Texas governors, Bill Clements and Rick Perry. He has founded numerous courses in the field of gerontology and geriatric education, and has obtained countless awards for his efforts throughout his career.

BEN DICKERSON:

THE SHOW'S FIRST SCHOLAR REMEMBERS

In the fall of 1957, Ben Dickerson, an FFA student from Bellaire High School, and the only child of Robert Ben and Lois Dickerson, was all set to attend Baylor University. He had hopes of entering the seminary one day, but fate had another plan.

Before entering college, Dickerson was away during the summer working as a counselor at a camp for juvenile delinquent boys. His director, Bernie Lemmons, was a former football player at Texas A&M University, and while Dickerson knew he was going to attend Baylor in the coming months, he agreed to visit the Texas A&M campus with Lemmons and meet with the dean. Little did he know, he would leave College Station, Texas, with a new plan.

"I called my mom and said, 'I hope you're not too mad at me, but I've decided to go to A&M,' and there was silence," Dickerson said. "I asked her if she was mad at me, and she said 'No, I can't believe this is happening. Your ag teacher called me a day ago and said that you won the scholarship from the Houston Livestock Show. I told them you were going to Baylor.' I told her to call them right back — 'I'm going to A&M!'"

At the time, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ required its scholarship recipients to attend Texas A&M. The scholarship was in the amount of \$2,000, and according to Dickerson, just the right amount to fund his entire undergraduate stint.

"It was almost like a divine intervention that the Show provided that scholarship and that I actually could go to A&M. I will forever be grateful." Dickerson was the first in his family to graduate from college.

While he credits a lot of people for helping him along his journey in life, Dickerson notes that he would not have been able to win the Show's first scholarship nearly 60 years ago without his Bellaire High School FFA agricultural science teacher, Isaac Carter, or his parents, who he said always supported him, no matter what. Dickerson's father died before he was awarded the scholarship in March of 1957, and although it was a difficult time, he said he feels that everything has turned out for the best in his life.

"Interestingly, my dad always wanted me to go to A&M," Dickerson said.

While attending Texas A&M, studying agricultural economics and sociology, Dickerson said he had some hard times adjusting to the lifestyle of being a college freshman. He recalls the relationships he formed with officials at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, and said the organization became an addition to his family for his entire college career. He said that former general manager of the Show, Herman Engle, and former livestock show manager, John Kuykendall, were two individuals who offered him strong support.

"These men, they actually became more than the positions and roles they held. I knew them as people," he remembers. "It was really nice and it made a big difference. They were always there with me; the livestock show became a surrogate or extended family. No question about it."

Dickerson went on to complete his undergraduate degree in sociology and then entered the military to serve in the medical service corps of the U.S. Army Reserves. Upon his completion of active duty with the Army, Show officials called him and said they would like to fund his master's degree as well. Dickerson completed his master's in sociology at Texas A&M, followed by a Ph.D. from Louisiana State University. He knew then that his calling was to teach, and he continues to do so to this day.

"As long as I live, I need to make a difference with my life — for the benefit of others," he said. "That's why I'm passionate about what the Show does and that I still have the privilege to teach."

When thinking back on the past six decades since being awarded a scholarship from the Show, Dickerson said he still cannot believe it happened to him and that he is very appreciative of the organization for all that it did for him and for all scholarship recipients who followed.

"[This scholarship] gave me a sense of worth and pride," he said. "'We're pulling for you, we're proud of you, and we can help you,' that's what [the Show's staff] would say — it was from their hearts, not scripted." 🐾



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