

Country Neighbor

Agriculture and Rural Living Quarterly



Starvo Creek Bluegrass Festival

The Ozarks have always been known as a region for Ozark Mountain music; bluegrass.

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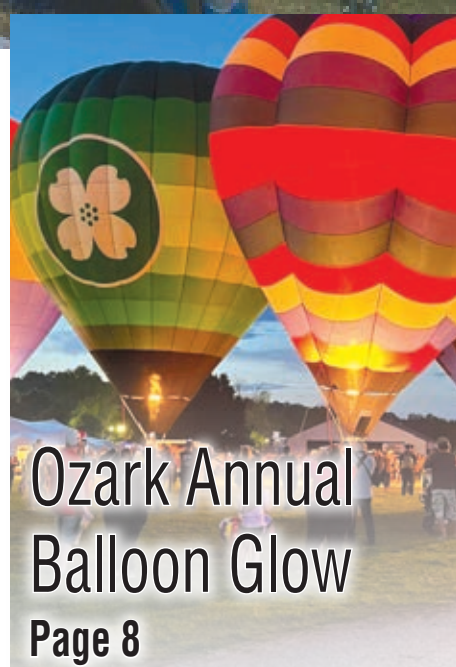
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Award-winning quilters sew for veterans, families with devastating losses, toddlers, fundraisers, and the first baby of the year.



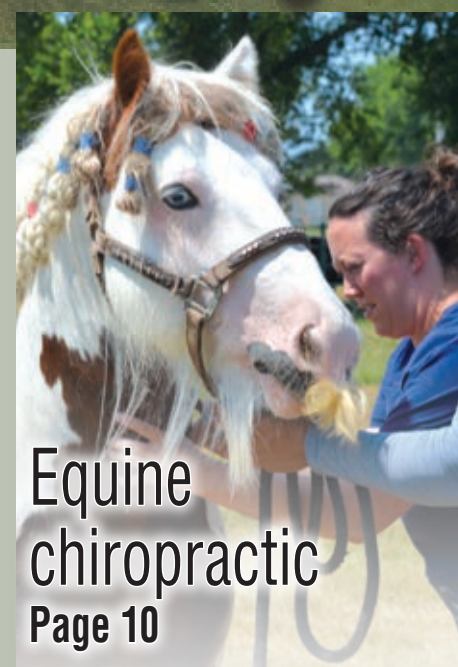
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Country Neighbor Agriculture & Rural Living Quarterly • Wednesday, July 19, 2023
Supplement to the Bolivar Herald-Free Press, Buffalo Reflex, Cedar County Republican,
Christian County Headliner News and The Marshfield Mail

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JIM HAMILTON • OZARKS RFD

Hauling hay ‘back in the day’

“Back in the day” I was a pretty good hay hand. At 17 and 18, I never had trouble finding work, and I never turned down a job if I was free to take it.

The pay was \$1 an hour, and I was happy to get it. That doesn’t sound like much now, but in 1965 a dollar was worth more than seven times what it is today. I probably was, too.

Adjusted for inflation, that dollar of 51 years ago would be \$7.58 an hour. That’s more than I make pounding out these columns, but the working conditions in my air conditioned office are a whole lot better than those of a blistering Ozarks hayfield in July.

I’ve seen hay crews out this summer — mostly kids — and I’m absolutely sure I couldn’t keep up with them. A half-century of soft living has put my hay hauling days far behind me. Even if the heat and work didn’t put me in the hospital, what I could pitch on the wagon might still be worth just \$1 an hour — in 2016 dollars.

But in 1965 I didn’t know the meanings of “too hard” or “too tired to work.” Years of work on our own farm had toughened me up more than I realized. Had not most of my peers come from the same backgrounds, I might have thought more of my abilities, but we were all tough. I really didn’t

appreciate the shape I was in until I started college, but that’s another tale.

Hay hands seldom had to go far from home for work. With dairy farms up and down every road and big, round bales still a few years in the future, boys to fill haylofts and sheds with hundreds of little, square hay bales were in high demand.

Probably 75 percent of the hay I hauled was for the same family, and most of it was alfalfa. A couple of times we brought in sudan grass — heavy bales with sap still oozing from some of the stalks.

No matter the kind of hay, I favored a hay wagon over a truck and a ground-level hay barn over an old hay loft. Who wouldn’t? Much of what we put up, though, still went in the lofts of traditional Ozarks barns built decades earlier for loose hay. Only rarely did we have a hay elevator to move bales from the truck to the loft.

Stacking to the peak was a three-man job — one on the trailer, one just inside and another up high.

Working at the top in August was as near hell as a fellow could get without setting himself afire. But, some of us loved it, just like some of us loved tossing bales off the truck, which could be an increasing challenge as the layers went down and the hayloft door got higher; but sometimes there was a



breeze even with the sun bearing down.

Hauling round bales, rather than square, was a different game. They don’t buck the same. They don’t stack the same.

But, I liked them. A hay hook makes moving them a breeze. Sink the hook in one end, your free hand in the other and give it a push. Stack ‘em on the trailer like cordwood and do the same in the barn. Then, to feed ‘em you just grab the twine and roll ‘em out like paper towels. At least that’s the way it’s supposed to work.

Really just tiny versions of the big bales commonly rolled today, small round bales could be left in the field to take a rain or hauled in a few at a time. Our neighbor turned to them

when reliable hay help became hard to find.

In time, I suppose he went to big bales, too.

I was off in college and the U.S. Air Force when big bales debuted in the Ozarks. I recall an uncle laughing at the first he saw them, quipping they looked like giant rolls of toilet paper — and that was before white plastic wrap.

Haymaking today is a much different business than when I was a teen. Round bales rule, both cured hay and those long, white caterpillars of hay wrapped up green. Dairy cows are rare. Most hay is fed to stock cattle — unrolled from the backs of trucks and big tractor, dropped in bale rings or pulverized in TMRs.

Most of what I understood about haymaking is still back there in 1965. It was pretty simple, compared to today, and it was a great way for field-toughened farm boys to make a few dollars for Saturday nights and still put some away.

I confess, I am a mite ashamed I’m not nearly so tough today. My wife and kids assure me though, “Dad, it’s OK; you’re 68, not 17.”

Yeah, I know.

(Copyright James E. Hamilton 2016) Jim Hamilton is a freelance writer living in Buffalo. Contact him at jhamilton000@centurytel.net



Country Neighbor

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Calico Clippers

It's not your grandma's quilting circle

By Pat Hindman

When a person thinks of quilting, the first thought may be of a white-haired great-grandma painstakingly squinting by the fire, making a quilt from the scrapes of grandpa's flannel shirts. That's not the image of The Calico Clippers Guild members who get scrapes of happiness by stitching for others. These quilters "quilt until they wilt." The guild has members all over the area. These award-winning quilters sew for veterans, families with devastating losses, toddlers, fundraisers, and the first baby of the year. And they take part in educational training, quilt shows, and contests.

Guild president Jacqueline Schutte said, "I really feel our talents and skills as quilt makers are meant to be shared. There is always someone out there that could use the comfort and love that is stitched into each and every quilt we make."

Judy Sage, publicity chairman, attributes "standing committees organization" as one aspect that makes the Calico Clippers Quilt Guild successful. So, don't "needle" these women; they are sewing up the holes in our society. Just as accurately as the quilters block off quilt patterns, they block off their duties.

"Members of standing committees are the essence of Calico Clippers community service project work and (they) meet monthly to develop quilts," said Sage.

The Community Quilt Committee sees that quilts are available to families who have suffered devastating losses. The Veterans' Committee makes quilts to distribute to all veterans who attend one of the two Veterans' Day assemblies in Stockton and El Dorado Springs. Another committee works on Head Start toddler quilts so each Head Start child has a quilt at naptime. Committees gather separately to work on these quilts.

At its monthly meetings, the Guild addresses the purpose as stated in its Mission Statement by hosting speakers and demonstrations to enlighten members and guests about new quilting ideas and techniques, fabric selections, care for vintage quilts, and quilted examples during trunk shows. These elements, and the already present expertise of the members, provide the basics for their community service projects according to Sage.

Calico Clippers also help the women get better at their craft. Marlene Dean said, "It is great to visit with others that enjoy the same things that I do. There is always someone that is able to help me with general quilting or with a specific project."

Since first established as a Guild, working committees have been developed to assist with various quilting projects, including, but not limited to, tornado victims, Covid-19 masks for the police departments, and a Cedar County block for inclusion in the Missouri Bicentennial Quilt.

The Calico Clippers bi-annual quilt show allows the quilting community to get together to display the outstanding and talented work of the members, a chance to purchase handmade items made by the members, a history display of the Guild, as well as educational demonstrations presented by various vendors. The two-day event brings local and distant visitors to their bi-annual quilt show.

Calico Clippers supports community activities by providing quilts for the Black Walnut Festival held in Stockton at the end of September. Many quilts are on display at the Community Center during the festivities. Opportunity Quilts used as a Guild fundraiser are for sale and a craft table showcases members' handiwork.

Calico Clippers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the purpose of stimulating an interest in quilt making, sharing ideas, conducting educational programs and services in the design and techniques of quilt making, and preserving the art of quilt making.

Before the monthly meeting, members work on special monthly projects; enhancing their skills through quilting demonstrations; or checking the library for any new publications which might produce an idea for that new quilting project or seasonal item. Most months, a guest speaker is featured, or an educational program, or a special project for members to enjoy.

Members show their culinary talents by providing breakfast or luncheon items before the meeting. Members report on current Guild activities and discuss plans. Members also share their work during Show and Tell. Judy Williams said Show and Tell is one of her favorite parts of the meetings. "I love being with other quilters that are as obsessed as I am with fabric."

Calico Clippers Quilt Guild was established in 1997 with charter members Mary Ellen Clark, Jean Lane, Sherlene Hill Netsch, Lois Rohrig, and Ruby West. Since its inception, the Guild has continued with its purpose of stimulating an interest in quilt making by sharing ideas, conducting educational programs and services in the design and techniques of quilt making, and preserving the art of quilt making.

Anyone wanting information about the Guild can email Judy Sage at isagex@yahoo.com or call 417-275-4307 or 816-206-4626.



I really feel our talents and skills as quilt makers are meant to be shared. There is always someone out there that could use the comfort and love that is stitched into each and every quilt we make."

Jacqueline Schutte
Guild president



They are not your grandma's quilts. Calico Clippers come up with creative designs in addition to serving the area by providing quilts in times of need. PHOTOS BY PAT HINDMAN

Get outside at Missouri State Parks



Passing along country traditions Cousins try their skills at making grass whistles. Teenager demonstrates to toddler the simpler things away from the electronics and life at a busy home. PHOTOS BY JOY BEAMER

Rivers flow across Southwest Missouri with lots to explore. These girls study snails and try to catch minnows.



Look!

Birds, squirrels, caterpillars, butterflies, centipedes and other hikers become new friends on trails across the regional state park trails.

By Joy Beamer

When did you last spend a quiet day without the electronics and distractions of the busy, day-to-day grind?

In the Ozark's backyard are Missouri State Parks scattered over Southwest Missouri, ready to transport you back to an easy day of exploration and adventure. Whether the decision is to go alone and take a solo hike on one of the many trails with several skill levels or take the family on a day of adventure, it's time to teach them about fun without tablets.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, spending time outdoors can improve overall health because the outdoors offers many opportunities to be active. Time outdoors promotes mental health and stress reduction for all ages.

Families can try camping or reserve a lodging unit in some parks. When mom's idea of camping is going to the Hilton, one of the state park cabins might be a good compromise. For a big step back in time, try primitive camping or pull in your camper to a campsite for an outdoor vacation.

A day trip to a state park can be packed with many activities. Most parks have a playground for little ones to run off energy and try their acrobat skills. Shelters and picnic tables give the family to bring a basket picnic. Pack the sweet watermelon, grapes, sandwiches, chips, pickles, and lots of bottled water in the ice chest. Eating

outside with children is a culinary rite of passage. When hungry appetites clear the food basket, remember to sing camping songs and watch the "Ants go marching one by one...."

The photo models traveled to Bennett Spring State Park, nestled on the Laclede and Dallas County line. Rainbow trout fishermen line the stream reeling in the day's catch. On the Nangua River, kayaks, rafts and canoes made a steady line of floating enthusiasts. Family groups, solo floaters and couples were seen laughing, splashing and enjoying a slow pace of existence.

“

There is no Wi-Fi in the forest, but I promise you will find a better connection.”

—Ralph Smart

While the watercraft passed them by, the young ladies found snails. They attempted to catch minnows and picked up driftwood in the cold spring-fed river. Passerbys were friendly, waving as they cruised the waterway. On one raft, a stroller was anchored down. A six-month-old baby was enjoying her first float in a tiny lifejacket.

Bennett Spring State Park has a nature center where families can tour and learn more about the park and the



There is so much to play and learn at the rivers. These girls play in the Niangua River at Bennett Spring State Park as the rafts, canoes and kayaks pass by.

animals that live there.

Two trails start at the rear of the building for a day of exploring. The teenage girl taught her toddler cousin the art of collecting rocks on a path. Most kids have collected a few stones in their childhood. The interesting formations and fossils they found may be the start of a career in science. In the meantime, let imaginations go wild and find a stone eyeball on the trail as they did.

A short rest on a log brought a lesson on how to make a whistle out of a blade of grass. While the teen whistled an epic woodsy song, the toddlers came out with squealing screams. Either way, laughter filled the forest and family bonding goals were achieved.

Creatures fill the woods. Stopping to watch the ants scurry across the ground, trying to find food, is a great way to slow things down in your mind and get a centipede to crawl onto a twig so he can be moved across the trail. No one wants to smush a bug.

Birds, squirrels and deer can be found in many state parks. When starting out on the trail, one game to play is listing all the creatures encountered along the way in a nature journal. Bird watchers should bring a field guide to identify the beasts of the sky.

The state parks offer special programs for children and families. For example, Bennett Springs State Park celebrates National Moth Week, and an area will be set aside to attract moths after dark on July 22, presenting an in-

Visit Your State Parks in 2023

- Bennett Spring State Park
- Big Sugar Creek State Park
- Bryant Creek State Park
- Ha Ha Tonka State Park
- Lake of the Ozarks State Park
- Pomme de Terre State Park
- Roaring River State Park
- Stockton State Park
- Table Rock State Park

For more information, mostateparks.com.

terpretive program.

Earlier in the day, the park naturalist will present Vulture Kettle at 2 p.m. to learn about Bennett Spring's black vulture population of over 200 birds. On July 26, the park will host a community fly-tying demonstration with experienced Bennett Spring anglers.

The Missouri State Park website lists the programs in detail for each park with dates and times. The website can answer all questions about the individual parks across the state at www.mostateparks.com.

The state parks are open and inviting residents to spend a day or a week in the great outdoors. Why wouldn't everyone want to spend a day outside? According to the American Psychological Association, spending time at the river or on the trail is linked to cognitive benefits, improvements in mood, mental health and emotional well-being.

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CELEBRATING 38 YEARS OF Starvy Creek Bluegrass



Rhonda Vincent joins a young bluegrass artist onstage during the Saturday set. PHOTOS BY RYDER BERGER



Amy and Aaron McDaris, of Hartville, picked up where the Day family left off and continued the bluegrass tradition in Conway with the July 2023 Starvy Creek Bluegrass Festival.

By Shelby Atkison

The Ozarks have always been known as a region for Ozark Mountain music; bluegrass. For decades, folks have flocked to Missouri for picking and grinning at some of the finest modern bluegrass venues. High upon that list of stages is the one at Starvy Creek in Conway, Mo.

It all began when Don Day was 11 years old and his brothers introduced him to the live bluegrass sound.

“My brothers took me to Marshfield to see Bill Monroe, the man who started the genre of bluegrass music,” Day explained. “I was amazed at it and I’ve followed it ever since.”

Starvy Creek Bluegrass Festivals started in 1986 as a way for Don & Bobbie Sue Day to share their love of bluegrass music with others. What started out as a small get-together eventually grew into large bluegrass events held twice a year. The venue and events are all family run with the help of his family, who are all passionate about bringing top bluegrass acts to Starvy Creek so that fans have a fun and memorable experience.

For 37 years, the Day family shared this tradition with the community and visitors who have traveled to Conway from as far as Europe. Last October, bluegrass fans were worried when the family announced the closure of the park so they could step back and slow down. Thankfully, just a few weeks later it was announced that Starvy Creek Bluegrass Festivals would continue under the management of McDaris Music Festivals, LLC.

Aaron and Amy McDaris live in Hartville, Mo with their two children, Ethan and Katie. Aaron has been the banjo player for Rhonda Vincent & The Rage for many years and brings immeasurable experience and expertise in the genre. This weekend, the 38th Annual Starvy Creek Bluegrass Festival saw record crowds as fans filled the venue



Fans wrapped a line around the stage to snap a photo with the Queen of Bluegrass between her sets at the July festival.

to continue the tradition. The July Festival was expanded to include a Wednesday night show, a festival first.

“Everything is run the way the Day family did things. I’ve played at a lot of festivals but this is my first time running one,” Aaron McDaris said. “We know what they did worked and we were proud of continuing the legacy that they created. This

OF OZARK MOUNTAIN MUSIC

Bluegrass Festival



Pictured is approximately half of the Saturday crowd at Starvy Creek. Festival goers arrived at the campgrounds early and made claim to their spots as early as a week ahead of the first show.



The festival at Starvy Creek has offered a place for friends, family and bluegrass fans around the world to gather for fun and fellowship. Gary Alexander, pictured with Mail Editor Shelby Atkison, is one of bluegrass music's biggest fans and has attended every festival at the venue.

was my home festival growing up in Hartville and it's so special to see people still enjoying it... I've been doing this for 25 years now and I always had the dream of running the festival so it kind

of felt like coming full circle. It's a humbling feeling to take over such a big event."

The venue started filling early the week of the show with camper lots completely filling up by the Wednesday start date. Four days of music drew thousands of fans for performances by Rhonda Vincent & The Rage, Russell Moore & IIIrd Tyme Out, The Kody Norris Show, Josh Williams with The Rage, Little Roy & Lizzy, That Dalton Gang, Route 3 and many more.

This was the very first time "Queen of Bluegrass" Rhonda Vincent & The Rage were able to attend the July festival because in past years, they have played at a festival held by Vincent's family.

"It was so overwhelming when we thought it was going to close. The Day family allowed Aaron and his family to host it and I think that's so special," Vincent beamed between sets. "It's really a sign of love that Aaron has for bluegrass and for this specific festival... I love that so many people wanted to support him and wanted to be here to continue the tradition."

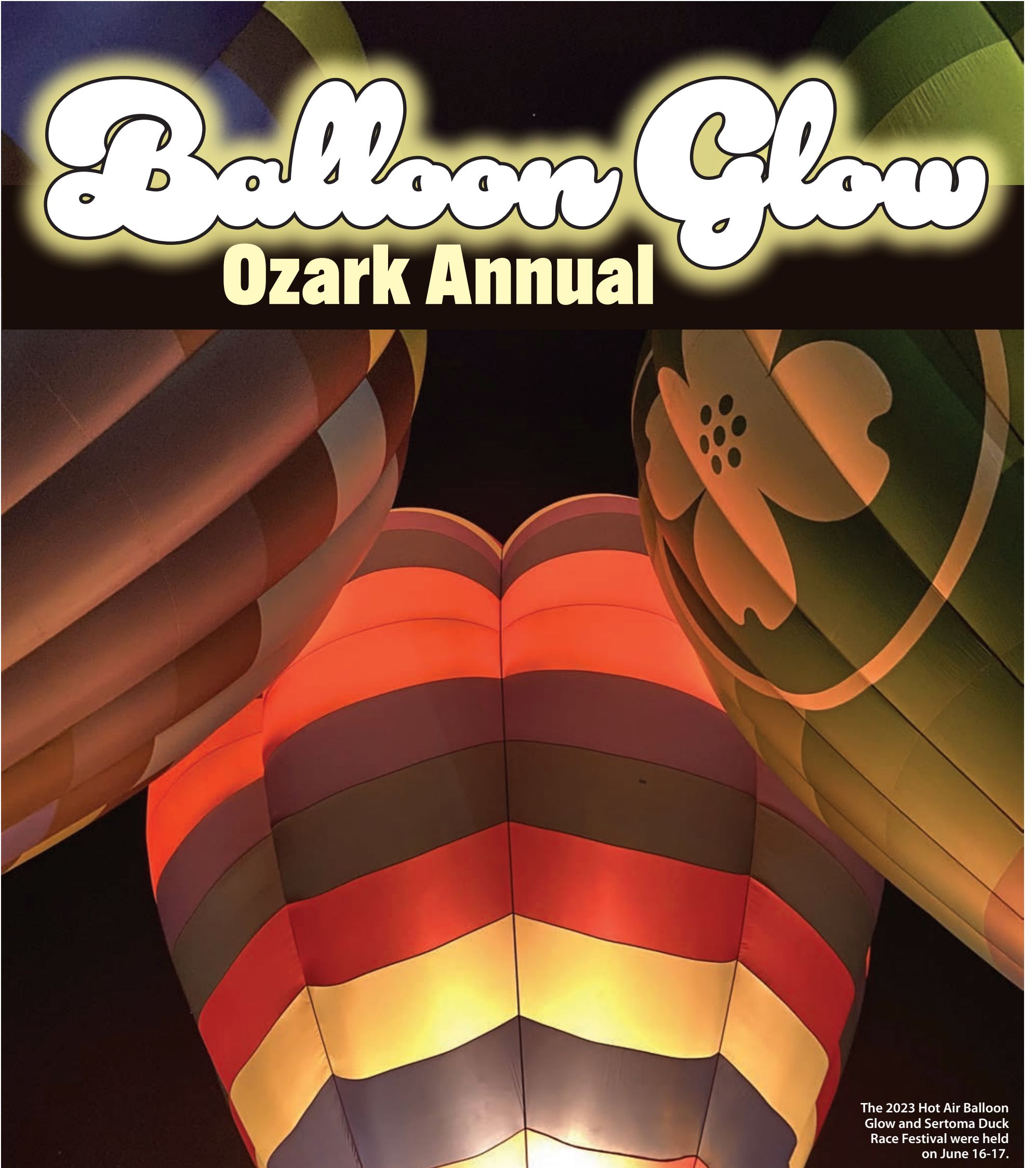
Rhonda Vincent & The Rage played four sets between Friday and Saturday and took time to meet each person who wanted an autograph or photo after each performance.

"You can just look at this crowd and see how important this festival is for the area," she added. "Thank goodness... Thank goodness that the Day family allowed it to continue. We're so thankful to be here."

The next Starvy Creek Bluegrass Festival will take place Sept. 14-16 with another massive lineup. For more information, visit www.starvycreek.com or find them on Facebook by searching Starvy Creek Bluegrass. To view a full photo album from the July Festival, check out our album on the Marshfield Mail Facebook page.



Kathy (Day) Lane, Don and Bobbie Day, pictured left to right, operated the festival since its conception in July of 1986. Last year, they announced they were stepping back and the future of the festival was uncertain.



The 2023 Hot Air Balloon Glow and Sertoma Duck Race Festival were held on June 16-17.

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Headliner News Staff with Jackie Barger
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Since 2007, tens of thousands of southwest Missourians have enjoyed the annual Balloon Glow in Ozark. The Balloon Glow is presented by Ozark Chevrolet to benefit Children's Smile Center and is located in Ozark's Finley River Park. This year's Balloon Glow was held on June 16.

Local balloon pilot Dallas Matney, who lives between Ozark and Sparta just north of McCracken, recently sat down with Children's Smile Center Executive Director Jackie Barger to reminisce about Matney's ballooning career and reflect on the success of the GLOW event.

"I had been volunteering as a balloon crew member for about two years in the late '90s," recalled Matney, "and it was nine-nine-ninety-nine (Sept. 9, 1999) when I got my FAA certificate to be a balloon pilot."

When asked the appeal of ballooning that led to his 20-year career, Matney replied, "Hot-air balloons always put a smile on everyone's face."

Right before he officially became a certified pilot in 1999, Matney purchased his balloon, which he named "Ozark Flyer."

"Seeing 'Ozark Flyer' at our event over the years was always a highlight," Barger said. "It sure was a unique and distinctive sight to behold."

From 1999 until his last log entry of June 2017 at the GLOW in Ozark, Matney logged about 20 flights a year, as well as attended several balloon events throughout the midwestern United States.

Matney and his wife, Jan, have been an integral part of a close, tight-knit fraternity of balloon pilots, with about a dozen in the immediate southwest Missouri area — most of whom have been at the Ozark GLOW at least once.

"We have had a core group of pilots, several who have been at our GLOW in Ozark for nearly all 17 years," Barger said. "This year's event, we planned to host eight balloons, and all eight (of those) pilots have experience at our event in Ozark, most for many years."

Matney noted that the GLOW event has been one of the best things that could happen for the local ballooning community of both pilots and spectators.

According to Barger, while several factors make the Ozark event uniquely successful, the location of the park itself is crucial.

"A large piece of flat ground right next to a river in a valley; it couldn't be any better," Barger said. "Over the years, we have experienced quite a bit lower wind speeds in that very particular area of Ozark compared with what you would hear at the same time over local media and weather reports for the Springfield



The 2023 Hot Air Balloon Glow featured four inflated balloons for the crowd to enjoy.
PHOTOS BY LEAH GREENWOOD



Matney



Barger

“The GLOW is a fun event for all ages, rarely do people have the opportunity to see the balloons close up, but here you can visit with the pilots and then watch an amazing light show.

Jackie Barger
Children's Smile Center Executive Director

metro area. The very specific river bottom area where we hold the GLOW each year is perfect for the balloons."

From 2007 to 2009, the GLOW in Ozark was a special event fundraiser for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Missouri based in St. Louis, when Barger worked for the Springfield office. When he left the foundation in early 2010 and started working at Children's Smile Center that same year, Barger checked to see if Make-A-Wish was continuing the event. They were not, and he asked if it would be a problem for another nonprofit to continue the event. It was not, and the first GLOW for Children's Smile Center was

held on Nov. 20, 2010, in the park after the Christmas parade.

"Back then, we had the balloons set up in the far north soccer fields, which were at the very end of the drive-through Christmas Lights of Ozark display, already known for big crowds and long lines," Barger said. "To say the addition of the hot-air balloons caused a few traffic delays and tie-ups was certainly an understatement. But my oh my, what a great day for Ozark and special events!"

After the November 2011 event was cancelled on a very cold day due to high wind speeds, Barger proposed the event move to the Friday night schedule of the

Sertoma Duck Race, now the Sertoma Duck Race Festival, which then was in the middle of resurrecting and growing an event that had earlier been small and stagnant.

"Since 2010, the 4C Sertoma Club has worked hard to grow their two-day festival into one of the largest and most unique festival events in all of southwest Missouri," Barger said.

He continued, "Children's Smile Center is proud to have one of the signature events in the schedule of the Sertoma Duck Race Festival, and also grateful to the 4C Sertoma Club for all they do to support our largest annual fundraiser."

Barger noted the decision by Ozark Chevrolet in 2020 to increase their community support by becoming a presenting sponsor was key to the dramatic growth in sponsorship revenue for Children's Smile Center since then. Another part of the revenue growth has been the increase in the number of sponsors from about 20 each year to now 30 per year for the most recent five years.

"Over the years, our annual hot-air balloon glow has been our single, largest fundraiser of the year," Barger said. "Instead of trying to find another two or three small events, we decided to make one event larger and even more financially successful. That plan has worked, with this year's event resulting in over \$62,000 in financial sponsorship revenue to support our nonprofit dental clinics."

"The hot-air balloon community has been blessed with such a quality event like the Ozark GLOW that many thought was not possible to happen," Matney said. "Children's Smile Center has done a great job presenting and producing this event that brings joy and smiles to as many people as possible."

As a part of the schedule for the two-day Sertoma Duck Race Festival each year, attendees to the GLOW can enjoy additional activities on Friday evening, including live music, food and craft vendors and a kids' zone with various carnival-type attractions. There are costs associated with many of these activities, including a parking fee. There is, however, no admission charge for either of the events.

"The GLOW is a fun event for all ages," Barger said. "Rarely do people have the opportunity to see the balloons close up, but here you can visit with the pilots and then watch an amazing light show."

"We want everyone to know that the event is extremely sensitive to weather and wind conditions," he added. "The unpredictability of Ozark's weather means there is always a chance the event could not be held. Please keep informed through our Facebook page."

For more information on the Balloon Glow, call 417-818-5718 or visit the Facebook event page.



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AS HEALTHY AS A HORSE

Equine chiropractic care offered in Bolivar

By Quincy Young

“A horse walks into a chiropractor’s office” may sound like the beginning of an odd joke, but it may surprise you that such a service actually exists. At Wooderson Veterinary Clinic in Bolivar, horse owners are no stranger to seeking chiropractic care for their animals.

Dr. Erin Walker, a veterinarian at the clinic, says that equine chiropractic care is helpful for providing pain relief and giving overall physical and neurological care to the animal.

“Chiropractic is really, really good because you’re freeing up the spinal cord,” Walker says. “You’re freeing up nerve function or allowing that fluid to flow properly from the brain to the tail. And then it has to get back to past signals, so all those nerves innervate every part of your body.”

As a Bolivar native, Walker grew up on a farm, where she found her passion to work with animals. She graduated from veterinary school at Mizzou this past May and is certified to treat large and small animals, mainly taking care of dogs, cats, horses, and cows. To become certified in chiropractic care for animals, she completed a course called Animal Chiropractic Education Source (A.C.E.S.) based in Texas. Earlier this past month, Walker finished all of her online coursework and the last of her three required labs in Texas for the chiropractic program.

“The only people that can be true animal chiropractors are veterinarians or a doctor of chiropractic,” she states. “They go through a course like I went through. You complete a program, and then you’re allowed to practice.”

Many of her equine chiropractic patients are athletic horses used for competitions, such as barrel racing. Often, riders know that routine maintenance is a beneficial measure for the upkeep of their horse’s health. As Walker says, these athletic horses are usually adjusted on a monthly basis or just a few days before their competition.

“[The owners] just understand how important it is for their horses to be able to turn properly and smoothly, and they pick up certain leads and things like that. So they want their horses moving nice and free,” Walker states. While chiropractic care for animals may seem like a new concept, it’s actually existed since the 1900s and has evolved over time. “It’s been around for a really long time. I think it’s getting more widely accepted,” Walker explains. “It’s definitely been more popular in the athletic world, you know, dog competitions and horse competitions. I’d say it’s just getting more understood.”

Walker supposes that the practice of animal chiropractic care may seem new to many people in the local area, as this type of treatment tends to be prevalent near bigger cities.

“I really wasn’t familiar with it either until I was in vet school. We had a few veterinarians come and speak



Chiropractic is really, really good because you’re freeing up the spinal cord, you’re freeing up nerve function or allowing that fluid to flow properly from the brain to the tail. And then it has to get back to past signals, so all those nerves innervate every part of your body.”

Dr. Erin Walker,
Veterinarian • Wooderson Veterinary Clinic

that do acupuncture and chiropractic. And that’s really where it struck, as that’s something I’m really interested in,” she says.

Yes, horses can get acupuncture too, and while Walker is not certified to conduct that particular service, she says it is something she would like to be able to do in the future.

Equine chiropractors and veterinarians try to ensure that the patient is kept comfortable and that they can do as much as possible to eliminate the need for pain medication.

“There’s all kinds of levels of alternative medicine. But as a veterinarian, of course, I’d like to mix alternative things that we can do to prevent the use of pain medicine. So I try not to use that all the time,” Dr. Walker states. “There are certain scenarios where a horse... maybe needs some pain medicine, but through chiropractic care and keeping them adjusted, I can almost essentially eliminate that.”

Very few of Walker’s patients are given pain medicine after they receive an adjustment, she says.

During the adjustment, Walker attempts to figure out “why” the animal is experiencing pain or movement issues, finding the “out” in the animal’s skeletal system. “We’re adjusting for subluxations. So subluxations are just anywhere where your spine is not quite in alignment,” she states. “A lot of times the neck, spine, and pelvis are the main points.

And you can have the radius, ulna, and scapula out of whack, but generally it’s your primary. So I’ll feel for all of that, and then I’ll adjust.”

After the vet’s initial assessment, an adjustment plan will be scheduled, depending on the injury or the animal’s need.

A recent patient of Walker’s had been injured after falling while its head had been tied to something. After it had fallen, the horse had experienced a lot of swelling, and her neck had been stretched uncomfortably.

“So that’s something I can help with. Something traumatic. Or if a horse has pulled back and injured their

neck, [it] just causes things to get out of alignment,” Walker shares. “So basically we are doing that to free up the spinal cord. So if you have something out of alignment or pressing on the spinal cord, you’re not getting good nerve innervation.”

Like with humans, animals go to the chiropractor to relieve numbness, tingling, and nerve pain.

Animal chiropractic adjustments involve making small movements by the veterinarian using the body, arms, and other long bones to make gentle manipulations on the animal.

These adjustments check certain set-up points, or points of contact, to move the bone how it needs to move. Walker says that there are several ways to check that a horse’s vertebra is moving correctly.

“I’m just giving it that jolt, and then the body will set it itself,” Walker says. “The muscles naturally want to pull it back into alignment. It’s just been out, and it can’t get released. And so I’m just basically releasing it, and then it can go back.”

Dr. Walker ensures that the chiropractic adjustments are not causing direct pain to the already sore animal.

“It’s not painful to the animal. There are certain areas like the pelvis... And if they’ve had an injury, that can be just a little bit of pain when I adjust. But otherwise, it’s not painful,” Walker says. “I think people do worry about harsh movements or if I’m going to hurt their animal, like crack and pop their neck. And that’s not what it is. It’s just very gentle manipulation. I’m just using my hands, but it’s very gentle.”

In animal chiropractic care, each animal’s structure can be broken up into sections: head, neck (cervicals), thoracic, lumbar, pelvis, and tail, along with “extremities setups” (e.g. front and back legs, ribs, etc.). Essentially, every bone can be assessed, Walker says.

Some breeds or types of horses have narrower cervicals that tend to press on the spinal cord and can cause some pain, she adds. This can sometimes be seen neurologically in young thoroughbreds.

During and after the adjustments, veterinarians will perform certain “checks” to make sure that the animal is moving correctly. If there is a place with questionable or no movement, the vet may find that to be a problem area.

Dr. Walker says that the effectiveness of this process is often immediate.

“Generally, it is almost instant. You can see relief or results,” Walker notes. “I have a couple ways I can check, like checking hips. Just like if we went [to the chiropractor], they can check leg lengths, and they can check your hips. And so I can do the same. Obviously, horses are a little bit different. I have different techniques to check, like, their pelvis and make sure they can tuck under like they’re supposed to or they can flex their neck all the way.”

For cases involving injuries, the horses will typically

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Chiropractic adjustments involve checking certain contact points on the animal.



In order to test the horse for potential diseases, Dr. Erin Walker takes a blood sample from a gypsy cob called Ringo.



During a chiropractic routine, Dr. Walker finds the adjustment points on a horse named S.D. "The Milkman."

Dr. Walker keeps the horse calm as she draws blood. PHOTOS BY QUINCY YOUNG

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It was Windy Wilson's turn, unofficially, of course, to pick a coffee counter topic of learned truth and everlasting beauty. We sorta took turns without keeping score.

"Ya know," said the old camp cook, "Been thinkin'."

We gave him a second or two. Didn't work.

"About what, Windy?" said Doc.

"'bout leisuractively activities. You know, what to do when you ain't doin' nothin' else."

We grinned and sipped. Good topic, Windy. This works.

"I like to read catalogs," said Herb. "You can get all kinds of ideas in

them. Don't much care, really, what kind of catalogs, either. So what if I don't know a thing about wrist watches? I can always learn."

"With me," said Doc, "it's fly fishing. When I've had a hard day with lots of patients, I just want to go down to Lewis Creek and whip the surface film into a froth. Doesn't even matter if I catch anything or not."

"I hear ya," said Dud. "It's a little different with me. Working on writing that mystery ("Murder in the Soggy Bottoms") takes it outa me, you know? So I like to spend my leisure time reading things other guys wrote. After about an hour of reading what some other poor soul suffered through, I'm

ready to go fishing with Doc."

Doc looked over at Windy, who had initiated this topic, but strangely seemed content to sit there and listen to the leisurely ideas of others. "What about you, Windy? How do you unwind?"

"Well, Doc, glad you asked. Them kids was on their way home from school jest t'other day and I come crost 'em when they wasn't payin' too much tension. And I could see they hadn't figured out anythin' leisure, you know? So I told 'em 'bout my sure-fire way to relax. What I do is set down on the front porch and think about fun stuff while I pick scabs off the neighbor's dog."



EQUINE

Continued from Page 10

need to perform some exercises at home in order to rehabilitate on their own.

For chronic injuries, it usually takes a decent amount of time to work on the areas of concern.

For example, Walker says that if a problem has been going on for six months, it might take six months of adjustments to fix the issue. "A lot of it requires some rehabilitation and some exercises, like physical therapy, basically. But you can check and instantly see that what you have done is fixing whatever is going on with them," she states. "It's just, then, you are working on retraining their muscles and their nerves and getting better nerve function."

Chiropractic care gives attention to the time needed for the animal to build up muscle strength, especially in injury

and chronic issues. However, for horses receiving regular maintenance, they can be ridden in about a day or two after their adjustment.

"Very minimal aftercare. I do what I do and then they can almost resume their normal activity," Walker states. "Usually I would tell people you would expect some soreness, so I probably wouldn't recommend riding the first few days afterwards. So probably a little tenderness, some soreness. They should take it easy."

Horse owners can perform hydrotherapy, using a hose to apply cold water to sore areas. If the horses don't like that option, ice can be used in order to relieve soreness.

Some stretches for the animal may also be recommended by the veterinarian.

There are certain ways that a horse can demonstrate the effectiveness of its adjustment, normally proven by licking, chewing, or giving a release.

Chiropractic care is also available for dogs too. Competition dogs often get adjusted a few days before their events.

"Things that I probably see most commonly are a horse or a dog with an injury. They are limping or just not performing like they're supposed to," says Walker.

Leash-walking is a typical aftercare measure for dogs that are experiencing a chronic injury.

In diagnosing health-related issues, veterinarians may identify a problem in an animal's bodily system that is, in turn, affecting other systems of its body. Therefore, animal chiropractors make sure that all organs are getting the proper nerve function. For instance, Dr. Walker once treated a dog with chronic diarrhea. Upon realizing that the dog had a back problem, she understood that those back nerves may innervate the dog's digestive system.

Another dog that was treated at the clinic recently had been hurt by some

goats, causing injuries to the dog's back and pelvis areas. X-rays confirmed that the canine did not have any fractures or broken bones, so a plan was scheduled for adjustments once a week for three weeks.

If the chiropractic adjustments have been effective, the dog usually gives "a good body shake afterward," Walker says.

These adjustments make all the difference for animals with an injury, pain, or other structural or neurological issue.

As the world of animal chiropractic care becomes more familiarized in Bolivar and neighboring communities, owners hold the reins to ensure their animal's health is prioritized by seeking the relief and rehabilitation treatments of veterinarians and equine chiropractors.

For more information about animal chiropractic services, Dr. Erin Walker and Dr. Hannah Braden can be reached at Wooderson Veterinary Clinic. To contact the clinic in Bolivar, call 417-326-8381.

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