

The Gift Horse

Kevin Holten



I recently wrote about my best friend being a horse. His name is Big Boy. But before Big Boy, I had another great horse whose name was Rooster.

My sister just sent me a text message saying she was sorry to give me the bad news, but they had to put Rooster down today. Like putting down a little part of our life.

He was a sorrel gelding quarter horse, that was really two horses in one. At the stable in Southern California where I boarded him, they called him Eeyore after the character in Winnie the Pooh because he was so mellow.

Yet, he was also a great team-roping and cow horse, and I had many offers to sell him. But I would never let him go. That is, until the day I had to.

He and I had traveled back to North Dakota one summer in my three-horse trailer with living quarters. And whenever we did that, we'd leave late to get through the Nevada desert when it was a bit cooler and then we'd stop somewhere in Utah for the night.

The next day we could make it to the fairgrounds in Bozeman, Montana and board there before driving the last eight hours to my North Dakota home located a stone's throw from Montana and Canada.

At the fairgrounds that next morning, I noticed the place was packed with other trailers. And when I got Rooster out of his stall and took him to a round pen to loosen up a little before we hit the road, I heard a lady behind me say, "Now that's what a horse should look like".

It turns out there was going to be a horse show there that day. And the woman naturally thought we were going to be a part of it.

And yes, it's true that Rooster was a beautiful horse. At his peak at that point, all muscled up from running in the sand almost every day and team-roping a lot.

When we got back to my hometown, I put him in a small pasture with two Tennessee Walkers for the night and the next morning I went back to check on him around 9:00 a.m.

Turns out he'd gotten tangled up in some barbed wire and was bleeding profusely from a big cut on one leg between the ergot and heel.

So, I tore off my T-shirt to make a tourniquet and sped the five miles back to town to get my trailer to take him 40 miles to the nearest veterinarian, hoping he'd survive the ride.

By the time we got to the vet Rooster could barely stand. So, the vet went to work and when he'd sewn Rooster up, he said the words that burned a hole in my heart: "Well, he'll be a good kid's horse from now on."

Right then, I knew I'd let Rooster down. I didn't take care of him like I should have, leaving him in that pasture the way I did.

Still, he went on to have a great life at my sister's ranch, where early on, they could take proper care of him. A place I've commonly referred to as the "ideal habitat". And now he's been a member of our family for many decades, and my brother-in-law's favorite parade horse.

In the end he died gracefully, at 31 years old. And he was a true "gift horse".

A Step Back in Time

Troy Tescher

100 Years Ago
Sentinel Butte Review
November 20, 1925

The new Yellowstone River bridge at Glendive was officially dedicated with appropriate ceremonies. The biggest crowd in Glendive history jammed the town all day, with between seven to eight thousand people in attendance.

Henry Thoenke, postmaster of Mosher, was a Sentinel Butte visitor on Wednesday. He took out a load of flooring for the community hall he is fixing up at Mosher. It is expected to become the center of social activities for that community. He expects to open the place with a dance Saturday, Nov. 28.

Peter Uetz, farmer residing seven miles north of Sentinel Butte, died at 4 p.m. Saturday as a result of drinking a cup of formaldehyde. Uetz came to the home of a neighbor, Harry Rilea before noon and Mr. Rilea noticed strange actions and appearance and after finding out the reason, summoned Dr. Jameson who attempted to remove the poison from his system with no avail. Ever since the death of the unfortunate man's wife, which occurred two years ago, he has shown signs of melancholy.

75 Years Ago
Golden Valley News
November 23, 1950

E.J. Moses recently bought the Beach Hide & Fur Co. from the Still brothers (Bud, Howard and Ray) after the death of their father, H.J. Still in September of 1949. The elder Still had purchased the business

in 1942 from the Prociw brothers who had operated it for many years previously. The business has a supply of army surplus clothing, buys metals of all kinds and a good market for hides and furs. No skunks, please, unless skinned.

A delicious supper and carnival fun with games and prizes will be given at the Sentinel Butte Town Hall on Monday, Nov. 27.

Sentinel Butte will be one of three cities in North Dakota to retain federal airway beacon towers, with others being Mandan and Fryburg. The airway beacon lighting system was originally built as a visual aid to night air navigation for commercial airlines, military and private flyers.

Trotters News: We understand that the little son of Francis Hudecek has a broken arm, which happened when his saddle horse threw him off. Mrs. Hudecek has a back injury as a result of being thrown from the same horse. And to keep the doctors employed, Peggy Gunkel broke her right arm at school when she jumped from a swing and fell.

50 Years Ago
Golden Valley News
November 27, 1975

The words "country school" bring back bitter memories to most of us. Judy Still, the teacher at Randash School, is a product of a country school and "maybe that is why I like it so much." When friends ask Judy how she copes without modern plumbing, Judy quips, "Well, I learned never to wear a jumpsuit." Judy has three

grades with Randy Dietz in the third grade, Eileen Johnson, Steve Underwood and Tammy Trester in sixth grade and Tyler Underwood in the seventh grade. Mrs Still is a graduate of Dickinson State College. She is well prepared for her present job as her experience has been varied, having taught in Beach Junior High, sixth grade in Wibaux, Lapla County School and second grade in Beach.

25 Years Ago
Golden Valley News
November 30, 2000

News says goodbye to a friend and colleague. Her column was a fixture in the *Golden Valley News* for almost 20 years. It was something people looked forward to reading, whether they lived in or had lived in Sentinel Butte or not. Dorothy Johnson had a casual, familiar style of writing, like she was writing a letter to an old friend, not worrying about how grand everything sounded, just letting her old friend know about the comings and goings of people around town. Dorothy E. Johnson, age 77, a longtime resident of Sentinel Butte passed away at her home in Sentinel Butte on Monday, Nov. 20. Her last column ran Nov. 22 with her signature sign off, "That's all for this time. Hopefully I will see you next week."

Quote of the Week
"A person travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it."
- George Moore

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DID YOU KNOW...

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Student Congress

photo | Belfield Public School

Congratulations to Kitty Nelson! She took 7th place in House I at State Student Congress! This season marks Elise's last year in Studnt Congress