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Volume XXIV Issue 1

Pam Turner, Editor

January 2010

**13<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL COWBOY POETRY AND MUSIC FESTIVAL**

**JANUARY 16, 2010**

**AT THE EMPTY SADDLE CLUB**

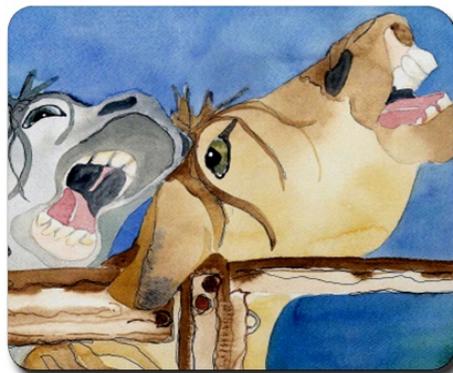
**39 Empty Saddle Road, Rolling Hills Estates**

**Free chili & cornbread at 6pm and the show starts at 7pm**

C'mon down to the Empty Saddle Club for an evening of classic entertainment, cowboy style! We've got poets, musicians, chili, cornbread and a whole load of fun! The chili feed starts at 6pm to warm up your insides. Then at 7pm your outsides will be getting warmed up in the clubhouse to cowboy campfire songs, poems, music, comedy and whatever else just happens to ride on in with our performers this year. There'll be the poems of returning poets **Wanda Smith** and **Janis Lukstein** among others. **Steve Deming** with his saddle pals- **Craig Ruppert** and **Mel Harker** AKA **The California Cowboys**, will be there to entertain us. **Ron Christopher with Saddletramp** and **Dan Peddicord** will be back to sing for you. Musical group, **The Crosstown Cowboys**, will also be joining us. **Paul Pitti** and **The New Westernaires** will be bringing you cowboy campfire songs from years gone by. Now, this is only part of our line up of performers, you'll just have to join us to see who else will be there to share their special poems or songs!

***The West is dead my friend  
But writers hold the seed  
And what they sow  
Will live and grow  
Again for those who read***

*Charles M. Russell, 1917*



## FROM THE EDITOR...

Happy New Year...2010!

Welcome back as we move into the winter season after all those pies, cookies and goodies from the holidays and of course the resolutions made on New Years' Eve. We are in hopes that the 'rainy season' won't wipe out all our beautiful trails and that our hills will still be watered and green. My resolution for the year has been to continue to eat healthy and participate in some 5K walk/runs. A serious runner I'm not, but after taking part in the Torrance Turkey Trot, I discovered a fun way to get some exercise. Hey, shedding some extra holiday pounds will be appreciated by my equine friend, Keanna, who has to carry me up and down those hills.

I watched some of the Rose Parade this year. As always I like the equestrian groups the best. I loved seeing all the different breeds Arabians, Peruvian Pasos, Miniatures, American Saddlebreds, Mules, Mustangs Quarter Horses, etc. The Long Beach Mounted Police made their annual ride down Colorado Blvd. A couple of units caught my interest ; The Giddyup Gals were pretty cute as the ladies wore big pink wings as they rode down the street. I couldn't help but wonder what the horses thought of their git-up. The U.S. Marines Mounted Color Guard riding the rescued Wild Mustangs were inspirational. The announcer even mentioned the controversial round-up of the wild mustangs in Nevada and I'm glad that they got some press over the air waves.

January promises to be a fun month with the Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival on January 16. I hope to see many of your smiling faces again this year.

I am sad to report that a Festival regular, Mary Vandever passed away earlier this year. Her friend, Wanda Smith, said that Mary, "always looked forward to the Festival each year". Mary was a real cowgirl and her poems and stories from her life will certainly be missed. Included in this issue is a little story Mary shared with us at last year's Festival.

I have enjoyed being your Festival Director and MC these past 13 years and hope to do so for many more years to come.

*Happy Trails!*



### What's Happening!

January 16: PVPHA Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival at 7pm. Chili and cornbread feed starts at 6pm.

### New Members:

Sean & Cathy O'Donnell  
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Shelly Xiaolei Xing  
Elizabeth Youngling  
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Scott Launer

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## **Tony's Spurs**

By  
Mary Blei Vandever

I got to know Tony the summer I was seventeen and got my first job away from home. Rainbow Trail Lodge was a guest ranch and Tony was the horse wrangler.

In the evening when the chores were all done the work crew would gather in the kitchen to chat a bit. Tony spun yarns about his younger days as a cowboy on the last trail ride from Texas to Montana. A natural storyteller, he charmed everyone with his tales of yesteryear.

Young love stepped into the picture and time passed. My husband, Sam, had always wanted to be a cowboy so we contacted Tony who now took care of some horses on a small ranch closed to the lodge. Getting on in years, he could use some help and Sam was hired to give him a hand,

According to Tony, besides herding, he had ridden the rails through the whole Southwest from Missouri through Texas to L.A. But mostly he had ridden his ponies from ranch to ranch. He said he had been in the movies and told us he'd met Will Rodgers.

One day in the midst of story telling, Tony opened a small trunk and showed us his collection of spurs. He told us where he'd gotten each pair, some were gifts to him from friends along the way and others were mementos of a

special time or event. He picked out a pair and gave them to Sam.

Sam wore those spurs every chance he could. But even spurs won't cure itchy feet. We left the valley in search of greener pastures.

Tony spent his life riding ponies and herding cattle, wrangling and making friends. He was the only real cowboy we'd known. We missed his years by his cabin and our visits that got scarcer and scarcer. Tony rode off into the sunset in 1977 at the age of 85. Same made the same journey two years before this new century. I'm still here and I still have Tony's spurs.

*Note: Mary "rode off into the sunset" and joined Sam and Tony in 2009. What a reunion that must have been! We will miss Mary and her poems and stories she shared with us at our yearly Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival.*

*Happy Trails to you, Cowgirl!*  
*Ed.*

## **Katie Nana and her Brood**

### **A love Story**

By Erin Ryan

I thought this year I would write an original story to launch 2010. Something my daughter and I could read year after year. Although this is not a horse story, so many horse owners are also animal lovers and backyard barn hobbyists. I hope many of you will find this interesting. One thing is sure; the maternal instinct of the average hen should not be underestimated!

### **Why Chickens?**

Chickens were introduced into my corral some five years prior, mainly for fly control. They eat a variety of things, including the fly larva from manure and insects within reach. I have seen chickens jump into the air to snag a bug. Eliminating the use of pesticides so not to inadvertently poison the wrong animal is a priority considering I have a menagerie of pets roaming around my backyard. My family and friends also

enjoy the added benefit of fresh, hormone free eggs. In addition to consumption, collecting eggs also restricts the population growth of my flock. Every chicken has a name, and as it turns out, a distinct personality.

### **The Incident**

I will not go into great detail in this regard, but a neighbor's dog was able to dig under my fence over a period of months with the intent to terrorize and kill my chickens. To catch the little guy in the act took many covert late night visits to the corral. Dogs have excellent hearing, and I was playing a stealth game with a canine killer. During these dark days, some of my chickens learned to fly over the fence to safety. On a bright note, the dog issue was resolved. Most of the chickens that escaped were lost, except for one, Katie Nana. She occasionally would be found outside the corral exploring the trail side, but always present inside the corral for breakfast, lunch and dinner. She even was present for the evening coop tucking in counts. For the most part, she remained with the flock, and I did not give her wandering indiscretions much thought. With the dog gone, over time the flock got back to normal.

### **The Unplanned Pregnancy**

Even in December, we are fortunate to live in an area with a mild climate pretty much year round. On one such day the sun was out and Maya (my mare) and I were in the side yard after returning from a horseback ride. All of a sudden we could hear frantic peeping. I went over to the coop where my older chicks were sitting, all accounted for. I figured it was probably a peachick separated from her Mom. The peahen was probably just up the trail, and I could find and reunite the two. As it turns out it is hard to find the source of a peeping chick hiding in thick bushes. First it sounded like it was coming just inside the fence across the trail. I hiked up the hill to get around the fence. Once there, the sound then seemed to be resonating from just outside the fence. Darn it, up the hill I hiked again to get back down to the trail. I could not believe it, once there, I was sure the chick must be hiding inside the fence. Gosh! So around I went again. On the second go around, I noticed

Katie Nana lying low to the ground, acting as if she was invisible. I walked over to her, saying, "What are you doing over here Katie?" She took exception when I reached down to pick her up. There were a lot of very small baby chicks under her! A few of them still had egg yolk on their chest fuzz. Some of the chicks were slightly larger. My guess was that part of the brood had just recently hatched, and others might be a day or two older. It looked like a bunch of fuzz with little eyes looking up at me. The final count came to 15! So many I could not pick them all up. I called up to the house for my husband to come down with a box. While lying on the ground waiting for the box to arrive, I was finally able to locate the wayward chick. A little gray head was visible through the tall grass, screaming her head off. Yup, it was one of Katie Nana's. Looking back, I realized it was incredible luck to have found them. House cats can obliterate a flock of chicks. That is why we see peahens with five chicks one day, and several days later she has only one remaining chick. Not to mention possums, racoons, dogs and hawks. Those baby chicks would not have had much of a chance of survival.

### **A Good Mom**

Katie did not take kindly to me touching her chicks, and I got several good pecks on the back of my hand as I transferred the chicks from their improvised grass nest to the box. Katie Nana came along as well. Up to the house the whole brood went. A pen was assembled in my daughter's room, where everyone safely stayed for a week. Katie did her best to cover the babies, but with so many, it was not chicken-ly possible. Some were lucky enough to keep warm under her downy feathers, but many had to make their bed time arrangements just next to their Mom, not a suitable arrangement for chicks needing warmth. So, each evening the family comes up to the house and sleeps there. This way even the chicks that have to nest close by will not get overly chilly. During the

day the family is moved down to the corral. Katie Nana and her brood are allowed to wander around the corral as long as someone trails them.

Hawks would otherwise drive down and kill any babies they could grab. Katie constantly talks to her babies, with the chicks peeping back. She teaches them what things are good to eat and how to maneuver around the corral by staying close to the fence so not to cross open areas of the corral for safety.

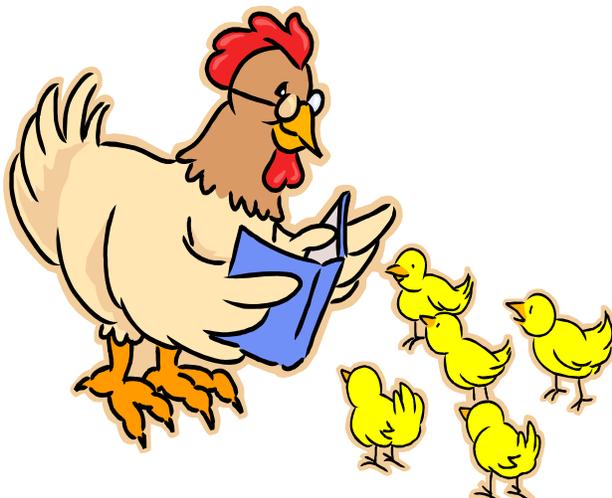
The father, a great blue Cochin by the name of Poofy, normally walks over to the brood and stands amongst the chicks. It's as if he is saying, "Look at what I made." He seems especially proud of himself. I have to say he did the same thing with the ducklings, and he had absolutely nothing to do with that hatching. No need to deflate his self esteem, the less he knows the better. As of the reading of this tale the chicks are a month old. They are absolutely adorable, and we love all of them. We hope to place some of them in new homes when they get older.

Consider this; Katie Nana normally lays one egg every other day. The chicks probably hatched within three days of each other. Nor could she have left the nest for very long, since fertilized eggs require warmth to hatch. That would mean she would have had to lay 16 eggs within a short period of time, and keep that nest warm most of the time. How was any of this possible? Katie Nana was all

over the corral every day. So I count this series of events as my own little New Years wonder!

In the meantime we are going to enjoy having Katie Nana and her brood up at the house in the evenings. My daughter never has any trouble getting to sleep with the comforting peeps from the brood. May all your evenings be just as pleasant this New Year.

**"See Y'all at the  
Cowboy Poetry and  
Music Festival on  
January 16!"**



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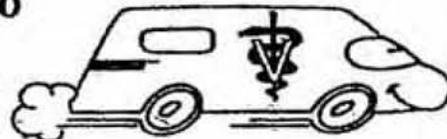


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