



Hey Neighbor



For The Love Of Horses

By Frank J. Buchman

Humanitarian Is Cowboy First Of All

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"I can remember riding ponies when I was just four years old. I would get one started riding. Dad would sell it and then get me another one," Hedrick recalled. "I can't ever remember not having a horse. There's something about a horse that makes them such a therapeutic animal."

With their ranch headquarters home east of Strong City, Hedrick and his wife, Bev, also have a home at Kansas City. "We keep horses at both places, because we like horses and enjoy riding," she explained.

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has had a diverse and colorful life, and their assistance to others is most commendable. Hedrick was recipient of the Merle Wood Humanitarian Award from the American Quarter Horse Association in 2005, recognizing his service to Quarter Horse owners around the country.

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and I said I was destined to be six feet tall, until that fall stunted my growth."

Trick pony mules were also a part of the Hedrick shows. "Dad trained a lot of mules, and he was the originator of the mule mobile act, so common in rodeos now," Hedrick related. "It was an accident how that routine came about. The mule Dad was working with rolled up on its back, and Dad sat up on his stomach. The announcer asked him what he was doing, and Dad responded, 'This is my

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clowns. "I was 17 the first time I clowned, and it was actually the last time Dad clowned. He was injured

by a bull at the rodeo, and I clowned for him the rest of that summer and ended up clowning for a total of 14 years," Hedrick said.

Joe started clowning two years later. "Joe and I had gone to a rodeo, and Dad told me to make sure Joe didn't get in the barrel. But when a mean bull came out and started turning the barrel end over end, Joe was inside. All I could think of was Dad telling me to not let Joe get in the barrel," Hedrick detailed.

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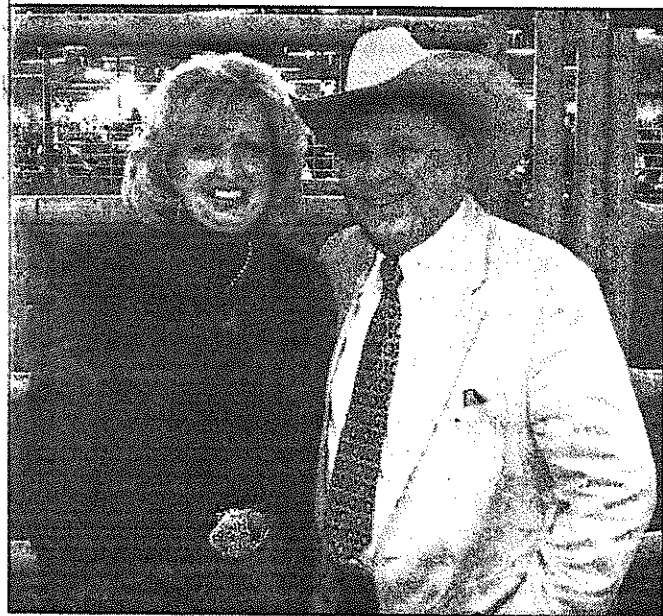
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Horses are constant in Hedricks' lives — in work and play

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The couple continued their ties to agriculture, buying Flint Hills grassland when opportunities arose. "We hired Bud Higgs to look after the pastures which are used for custom grazing cattle in the summer," Hedrick reviewed.

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ican Quarter Horse Association, headed the original pharmaceutical department where Hedrick worked. "Actually Merle was my boss, my mentor, my friend and like a father to me," Hedrick credited.

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After that announcing job, Hedrick was asked to announce the World Championship Quarter Horse Show. "I ended up announcing both the youth world show and the open world show 10 times," Hedrick calculated. "I would have done them longer, but demands at my job made it

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However, when Wood retired as a director of the American Quarter Horse Association, Hedrick, representing the state of Kansas, stepped into that position, serving for 16 years. "That was a very interesting and fun opportunity. I got to meet and work with a lot of great horse people," expressed Hedrick, who continues to serve on the AQHA's public policy committee.

Active in leadership of many horse activities, Hedrick was manager of the American Royal Rodeo for several years. "The rodeo was dwindling in attendance, but we worked hard and built it back up to be one of the top five indoor

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The Hedricks keep some of their seven horses at Kansas City's Saddle & Sirolo Club, which he served as president a couple of years ago. "It's a great place to keep our horses," Bev confirmed. "We can ride the trails or the indoor and outdoor arenas anytime we want, and they take great care of our horses."

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