



"BOWLEGGED H" MAGAZINE

WINTER 2014 • VOL. XXII NO. 4 • HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™



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Leroy Shafer

photo by  
Debbie Porter

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In the fall 2014 issue of "Bowlegged H" Magazine, it was reported that Mike Kuykendall is the nephew of John Kuykendall, former livestock manager of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. This information was incorrect. We apologize for the error.



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AGRICULTURE

EDUCATION

ENTERTAINMENT

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## FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

**T**he atmosphere around NRG Park has been buzzing and committee meetings are in full force almost nightly, which can only mean one thing: it is officially the start of the Show season.

It has been a pleasure these past few months to meet so many of you volunteers at different committee meetings, galas and socials. As chairman of the board, I am asked to speak at a lot of different functions and this has been one of my favorite duties so far. Without you, my fellow volunteers, the world's greatest livestock show and rodeo would not be possible. So, before I write any further, I just want to take a moment to say a special thank you for the hard work and countless hours you dedicate to this organization.

Earlier this fall, the Show announced its 2015 Educational Commitment, and as some of you may know, this year's commitment brings the total giving to Texas youth since the Show's inception to nearly \$375 million! What an accomplishment for the Show and for thousands of young Texans who benefit from this organization year after year. You can read more about the breakdown of the 2015 commitment — which includes more than \$24 million in scholarships, educational grants, graduate assistantships, junior livestock show exhibitors and calf scramble participants — on page 2 of this issue.

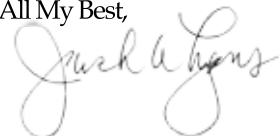
While the pace starts to pick up with the 2015 Show just around the corner, it is important to mention a few changes in

leadership over the past few months. As most of you know, Leroy Shafer has been a staff member of the Show for more than 40 years, and in October, he officially retired and transitioned to a new position: chief operating officer emeritus, leaving behind a legacy unlike any other. We salute Shafer with this issue of "Bowlegged H" Magazine and acknowledge him for his decades of service to the organization that has made an impact on so many lives, including his own. Take a moment to read through his retirement article on page 18, and from the bottom of all of our hearts, Shafer, thank you.

We also would like to take a moment to welcome our new chief operating officer, Dan Cheney. Dan is the former president and chief executive officer of Cheyenne Frontier Days in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and we are delighted to add him to our team here in Houston. Get to know him a little more on page 20 of this issue, and be sure to say hello if you see him around the halls or at your committee functions.

I look forward to seeing you all more in the coming months and to making the 2015 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ the best this city has ever seen! 🤠

All My Best,



Jack A. Lyons

"The Show is honored to be a foundation from which young Texans can proudly step into their future," said **Joel Cowley, president of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.** "To fund education for 80-plus years is an achievement built on the hard work of 31,000 volunteers and the unwavering support of our community."

**SCHOLARSHIPS .....\$12,981,000**

Metropolitan: 238 four-year, \$18,000.....	\$4,284,000
Opportunity: 114 four-year, \$18,000.....	\$2,052,000
Texas 4-H: 70 four-year, \$18,000.....	\$1,260,000
Texas FFA: 70 four-year, \$18,000.....	\$1,260,000
Area Go Texan: 78 four-year, \$18,000.....	\$1,404,000
School Art: 15 four-year, \$18,000.....	\$270,000
Exhibitors: 30 four-year, \$18,000.....	\$540,000
Hildebrand Family: 15 four-year, \$18,000.....	\$270,000
Military: five four-year, \$18,000.....	\$90,000
Achievement: (100 scholarships for junior and senior Show scholars).....	\$1,200,000
Ag Mech Technical: five \$9,000.....	\$45,000
Technical.....	\$200,000
Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine: six one-year, \$16,000.....	\$96,000
Texas Christian University Ranch Management Program: four one-year, \$2,500.....	\$10,000

**GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS .....\$525,400**

Angelo State University	Tarleton State University	Texas State University
Sam Houston State University	Texas A&M University	Texas Tech University
Stephen F. Austin State University	Texas A&M University – Commerce	West Texas A&M University
Sul Ross State University	Texas A&M University – Kingsville	

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM GRANTS .....\$3,323,100**

Alley Theatre	Houston Community College – Public Safety Institute	Teach For America – Houston
American Festival for the Arts	Houston Grand Opera	Texas 4-H
Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation	Houston Hispanic Forum	Texas A&M University: Beef Cattle Short Course
Baylor Research Advocates for Student Scientists	Houston SPCA	Bush School of Government and Public Service
Borderlands Research Institute, Sul Ross State University	Houston Symphony	Department of Entomology
Breakthrough Houston	John P. McGovern Museum of Health & Medical Science	Dr. Joe Townsend '67 Leadership Fellows Program
Brookwood Community Camp for All	Longhorn Project Advisory Board	Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities
The Center for Hearing and Speech	Medilife Houston	Texas FFA Association
Children's Museum of Houston	Memorial Park Conservancy	Texas Ranger Association Foundation
Comp-U-Dopt	NASA – Texas Aerospace Scholars	Texas Southern University Foundation
Crime Stoppers of Houston	Neuhaus Education Center	Texas Wildlife Association Foundation
Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston	Prairie View A&M University	The University of Texas at Austin – UTeach
Glassell School of Art	Project GRAD Houston	Theatre Under The Stars
Greater Houston Partnership – Opportunity Houston 2.0	Pro-Vision Academy Charter School	United Way
Housing, Entrepreneurship, and Readiness Training	Reasoning Mind	University of Houston Clear Lake – Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities
Harris County Hospital District Foundation	The Rise School of Houston	UTHealth School of Nursing
The Hobby Center Foundation	Schreiner University – Western Art Academy Workshop	Yellowstone Academy
Houston Area Women's Center	Shriners Hospitals for Children – Houston and Galvetson	YMCA of Greater Houston
Houston Ballet Foundation	Small Steps Nurturing Center	
	Spring ISD Elementary Reading Program	

**JUNIOR SHOW EXHIBITORS AND CALF SCRAMBLE PARTICIPANTS .....\$7,347,000**

**2015 TOTAL EDUCATIONAL COMMITMENT .....\$24,176,500**



# Rodeo Rockstar

By SANDY HOLLINGSWORTH SMITH

## Where Are They Now?

Since 2012, nearly 300 promising young musicians have vied for a coveted spot in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ singing talent contest, Rodeo Rockstar. For a handful of talented young performers, winning the competition has catapulted their music careers, opened doors and helped form relationships that otherwise would have taken years to cultivate. *"Bowlegged H" Magazine* caught up with the past junior and youth division winners to see what they have been up to since being named Rodeo Rockstars.

Photo courtesy of Julia Cole



### Julia Cole 2012 Youth Division Winner

**Current Age:** 21

**Hometown:** Houston

**Current School:** Vanderbilt University – Nashville, Tennessee

**Advice for Future Rodeo Rockstar Competitors:**

"The most precious gift you have to give to your audience is your personality and special perspective no other person can possibly duplicate."

Before she ever stepped on stage at the debut Rodeo Rockstar competition in 2012, Julia Cole had her career plan mapped out. She was already performing around town regularly, had won other singing competitions, and was on her way to Nashville, Tennessee, to attend college. Her Rodeo Rockstar win unexpectedly helped connect her to individuals who would become mentors, co-workers and friends. Cole continues to write songs and perform in Music City. In 2013, Cole was asked to return to the Show to sing the national anthem at several RODEOHOUSTON® performances, and she played to thousands of Show patrons in the Up & Comers event on the Statoil Stars Over Texas Stage. She recently released two singles with accompanying music videos, and released an EP album, which Cole hopes will help her sign a record deal and, ultimately, a tour to build her fan base.

Photo courtesy of Erica Honore



### Erica Honore 2012 Junior Division Winner

**Current Age:** 17

**Hometown:** Houston

**Current School:** Manvel High School

**Artist Who Inspires You the Most:** Martina McBride

When she was just 8 years old, Erica Honore met and had her photograph taken with country music sensation Martina McBride. At age 14, Erica was following in her idol's footsteps and blew the crowd away with a rendition of McBride's song "Anyway," capturing the first-ever Rodeo Rockstar junior division title. Two years later, McBride invited Erica to join her onstage to sing that same song, and her dreams were coming full circle. With her Rodeo Rockstar prize money, Erica purchased a guitar and has been teaching herself to play. She currently is recording her first album, which includes eight original songs. Erica performs regularly, with local bands as well as a solo artist, but she still manages to be a full-time student and cheerleader at her high school. After graduation, she plans to take classes at Alvin Community College before heading to Nashville, Tennessee, to continue to pursue her music career.



# Rodeo Rockstar



Photo courtesy of Tori McClure

**Tori McClure** 🎵 2013 Youth Division Winner

**Current Age:** 20

**Hometown:** Tomball, Texas

**Current School:** Texas A&M University

**Advice for Future Rodeo Rockstar Competitors:**

"You can never say a genuine 'thank you' enough."

As a pre-teen, Tori McClure believed she was not coordinated enough to play sports, so she took her brother's old guitar and started writing songs and performing throughout the Houston area. In 2013, she took those talents to the big stage and won over the judges to become the youth division winner of the Show's second Rodeo Rockstar competition. McClure said the win was a total surprise and the experience has given her an opportunity to meet people who support her dream of being a musician. Since winning, she has moved to College Station, Texas, to attend school, has recorded two singles, and has landed gigs all over the Bryan/College Station area. Aiming to keep a level head, McClure said she looks past the idea of fame or money and simply enjoys having the opportunity to play her music for people who want to hear it.



Photo courtesy of Molly (left) and Zoe Flores

**Starflight Rocks:**  
**Molly and Zoe Flores** 🎵 2013 Junior Division Winner

**Current Ages:** 14 and 15, respectively

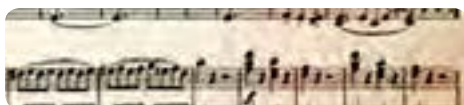
**Hometown:** Rosenberg, Texas

**Current School:** B.F. Terry High School

**Advice for Future Rodeo Rockstar Competitors:**

"Don't let the competition get to you, and if it does, let it fuel and drive you to be the absolute best."

Seemingly typical high school freshmen, Molly plays in the band, and Zoe has a part in the school musical. Not so typical, however, is that the girls have been to Los Angeles to record their first single, have opened for GRAMMY®-winner Rick Trevino, and have performed at South By Southwest®, a world-renowned music festival in Austin, Texas. Zoe, the elder sister, lead guitarist, and vocalist, also has been endorsed by a girls' guitar company out of California. The connections the duo made after claiming the junior division title in the Show's Rodeo Rockstar competition have allowed Starflight Rocks to be noticed on a much bigger stage. Although the sisters said they have encountered some unfortunate bullying and negativity from classmates, they have taken inspiration from their experiences and written more than 10 original songs. Looking to the future, Starflight Rocks hopes to be on a world tour one day and to help inspire other young girls to follow their dreams.





# Where Are They Now?

Photo courtesy of Triston Michael



## *Triston Michael* 🎵 2014 Youth Division Winner

**Current Age:** 17

**Hometown:** Missouri City, Texas

**Current School:** Home-schooled

**Words of Inspiration:** "I believe if you have a dream, you gotta be willing to sacrifice a lot for it."

When Triston was not called back for the final round of the 2013 Rodeo Rockstar competition, he immediately set a goal to come back and compete again in 2014. He worked on his vocals and stage presence, and, with guitar in tow, took home the youth division title, proving to himself that hard work ultimately pays off. A California transplant, Triston and his family moved to Texas in 2008, so he could train for the Olympics. However, juvenile arthritis ended his career in gymnastics much earlier than anticipated. He said he turned to music to help him cope. Triston has played venues such as Houston's McGonigel's Mucky Duck and at the MS150, a bike ride from Houston to Austin, Texas, that raises money for multiple sclerosis. Triston said he feels that the Rodeo Rockstar competition opened paths for him and gave him the confidence to perform. In August, Triston recorded his first original song with Stormy Cooper Media in Houston as part of his Rodeo Rockstar grand prize, and he plans to make his way to Nashville, Tennessee, to promote his EP album.



## *Jon Wesley Hopkins* 🎵 2014 Junior Division Winner

**Current Age:** 9

**Hometown:** Mountain Home, Arkansas

**Current School:** Home-schooled

**Dream:** "I want to play at [NRG] Stadium."

Growing up on a farm, Jon Wesley Hopkins was naturally attracted to hunting and fishing. At age 4, after watching the Keith Urban and Brad Paisley video for "Start a Band," he was determined to learn how to play the guitar and write songs. He played an original song called "My Small Town" during the finals round of the 2014 Rodeo Rockstar competition, which helped him earn first place in the junior division. Jon Wesley made his first appearance in the competition at age 6 in its debut year, and continued to apply himself in hopes of a big win. In 2013, he was in a local production of *The Revenge of Captain Hook* and wrote a song that was used in the play, and he also performed in St. Louis, Missouri, for Stand Up to Cancer. While most would agree that he is talented well beyond his years, Jon Wesley said that when he grows up, he hopes to have his pilot's license, serve his country and continue to play music.

# HOW TO BE A RODEO COWBOY COWGIRL: BARREL RACING

By KATE BRADLEY

A barrel racing pattern is deceptively simple with three turns and a long run home. However, in an event where hundredths of a second separate first place from second, the rider's slightest shift in weight can cost precious time.

Three-time Women's Professional Rodeo Association champion and longtime RODEOHOUSTON® contestant and former champion, Sherry Cervi, knows that her ability to pilot her horse, Stingray, will make or break her time.

"My parents rodeoed, and both my mom and my dad have been to the National Finals Rodeo," Cervi said. "I started competing young, and since my mom was a barrel racer, I wanted to be one. I've had several horses that do run good at [NRG] Stadium, and it is so important to me because of the energy in that place," Cervi said. "My horses like [Houston] and it is a great atmosphere. It is a fun place and exciting to be successful there."

She also emphasized that the layout of such a massive stadium arena is quite different from other rodeos, and that the horse must adjust to all of the extra space there is between the two side barrels and the fencing.

Even with years of experience riding and training barrel horses, and more than \$2.4 million won in the sport, Cervi knows that without a willing, athletic partner, she could not be successful. In 2000, 2001 and 2010, Cervi captured the RODEOHOUSTON barrel racing title, and in 2014, a \$25,000 check as the RODEOHOUSTON Super Shootout®: North America's Champions, presented by Crown Royal, barrel racing winner. Cervi describes why even an imperceptible movement counts in barrel racing.

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## HISTORY OF BARREL RACING



"You can tell [Stingray] is really focused on me; she has one ear cocked back and to me; that shows she is listening to me but is focused on turning the barrel as fast as she can."

"I'm not doing much with my hands because she is pretty automatic. Right here, I'm staying out of her way."

"With Stingray, you want to ride her all the way up to the barrel because she wants to turn — I don't have to worry about her going by [the barrel]. So, I ride her all the way up and then sit down in my saddle. Here, you can see we are in the turn because I am sitting down, which is the cue for her to slow down and turn."

As with many rodeo sports, when the first barrel pattern was run is up for debate. However, 38 barrel racers banded together in 1948 to form the Girls Rodeo Association. Today, the Women's Professional Rodeo Association governs not only barrel racing but also other women's rodeo events.





"I am looking at the barrel because that is what I'm going around. I'm thinking about the next motion, which is the jump toward the third [barrel]. I get ready for that forward motion by leaning forward slightly to help my horse."

"My philosophy is that they put the [saddle] horn there for a reason. Pushing against that horn to make sure my upper body doesn't get tilted forward helps me to keep my balance. We've been going really fast toward the barrel, and then stop and turn fast, so I use it to help me stay in balance, which helps her turn the barrel. Sometimes your upper body might want to lean forward with the force of stopping and turning, so I push on the horn to keep myself up."

# JUST THE FACTS

The event calls for the horse and rider to make three turns, either a right turn and two left turns, or a left turn and two right turns, to form a cloverleaf pattern. The fastest time wins the event, and if a barrel is knocked over, an additional five-second penalty is added to the rider's time. In NRG Stadium, the record barrel racing time is 13.92 seconds.



# BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE Downtown Rodeo Parade

By SARAH TUCKER

**B**efore the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ kicks off, another important and historic event occurs: the Downtown Rodeo Parade. Winding through the streets of downtown Houston, among the epic buildings that create a skyline visible for miles, the annual parade showcases local and visiting dignitaries, area bands and thousands of trail riders.

Lasting approximately two hours, the Downtown Rodeo Parade is the largest parade in Houston and is the largest rodeo parade in the United States.

Gregg Steffen, Parade Committee chairman, said preparation for the parade begins seven months in advance when the committee starts ordering equipment, assigning important roles to the 460-person committee and filing traffic plans with the city and state.

"It's a lot of work with several moving parts," Steffen said. "Everybody's got their job." Members of the committee are assigned to one of 13 subcommittees, all of which are dedicated to a different aspect of the parade. Some committee members coordinate with high school bands or set up security, while others put together the media guide or register floats.





By January, committee leadership has met with the Houston police and fire departments and the City of Houston Public Works and Engineering Department to review street closures, and, about a month before the parade, have finalized the floats and bands. By this point, the grand marshal of the parade typically has been determined.

The day before the parade, committee members do a final inspection of the parade route and look for traffic or construction issues. They also set up hospitality areas, review first aid and security with Houston police and fire departments, and update the media book to reflect any last-minute lineup changes. "The day before, we're double-checking everything we can double-check," Steffen said.

By 6 a.m. on parade day, volunteers are in place. The parade is broadcast live on Houston's KTRK-TV, Channel 13, so everything must run smoothly to comply with the television schedule. Volunteers spend their morning checking in parade participants and staging the more than 100 entries, from flamboyant floats to high school marching bands.

The committee follows a master timeline, which is scheduled to the minute with details such as escorting the grand marshal to the review stand, sounding the air horn for the start of the ConocoPhillips Rodeo Run, and specific interviews by television

reporters along the parade route. This timeline is imperative to make sure the parade is executed without a hitch.

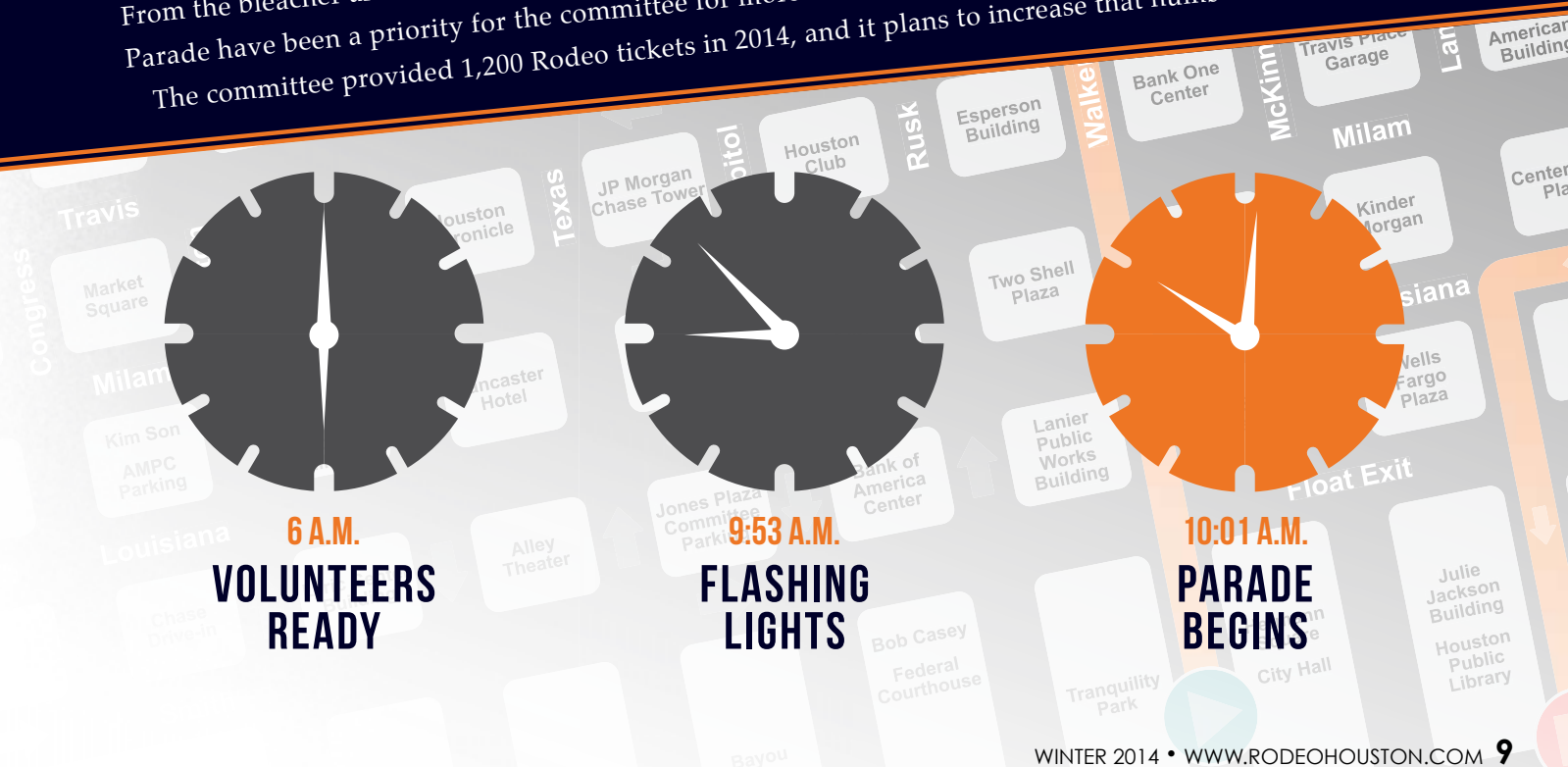
At 9:53 a.m., Houston Police Department and Harris County Sheriff's Office vehicles located on Walker and Smith streets are signaled to turn on their flashing lights, indicating the impending parade start. At 10:01 a.m., the parade begins with the official cars at the lead, followed by the grand marshal, who is usually on horseback or in a carriage. "And, from there it's a go," said David Yates, officer in charge and former chairman of the Parade Committee.

The full parade route, which begins by Tranquility Park at Walker and Bagby streets, flows east to Travis Street and heads south. The route then takes a west turn on Bell Street and north on Louisiana Street, making a final turn for the finish line west on Lamar Street and ends at the Bagby Street intersection. After the parade, committee members start the clean-up process, help with tear down and arrange transportation for participants. Their hard work for the past seven months is completed with pride and excitement, kicking off the world's largest livestock show and most innovative rodeo once again. 🤠

## SPECIAL FRIENDS OF the Downtown Rodeo Parade

Each year, Parade Committee volunteers host a group of special needs children and adults from around the Houston area. In 2014, approximately 1,800 special friends were given the VIP treatment, including exclusive bleacher seating to view the parade along Louisiana and Bell streets, breakfast and lunch, and tickets to a RODEOHOUSTON® performance in NRG Stadium.

"This is something the committee likes to do for a group of people that might not normally have the opportunity to come down and view the parade," Steffen said. Proceeds from the Parade Committee's annual fundraiser are used to help pay for the costs of this project. From the bleacher and tent rentals to food and Rodeo tickets, the Special Friends of the Downtown Rodeo Parade have been a priority for the committee for more than two decades. The committee provided 1,200 Rodeo tickets in 2014, and it plans to increase that number to 1,500 in 2015.



# BROTHERS

# ANTHONY

By LAWRENCE S LEVY  
Photos by Lisa Van Etta



CODY



TRAVIS



MARK

A trio of firsts occurred for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ at the Feb. 26, 2013, calf scramble. The Anthony brothers, Cody, 19; Travis, 17; and Mark, 15, were the first set of three siblings to have been selected as calf scramble alternates, chosen to compete in the same scramble event, and awarded a calf scramble purchase certificate on the same evening.



Representing the Pearland FFA Chapter, the three each applied to participate in the 2013 calf scramble. Coincidentally, each was selected to serve as an alternate scrambler — to step in and scramble in the place of a no-show. And, to their good fortune, all three were given that opportunity.

Cody, the eldest, caught a calf right in view of his parents, while middle brother, Travis, was not so fortunate. In the chaos on the arena dirt, he was trampled by calves running helter-skelter. Although unharmed, except for a few minor cuts, his blue jeans and his once-clean scramble T-shirt were torn without a calf to show for the effort. As for Mark, the youngest, he only gained the experience of competing. Mark did, however, display his character by helping another scrambler who was having difficulty holding on to the calf. "All the others surrounded her," Mark said, "like vultures on a fresh kill, waiting for her calf to get free." According to the rules, he could not physically assist her; so instead, he coached her on how to use her halter correctly, so that she might secure her catch.

With the scramble over, and only Cody catching a calf, the siblings received a pair of surprises. In spite of being run over many times, and due to his determination to get back up and keep trying, Travis received a Hard Luck Award, which is given to scramblers who display extraordinary efforts to catch a calf. And, for his sportsmanship in helping another catch a calf, Mark also received a Hard Luck Award.

Two months later, with scramble purchase certificates in hand and parents in tow, the Anthony brothers went to an area breeder to purchase

calves to raise and exhibit in the 2014 Houston Livestock Show™ Calf Scramble Steer Show.

Based upon their own research, Cody and Mark selected Brangus (a cross between Angus and Brahman breeds) calves, while Travis selected an Angus calf. Now the real work began, as each steer exhibited individual differences and traits, requiring personalized attention.

"I named my steer Joker because it has a white face mask on a black body that reminds me of a Mardi Gras costume," Cody said. A bit of a contrarian, Joker proved to be stubborn. More than once, Cody found himself "cow skiing," as he was dragged across the practice arena. However, with time and some adjustments, Joker became a cooperative show project.

Naming his Black Angus Ace, Travis turned his spirited calf into a somewhat gentle steer. At first, Ace headbutted people, but Travis worked long hours with the steer to improve his social skills. "We would wrestle," Travis said. "Ace would use his head, and I needed my whole body. But, he finally calmed down around people."

Mark dubbed his calf Harley. From the start, Mark said Harley displayed mood swings and, at times, crazy behavior. Having worked with steers before, Mark applied methods he had learned to train Harley.

Time passed quickly. The Anthony boys traveled to various cattle shows to learn how to care for, raise and train their projects. This experience helped the steers become

accustomed to traveling in a trailer, being stalled in unfamiliar places, and unfazed by the noise and commotion in show arenas.

Returning to Houston for the Calf Scramble Steer Show, the Anthony brothers completed the full calf scramble experience. In a mere 55 weeks, they were elevated from being alternates to actual scramblers; were awarded purchase certificates; and bought and trained their calves. On March 18, 2014, the brothers stepped into the Tractor Supply Main Arena in NRG Center as exhibitors, and shared in this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Unlike the Junior Market Steer Show, the Calf Scramble Steer Show has no auction. Exhibitors receive prizes and premium monies for their efforts throughout the year and in the show ring. However, exhibitors may enter and exhibit their calf scramble steer in the Junior Market Steer Show, and if they place high enough, can potentially make it to the NRG Arena Sales Pavilion.

Although they did not end up with the top honors in their steers' respective weight classes, Cody, Travis and Mark gained valuable life lessons: the mental fortitude to complete an individual commitment, integrity, and responsibility; and the development of a strong work ethic. 🤠



**MEET THE PARENTS:** Reflecting on their sons' year-long experience, Katherine and John Anthony jointly said that within 30 minutes after the end of the 2013 Calf Scramble, the entire family was filled with excitement, shock, disbelief, gratitude and awe. As the weeks and months passed, the mundane tasks of caring for, training, and grooming the steers; taking trips to the feed store, vet, and progress shows; and, of course, cleaning stalls daily, was worth every moment.

# BY THE NUMBERS:

By NAN McCREARY  
Photos by Lisa Norwood

In 2004, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ roped a new player into the corral: Rodeo Uncorked!®. Almost instantly, the new kid on the block became a huge success, with an international wine competition, an elite wine auction to sell those winners, a pre-Show event for wine enthusiasts and foodies alike, and, in 2007, an on-site wine garden during the Show featuring the competition's award-winning wines.

The small committee that staged that inaugural competition, which featured 800 entries, has grown to four separate committees: Wine Events, Wine Garden, Wine Sales and Public Relations, and Winery Relations.

Events that were once new to the Show's fans have become wildly popular, sold-out affairs.

And, the Champion Wine Garden, initially with only a small bar and a few chairs, has become the place to see and be seen during the Show, with its three tents, live music, options for private parties, and wine seminars presented by local wine experts. Clearly, Houstonians are enjoying good wine at the Show.

To really appreciate the enormity of Rodeo Uncorked! take a look at just a few numbers that will surely knock your boots off.

**1,104**

members on all four wine committees

**25,000**

total number of glasses washed during International Wine Competition

**2,505**

entries in the 2014 International Wine Competition

**800**

capacity of the Champion Wine Garden

**100**

International Wine Competition judges

**23,713**

bottles of wine sold in the Champion Wine Garden during the 20 days of the Show

**100**

maximum number of wines tasted by a judge per day

**5,000**

average number of glasses poured per day at the Champion Wine Garden

**13,500**

approximate glasses of wine poured during International Wine Competition

**34,000**

plastic souvenir wineglasses used in the Champion Wine Garden

**5,000**

wineglasses utilized by judges

**\$1.7 MILLION**

raised during the 2014 Champion Wine Auction and Dinner



*"Bowlegged H" Magazine decided to check out the scene in the Champion Wine Garden and asked its patrons what they tasted and what they enjoyed about the vino-exclusive haven on the grounds.*

# WINE



**KARIN VIOLANTE**, Houston  
Wine Garden Committee volunteer  
and seminar captain

"My go-to wine is the petite sirah. It's a nice fruity wine that goes great with pizza. I also like Fess Parker's The Big Easy. Who doesn't like Davy Crockett?"



**CONNIE MISERAK**, Houston

"Pinot grigio. It's my favorite wine. It's light and not too sweet...perfect for a night like this."



**ERIC THOMAS**, Houston

"The Davis Family Vineyards' pinot noir. I've been drinking a lot of pinot noirs lately. They're my favorites."



**LIZABETH CROWELL**, Houston

"The Alexander Valley Vineyards' merlot because I'm familiar with their wines. I love the Wine Garden because you get to try different wines, have fun and meet nice people."



**JULIE COMBS** (with Keith Crane), The Woodlands

"The Vampire cabernet sauvignon because I have a bottle at home and haven't tried it. This is a good place to try wines."



**BRIDGET BONDY**, Katy

"I pick my wines by the label. Actually, I'm drinking a Russian River pinot noir because someone else chose it. This is my first time here."



**CHRIS AND KATHERINE ESPINOSA**, Austin

"Moscato D'Asti. We're new to wine, and we like the sweet wines. We're still developing our palates."

## WINE NOT?

The Champion Wine Garden is a happening place. On one Friday night during the 2014 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™, the 6-to-11 p.m. shift sold 800 bottles of wine. When asked which wine was the most popular, committee member Ken Pujats said, "Everybody likes to try the Grand Champion Wine. If that's out of their price range, they'll go for Class Champions." The 2014 top selling wines were Joel Gott Cabernet Sauvignon 815, California, 2011; Vampire Cabernet Sauvignon, California, 2012; and Francis Coppola Diamond Collection Pinot Grigio, California, 2012.

HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™

RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF THE SHOW

**TRAILBLAZER AWARDS**

By SARAH LANGLOIS

For the past 15 years, the Trailblazer Awards have recognized hardworking, outstanding Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo female volunteers. Trailblazer Committee Chairman Gretchen Gilliam said, "It's a prestigious acknowledgement of the unsung lady heroes who work tirelessly for the Show."

The annual Trailblazer Awards Luncheon and Fashion Show toasts the honorees in style, celebrating each woman's remarkable volunteer achievements. "It is an amazing production that spotlights our honorees, celebrates past honorees, and allows us to show our respect and support for these outstanding ladies," Gilliam said.

Each year, the Show's Executive Committee, vice presidents and Lifetime Vice Presidents submit nominations for the Trailblazer Awards. Gilliam said Trailblazer Award honorees always surpass the minimum requirements, which include at least 10 years of service to the Show and membership on at least two committees. However, the Pearl Award, which takes the acknowledgement one step further, is not always awarded to a woman who only has served on a committee. It is awarded to someone who has made

an extraordinary commitment to the Show and her community.

Sharleen Walkoviak, officer in charge of the Trailblazer Committee, said the selection committee, which is comprised of hand-picked Show veterans, undertakes the challenge of choosing the distinct honorees. "It is an incredibly difficult process to select the honorees because there are so many great women whose levels of service — both within and outside of the Show — are tremendous," Walkoviak said.

Walkoviak and Gilliam emphasized that the Trailblazer Award honorees serve as an inspiration to other Show volunteers. "It is incredibly motivating for folks to see how much each of these individuals can accomplish," Walkoviak said. "People start to think, 'Maybe I can find a way to give back, too.'"

Gilliam described the honorees as Show volunteers who have left an inspiring legacy. "When you hear about each honoree's amazing involvement," she said, "you wonder how a single person is able to accomplish so much, both for the Show and for the community. These ladies are superwomen." 🌟





# HOME

AWAY  
FROM  
HOME

Photos by Lisa Van Etta

*A Look at* RODEO VILLAGE

By LYN STEWART





**L**ife on the rodeo circuit means a life on the road. But, contestants at RODEOHOUSTON® always have a home away from home at Rodeo Village.

Located along Almeda Road just a few miles from NRG Park, an open field is transformed into an oasis for contestants and their families while they compete at RODEOHOUSTON. To an outsider, Rodeo Village might look like an impromptu, and extremely oversized, campsite, but to rodeo contestants, it is where they park campers, trailers, and trucks, house horses, and enjoy home-cooked meals — in short, it is where they call home while in Houston.

“We have water and electrical, showers, and restroom facilities,” said Jim Petree, chairman of the Rodeo Contestant Services Committee, which oversees daily operations on the grounds. “Anything they need, we try to take care of it.”

Everything moves like clockwork from the moment contestants arrive at Rodeo Village to the second they leave. Rodeo Contestant Services Committee members at Rodeo Village are in daily communication with their counterparts stationed at NRG Stadium, who check in the rodeo athletes each night as they make their way from the Village to the Show grounds — horses and tack in tow. The entire process is conducted precisely to make sure contestants arrive on time and during low-traffic times of day. Maneuvering large travel trailers and rigs through Houston highways and streets could be a recipe for disaster, but with the system set in place, the process is made as simple as possible.

Each day during the Show, home-cooked meals for breakfast and lunch are served inside the Cowboy Bistro tent, one of the many appealing aspects of Rodeo Village, while dinner is provided at NRG Stadium with help from the Rodeo Contestant Hospitality Committee. All costs of meals are covered by RODEOHOUSTON, a luxury that the contestants appreciate.

“The way they treat you here is the best,” said Josh Koschel, a bull rider from Greeley, Colorado. “We spend a lot of money on food and lodging because



THE WAY  
THEY TREAT  
YOU HERE IS  
THE BEST.

*Josh Koschel, bull rider from Greeley, Colorado*



we're traveling. Here, it's nice because I don't have to buy a meal at Rodeo Village, and they have an awesome dinner at the [stadium]. It's a lot healthier than eating fast food on the road."

Linda Wiese, a certified chef, is proud of the food she and her husband, Ted, provide through Rockin' W Rodeo Ministries for these contestants. "I call it gourmet cowboy comfort food," she said. The Weises also lead worship activities and cowboy church on Sundays at Rodeo Village, which is one of the many activities you can find happening on the grounds.

It is the norm to find contestants prepping for the night's go-round in NRG Stadium during the day at Rodeo Village. From roping steer dummies to warming up their horses or getting in a quick workout with a pick-up basketball game, the grounds become a second home for a few days, or, in some cases, nearly a month.

"RODEOHOUSTON is almost in a league of its own, really, with the hospitality here," said Dusty Tuckness, world-champion bullfighter from Meeteetse, Wyoming. Tuckness spends more than 10 months a year on the road and said he knows when accommodations are first class. "This is the place I want to be in March, and I'm here for three weeks straight. You've got campsite plug-ins, showers and hospitality tents — anything you think of that you might need."

Part of life on the road can mean time away from family, but RODEOHOUSTON makes sure that its contestants' loved ones who travel with them are accommodated, as well. Rodeo Village is extremely family friendly and is equipped with a playground set for children.

"We are a family event. One of our major goals [for Rodeo Village] is to provide a safe area for both contestants and their families," said Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ General Manager Joe Bruce Hancock. "Just like the star entertainers who get on stage each night, these contestants are star

athletes, and they deserve to have the best facilities possible."

The top-notch facilities are not limited to the human contestants either. Horses are housed either inside stables or outside stalls, depending on the owner's preference. The stables hold up to 200 horses and are tended to by Rodeo Contestant Services Committee members. "A team comes in every morning to muck, or clean, their stalls, so they don't have to worry about that," Petree said. "We try to make it easy and convenient for the contestants, so all they have to worry about is performing to their best ability every night."

According to Hancock, the Show is always looking for ways to improve and expand the facility. In the future, it hopes to have permanent structures on the grounds, including stall housing for animals and a covered warm-up arena. "These contestants are on the road the majority of the year; we want them to be able to get the same services and usage out of Rodeo Village as they would at an RV park across America," he said.

Kim Schulze, a barrel racer from Larkspur, Colorado, spends more than 300 days a year on the road and said there is no other rodeo that compares to RODEOHOUSTON when it comes to hospitality for both the contestant and their horses. "You come here, and it's like a resort. The shavings are 2 feet deep in your stall, and your horse is like, 'Oh yeah, this is the life,'" she said, laughing. "This place is amazing. I really hope that I get to come back to this Rodeo. I can't imagine it being any better than this."

The top rodeo athletes in the world compete at RODEOHOUSTON year after year. It is imperative for them to feel as comfortable, welcomed and as relaxed as possible. Rodeo Village along with all of the dedicated volunteers and staff ensure that it is nothing but the absolute best in Houston for the world's greatest. 🤠



# 40 years of SHAFFER

By MARSHALL R. SMITH

Photo by Debbie Porter

After graduating from Texas A&M University with a bachelor's degree in agricultural journalism, receiving a master's degree in mass communications from Iowa State University, and serving four years with the U.S. Army as an infantry officer and helicopter pilot in Vietnam, Leroy "Shafe" Shafer returned home in search of employment, with his eyes on corporate America. He soon received job offers from several top agricultural industry companies: Ralston Purina, John Deere, Du Pont and Progressive Farmer. However, after some pressure from then-Show president and fellow Aggie, Tommie Vaughn, as well as a push from the associate dean of agriculture at Texas A&M University, Shafer agreed to interview with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™. Although, he had no intention of taking a position with the Show.

Shafer had shown steers at the Show from 1956 to 1963, and caught a calf in the scramble, but a full-time job at the Show was not something he had imagined. During the interview process, several Show officials and the general manager described their vision of Shafer developing the Show's first in-house marketing department. On April 1, 1973, April Fools' Day, Shafer accepted the position of assistant manager of public relations with the Show. He said that he did not know if the joke was on him, but it was fun the first day and has continued

to be fun every day since. Shafer mentioned that he believed he would stay for five years and move on, but during the next 41-and-a-half years, he said that he never again felt the temptation of a career in corporate America.

"I have been so fortunate to have been a part, and I emphasize 'only a part' of the Show's growth in the last 41 years," Shafer said. "Everything that was accomplished during those years has been the result of the commitment and the efforts of tremendous volunteer leadership, great staff and management, and the unbelievable efforts of the Show's committee volunteers."

Shafer's early duties were to establish the Show's media relations program and statewide exhibitor press release system, create an in-house advertising agency, and coordinate six of the Show's 36 committees. He also was tasked with upgrading the presentation and display technology in the Astrodome, and he brought in a state-of-the-art sound system and a large video projection screen for the 1980 Show.

In 1981, he was named assistant general manager and was responsible for all of the Show's marketing and presentation activities. Later in the 1980s, with guidance from Shafer, the Show developed a comprehensive audience analysis research survey that serves as the basis for the Show's current survey program.

He also helped create the Show's sponsorship program that same year, which is now the largest and best in the fair and festival industry, and is ranked with sponsorship programs of professional sports teams.

In 2004, he became the Show's chief presentation and operations officer, overseeing the Marketing, Presentations, and Agricultural Exhibits divisions, in addition to the Rodeo and Concert Entertainment Department. In 2005, he was elected as vice president and chief operating officer of the Show; and he served as the Show's interim president and CEO after the departure of past president Skip Wagner in 2013. He resumed his position of chief operating officer, once Joel Cowley was hired as president, until Shafer's retirement in October. "I will always be proud of the tremendous growth in our attendance, exhibitor numbers, and scholarship, research, and endowment programs; of our market research, and our ability to reach out to all facets of the greater Houston community; of the stature and scope of our concert presentations; and of the Show's national and international prominence and image. I will always take pride in my part, and the part of the Show, in securing funding and building Reliant Stadium (now NRG Stadium) and helping bring back an NFL team to Houston," Shafer said.

Upon his retirement, the Show's Executive Committee voted to name Shafer as the chief operating officer emeritus. He said that as long as he is mentally and physically able he will be involved with the Show. Shafer plans to work closely with Dan Cheney, the Show's new vice president and chief operating officer, as he learns the nuances and complexities of this vast organization. He also will advise and consult with the Show's Marketing, Public Relations and Presentations Division; as well as the Entertainment and Concert Production Department; and Sports and Event Presentations Department.

Shafer has seen (and done) it all, and the Show is forever thankful for his service and dedication, paving the way for it to continue to succeed and cater to a forever-changing audience. 🤠









## What are your hobbies outside of work?

**A.** scuba diving, wakeboarding, flying and riding my dirt bike

### Houston is a melting pot for foodies. What is your favorite type of food and why?

Whataburger with spicy ketchup (a must-have anytime I am in Texas) — in fact, Amarillo was the closest Whataburger to Cheyenne — and Tex-Mex: the perfect marriage.

### Do you have a morning/ evening ritual?

**Morning ritual:** vitamin and protein drink

**Evening:** an hour of TV before I fall asleep (no TV in the bedroom because it would be on all night) — If I am still for more than 15 minutes, I am usually asleep.

### What is your go-to song?

This one is really hard as I love music, so there is more than one right

now. I keep playing "Lettin' the Night Roll" by Justin Moore, but when I am getting ready to go out and have fun, it's "Don't Stop the Party" by Pitbull. Honorable mentions: "Wake Me Up" by Avicii, "Workin'" by Big Smo, "Whatever She's Got" by David Nail, and anything by Gary Allan or Kenny Wayne Shepherd.

### Favorite book?

"Blacktop Cowboys" by Ty Phillips. It let me relive a lot of the great times I experienced rodeoing.

### Favorite TV show or movie?

The TV show "Nashville" — I am hooked. Good music and good storyline. And, any movie that makes me laugh!

### Three things you would want to have on a deserted island?

Satellite phone (so I can get rescued)... OK, really: the love of my life (TBD); ice-cold Coca-Cola; and mask, fins, and snorkel.

### Mountains or beach?

Beach. The family ranch is in the mountains, so I guess you crave what you don't have.

### Coffee or tea?

Iced tea

### What is your favorite memory from your first job?

Eating a 32-ounce steak at a dinner party my first week of work. I had a month between graduation and starting my new job. During that month, my brother worked the heck out of me at the ranch, so when I had a chance to eat the big steak, I indulged and became "the guy who ate the big steak" throughout my time with Ciba-Giegy (now Novartis).

### Proudest accomplishment?

Without a doubt, that a lot of people that have worked with me on my team(s) have gone on to bigger and better roles/positions/jobs.

### The Show is a big supporter of Texas youth and education.

### What is the best career advice you would give a scholar?

Commitment — there is no substitute. Study and work hard at something that you love to do, find the right mentor, and choose your teammates wisely.

### What is the best career advice you have received?

The best career advice I received was to go to graduate school and get an MBA.

### What are you most looking forward to about living in Houston?

The opportunity to be on the [Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo] team...and, warmer weather!

### In one word, describe the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

Volunteers.



# HERITAGE PARTNER

*Salute*

The Local Ford Dealers have held a relationship with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ since 2000, when Ford and The Local Ford Dealers became sponsors of the rodeo bucking stock. In 2002, the company claimed the sponsorship for Rodeo Express (at the time called Rodeo METRO Express). In 2003, The Local Ford Dealers became a Founding Partner and Heritage Partner of the Show. At this time, Ford was named the Official Vehicle Provider. This also was the first year of the Show's tram system, and Ford has been the sponsor of the program ever since.

Every night in NRG Stadium, the chuck wagon races are a fan favorite. In 2005, Your Local Ford Dealers added to their portfolio of sponsorships with one of the wagons showcased in the race.

Ford maintains a prominent presence on the grounds year-round with the Ford gate at the southwest entrance of NRG Stadium. Ford also has a popular outdoor exhibit at the Show, complete with its latest vehicle models and interactive games for the public.

"We are proud to be a long-standing partner of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo," said Mitchell Dale, chairman of the Houston Area Ford Dealers Association. "From their support, of the youth and vast scholarship efforts to the many agriculture programs they are involved in, we are honored to partner with an organization that displays such commitment to the leaders of tomorrow."



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