



EVENTS

Feb. 12

Equine & Wine Event

310-377-8834

Cowboy Boot Camp

Feb. 16

PVPHA general meeting

Empty Saddle Club

Feb. 24

TGIF Celebration

Empty Saddle Club

Feb. 26

Cowboy Boot Camp bit workshop

310-377-8834

Cowboy Boot Camp

Feb. 27

Equestrian Committee meeting

Rolling Hills Estates City Hall

Send events to pvpha2010@gmail.com.

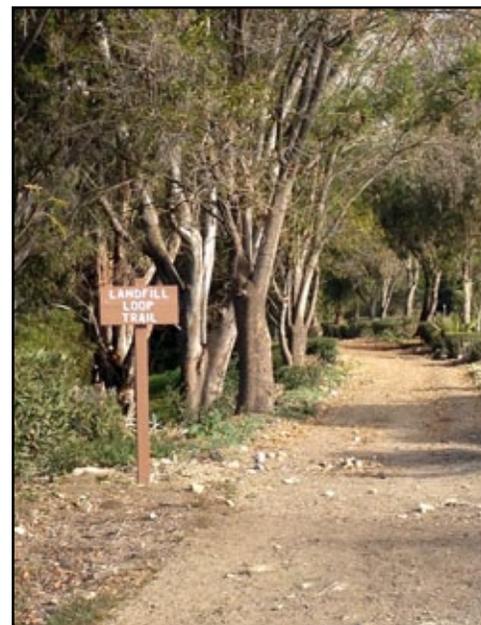
Landfill loop is easy trail with few hazards

by **STUART SHAW**
SPECIAL TO THE DISPATCH

Imagine taking your horse and going on a leisurely trail ride on a beautiful sunny day though a former city dump, where all the trash and waste that humanity has come up with has been transformed into open space. This is possible on the 291-acre former Palos Verdes landfill, which closed in December 1980.

The trail has two entrances. The first is through the Peter Weber Equestrian Center, and the other is through the gate off the Moccasin Trail. Either entrance will get you to off to a good start on the 1.44-mile landfill loop.

The loop trail is a very easy trail
See "LANDFILL LOOP," Page 9.



STUART SHAW

The landfill loop trail winds around the former Palos Verdes landfill, which has been defunct since 1980.



DANIEL NOVTA / FLICKR

Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival (Page 6): The annual event evokes images of the old west through poetry, comedy and song.

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Local vet to talk Mexico trip

by **CHARLENE O'NEIL**
VICE PRESIDENT OF EDUCATION

In October, Dr. Larry Kelly and his assistant Victor journeyed to Mexico to treat horses and burros that needed dental work and whose owners were too poor to afford care. This was a weeklong trip to Mexico City, Santa Cruz and small villages where the people were dependent on their animals. All of Kelly's work was donated.

Kelly will present a slide program of his trip during the next general meeting. This should be a great and informative evening for all! See you Feb. 16 at 7 p.m. at the Empty Saddle Club! U

ETI Corral 8 Ready for Show Season

by **DAN WALLACE**
SPECIAL TO THE DISPATCH

The newly elected Board of Directors held its kick-off meeting to start planning for the 2012 show season on Jan. 18. We have a wonderful group of people on the board who are committed to making the 2012 season one of the most exciting years ever.

One major change this year is that there will be only one annual premium issued this year instead of the five monthly premiums that have been mailed in the past. The annual premium will have new information, larger print and all of the registration materials for all five shows so it is very important for members of ETI Corral 8 to keep their premium for the entire season. The registration information in will also be available online at eticorral8.com. The new premium should be mailed to members of Corral 8 by March 29.

This year's show season starts with the first show on April 15. As always, it will be held at Ernie Howlett Park in Rolling Hills Estates. For more information as well as the dates for all 2012 show dates, please visit the official website at eticorral8.com. U

NEWS BRIEFS

RHCA warns of trail closure

The trail behind 14 Crest Road and adjacent to the Fire Station and the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy has been closed, according to Rolling Hills Community Association Manager Kristen Raig.

The trail was closed because it wasn't safe and it was on private property, Raig said in a letter to PVPHA President Dale Allen.

Raig also noted that people who wish to enjoy the trails in Rolling Hills should apply for badges issued by the RHCA office. To receive a badge, riders must fill out a liability waiver as well as provide emergency contact information and a small photo.

"We invite you to continue to enjoy the other trails in the Rolling Hills community," Raig wrote. "Thank you for your continued support and 'happy trails.'"

Anyone with questions or seeking more information should contact the RHCA office at 310-544-6222.

Help the Dispatch

This is where you come in Do you have a horse care tip? Did you take home a ribbon at your last show? Got a great recipe for horse treats? Want to express an opinion on an equestrian issue? Have a clinic to put on the calendar? Send it to pvpha2010@gmail.com, and I include it in a future issue.

News briefs are generally 2-3 short paragraphs. To submit a news brief, email the text to pvpha2010@gmail.com. The editor reserves the right to not include briefs and to edit briefs for length and clarity. U

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Rudnicki: Horse slaughter not humane

Anti-slaughter advocate responds to veterinarian's letter published in January Dispatch issue.

by **SUSAN RUDNICKI**
SPECIAL TO THE DISPATCH

The issue of horse slaughter has been highlighted in the last couple runs of the *Dispatch*, but readers should also know that this is a federal consideration. Two bills in Congress—SB 1176 and HR 2966—would amend the Horse Protection Act to prohibit the shipping, transporting, moving, delivering, receiving, possessing, purchasing, selling, or donation of horses and other equines to be slaughtered for human consumption and other purposes. The legislation is called the “American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act,” and though the issue brings strong emotional responses, both pro and con, it is important that education be substantiated with facts. Too often, assertions are made that have no citations in science, data gathering or documentation. This piece will give sources people may check and read for further understanding.

When slaughter is labeled “humane” we should go back to the definition of the word to remind ourselves of the discordance of putting those two terms together. “Humane”—having or showing compassion or benevolence, inflicting the minimum of pain (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Horses in the slaughter pipeline experience abject fear, chaos, and cruelty from human handlers at all stages of the process. While our pleasure horses may be asked to endure new experiences which raise fearful responses—trailer, being ridden, being overnight in unfamiliar locations—it is hardly analogous to the freakish smells, screams and people encountered in mass transport or at a slaughterhouse. Indeed, when we ask our horses to take on a new experience, we do all we can to ameliorate the situation by calming our horses and behaving kindly.

Slaughter horses are *never* treated kindly. The documentation of this in American slaughterhouses, *before* the last were closed in 2007, is part of a Freedom of Information Act request by humane organizations monitoring the situation. More 900 pages of documents, videos and photos are available online for anyone to see¹. One must keep in mind when viewing these extremely graphic compilations that these plants were being “overseen” by official USDA veterinarians and inspectors, which the pro-slaughter crowd insist renders the “processing” of

horses inherently more humane than currently done in Canada and Mexico. How their assertion is substantiated by this evidence is difficult to fathom. The documents contain hundreds of photographs that depict horses with open fractures, legs missing, battered and bloody faces, eyeballs dangling and what appears to be horses left to bleed to death. Veterinarians called to review the documentation concurred that the captive bolt gun often did not work, had to be employed up to 11 times or went into the ear or eye. Horses were eviscerated while alive. Further, in a sworn statement before officials in Cook County, Ill., a former employee of Cavel International, a horse slaughtering plant, testified the following²:

“In July 1991, they were unloading one of the double-decker trucks. A horse got his leg caught in the side of the truck so the driver pulled the rig up and the horse’s leg popped off. The horse was still living and it was shaking. (Another employee) popped it on the head and we hung it up and split it open ...

“Sometimes we would kill near 390, 370 a day. Each double-decker might have up to 100 on it. We would pull off the dead ones with chains. Ones that were down on the truck, we would drag them off with chains and maybe put them in a pen or we might drag them with an automatic chain to the knockbox. Sometimes we would use an electric shocker to try to make them stand. To get them into the knock box, you have to shock them ... sometimes run them up the (anus) with the shocker ... When we killed a pregnant mare, we would take the guts out and I would take the bag out and open it and cut the cord and put it in the trash and sometimes the baby would still be living, and its heart would be beating, but we would put it in the trash can.”

How can any person accept this as a humane death? The word “humane” loses all meaning here. Though many decry an abundance of unwanted horses and/or abandoned horses as a reason to bring back slaughter, the statistics do not bear out the assertion. The numbers of horses being killed now in Canada and Mexico are approximately the same as when plants were open in the U.S.—140,000 per year. If things were so much better when slaughter was domestically available, why are the

Continued on the next page.

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 numbers so consistent?

The number of horses in need is driven by a poor economy, not lack of slaughter. Slaughter, on the other hand, is driven by a demand for horse meat in other countries, not numbers of horses in need. Horse meat is eaten in Europe and Asia—not the United States—and the profit potential of the business is dependent on the culinary demand alone.

It is the availability of slaughter that has resulted in too many horses. The American economy suffered great shocks after 2008, and drove many people into financial insolvency. But the “culling” operation afforded by foreign slaughter plants for horses deemed by breeders to be less than desirable continues as an outlet for overproduction. Indeed, the American Quarter Horse and the Arabian breed associations are on record in favor of slaughter, urging the membership how they may lobby their representatives to return the horse slaughter plants to the U.S.

What about the thoroughbreds, who are such money-makers for their owners? Famous racers such as Exceller and Ferdinand went to slaughter. The racing industry is complicit in the cover up to hide the ugly truth that these horses are just production units. When the horses fail to deliver, they are off to the killer buyer. An article from *Forbes* detailing the fate of thoroughbreds when their number is up shows little time is wasted in disposing of “investments.”³

Fully 20 percent of the horses in the slaughter pipeline are thoroughbreds, which at times turn up at killer auctions with the sweat marks from their last race showing on their backs. According to the USDA statistics, 93 percent of slaughter-bound horses are young and well-fleshed. This puts to rest the hoary argument that slaughter is for the old, weak or thin horses. The analysis of these economic and abandonment factors, foreign meat demand, and numbers of horses shipped to slaughter can be seen online at the Animal Law Coalition website.⁴

There may be some pushback coming, however, from the European Union, where the majority of horse meat is consumed—Japan and other Asian countries are also importers. Until recently, the European Union took the inspection assurances of the exporters at their word regarding drug residues in meat. Amid rising concern about the certification processes and falsified paper trails of horses coming from plants in Canada and Mexico, Europe is considering stricter protocols.

Even if a person cares not a whit about the inherent cruelty of the horse slaughter process, drugs routinely given to horses for pain relief, worming and many other uses are uniformly banned for use in food animals. Phenylbutazone, given to 99 percent of thoroughbreds, causes

cancer in humans. It is specifically banned for use in food animals by the USDA and FDA and has no allowable withdrawal period. This issue of toxicity in horse meat is why almost no pet food manufacturers or zoos use it, and yet this significant public health risk is routinely ignored by the pro-slaughter lobby. The scientific journal *Food and Chemical Toxicology* carried a definitive analysis of the drug phenylbutazone as a banned substance and public health risk.⁵

The prevailing media opinion that horse abattoirs are soon to come to a state near you bears some scrutiny. To call a horse slaughter plant a bad neighbor is putting it mildly. One of the most notorious but well documented situations was the Dallas-Crown plant in the town of Kaufman, Texas. The former mayor, Paula Bacon, testified to Congress in 2006 on the thoroughly noxious presence of this business.

She described constantly overflowing sewage systems, even though the plant had been given six times the normal allowable limit; failure to pay any taxes over decades of occupation of the town; degradation of the social and mental health of residents due to the smells and sounds of hundreds of horses being killed every day; dumpsters of bones, hides, and offal attracting flocks of vultures; withering of business investment by any company considering the town; and finally, the only people working such soul-numbing employment being illegal immigrants and former criminals. A small excerpt of Ms. Bacon’s statement is quoted here, describing the financial predation and the company’s disgusting conduct:

“During this time, I learned that an estimated \$5 million in Federal funding was being spent annually to support three foreign-owned horse slaughter plants! And when the Dallas Crown tax records were exposed in (my) city’s legal struggle, we found that they had paid only \$5 in federal taxes on a gross income of over \$12 million! Moreover, the parent company of Cavel has since moved its operations to Canada and continued to slaughter American horses. In Canada, they have apparently become even more blatant, dumping huge untreated piles of entrails onto open ground and even using a tanker truck to discharge blood and refuse into a local river.

“I have mentioned only the pollution issue, but this is but one negative aspect of horse slaughter. I have subsequently learned of a USDA document containing 900 pages of graphic photos that show the horrors that the horses were subject to. Behind the privacy fences of these plants, trucks arrived continuously and on those trucks was every form of inhumane violation one can imagine from mares birthing foals to horses with eyes dangling from their sockets and legs ripped from their bodies.

“The more I learn about horse slaughter, the more cer-

tain I am: There is no justification for horse slaughter in this country. My city was little more than a door mat for a foreign-owned business that drained our resources, thwarted economic development and stigmatized our community. Americans don't eat horses, and we don't raise them for human consumption. There is no justification for spending American tax dollars to support this industry at the expense of Americans and our horses."⁶

With regard to the latter comment above, in these times of strained economics and Congressional feuding over budgets, why is it a small group of politicians would insert a clause spending \$6 million in taxpayer money to fund inspectors for plants that will be owned by foreigners to ship a product to foreign countries? We don't usually like to spend our money this way. It seems when expenditures can be buried in larger spending bills, as this one was in the larger agriculture bill for 2012, a lot of bad policy gets swept in.

The final issue to expose in this piece is the fallacy that "the slaughter issue is not about our horses going to slaughter. These are unwanted horses—people have already demonstrated that they don't care about them." The Kelsey Lefever story that recently broke is enough to put the chills into any caring horse owner. Lefever, 24, has been charged with three felonies and two misdemeanors in connection with selling horses to slaughter after taking them in under a bogus sanctuary and telling their owners she would train them and find them forever homes.

These owners demonstrated they did care about their horses and even though some of them contributed significantly to the transfer of the horses to Lefever, she is on record bragging about her acumen in pulling off her scheme. A cell phone transcript quotes Lefever as saying, "I killed every one of those f---ing horses, over 120 of them, if they only knew. I only have five left and the ones that you have. Every one of them is dead. I don't even know their names and there wasn't a goddamn thing they could do about it because they gave me those horses. I didn't sign one contract for any of them and there is no paper trail from Bruce (Rotz, the buyer for the Canadian slaughter plant), so they have to prove it."⁷

Humane experts working in this field—Animals Angels is one of the most well-known—have years of documentation showing this type of scam is not rare. Animals Angels follows transport trucks, surveys livestock auctions, and tracks known killer buyers. They recognize suspicious situations and are very astute in judging cover-ups. According to Animals Angels, horses are reported stolen, are sent to "good homes" or are sent to sanctuary, yet still end up in the hands of predatory kill buyers and at kill auctions all over the country.

Anyone's horse could suffer a similar fate, but as long

as horse slaughter is an accepted part of some notion of "necessary evil," it will remain a blot on our moral values and on the great debt we owe this historical partner of humans. SB 1176 and HR 2966 need to pass through their respective chambers in Congress, and with citizen initiative and calls, they can.

Editor's note: Susan Rudnicki offered to share her thoughts on horse slaughter in response to Dr. Ruth Sobeck's essay that was printed in the January 2012 issue. Rudnicki was one of two people who were presenters at the November 2011 PVPHA general meeting. Horse slaughter was one issue discussed. U

Sources

¹Mary Nash's Horse Slaughter Website; <http://www.kaufmanzoning.net/foia.htm>

²The Texas Massacres: Horse Slaughter in America; <http://www.animalsvoice.com/moretti/?p=69>

³Racing Industry Silent About Slaughtered Thoroughbreds; <http://www.forbes.com/sites/vickeryeckhoff/2011/11/29/racing-industry-silent-about-slaughtered-thoroughbreds/>

⁴A Study of Equine Slaughter/Abuse Patterns Following Closure of Horse Slaughter Plants in U.S.; <http://www.animallawcoalition.com/horse-slaughter/article/541>

⁵Letters to the Editor; http://equinewelfarealliance.org/uploads/Henneke_and_Marini.pdf

⁶Open Letter to State Legislatures Considering Pro-Horse Slaughter Resolutions; <http://www.animallawcoalition.com/horse-slaughter/article/686>

⁷Kelsey Lefever: 'Every One of Them Is Dead'; <http://www.paulickreport.com/news/ray-s-paddock/kelsey-lefever-every-one-of-them-is-dead/>

Director: Festival provided 'pure cowboy entertainment'

2012 Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival deemed a success.

by **PAM TURNER**
POETRY FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

It was a cool January evening, and at 5:30 p.m., there was already a crowd gathering at the Empty Saddle Club. One could sense their eager expectancy for the chili, cornbread, brownies with ice cream and an evening of pure cowboy entertainment.

The line for the chili formed around 6 p.m. and the background music, featuring Roy Rogers and Sons of the Pioneers, filled the air. Festival-goers laughed, ate and visited with each other. The bar was doing a brisk business filling orders for soft drinks, cool water and, of course, the usual spirits of wine and beer. Everyone was preparing for an evening of fun, surprises, and maybe even a sing-along or two.

A few minutes before curtain time, the first group, family band Paul Pitti and his New West-ernaires, started tuning up. Promptly at 7 p.m., Mistress of Ceremonies and bass player, Pam Turner, announced the beginning of the Festival and introduced her father, 88-year-old Paul—an original cowboy—and they were off and singing. Other band

members were Pam's husband and festival sound engineer Randy Turner on keyboards, spoons and bicycle horn, as well as the only non-relative, Ron DePalma, on guitar. As usual, Paul shared a little history about the cowboy campfire songs written back in the '30s and '40s and the audience enjoyed singing along with some familiar tunes, such as "Cattle Call" and "Detour."

While Paul and the band packed up, alternate emcee Kathy Stowe took

the stage and entertained the audience with her own original and comedic style.

When the stage was cleared, Stowe introduced Poet Laureate Wanda Smith, a longtime cast member of the festival. Smith shared her original poems, including an amusing one that honored past ESC member and colorful old cowboy George Bradbury.

Bob Hotel, who followed Smith, got the audience going with an updated version of his "Take a ride" poem. There were a lot of laughs.

Janis Lukstein provided another fun audience participation moment with her poem "Horse with a Name," rather than "no name" like the song. The audience *la la la'd* the chorus to the American song with the help of the not-quite-teleprompters—John McBride, Kathy Stowe and another friend of Janis' who held up signs with the words.

Up next were Cowboy Poet and harmonica player Steve Deming and California Cowboys Jeff Severson and Buddy Mercer. Deming's new book of his original poems, *The Source*, was the source of the *See "FESTIVAL,"*

Page 8.



ASHLEY CAMPBELL / FLICKR

Poetry and songs at the 2012 Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival sponsored by the PVPHA inspired the feeling of the Old West.

My horse, was so smart if he could talk
he would have been a people whisperer.
He was trained in a fine Spanish equestrian
school and understood Spanish commands
but all he could say was "Neigh."
Which made him pretty negative.
He taught me everything I know about
horsemanship and riding.
Like don't let a horse know you're scared.
Make him think you are as smart as he is.
Horses understand body language.
What you do with your knees is important
just like with your favorite stud.

Del also taught me horses are very expensive.
Not only was he a hay burner but
got more manicures than I do and
he had four hooves to take care of

My horse's name was Del Greco
I don't know the Spanish meaning but
I know he had the soul of a poet.
If he could Del would have whispered
Lorca's poems in my ear
But all he could say was "Neigh"

—*"Straight from the horse's mouth"*
Wanda Smith



FESTIVAL: Event full of poetry, music, comedy

Continued from Page 6. brilliant poetry he shared.

Severson, a former NFL player and holder of two Super Bowl rings, played guitar and sang his original parody "The Legend of Tim Tebow" to the tune of "Ghost Riders in the Sky." Severson is an ex-Bronco, so it was quite fitting. Mercer held down some excellent rhythm, leads and bass on his sparkly guitar.

Charlene O'Neil followed with her poignant poetry. It is always a pleasure to hear what she has written as it seems to flow directly from her heart. Bruce Harnishfeger shared his poem "Ford Tough"—a true story about "10 strong men with 10 strong backs" driving down a muddy trail, a truck and tractor in a ditch and the adventure that followed. Wendy Wright,

told the tender story of Shorty, a very talented horse indeed.

Stowe, as usual, was most entertaining as she played her 12-string guitar and sang her original tunes. We loved the one about the "Hawk on Western Ave." Some audience members are sure to be looking for him.

Closing the show were the always entertaining and talented Cross Town Cowboys. Buffalo Bryan's big bull fiddle and Dusty's yodeling and mandolin playing were a real hit! They shared some songs off their new CD, *That Old Prairie Moon*, which they sold at the end of the show. Their original tune, "Chucky, the Buckboard Cat" was pretty darn funny. Guitar player Robby's rich baritone was "crooning soft and low" as he and the boys sang, "Ragtime Cowboy

Joe," with the audience joining for the chorus.

All in all, it was a sweet and satisfying night for both audience and performers. Many lingered afterwards to talk with cast members, take pictures and enjoy the post-festival ambience. We look forward to next year and hope that the ones who attended and performed will again join us.

I want to thank the chefs from the PVPHA board who donated their time and culinary skills to make our chili dinner the best ever; our friends at the ESC for their beautiful clubhouse; the ESC bartenders; Pat Bolland for providing the sound system; those who set and put away the chairs; and all who participated to make this a memorable 15th anniversary show! U

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LANDFILL LOOP:

Trail offers options, few hazards

Continued from Page 1.

with few hazards. This trail gives you the option to ride on two different surfaces—paved or dirt—which makes this ride an option on a rainy day when all the other trails are too wet.

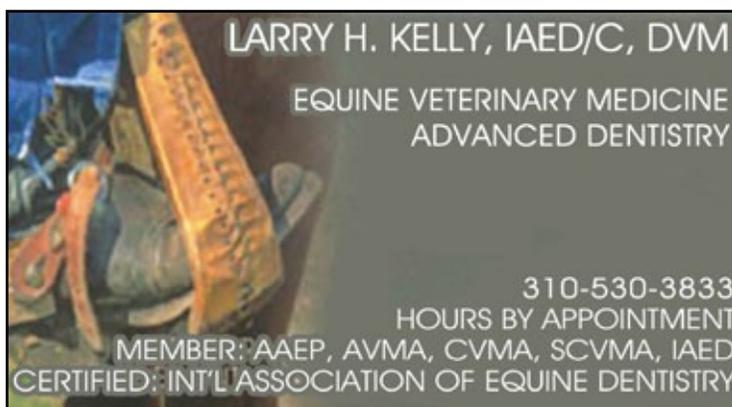
The paved portion of the trail is in the open all the way around the landfill, so it has very little shade.

The dirt trail, on the other hand, is usually shaded by a nice tree covering. The trail's plants are always well trimmed, and the county grades the trail in the dry months. Nevertheless, the trail seems to get a new load of dirt a few times a year with all sorts of foreign objects like rebar, wire and a lot of small rocks.

As previously mentioned, this ride does have some minor hazards. The former landfill produces methane gas, which is recovered with large green pipes above ground and converted to electricity. On some days, the pipes sound like a rushing river at the back side of the ride. Additionally, dogs off leash sometimes can be a problem, but most owners take precautions and control their dogs. There is also the occasional jogger who doesn't slow down for horses and their riders.

Every day is different on the trail. The views from the back side can be very nice. On a clear winter day, riders can see the city and the mountain range in the background, hawks flying overhead and lots of birds. My riding partner once saw a rattlesnake at one of the entrances.

All-in-all, the trail is a good bet. It has few hazards, excellent views and is not too long. U



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HORSE FUNNIES

Jack does not enjoy his baths.

Photo and caption by Nicole Mooradian.



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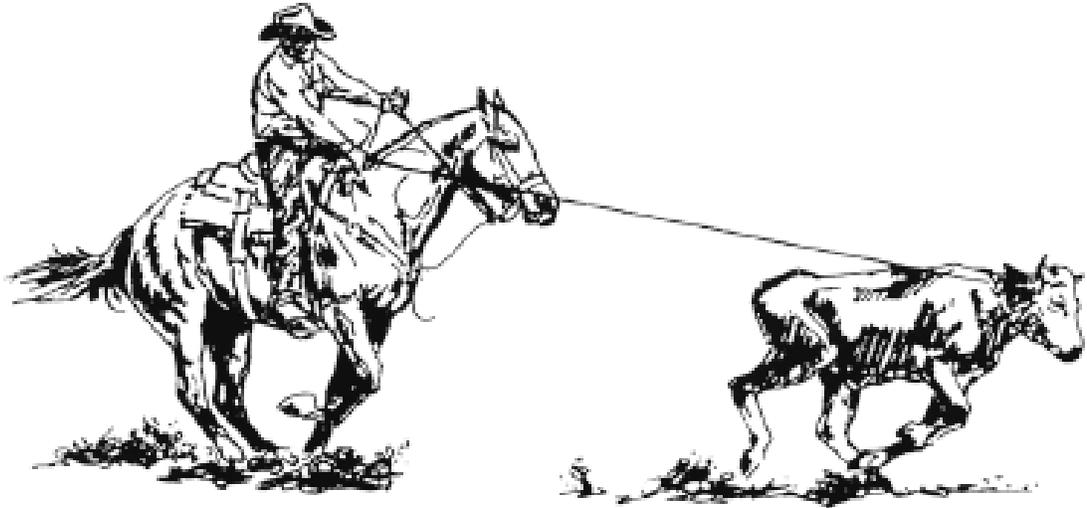
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