

de Stolfe

Journal ●●●●●●●●



Contents

Fall 2 2022 | 11.11

The page numbers correspond to the PDF pages.

*Covers activities in October to December 2022.
The page numbers correspond to the PDF pages.*

- 2** Contents & On The Cover
- 3** Comments by RG
- 4** Word for Life
- 5-8** Random Things
- 9-23** Ranch Rodeo Finals
- 17** Pokey The Clown
- 19-20** Ranch Rodeo Events
- 21-22** Bug Ranch
- 23** Around Amarillo
- 24-26** Future of Agriculture
- 26** Playing With Cows
- 27-32** Thanksgiving
- 30-31** Eastland
- 32** Gorman Depot
- 33-34** Bluecat Travels
- 35** Final Thought—Merry Christmas
- 35** Fine Print

On The Cover



*What are these guys doing??
Why is the one guy holding a beer bottle?
Learn more elsewhere in this issue
about when I went to the WRCA Ranch Rodeo
Finals in mid November!*



*Bluecat wishes
you a wonderful
Christmas!*

We live in the 21st century! Anywhere you see a web link like this, click it to go automatically to the webpage that it references! (Try it now!)

www.destolfe.com



Comments by RG

Last Of The Travels For 2022

Having the seven issues to cover the trip in May sucked up everything else that happened for the rest of the year! But, once I got those done, I was finally able to put out the last issue covering our fall trip. After I got back from that trip, I had a few other things I did, mainly in November. With this, I can finally bring you up to date before the end of the year!

The cool things I did that this issue covers involves some local or short distance destinations. The rest of October after the fall trip was down time, but it was but a short time later before the next multi day activity.

The next big thing was my trip to Amarillo to go to the WRCA Ranch Rodeo Finals. If you remember my journal from a year ago, I went for the first time last year to these finals. I had the means to be able to go again this year, so I got my tickets back in June! Even after two weeks of ticket sales opening, 75% or more of the seats were already sold! But the weekend was a whole lot more than just the daily rodeos! There were scattered smaller events and three large trade shows overflowing into the halls! I did spend one day less than last year, and I stayed at a different motel. Other than that, the weekend was very similar to last year.

One week after the rodeo, I attended a symposium of sorts discussing the future or rural Texas. This free event was sponsored by a nonprofit news organization called *Texas Tribune* and held at a couple of locations on the campus of Texas Tech University. It went over two days, the evening of Thursday and most of the day Friday. I thought it was worth attending if for no other reason to be informed about the things going on around me!

Then, the next week was Thanksgiving. As with most previous years since 2016, I have traveled to visit friends who live in De Leon. I did stay at a different motel from previous years, which did make me have to have some commute time twice a day. But otherwise, it was a good Thanksgiving!

I did not really do much of anything in December. I just stayed home most of the time. That is not unusual for me most Decembers and even for Januarys where I just stay home and don't go any where or do anything.

I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year!



Producer, RG de Stolfe

RG

Word For Life

What Is Your Treasure?

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Most of us have read these verses, and often just glossed over them. We tend to do that because we only take it for face value and fail to understand what the scripture means, particularly with the word treasure! Verse 19 states that keeping treasures on earth will cause them to be eaten by moths or destroyed by rust and decay or to be stolen. And that is where we stop, having no clue really what the next part actually means. The next part states what we should do instead, to keep treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where they cannot be stolen. The last verse then tells us how to identify what we are doing by stating that wherever our treasure is, our heart is there too. Let's go over these verses with a little more understanding.

When we think of treasure, we generally think of something valuable, like gold, silver, jewels, and the like. Sometime in the early 80s, I was somewhere between 10 and 15, I went to vacation Bible school at the church where we occasionally went. They lasted a week going every day for a few hours. On one of the days, we had a craft project to make a large banner. This banner was in the general style of

what was in the church sanctuary. You know, most old style church buildings having high cathedral ceilings, long pointed stained glass windows, and a pipe organ with more brass pipes than you can count! In between the windows would be various long fancy tapestries with scriptures or phrases. That was our craft project, to make a simple version of one of these banners. We first had to choose a scripture we liked, then design out a visual interpretation into a type of tapestry. These banners had a burlap base, and we would cut out felt for the images and words to glue on the burlap. My banner used this scripture, specifically the first part of Matthew 6:20, “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven”. Now obviously my understanding of treasure as a kid was very limited! The image I made was of an open treasure chest with gold coins flying out of it upward towards some clouds. Remember that I was not even in my teens, so the image was very basic, but that illustrates my point that we really don't understand what treasure means even as a kid! If we think of treasure as gold, silver, jewels, etc, we must think that somehow the “treasure” is somehow dissolved, translated, raptured, or something to show up in Heaven awaiting for us whenever we get there! Frankly, that is a very shallow understanding of the Word of God!

Because we live in the world, having originally come from the world, treasure has a general definition of something of high value, something of great worth, or something greatly sought after. We could name a long list of things that fit these descriptions. These are only things, stuff, objects and not at all what the Word refers to! In the next issue, let's take a look at what treasure really is.



Random Things

Texas charcuterie board!



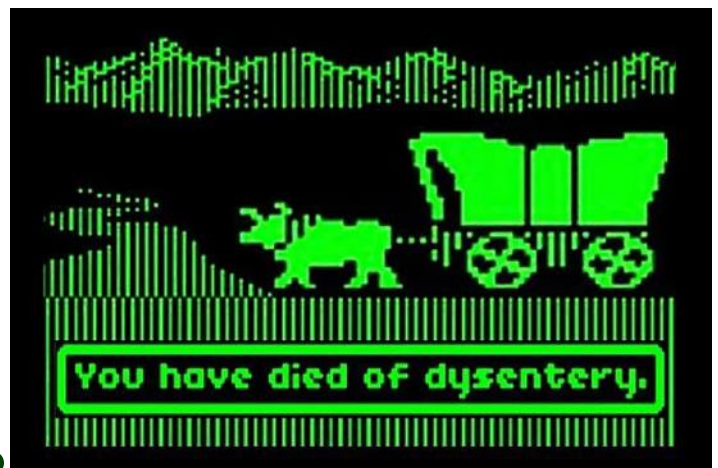
Floating post on Facebook and Instagram



*I saw this display at United on November 7.
(Face palm!)*

There's no denying that the Yellowstone series has gained extreme popularity since the series started! And that's not even to mention about the spinoffs of 1883, 1883: The Bass Reeves Story, 1923, and 6666!

Remember this from Oregon Trail?



At the motel in Amarillo where I stayed for the ranch rodeo, I saw these painted rocks looking like ladybugs. For several days, they moved around until they apparently disappeared. I guess someone took them.

Random Things

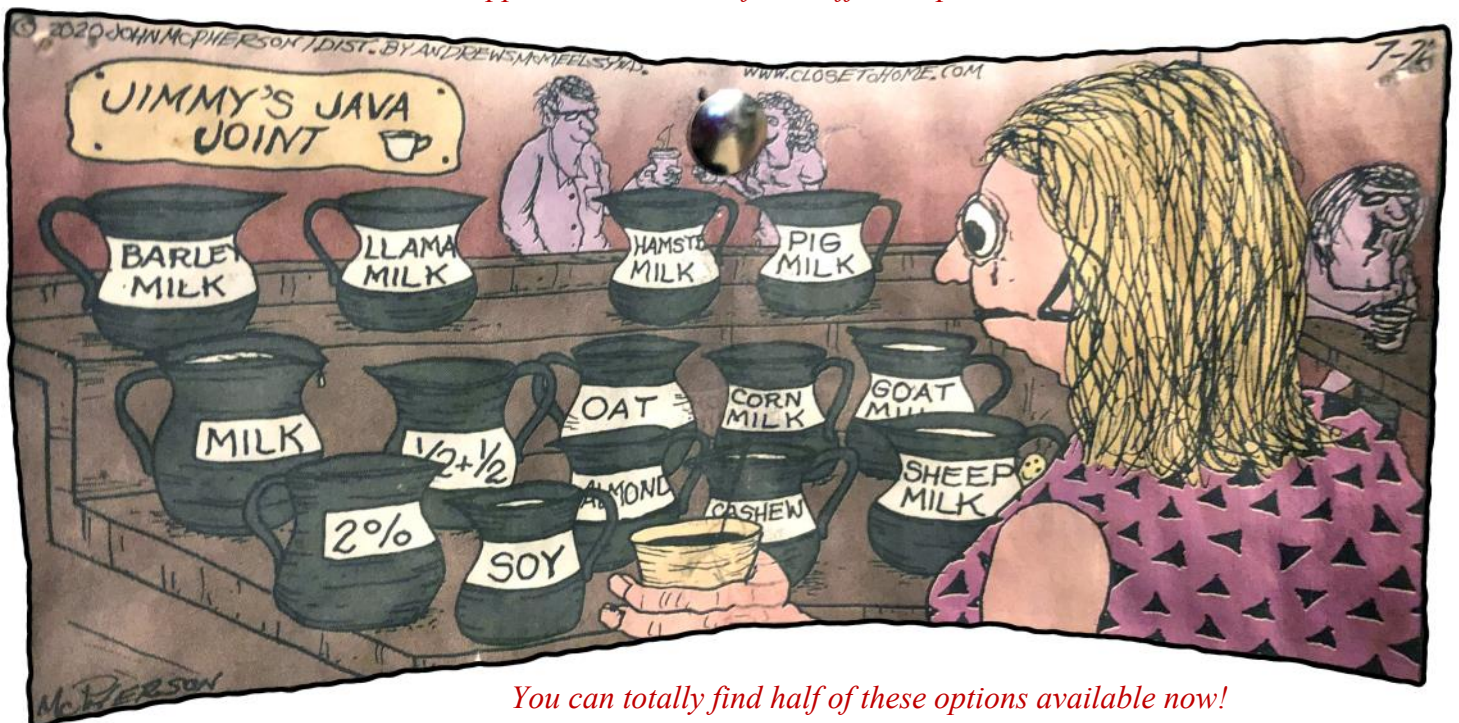
Sad But Interesting Story

So if you travel anywhere in the Texas panhandle for any length of time, especially along US 385, you have no doubt seen these distinctive Sweet Bran trucks. Sweet Bran is a division of Cargill, which is one of the large meat packers. Now in recent years, something else was added to the trucks. I got this photo back in May in Dalhart, but the addition of “Hi Macey” to the trucks has been since at least early 2018, and probably since 2017. So then, the question is, who is this Macey? There is a rather funny, but

sad, but then hopeful story about this. KCBD news of Lubbock did a report on this that was posted in January 2018. In short, her name was Macey Foley who was a high school band member in Earth, Texas. She died suddenly in 2016 from an asthma attack at the age of 16. The back story is what led to putting the note on the trucks, along with her band competing in the State Marching Band competition. Read the whole story here: <https://www.kcbd.com/story/37203786/sweet-bran-company-honors-life-of-springlake-earth-teen-band-with-surprise>



*Okay, so creamer options for coffee have gone a little crazy... no, much crazy!
I saw this clipped on the board of the coffee shop in Leadville!*



You can totally find half of these options available now!

Random Things

Seeking Pumpkins

Much like last year, I wanted to go over to near Floydada to get pumpkins from the Assiter Pumpkin Ranch. Last year, I bought a whole bunch of pumpkins of a variety of types and sizes. But this year, I was more restrained, partly because I ended up waiting until the last day of October to get these orange orbs! I drove there in the afternoon and got back in about two hours. I got two bags of mini pumpkins (one white and one white striped), two pie type of pumpkins, a birdhouse gourd, and a few small Indian corns. I took an assortment of the mini pumpkins with me for Thanksgiving decorations.



Assiter Pumpkin Ranch in Floyd County



Another Lowe's Discovery

Last year, I was at Lowe's in Colorado Springs and saw little tubs of ladybugs for sale. This year, I was at Lowe's in Colorado Springs and saw more little tubs, but this time of praying mantis eggs! WHAT?



Look at that cute smiling mantis!



I was walking out to my white car back in late September and saw this bug on my hood. I have no idea what it is.

Note: this bug was only about 1/4" to 1/2" long. Photo looks way scarier!

Random Things

I got these photos near a grocery store in Lubbock of these lovely flowering yuccas!



I have never seen a light like this! Very interesting colors! This was at a Dutch Brothers in Lubbock at the end of November.



If you know, you know!

*Remember these?
Swanson TV dinner.*



Ranch Rodeo Finals

Going to the WRCA Finals

Last year, I went to the WRCA Ranch Rodeo Finals in Amarillo. The Working Ranch Cowboys Association is based out of Amarillo and have their finals there every year. Member ranches of the WRCA compete throughout the year at various rodeos around the country and the qualifiers compete at this event in November. Very much like last year, I went again for the whole thing. They start out with a private kickoff event Wednesday night. Then starting in the afternoon on Thursday, three trade shows open and run through Sunday. Each night Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday afternoon

are the finals competitions. They also have a kids finals Saturday afternoon just that one time. The kids finals first started last year, and this year was the second annual kids finals. There are a few other events throughout the few days. Like last year, I spent the entire time in Amarillo. But unlike last year, I stayed one night less, and I did not do as much extra sightseeing this time. In addition, I decided to stay at a different motel from the one last year. This different one ended up being much more convenient and closer to the event center and made travelling in town much better!

Wednesday, November 9, 2022 – Private Event Night

I drove up in the afternoon after doing some errands in Lubbock, getting to the motel in Amarillo a little before the kickoff event started. From Lubbock, Amarillo is a little under two hours away (when driving correctly!) and I took I-27 straight up with no stops until I got to the motel. I then checked in and took some stuff to the room. After a short while, I left and motel and took a short route from there to the event center downtown. I took this route for the entire time I was in Amarillo for it was a short, easy drive. The event center is the Amarillo Civic Center Complex. I happened to find a good parking spot in a lot right near the entrance I typically go in. The Heritage Room is where most of the special events take place as well as where the hospitality area was. Arriving a little after things started, the place was packed. They were selling raffle tickets for a saddle and for a firearm in the front, and the line for the food was off to the side. I did buy a rodeo program, which was five dollars. It is a really thick color souvenir booklet that also included score sheets for the adults and for the kids to keep track of the scores. Unlike last year, I did keep track of the scores this year. I then went over to the food line and waited until I got up to the tables. They also had some silent auction items near the food tables, but I wasn't particularly interested in anything there. The food was almost identical to last year. They had lasagna,

garlic rolls, and a big full salad bar, along with drinks and desserts of a layered chocolate cake with cream filling and cannolis. (Most people obviously wanted the cake since there were a whole lot more cannolis left!) Because the place was really full, I had to look around for a place to sit. I ended up going with a tall café table in the back of the room and stood to eat. After a little while, they started the live Calcutta of the 22 teams. The bidding for the teams went from \$1500 to as much as \$8000. Afterwards, I went back to the motel for the night.



During the live Calcutta, in this case, for the 6666 Ranch.

Ranch Rodeo Finals

Thursday, November 10, 2022 – Sightseeing, Turkey, and First Day

This day was technically the first day of the finals weekend, but not starting until the afternoon. The weather was supposed to change and get much colder on Friday. So I decided that today I would go see one of the attractions I was considering to do Friday. That attraction was of sorts was called the Bug Ranch. Now, this is a third version of an installation similar to the Cadillac Ranch and the Combine Ranch that I showed last year. I found out about it later last year, but didn't get to it. It's a little under 30 miles east of Amarillo in a little town called Conway, or more like a named spot on the highway called Conway. (There's not much there!) So I hopped on I-40 and went there driving among the many big rigs that were on the road. It's not as large an attraction nor as "formal" an attraction being located next to an abandoned gas station and some other abandoned structures (but that are privately owned). Read more about this visit elsewhere in this issue.

After about 20 minutes on the site, I drove the nearly 30 minutes back to the motel, except that I instead went to the Cracker Barrel next door to the motel! Because it was Thursday, I preplanned to eat lunch at the Cracker Barrel for the Thursday turkey. (It's every Thursday that they have turkey.) This was the only day I had planned to go to a specific restaurant. As usual, I got the turkey, stuffing, hashbrown casserole, gravy, and biscuits, along with iced tea. The two other things I planned to do today was to walk around the trade shows and go to the first performance in the evening. I got to the event center by 3:30 PM and spent the next two hours looking around. There were technically three separate trade shows in three rooms, but the hallways were also lined with booths basically making everything flow into each other. The one exhibition hall was a little different in that they had stock trailers, corral panels, squeeze chutes, and the like. I saw a lot of the same exact same booths that I remember seeing last year and even in the same exact locations as last year. My goal for this day was simply just to look around and make mental notes of what things I wanted to consider buying. I only had a set amount of money

this year that I could spend on whatever. So doing this kept me from impulse buying without seeing everything I would consider buying first. As compared to last year, I only bought a fraction of items I did last year by necessity. After looking around, and I knew what things and what booths I was interested in buying but waited until the next day before actually buying anything. With some time still left before the rodeo and not wanting to go back to the motel and lose my good parking spot, I went over to the hospitality area in the Heritage Room to get some water and to kill some time. Just before the rodeo, I went back to the car to drop off things and get my program and ticket for the evening.

The rodeo started at 7:00 PM (each night), and I got there roughly 30 minutes before. There were some additional booths in the hallways around the arena. So I took some time to look around before getting to my seat. For this night, my seat was in the same spot as last year, but based on when I got the tickets, my seats did move around the area some of the other nights. The rodeo started right about seven and went through all of the events in the same pattern as I recalled from last year. Somewhere about halfway through, they did have a "halftime show" of sorts this night and every night. I did not focus as much in taking photos and video this year in as much as keeping on top of the scores, which was actually a challenge not to get behind or miss any scores. After the rodeo, I thought I'd go over to the hospitality area to see about some snacks or water or whatever. It turned out that they had a whole full meal! They had brisket, loaded mashed potatoes, green beans, rolls, and a full salad bar! I did not get a salad this time, but I did go ahead and get the full meal of food! They also had cobbler for dessert. Certainly, this was a lot more food than I was planning or wanting to eat, even that late, but the food was free, and I didn't have to spend any money for it. It turned out that they did this rotation of food all of the nights, and so being tight on money, this helped greatly to keep from spending money on food! By the time I left, it was well after 10:30 PM and it was much colder outside, but not yet bone frigid.

Ranch Rodeo Finals



A presentation of the teams started each rodeo, even if they were not competing that night. 22 teams, 5 states.



The announcers at each rodeo included Bob Tallman and Randy Lewis.

Ranch Rodeo Finals

Friday, November 11, 2022 – Various Activities

The cold front came through overnight, and it was much colder today! I had a notice on my phone about needing to redeem my points for free coffee, so I first went over to Dutch Brothers to get my free coffee before heading over to the event center. I got a yummy frou frou hot coffee! (hazelnut truffle chocolate something or other with oat milk and caramel drizzle!) It was the first hot drink I recall having ever gotten from Dutch Brothers, and it was pretty good. I went straight over to the event center and over to the hospitality area where there was a little bit of food left, some fajita meat with beans and the salad bar. I had an hour before an events that started at 4:30 PM. I walked around the trade shows and looked at the booths again casually. I did get a bunch of free things and bought a few small things.

I went back to the Heritage Room where at 4:30 PM they had a poetry reading for about 30 minutes followed by the Legends Tribute after that for about an hour. Last year, the legends included Tom Morehouse and Boots O'Neal with John Welch as the moderator. This year, the legends included Joe Leathers and James Golson moderated by the same

John Welch. They talked and told stories about different things they knew and experienced. Joe Leathers is the general manager for the 6666 Ranch, which of course is now owned by the man who produces the Yellowstone series, Taylor Sheridan. All three of them talked and told stories for a good hour. With about an hour left before the second performance, I went back to the car briefly to get a few things to drop off a few things before heading to arena. The weather did not warm up much through the day, and it was rather windy.

For the rodeo tonight, I was in a section a couple of blocks over from yesterday. It was another good rodeo of the same events for the first round but with another set of ranch contestants. The half time show was the same as last night with a slight variation. After the rodeo, I decided to go back to the hospitality area again, and it was crowded just as last night. They had brisket, jalapeño mac & cheese, rolls, fried okra (which I wasn't going to touch), and the salad bar again, along with bread pudding (but it was loaded with raisins, so I said nope!). From there, I went back to the motel for the night.



The Legends Tribute included Joe Leathers (left) and James Golson (right), moderated by John Welch (center).

Ranch Rodeo Finals

Saturday, November 12, 2022 – Two Rodeos and Quick Shopping

I went to the event center a little earlier for a supposed brunch and to watch a live auction. It turned out that the brunch was a dud of pastries and coffee, but I did watch the live auction for a while. Meanwhile, they were getting things ready for lunch. I did not plan to bid on anything, and I did not bid last year either. For a little while during the auction, I went around the trade shows again intending to buy a few things from some specific booths, but some of them only accepted cash, which was not how I was able to pay. So, I ended up skipping those booths and buying nothing. Well, their loss I guess, and mine too I suppose. I went back to the hospitality area while they were still finishing up the live auction. I checked on the food line, and they had hamburgers, hotdogs, some leftover brisket, and some other things, along with the salad bar. I got a burger with toppings and ate and rested for a while. I briefly went to the car to get a few things and went over to the arena a few minutes ahead of the kids rodeo starting. For about 3 hours from 1:00 PM to almost 4:00 PM, the kids rodeo went on. It was basically a shorter version of the adult rodeo, but with a whole different set of events. The kids rodeo was pretty good and was well attended, even more than last year. However, I don't think this year was quite as

fantastical as last year, partly for the last one being completely new and exciting. But there were still some highlights throughout. I did notice, though, that there were an unusual number of no times with the kids this year, and even with the adults for that matter. For the kids rodeo only once it was over, they got the scores and prizes sorted out and had the award ceremony right there in the arena. However, most of the people had already left except for those related to the kids and whoever else. They awarded the top winners each event, then they announced the top horse, then they announced the top hand, then the overall team.

By the time I left the arena, the time was around 4:30 PM and the adult rodeo would start at 7:00 PM. Not wanting to lose my good parking spot, I decided not to leave. I walked around the trade shows again looking at the different booths, usually seeing something I didn't see before. I did go to one booth that I somehow missed the other days that I went to last year and bought something. I continued looking around then went back to the hospitality area. They had some food there, but I just got a snack knowing that I would have dinner there after the rodeo.



Here was the presentation of the teams for the kids rodeo. There were 11 teams from 5 states.

Ranch Rodeo Finals

I stayed in the hospitality area for a long while waiting until the next rodeo would start. There were many other people basically doing the same thing. After 6:00 PM, I went to the car to get a few things and drop off a few things. Then, I wandered back down the halls to the arena. My seat for this particular rodeo was the oddball of the bunch! I ended up being in a lone seat right at the first row in the corner of the arena. Literally, the row was one seat, then two seats behind that one, etc. It was in the triangle section by where the cattle go back to the pens, opposite end of the bucking chutes. It was quite the different perspective! Although, that end was where most of the events took place. I had to look between the railings to see anything. Tonight was the first half of round two, with the second half and conclusion being Sunday afternoon. It was another really good adult rodeo, number three of four. Unfortunately, there were a lot of no times, much like last night.

After it was over, I went over to the hospitality area like I did the other nights to see what food they had. Except this time, they had the area block off and greatly restricted who was allowed to go in. Apparently for tonight, it was strictly for contestants and families, along with whatever VIPs. The food was apparently prime rib and probably some other good stuff and so being more expensive than the other food they have been serving. I suppose I could have tried to make my way in, but instead, I just left. At this point, it was almost 10:00 PM, and I figured to go get something to eat from somewhere that was still open. I did get lost trying to leave downtown for the oneways were not very kind! I got gas so I would not have to deal with it tomorrow, and finally made my way to I-40. I knew that Rosa's would still be open and made my way over to the other side of town where it was. I got a taco salad and drink. Once I left, I headed straight back to the motel. But as I was driving, I passed this shopping center with a whole bunch of Christmas lights on the trees. I saw this same place last year and stopped. I double backed and stopped to look at the lights in the different areas. Then, I headed back to the motel for the night since it was getting late.



Father, Tomas Garcilazo "Charro On The Road", and son, Luis, performing their roping skills during the adult rodeo performances.



Ranch Rodeo Finals

Sunday, November 13, 2022 – Final Day in Amarillo

Today is the shortest day of the rodeo being the last day. The rodeo itself started at 2:00 PM, and the trade shows continued until then and even through to the end of the rodeo in the late afternoon when the vendors started packing. I packed up and checked out of the motel and headed over to the event center, getting there a little before noon. I found yet another good parking spot really close to the side doors near the hospitality area where I've usually been going in. I figured that I would first go to the hospitality area to see what they had for food. In a lot of ways, I hit the jackpot! That is because they were putting out all of the leftover food they've had from all of the other days. The food was a sampling of everything they had from Wednesday night through Saturday. I filled up my plate! While in line, I saw someone from Lubbock I knew who had said would be there for the Sunday rodeo. However, that was the only time I saw him. I went over to a table, which had all of the tablecloths removed, and I ate the yummy food. Then, I just leisurely did whatever between noon and 1:00 PM. I did take one last look around through the trade shows selectively going to certain places I wanted to see. I did go to one booth I went to last year and several times this year to get one last thing I wanted. From there, I went to the car, again to drop off stuff and to pick up stuff, and made my way over to the arena.

As I was going that way, I again passed by a stage in the cross section of the halls where musicians performed throughout the days. At this particular time, there was this guy singing and playing a guitar, along with the biggest digeridoo I have ever seen! It was definitely a very unique sound. The digeridoo had a little mic clipped onto the end. A bunch of people stood around listening. I stood around long enough to get some photos before needing to get to my seat. I was there maybe 10 minutes before the rodeo started. This rodeo was the second half of the second round, completing all teams competing the two rounds of all of the days. The rodeo finished around 4:30 PM. I stayed in my seat for a while knowing that it would take a while for everyone to shuffle out of the arena and down the halls. I call it the slow post rodeo shuffle! (Really! Everyone is just sort of shuffling slowly with no one really getting anywhere fast!)



Jeff Gore performing most nights in the middle of the rodeo.

Musician performing with guitar and digeridoo.

Ranch Rodeo Finals

I was surprised to see that the trade booths were still pretty full and busy with people. And frankly, that is a good idea as the booths can make a lot of last sales as people are leaving. There were a few that already left and some that were packing, however. I went back to the car, and I was trying to decide what I want to do next. I did have one possible option of something that started at 6:00 PM. I ultimately decided to go ahead and leave back to Lubbock. Last year, I stayed another night and left that Monday. But this time, I skipped that extra day to save money, and it worked out fine in that there was a possibility of snow in Amarillo on Monday. I left a little after 5:00 PM from the event center and went straight through downtown to get on I-27. I drove nonstop all the way home, getting home in a little less than two hours later. It was sunsetty as I was leaving Amarillo for a while. I could see the sun like a big golden circle as it was setting. By the time I got home, it was black dark. I pretty much fully unloaded the car into the house and did a few little things before leaving again. I went over to Rudy's for dinner, getting a nice big turkey sandwich, some hot potatoes, a drink, a little block of cheese, and a chocolate pudding for dessert. (I took the pudding home to eat later, and the cheese for another day to make quesadillas.) This fully finished the trip to Amarillo for the WRCA Ranch Rodeo Finals!

Trip Summary

Like last year, I thought the ranch rodeo finals were well done and done in first class everything! It seemed well organized and well executed with no apparent confusion or shortcomings. Everything was done right. Even the officials were laid back and easy going, not at all stuffy, even though they were obviously very busy continually. As my second time to go to the finals, I'm happy to be a member of and support the WRCA!

**2023 Lakota Charger
4 Horse Trailer**

\$117,500

TRAILER

- All aluminum
- Pre painted white aluminum skin
- 8' wide x 35' long box x 7'8" tall
- Drop down windows
- 3 mangers with 3 access doors
- Electric brakes on both axles
- GVWR weight: 16,000 lbs
- Empty weight: 12,425lbs
- 17.5" aluminum wheels
- 44" side ramp
- Stall width measurements (wall measurements) 40"-39"-39"-48"
- Insulated and lined ceiling and walls
- Power awning
- Double leg hydraulic jacks
- 7'6" hay rack with landing
- 3.6KW LP Onan Generator

LIVING QUARTER

- 15' LQ conversion by Lakota w/ flush floor slide out
- Slide contains 6.0 refrigerator and 74" long x 46" wide dinette
- Sofa sleeper on drop wall
- Insulated floor
- Queen mattress in bedroom
- 2 burner cooktop
- 32" flat screen tv
- 15,000 BTU air conditioner ducted
- 20,000 BTU ducted LP furnace
- 6 gallon hot water heater
- Double door hanging closets
- 32" neosangle shower with skylight
- Dormetic toilet
- Digital thermostat
- Simulated hardwood inoleum floor

Coolhorse

That's not a horse trailer, that's a mortgage!



Ranch Rodeo Finals

Pokey The Clown

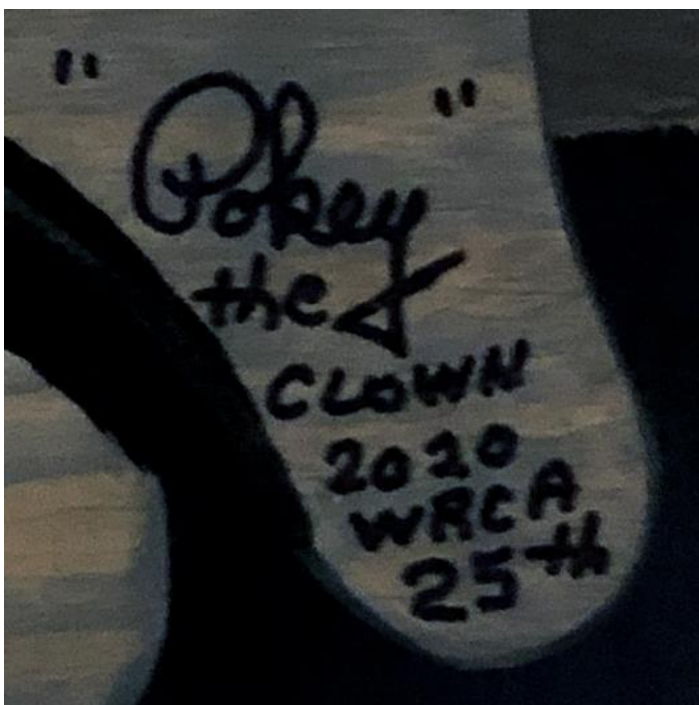
Per the WRCA website, “Pokey” the Clown, aka Doug Smith, has long been a fixture at the World Championship Ranch Rodeo, having hosted his Junior Ranch Rodeo World Championship there for 18 years. Pokey is also a tireless fundraiser for the Working Ranch Cowboys Foundation.”

He “hung his spurs” in 2015 in helping out with the junior ranch rodeos, but still continued doing other work for the WRCF. One thing he always did was to hand make wood stick horses for the kids competing. This was also the case for 2020, having made a large batch of them. But for reasons still not clear to me, the stick horses went unused even though the adult finals in 2020 still went on that November. So then at the finals in 2021, he had them for sale by his truck in the halls outside of the arena. He had a wide variety of horse colors. I bought one, one of the few that were left, and named him Gruillo. (Gruillo is a color of horse in the gray range.)

I did catch up to him at this year’s rodeo, and briefly asked him about the horses, but in all of the noise and activity, I forgot what he said about them.



Pokey the Clown, Doug Smith, helping out in the arena in 2021 picking up flank straps.



Ranch Rodeo Finals

Scenes from Around The Parking Lot



Do you think we are in Texas?



Eat Beef.



Could this be a cowboy work truck?

Ranch Rodeo Finals

The Adult Events

Ranch Bronc Riding



Stray Gathering



Wild Cow Milking



Sorting



Team Branding



Ranch Rodeo Finals

The Youth Events

Branding



Doctoring



Sorting



Wild Steer Race



Trailer Loading



Bug Ranch

Thursday, November 10, 2022 – Going To The Bug Ranch

The forecast for the next few days showed much colder and cloudy. So, I decided that since the weather was nice today, I would go find a place called the Bug Ranch. If you recall from last year, I went to the Cadillac Ranch and to Combine City, both are things half buried into the ground at an angle. The Bug Ranch is basically the same thing, but with Volkswagens half buried in the ground at an angle. This Bug Ranch is not exactly a formal attraction in as much as it is like a roadside attraction. It is in a little town called Conway, a little less than 30 minutes or 30 miles away from Amarillo to the east on I-40. Leaving from the motel, the drive was pretty straightforward, but the interstate was somewhat crowded, especially with the many big trucks traveling through.

The Bug Ranch was just a little off the exit from interstate in an area with some other buildings. The area was rather rough looking, and it looked like someone had been doing dirt work and some cleanup of the grounds. I walked over to where the cars were and first saw a big metal sign saying Bug Ranch. I

then went around and looked at the five cars getting photos. While I was there, a few people stopped and left. The site was pretty cool, but the cars were stripped out and covered in graffiti, much like how the Cadillac Ranch is too. In fact, everything on the property was covered inside and out with graffiti. I suppose with it being just off the interstate, people must think it's okay to spray paint everything just because you can do it at the Cadillac Ranch! There were signs everywhere saying private property no trespassing, but obviously people ignored them!



Bug Ranch

The site had several buildings. One building looked like a three bay mechanic shop with gas station, like what you'd find in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. Another building looked like a quick store that possibly had a café. The building next to it looked like it was a residence, and another building behind all of these buildings and behind a fence looked like another old residence. These buildings have long been abandoned. Also, I don't think there's much more to this little town of Conway, if it is even an actual town, but the bug ranch and a few other businesses on both sides of I-40. But this area is really close to the old Route 66 at about 2000 feet away to the south. I was there for maybe 15 or 20 minutes to look around and get photos before I left back to Amarillo.



When assembling your automobile kit, make sure to read the directions first to avoid disasters like this!

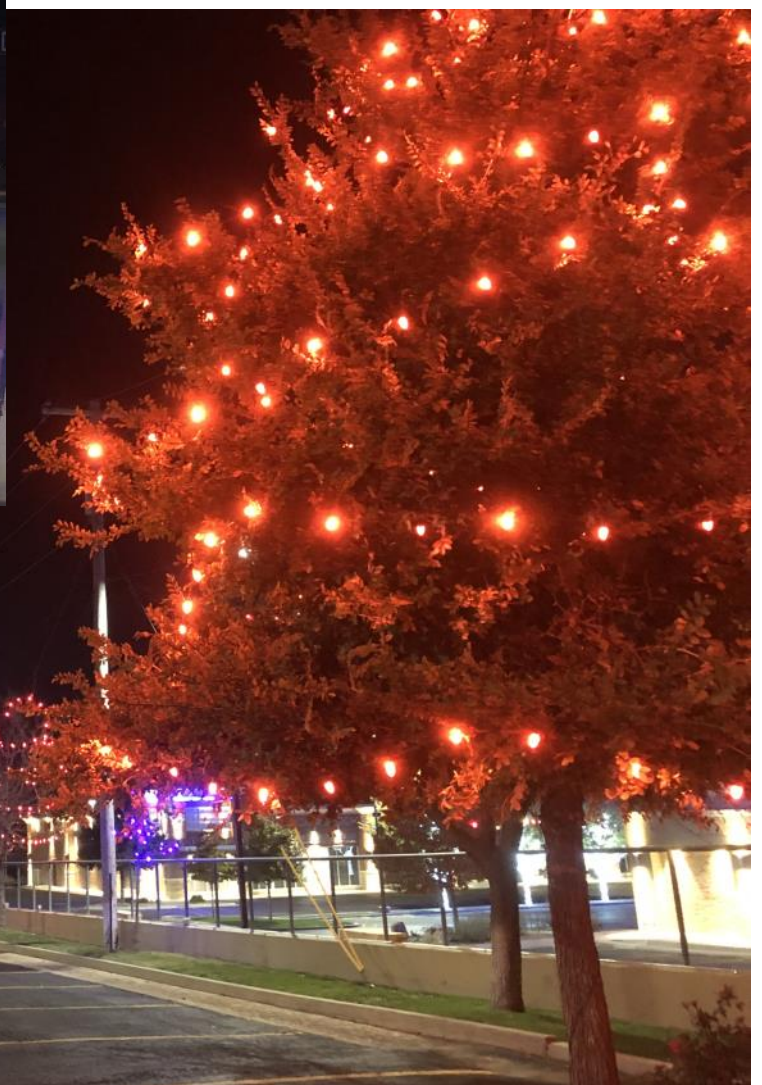
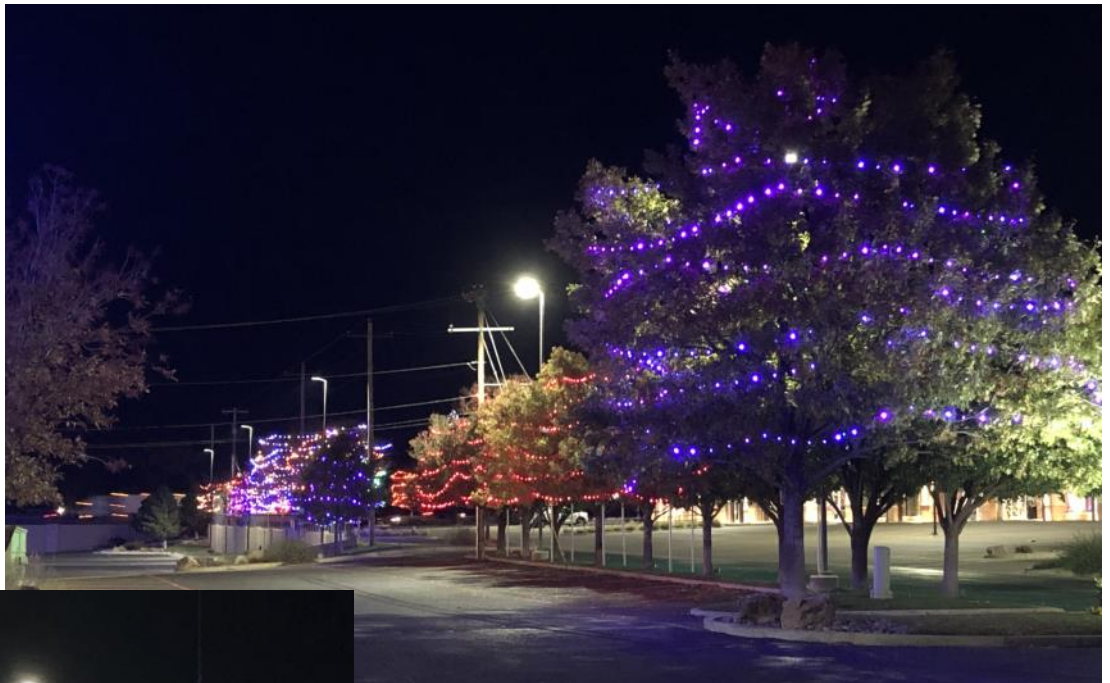
Remember these?



Around Amarillo

These lights were in an area called Wolflin Square at I-27 and Georgia Street in Amarillo.

This was in the evening of November 12, 2022.



Future of Agriculture

Future of Rural Texas Event by Texas Tribune

I attended a symposium of sorts in Lubbock on Thursday, November 17, 2022. A nonprofit news organization called *Texas Tribune* sponsored this event, and it was on the campus of Texas Tech University. The event was called The Future of Rural Texas and started the evening of November 17 and continued the next morning until the mid afternoon. The Thursday event was held at the Allen Theatre of the Student Union building, while the Friday part of the event was at the McKenzie-Merkel Alumni Center also on campus.

I first heard about this event in an email I got back in mid August. They described the event as “Learn how leaders in rural communities and around the state are taking on big issues that matter to rural Texans over two days of thoughtful panel conversations, one-on-one interviews, and more.” While I thought these issues did not affect me directly, I did not want to be ignorant either about the things going on around me, especially as a resident! It was free, so I thought why not and signed up to go. They had a long list of sponsors, which is obviously why the event was free. Indeed, I did learn about a bunch of things that I had no idea were even issues around here and beyond!

They had various presentations by companies in different parts of town earlier in the day Thursday, but I just went to the event in the evening and the next day. In the Allen Theatre, the kick off event was mainly a round table discussion on stage by the moderator with three state representatives. The moderator was the owner (technically CEO) of the *Texas Tribune*, Evan Smith. He asked some really good and revealing questions to the representatives from three different districts, and they would answer about their challenges on the things facing their districts. No doubt that the discussions were heavily political in nature just because that’s how it worked out. To be honest, I really had no idea who these people were, but if they were in elected position of state government, I did not want to be ignorant. The discussion lasted for just over an hour followed by heavy hors d’oeuvres, including a taco bar, in the foyer. The evening was rather cold.



The welcome with opening remarks.



Evan Smith of Texas Tribune with three Texas state representatives.



A sponsor gave away rain gauges (in the blue bags).

Future of Agriculture

The main event was Friday and started at 8:00 AM at the McKenzie-Merket Alumni Center with a breakfast of breakfast burritos, pastries, coffee, orange juice, water, etc. It was a very cold day, but the alumni building was plenty warm. The event was in a large room full of big, round tables with a stage up at the front. The room also had some large columns in the middle (I guess with just how the building was built) and so various TVs were around the room to view within the room where there was no direct sight of the stage, but also for live broadcasting of the event on the internet. (The event was in person as well as web broadcasted.) The event started at 8:30 AM, and I got there a little before it started with just enough time to find a table (in the way back) and get some breakfast. They started with a welcome and went into a recorded video presentation with United States Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. From about 9:00 AM on, the rest of the event featured six topical sessions, each about 45 to 50 minutes, covering a variety of issues facing Texas agricultural/rural lands. Each session was comprised of a Texas Tribune moderator and three or four professionals in the field relating to the topic. The moderator would ask questions and the people on the panel would answer and make

comments. The session topics were Educational Opportunity For All, Ensuring Rural Health, Getting Connected (rural internet), City Hall Confidential (featuring mayors), Preserving Natural Resources, and A Sound Economy. After the main discussion, people in the room could ask questions of the people on the stage. At noon, they provided a lunch consisting of two types of wraps with dipping dressing, pasta salad, chips, and cookies, along with iced tea, coffee, soda, water, etc. I was also able to warm myself by the nice big fire they had in the parlour with couches, chairs, and such. By the time we finished with the last session around 3:30 PM, we were pretty much ready to go home. They had lots of leftover food that they told us to take home. So, I took a couple of wraps, dressing, and cookies, along with what literature I wanted. I learned a lot of things that I was not aware of, as well as lots of things that I didn't know were even issues in rural Texas! While the event was eye opening in a lot of ways, it was quite enjoyable just to have the interaction with the various people. I was glad to go, and I did meet my goal of becoming less ignorant of things affecting the rural areas of the state, which is pretty much this half of Texas!

One of the most fun things of the day involved some giveaways! On the tables and in a few other areas, sponsors gave some literature, magazines, and these hand grip squeeze things that come in various shapes (you've seen these things before). The ones at this event were in the shape of tractors, pigs, and cows, specifically Holstein cows! Besides the cows on the tables, there were more on little tables around the building. One of the fun things that happened just sort of organically involved some cows on a side table in a hallway. When I first saw them, a few cows were just placed on the table. When I saw them, I rounded them up into a straight line (a trail line). Well apparently, the staff of the alumni center took notice of the changing arrangement of the cows and took photos every time they changed! Anytime I went by in between sessions, I would rearrange them, and other people apparently did the same thing! Eventually, the staff found out at least one

person who was messing with them (me!) and shared the photos with me. (I rather forgot to take photos as I went along until near the end.) These cows were fun to document with the different ways they were arranged. It was really funny! At the end of the event, I sucked up as many cows (and one tractor and one pig) that I could fit in my pockets!



Playing With Cows!



Texas Association of Dairymen



"Cow tipping"



Thanksgiving

Wednesday, November 23, 2022 – Driving Down

For Thanksgiving this year, I went down to the northern Hill Country area to spend the holiday with friends, as I have most years since 2016. I left on Wednesday, November 23 and returned on Saturday, November 26, 2022. The drive to where I was going takes about 3.5 hours and is a pretty straight forward drive. I left by the later afternoon, leaving a little later than I wanted from some errands I had to do before leaving. I finally got going by 4:00 PM and took FM 1585 from where I was south of town to US 84, also known as Slaton Highway. From there, the drive dead ends into I-20, which takes about two hours to go through Post, Snyder, and Roscoe, besides some other smaller named areas. Once on the interstate, the drive is just straight across to the east passing through Sweetwater, Abilene, and Cisco to

arrive in Eastland, Texas. Of course, there were many more smaller towns I drove through too. That stretch of the drive was about an hour and half, and there was beautiful sunset after I got on I-20. It was already black dark by the time I got to Eastland. So, my motel was in Eastland for the few days, and I would drive southeast from there to get to my friend's house. The forecast for most of the time I was there was rainy or overcast, and we have had rainy Thanksgivings before, but also a few clear and sunny Thanksgivings too. A short time later after I checked in, I headed over to my friend's house near De Leon for the evening, having dinner and staying a while visiting. I finally got back to the motel somewhere between 12:30 AM and 1:00 AM.

Thursday, November 24, 2022 – Thanksgiving Day

Before I left Eastland around noon, I went to get gas. At this point, the rain was pretty heavy but would lighten up as I sent down the road. I spent the first half of the day over at my friend's brother's place where their extended family spent Thanksgiving. We call this Thanksgiving number one because our Thanksgiving meal would be later in the afternoon! His brother has a little family farm of 30 acres with various fields of crops and a barnyard of animals including a few longhorns, chickens, turkeys, pigs, and a mule. This is what I remember seeing at least. We stayed until around 3:00 PM and headed back to his house where our meal was getting together.



The safe ones!



Thanksgiving

Once we got the meal all finally together, we first prayed, then helped ourselves to the food on the counter in typical family style. We had turkey, spiral honey ham, mashed potatoes, cornbread stuffing, sweet potato casserole, green bean almondine, the berryed cranberry sauce (which I never touch! and I forgot to bring my canned sauce!), gravy, and rolls, and a few other little things I am forgetting besides the snacks before the meal! Once we were happily full eating at the two tables (more people than would fit at one table), we then spread out where some talked at the table, some watched football on TV, and others went outside to do different things. After it was dark, most of us just sat around watching TV being too lazy to do much else. Once we were ready, we had a variety of desserts and some coffee to go with them. I ended up leaving a little before 10:00 PM to go to the motel, getting there around 10:30 PM.



*Everyone waiting around for the last of the food to get done!
(I'm partly to blame for not thawing the rolls out earlier!)*



This is the group for the "second Thanksgiving" taking a group selfie.

Thanksgiving

Friday, November 25, 2022 – Black Friday and Misc Stuff

Today is Black Friday. I had predecided on a couple of things I wanted to do before going back to my friend's house. The one main thing I wanted to do was go to Gebo's. I got an email from Gebo's about their sale, and I saw a few things I wanted, along with some free things they were giving away. Since I could not go to the Gebo's in Lubbock, there happened to be one in Breckenridge, their most eastern store except for one near Dallas. They have 22 stores, mostly in the Texas Panhandle. I got going about 12:30 PM. From Eastland, I drove up to Breckenridge, about 30 minutes to the north, on a couple of roads. Once I got there, I drove up and down the main road looking for it, forgetting to find it on a map ahead of time. I finally did find it at the opposite end of town, of course! I didn't realize that Breckenridge was a town of about 5000 to 6000 people, a good bit larger than I thought and of the other little towns in the area. I spent about 30 minutes looking around for the things I predecided I wanted intending to avoid impulse buying! There was one free item that I was too late to get because they ran out, but I got everything else I planned. By the time I left, I knew I wanted to get some lunch so that I would not be growling by the time I would get to my friend's house. I asked for a couple of recommendations from the people at Gebo's and set out to find them. The one option was closed, so I went with another option, specifically a Mexican food place. I can be leery about going to unknown restaurants, especially ones like Mexican, Chinese, etc, particularly for how I might make me feel later after eating it, if it would somehow bother me. The place was called Mi Familia. It looked like a family run place. This was a good Mexican restaurant. It tasted really good and everything was fresh! Even the refried beans were homemade! I went with the chicken fajitas that came with chips, tortillas, rice, beans, guac, sour cream, and drink. I would definitely eat there again whenever I am in the area. So far, the rain was on and off and varied throughout the day. Once done, I took the same roads back to Eastland, and got on Highway 6 towards my friend's house since I had no reason to go back to the motel.



Gebo's is an agricultural store based out of Plainview, Texas and found mostly in the Texas Panhandle. They currently have 20 retail stores.



Mi Familia's Mexican Restaurant in Breckenridge.

Thanksgiving

Once I got to their house, I parked and noticed that he was working on a homestead project, or more like a maintenance project. I took some time to get a few more photos with Bluecat (like I did at his brother's house on Thanksgiving, see more elsewhere in this journal).

He asked me if I could help with a couple of things around the farm. So, we took the truck and got a round bale and took it over to the pasture. He set it down, and I got the wrapping off while he went over to get the hay ring that was stuck in the mud. I had to shoo off the rude cows until I could get all of the wrap off! Cows are always gluttonous! Then he fast and furiously spread out the muck from the previous ring location. I mean it was flying everywhere! Ha, ha... We went back over to the shed to put the tools

away. Then, he wanted to go to town, that is to De Leon, to get some things. By this point, it was just getting dark. He got gas, we got some drinks, and stopped at a local store called Stockman's. There are several related names of companies, so I'm not sure exactly which one this was, but they did have a lot of clothes and other ranch supplies. He needed something, and I look around and found one item I wanted. We went back to the house and spent the rest of the evening piddling or sitting around or playing games or watching TV or just talking or whatever, along with eating some snacks. We did watch the Waltons Thanksgiving movie, the one from 1982 that was set in 1947. It was a good movie, but set in a date much later than the original TV series taking place during the Great Depression 1930s. I left around 11:30 PM and headed back to the motel.

Saturday, November 26, 2022 – Slowly Heading Back Home

Today is the last day of my Thanksgiving trip, but I did not leave home right away. I got the car loaded up and checked out around 11:00 AM and took some time to gather my thoughts before I went into Eastland proper. I first stopped at a local doughnut place for, well, a doughnut but also got a bacon egg and cheese croissant. Then further down the road, I stopped at the local Brookshire to get gas. Catty corner to the station was the Eastland County Courthouse. I decided to go over there and visit Old Rip! Now Old Rip was a horny toad that has some questionable history that ultimately was probably a marketing gimmick! (Read later about that.) I got a few photos again as I did back in the 2000s. From there, I got back on Highway 6 over to their house. I was in a somewhat strange mood, partly wanting to stay and do something and partly just wanting to leave and go home as if I was overstaying a welcome. I did stay for a little while and loaded up on some leftover food and a few other things before finally leaving a little before 3:00 PM. I left his house and took Highway 6 back up to I-20.



Thanksgiving

Old Rip—The Horny Toad

You can read the story about Old Rip from nearly a hundred years ago. The story about a sudden awakening from a 30 year slumber is sketchy at best!

These horny toads are technically called “Texas horned lizard” and were once prolific.



The casket with Old Rip.

“OLD RIP” - In 1897 when the cornerstone of the new Courthouse was dedicated, Earnest Wood, Justice of the Peace, who was a member of the Band, noticed his son, Will Wood, playing with a horned toad. The idea came to him to place the toad in the cornerstone. They named him ‘Old Rip’ and he lived peacefully in this cornerstone until February 28, 1928, when the courthouse was demolished to make way for a new one. Three thousand persons were on hand to watch the opening of the cornerstone to see how ‘Old Rip’ had fared. Judge Ed S. Pritchard removed the Bible and other objects, and at the bottom was the toad. Eugene Day, an oil man, thrust his hand into the cavity and lifted up the flat dust-covered toad. He handed it to Frank S. Singleton, pastor of the First Methodist Church, who passed the critter on to Judge Pritchard. Judge Pritchard held him up by his tail for all to see. Suddenly ‘Old Rip’ awoke from his 31 year slumber. “Old Rip” was exhibited in various parts of the United States, including a visit to President Coolidge in Washington. “Old Rip” died of pneumonia on Saturday, January 19, 1929. His body was embalmed and can be seen today in its plush-lined casket, as it is displayed in the lobby of Eastland County’s beautiful courthouse.

**-ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE-
EAST SIDE OF SQUARE**

Along the way on Highway 6, I stopped briefly in Gorman along the way to go back and look at an old depot structure I remember seeing. I stopped for a few minutes and got some photos. Then, I got up to I-20 and went west and continued past Abilene until I got to the little town of Merkel. There was an interesting gas station I remember seeing last year that I wanted to stop at. The place was called Iron Horse Travel Center, appropriately name because it is located right next to some train tracks. It seemed to me like it was a Buc-ee’s wannabe! I stopped for a bathroom break and to look around. I did buy a couple of things, but they were rather expensive overall. I went there once, I’ll probably not stop again.



Before I left their house, I noticed these dirty paw prints! (They have several cats.)

Thanksgiving



Iron Horse Travel Plaza in Merkel, Texas.



Old Gorman depot. Below shows where tracks were.



From there, I drove straight back to Lubbock. The only other stop I made was northwest of Snyder at the entrance of the Covered S Ranch. This ranch is owned by the same people who owns CarpetTech and the other business variations in Lubbock. The sun was setting with a nice sunset before I got to Lubbock. Once in Lubbock and even before I got back to the house, I stopped at the Chick-fil-A near my house for dinner since I did not have much to eat prior today. By this point, it was already dark. I knew what I wanted. I got a large chicken noodle soup and some nuggets, along with some tea. Once I got home, I got most everything unloaded into the house. With that, my Thanksgiving trip was done. It was another good Thanksgiving weekend, and I felt very pleased and content about it.



Covered S Ranch in Scurry County and Garza County.

Bluecat Travels

For Thanksgiving, I decided to do a little adventure series using the below as the face of the theme. This is Bluecat! It is a wood carving made in Thailand that I bought from Pier 1 about 30 years ago. Enjoy!



“Bluecat says this longhorn cow has a great pattern (hard to see in this photo, though).”



*“Bluecat is ready to go a trip!
But he says that I need to dust my car!”*



“Hey! Looks good!”



“Bluecat likes this field.”



“Bluecat took a ride on the horsey swing.”

Bluecat Travels



"Hmmm... walking beef."



"The ones that got away."



"Another nice field Bluecat likes."



"Getting warmed up on the cold dreary day."



"Bluecat is wondering what RG is making."



"They keep following me!"

Final Thought

de Stolfe Journal.....



Merry Christmas!
Happy New Year!

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