

Hey Neighbor

For The Love Of Horses

By Frank J. Buchman

Cowgirl and Hunter Make Unique Horse Team

She has always been a cowgirl, he has always been a hunter, and now they're cutting horse breeders.

"I started riding when I was four and rode my pony to school through my first seven grades," recalled Faye (Peck) Heath.

"I was a town kid, but I always liked to hunt. I was as bad about hunting as she was about horses," responded husband Marshall Heath.

Now the Junction City farm couple has a top-bred Quarter Horse stallion standing for service to mares and competing in major cutting horse contests.

"I've always liked horses," Faye continued. "My dad was a cowboy. My three brothers and sister all rode, but my brother Jerry (Peck), and I enjoyed it the most."

Riding her first spotted pony, Peanuts, to school came to an end for Faye, when she and her family moved from Hope to Woodbine. "Then I had to ride the school bus," she frowned.

Faye still rode, though

"usually on hand-me-down horses," assisting her dad Henry Peck in checking and gathering their own cattle and for others. "It was two miles to our mailbox, and I liked to go get the mail, so I could ride my horse," reminisced Faye, whose family didn't get electricity until 1949, and running water, accompanied by indoor toilet, came in '51. "I remember one time my dad and I rode in the moonlight to get the mail. I'll never forget that," she added.

Watching contract performers at rodeos made Faye decide she wanted to be a trick rider. "When I was 12, I learned to stand up behind the saddle and ride my horse at a gallop while gathering the milk cows. One day, as I was practicing my trick riding, a dog came up behind us, scared my horse, he jumped, and I fell off and broke my arm," remembered Faye, who also had her leg broken another time when a horse reared over backwards on her.

Faye's first horse show

experience came at Herington where she and her dad went to ride in a parade. "Dad let me use his spotted horse called Paint to compete in a little play day they had. I didn't place," Faye reminisced. "I went home and started practicing."

After graduating from high school in 1956, Faye started working at a locker plant and on weekends competed successfully in area rodeos riding Paint. It was at a show in Westmoreland where Faye first met Rosie (Rezac) Clymer. "She was teaching school at Junction City, and we became lifelong friends. We went to horse shows all over," Faye explained.

A Ready Money W mare was the first registered

horse Faye owned. "I bought her at Hutchinson from Bill James in 1961," she tallied.

"I always hauled my horses in a pickup with stock racks, until I bought my first trailer, a new two-horse model, in 1963," related Faye, who has traded up in trailers a handful of times since then.

Not long after, Faye bought Ole Yeller, a palomino gelding, from Glen Skeen at Council Grove. "That was my first really good horse, and one of the best horses I ever had. He sure could run the barrels and kegs," Faye contended.

The Ready Money W mare was bred to a Thoroughbred stallion called Secret Sargent at Abilene. "She had a filly I named Susie, and that was the fastest flag racing horse I ever owned," Faye admitted.

Competing in the steer un-decorating event at an all-girls rodeo one time, Faye revealed, "I borrowed Ernie Love's bulldogging team (of horses), and I won the contest in 1 1/2 seconds."

A number of horses have been owned over the years. "I'd buy young horses, and Rosie and Jerry would

help me get them started, and then I would resell them, after I got them going pretty good," Faye calculated. "I've really had all kinds of horses. Some were really good, and some weren't so good."

She competed in Western Kansas Horseman's Association-sanctioned horse shows, which featured heat races, one horse against another, versus running against a stop watch. Faye and Rosie, along with Merle Flinn and several other

area horsemen, were instrumental in organizing the Eastern Kansas Horseman's Association in 1963. "We then went to those shows as well as area play days," confirmed Faye, who competed in lots of events and collected many awards.

"They used to have breakaway roping, goat tying and sack roping. Rosie and I would be in the pair race rescue race and the relay race. I'd ride in everything," Faye related.

Marshall and Faye were



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That bay horse called Waldo became one of Faye's all time favorites. "He could do everything. I rode him in all the running events, pleasure and reining, and

he was a good cow and rope horse too," she credited.

"I could even ride Waldo. I'd snub colts up to him and lead Faye around on them to help her get the young horses started riding," inserted Marshall. "Of course, we were doing it all wrong, according to these whisperers now on RFD television."

In addition to winning many trophies at horse shows, Faye also competed in rodeos. "I won a buckle in the barrel race at the Longford Rodeo one year riding Waldo," she remarked.

Horse showing slowed down after Faye and Marshall bought their quarter-section-plus farm on Lyons

Creek Road in 1984. "I continued to ride quite a bit though helping Jerry look after the Big Four (a four section pasture south of Junction City). It was really good for getting young horses broke and seasoned," Faye commented.

While Faye was at horse shows, Marshall was often hunting with a trio of friends and three bird dogs. On the back of a photograph of the dogs, Marshall has written the number of quail, pheasant and ducks bagged each season with the dogs. Well over 100 of each fowl variety were killed every year.

Faye would occasionally go along hunting, but Marshall also got her started shooting trap, where she became very successful. "She could hit as many as 24 out of 25 clay pigeons. Her best score was 94 out of 100. Faye won a lot of trap shooting awards," detailed Marshall, who also collected honors shooting skeet.

The couple had a cow herd of 50 Gelbvieh females, which were in most recent

years bred to Angus bulls. "We sold out right when the market started going up," recognized Marshall, who remains close to agriculture as he trades commodity futures. The farm is now rented out.

One "dependable" riding horse, a 15-year-old gelding called Jake, is still owned by Faye. "I don't ride young horses any more, since I got bucked off one a couple of years ago," she admitted.

Faye and Marshall are both retired from lifelong professions as a meat cutter and sheet metal worker, respectively. Ailments have slowed them down, but their horse interests are still intact with the five-year-old red roan stallion Hide A Pepto, purchased as a yearling. "He's really Marshall's project," Faye chided.

By the top cutting horse Peptoboonsmal, the young stud is intensely Peppy San Badger and Doc Bar bred. He's been mated to mares publicly for three seasons, and his first colts, including one owned by the Heaths, will be started this year.

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The Heaths have two broodmares of their own bred to the stallion and also have two of last year's foals out of them and Hide A Pepto, who stands at the Bryce Fowles Training Stables, Manhattan.

Presently, the stallion is on the show circuit with Jimmy Packard of Medicine Lodge. "Hide A Pepto just got started competing this

fall, and he placed second in his last show at Reading in November," Marshall acknowledged.

With four large metal barns and neat steel fence corrals behind their ranch-style home, the couple has ample facilities to be in the horse business big time. However, they've had a good life and a fun time with horses and hunting. Now, they'll be plenty satisfied if Hide A Pepto wins some shows and produces winners as well.

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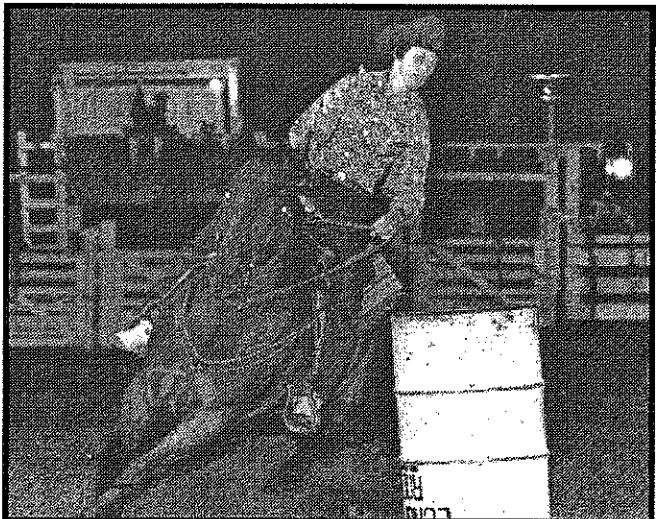
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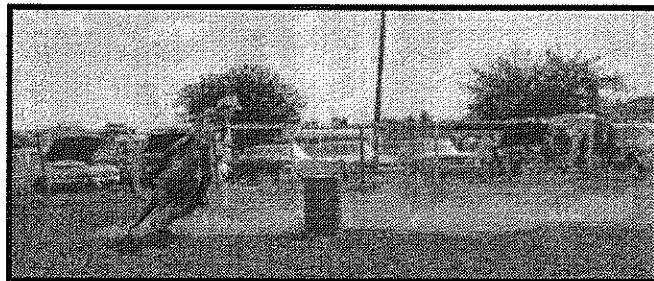
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A first place barrel racing buckle was won several years ago by Faye Heath of Junction City riding her bay gelding called Waldo.



Although she's ridden a lot of good horses, Faye Heath of Junction City contends that Ole Yeller was the first really top barrel racing and keg bending horse she ever owned.