

## Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Association Derby



# Tied at **The Top**

**Son of top-notch reining stallion Oak Ill Be Peppy and Morgan Cromer tie with hot cutter's daughter My Lizzy Babe and Tim Smith for the PCCHA Derby Open title.** Article by Mark Thompson • Action photos by Midge Ames

**A**mare Tim Smith identified as a top-notch prospect during her slow debut and a gelding Morgan Cromer talked reining trainer Todd Bergen into selling last fall tied as Derby Open Co-Champions with 220s as the Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Association Derby ended March 13 in Paso Robles, Calif.

Oak Ill Be Peppy and Cromer, who trains cutting horses in nearby Templeton, Calif., marked their 220 from a No. 2 draw in the nine-horse finals to earn their \$12,071 share of event Champion's money. They also picked up two more checks as Gelding Champion and \$10,000 Novice Co-Champions to earn a combined \$16,575 for owner Karen Brody, Bell Canyon, Calif. Brody also placed third in the Derby Amateur division and finished No. 2 in the Gelding divi-

sion on Oak Ill Be Peppy a day earlier to earn a combined \$1,811.

My Lizzy Babe, owned by John Kratzer, Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., and Smith, Temecula, Calif., also tied as Co-Champions in the \$10,000 Novice while earning a combined \$14,389. Lizzys Gotta Player sired My Lizzy Babe, and the Co-Champion mare is out of the Docs Stylish Oak mare Moms Stylish Babe. Retired reiner and stallion Skeets Peppy sired Oak Ill Be Peppy. His dam is an Ill Be Smart mare, Oak Ill Be.

Cromer, 27, a rising star among young PCCHA trainers, didn't mind tying Smith, 53, one of her longtime mentors and a top showman who ended 2010 with more than \$5 million in career cutting earnings.

"If there's anybody you want to be tied with, it's him," Cromer said. "And that's a phenomenal mare. To

tie with her is just outstanding."

Smith was competing at the NCHA Futurity in Fort Worth during late fall, where he made the Open finals while catch-riding another horse, when he recognized My Lizzy Babe, trained for the Futurity by Matt Budge, Weatherford, Texas, as a horse with big-win potential. He approached Kratzer, who had teamed with him in buying and developing another standout mare, Frecklesareinstyle, and suggested they try again with My Lizzy Babe. The mare and Budge showed strong potential but didn't hit it big during the NCHA Futurity.

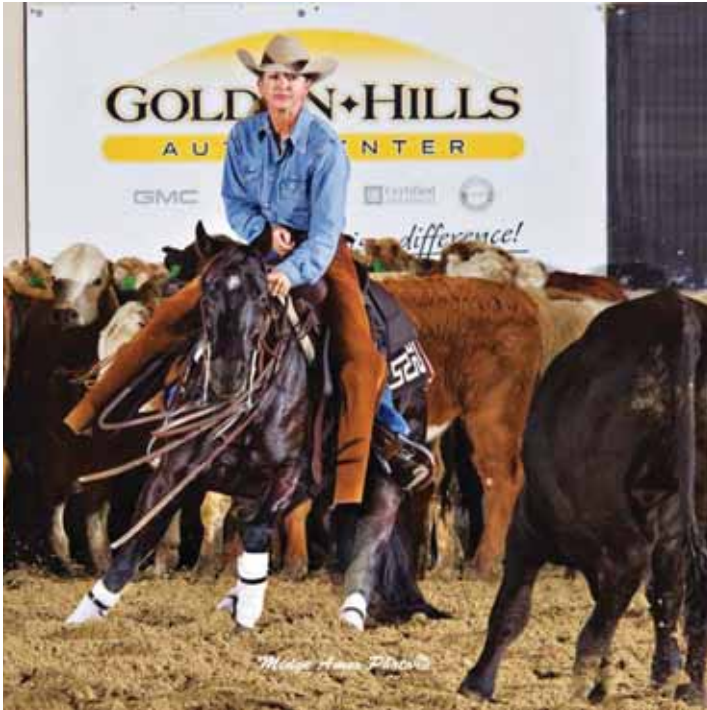
"She's my pride and joy," Smith said. "John [Kratzer] wanted another good 4-year-old mare. I brought her home from Fort Worth

[in December], so we were three months into our relationship." Smith brought My Lizzy Babe back to Fort Worth for spring's NCHA Super Stakes.

Under PCCHA Derby rules in a final-round tie, Smith and Cromer had the option of competing in a winner-take-all work-off for accompanying prizes, but the rules also state that tying contestants in all PCCHA Derby finals share the top two cash prizes equally.

Smith battled a sore back late in the show and didn't want to ride again in a work-off. Cromer also didn't want a work-off, partly because she knew about Smith's back, because Oak Ill Be Peppy pulled double duty all week with Cromer and her owner, Brody.

**(Top left) Oak Ill Be Peppy and Morgan Cromer tied for the Derby Open title with a 220. (Top right) My Lizzy Babe and Tim Smith were Derby Open Co-Champions with a 220.**



Janet Westfall and Duck On A Chain won the Derby Non-Pro with a 219.

## Derby Non-Pro

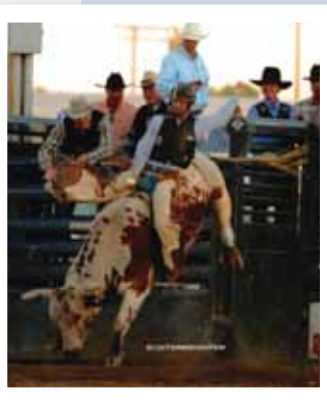
When Janet Westfall found out two mares she'd qualified for the March 12 Derby Non-Pro finals would compete No. 1 and No. 3 in the eight-horse draw, she had "a pretty good feeling."

She felt even better after winning with a 219 on Duck On A Chain and placing second with a 218 on A Royal Dual. The 1-2 finish netted the Los Olivos, Calif., Non-Pro Hall of Fame rider and career earner of more than \$900,000 two checks totaling \$9,631.

Duck On A Chain, sired by Blue

Duck Okie, out of the Dual Pep mare Zippity Dual, won from the third draw while competing at her first show with Westfall. Janet's husband, cutting horse trainer Russ Westfall, bought "Quack" during December's 2010 NCHA Futurity in Fort Worth, with one of his training clients in mind. He ended up keeping the mare for his wife and the couple's 10-year-old son, Brandon, to compete with this year.

Whitney Hall, the teenage daughter of Oklahoma cutting



Mr. Smith, a bucking bull owned by California cutter Tim Smith, has thrown the first six riders who hopped on his back and has a shot at a full-time rodeo career.

—Photo by Laurie Errington – Scootemshootem

## Mr Smith Might Go To Rodeo

A 4-year-old bull with a mean streak and a shot at eventually battling top pro bull riders started out as a weanling calf in Temecula, Calif., trainer Tim Smith's cutting pen.

The red-and-white speckled bull, owned by Smith and promoted by Westcoast Bucking Bulls, Anza, Calif., bears a prominent TS brand and is named Mr Smith.

Westcoast Bucking Bulls owner Nick Nuciforo renamed the young bull before his first competition, as an inside joke with his partner and friend, and the name stuck. Smith had originally named the bull "Klondike," as a tribute to a deceased dog that he once owned.

"It's fun," the bull's namesake cutting trainer said. "Nick keeps calling and telling me where he's going to buck. I've only seen him once, but he bucks. He darn sure bucks."

As a weanling, when he was about 4 or 5 months old, Mr Smith, the bucking bull, took a few turns in the cutting pen. Tim Smith, the cutter, remembers them well.

"He was mean," Smith said. "He'd run you out of the pen and run at the horses. If you got off your horse, he'd run your butt up that fence."

Nuciforo reports that Mr Smith, born in early 2007, now weighs about 1,100 pounds and has a great shot at making it as a pro rodeo bucking bull. He's already earned about \$8,000 at bull derbies and he's tossed the first six riders who hopped on his back. He also won a 2010 Central Coast Derby Bucking Championship in Paso Robles.

"At the end of the year, he'll be on television, bucking on the

Professional Bull Riders tour," Nuciforo predicted.

"It was kind of a joke. Now it's a riot."

Mr Smith's breeding is interesting, too. Boo Boo Berry, the proven bucking bull that sired him, hopped a fence to complete an unscheduled introduction to Mr Smith's mom.

"Barbed wire didn't keep him from his chosen one," Smith said. "She's just an old grey cow. She didn't have a name. Now, she's known as 'Mr Smith's mom.' I told Nick, 'She's getting up there in age. We might want to sell her.' He said, 'Oh, no. We can't sell her.' It's just like horses. You don't know what's going to work. She didn't have a mean bone in her body. She's just a big old gentle cow." —MT

## PCCHA Derby/Classic/Challenge

Paso Robles, CA — March 5-13, 2011  
421 Entries — \$106,000 Added — \$299,113 Total Purse  
Event/Horse/Rider/Pedigree/Owner/Score/Money  
\*Co-Champions

DERBY OPEN	
My Lizzy Babe	Tim Smith *
07M (Lizzys Gotta Player x Moms Stylish Babe x Docs Stylish Oak)	
John Kratzer	220 \$12,071
Oak III Be Peppy	Morgan Cromer*
07G (Skeets Peppy x Oak III Be x III Be Smart)	
Karen Brody	220 \$12,071

### DERBY NON-PRO

Duck On A Chain	Janet Westfall
07M (Blue Duck Okie x Zippity Dual x Dual Pep)	
Russ & Janet Westfall	219 \$5,037
\$200,000 DERBY NON-PRO	
For Instance	Katie Fonsen Young
07G (SR Instant Choice x Travalen Tessie x Travalena)	
Katie Fonsen Young	213 \$4,415
\$50,000 DERBY NON-PRO	
Smooth Lil Remedy	Ron Faris
07M (Smooth As A Cat x Remedy For Sweets x Grays Starlight)	
Ron Faris	213 \$1,244

### CLASSIC/CHALLENGE OPEN CHAMPION & RESERVE (Finals Workoff)

My Lil Lanta	Bonnie Johnson
05M (Mylanta Lena x Twinkle Lil San x Grays Starlight)	
George R. Hearst Jr.	219 - 219 \$11,899
Sway Cat	Gavin Jordan
06G (High Brow Cat x Doc O Lilly x Doc O Lena)	
Melissa Corcoran	219 - 216 \$11,899
CLASSIC/CHALLENGE NON-PRO	
Light N Lindy	Bonnie Martin
06M (Light N Lena x PCR Hickory Lena x Doc's Hickory)	
Frank & Bonnie Martin	220 \$6,078
\$200,000 CLASSIC/CHALLENGE NON-PRO	
Smart Michealangelo	Roger Booth
05G (Doc O Wena x Smart Masterpiece x Smart Little Lena)	
Roger Booth	219 \$4,825

### \$50,000 CLASSIC/CHALLENGE AMATEUR

His Reflection	Traci Shehady
05G (Dual Rey x Sweet Short Lena x Shorty Lena)	
Traci & Daniel Shehady	217 \$2,714
SENIOR YOUTH	
Sweet Pepto Lena	Ryan Denier
06G (Sweet Lil Pepto x Dox King Becky 095 x King Peppy San)	
Ryan Denier	218.5 \$131
JUNIOR YOUTH	
Miss Rip N Dual	Brooke White
00M (Mister Dual Pep x Rips Playgirl x Rips Sport Model)	
Casey & Dan White	212 \$55

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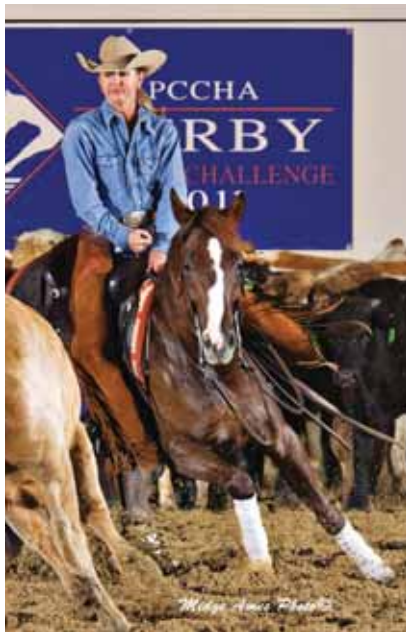
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trainer Shannon Hall, had guided Duck On A Chain to a third-place finish in the Limited Non-Pro finals at the NCHA Futurity to earn all of the mare's \$10,054 in prior career earnings. "Quack" and Janet Westfall picked up \$5,037.

The tough mare, named partly after her sire and partly after a well-known bucking bull, was also scheduled to compete with Janet and Brandon Westfall at the National Cutting Horse Association Super Stakes in Fort Worth, Texas in early spring.

Janet Westfall and A Royal Dual (CD Royal x Miss Dual Pepto x Peptoboonsmal) placed second from their No. 1 draw after setting the bar high with an early 218. They had placed 15th in the Non-Pro finals at December's NCHA Futurity to earn \$22,269.

Westfall never practiced with Duck On A Chain prior to competing with her for the first time and



(Left) Janet Westfall and A Royal Dual were Derby Non-Pro Reserve Champions. (Right) Playin For Cats and Carol Ward won Derby Non-Pro Gelding and Derby Non-Pro \$10,000 Novice titles while also placing third in the Derby Non-Pro finals.

## Derby Open Co-Champion Sires Took Different Roads To Success



**S**tallions Skeets Peppy (left) and Lizzys Gotta Player (right) both were born in 1995, and both were solid performance horse competitors, but until recently, that's all they had in common.

That changed on March 13 as 2007 gelding Oak III Be Peppy (Skeets Peppy x Oak III Be x III Be Smart) and 2007 mare My Lizzy Babe finished as Derby Open Co-Champions during the 2011 PCCHA Derby in Paso Robles, Calif., with twin 220 scores.

Lizzys Gotta Player (Freckles Playboy x Lizzielena x Doc O'Lena), a career earner of \$107,607 during his own cutting days, had sired cutting foals that had earned more than \$700,000 through early 2011.

Skeets Peppy (Peppy San Badger x Tivios Miss

Skeet x Right On Tivio) earned \$84,506 as a reiner. He had already produced reining and cow horse competitors that had earned more than \$700,000, but until recently, his few cutting foals had not earned much.

Oak III Be Peppy was originally trained and ridden by Todd Bergen, Eagle Point, Ore. Bergen is much more well-known for his combined success in training and riding reining and working cow horses, but Oak III Be Peppy carried the \$3.2 million earner to his top check as a cutter thus far, \$917, at October's 2010 PCCHA Futurity in Paso Robles. The duo finished as Reserve Champions in the Futurity Limited Open.

Oak III Be Peppy's owner, Karen Brody, Canyon, Calif., also has competed well with the gelding since late last fall. She eventually transferred him to cutting trainer Morgan Cromer, Templeton, Calif. Cromer guided the horse to the South Point Futurity Open finals in early fall but then let Bergen ride him one more time in late October.

Skeets Peppy competed as a reiner, but it

shouldn't shock many people that he has also passed along some quality cutting traits. His breeders, Lonnie and Barbara Allsup, Clovis, N.M., have bred many standout cutters. And Skeets Peppy's sire, Peppy San Badger, won the 1977 National Cutting Horse Futurity Open with Buster Welch. Skeets Peppy's dam, 1989 mare Tivios Miss Skeet, earned \$17,549 cutting as a 4-year-old.

Oak III Be Peppy's dam, 1999 mare Oak III Be (III Be Smart x Gypsy Oak x Doc's Oak) earned \$50,517 as a working cow horse. She also tied for the go-round lead while competing in herd work with Bergen during the 2005 World's Greatest Horseman event.

Vaughn Zimmerman, Springfield, Mo., owned Skeets Peppy during his reining career and until recently. The University of Wisconsin, River Falls, Wis., has owned the stallion since Dec. 7, according to American Quarter Horse Association records.

Oxbow Ranch, Weatherford, Texas, headed by NCHA Hall of Fame cutting trainer Lindy Burch, bred Lizzys Gotta Player and transferred him as a young foal to Charles Drummond, Pawhuska, Okla., owner of Drummond Land And Cattle Co. Tim Drummond, also based in Pawhuska, later purchased the stallion and continues to own him. —MT



My Lil Lanta Lena and Bonnie Johnson won the Classic/Challenge Open with a 219 plus a 219 work-off effort. (Lower left) Sway Cat and Gavin Jordan were Classic/Challenge Open Reserve Champions, and they won the Classic/Challenge Open Gelding division to earn a big payday. (Lower right) CD Headlight and Morgan Cromer finished fourth in the Classic/Challenge Open and won the \$10,000 Novice division while competing at their first limited-age show.

winning with the small black mare in Paso Robles. "I never swung a leg over her until I walked to the herd here, other than loping her."

That's a routine she usually sticks with, Westfall said. She trusts her husband, Russ, to have

any horses they co-own ready to roll when she rides them at a show. Russ and Janet Westfall will celebrate their 15th anniversary in July. Their routine as husband-and-wife cutters seems to work pretty well, Russ Westfall said.

"She's got her hands full putting up with me and Brandon. The horse-show deal is pretty easy," Russ Westfall said. "She goes to the shows and she knows my horses. She rides great. It's been a good combination for a long time."

She does sometimes ride turn-back horses while assisting her husband at home, and she'll hop on younger cutting prospects sometimes way before their show career starts, but she almost never practices with horses that are farther along in their cutting training.

"I never practice in a practice pen," Westfall said. "I think that would take all my confidence away and my horse would deteriorate."

Veteran cutting rider and El Rancho Futurity limited-age producer Carol Ward, Rancho Murieta, Calif., finished third on her gelding Playin For Cats to earn \$4,151. They also earned two more checks as Non-Pro Derby Gelding and \$10,000 Novice Champions to actually out-earn Westfall and Duck On A Chain with a combined \$6,727.

Playin For Cats, sired by Cats Merada and out of the Freckles Playboy mare Playing Easy, had previously earned \$3,311. He also probably competed for the last time with Ward at this show. She thought she had sold the promising horse, pending the prospective owner's ability to vet check and sell another horse first.

## Classic/Challenge Open

Following their third strong run of the week at the PCCHA Derby, a 219 from the leadoff draw in the March 13 Classic/Challenge Open finals, My Lil Lanta Lena, a mare owned by Paso Robles resident George R. Hearst Jr., had been cooled down, rinsed off and put back in her stall to enjoy a well-earned rest.

That rest didn't last long. The horse's trainer and rider, Bonnie Johnson, resident trainer at George and Sue Hearst's Estrella Ranch in Paso Robles the past seven years, and an employee there about twice as long, opted for a work-off with the first career limited-age title for the 6-year-old mare (Mylanta Lena x Twinkle Lil San x Grays Starlight) and the rider on the line.

Sway Cat, a 5-year-old gelding (High Brow Cat x Doc O Lilly x Doc O Lena) owned by Melissa Corcoran, Alamo, Calif., and Wilton, Calif., trainer Gavin Jordan matched My Lil Lanta Lena and Johnson's early 219 while competing from the seventh slot in the eight-horse finals. They rode back into the arena first during the work-off and set the bar high with a 216.

My Lil Lanta and Johnson then jumped over that bar with another 219 to earn \$11,899 and more importantly, the Champion's trophy and buckle that went along





Bonnie Martin and Light N Lindy won a Classic/Challenge Non-Pro Championship. (Below) Erin Bimat and Smokin Cat Wacky were Classic/Challenge Non-Pro Reserve Champions.



with it. Sway Cat, also the event's Gelding division champion, actually earned more money (an extra \$1,757), despite losing out on the Championship prizes.

Johnson and Hearst had no doubts about competing in the work-off, something riders can opt to compete in or not after any final-round tie during PCCHA Derby events.

"If you pay your entry fee, you go to win," Hearst said. The mare had finished as a Reserve Champion at a limited-age event last summer after she also competed in a preliminary round earlier that same day.

"I think maybe she kind of likes that deal [competing twice a day]," Johnson said.

While finishing just short of winning the title, Jordan wasn't disappointed with Sway Cat's overtime effort, either.

"He was really tough," Jordan said of the horse owned by Melissa Corcoran, Alamo, Calif., who also had marked a 218.5 in the second

(Left) Janeen Sanchietti and Gussied Up Cat made the Classic/Challenge Non-Pro finals and won the \$10,000 Novice division.

round. "He's honest every time. He's just a really good horse."

Jordan, 41, a native Australian, and his wife, Rebecca, have been married 18 years and they've worked and lived in Wilton, Calif., 12 years.

Sway Cat, a horse with several smaller futurity finals appearances and a semifinalist during late fall's PCHA Futurity in Paso Robles, will continue the search for his first win.

"He's getting strong and smarter and quicker," Jordan said.

### Classic/Challenge Non-Pro Champion

Las Vegas, Nev., NCHA and PCCHA Non-Pro Hall of Fame member Bonnie Martin rode into the pen last with her battle-tested mare Light N Lindy and rode out with a 220 to claim the Classic/Challenge Non-Pro Championship title and a \$6,078 check.

Orland, Calif., trainer's wife Erin Bimat and 6-year-old gelding Smokin Cat Wacky withstood six prior challenges during the eight-horse finals after marking a 218 from the first draw and settled for a Reserve Champion finish..

The 5-year-old mare Martin simply calls "Lindy" is a horse she and her husband, Frank, purchased from longtime Millsap, Texas, Non-Pro rider and horse breeder Billy Martin (no relation). Billy Martin's stallion, Light N Lena, sired Bonnie Martin's latest in a long line of solid cutting partners. She's out of a Doc's Hickory mare, PCR Hickory.

Tim Smith has been training the mare for Martin and he assisted in the arena during her winning run, along with Morgan Cromer, who tied Smith as the Derby Open's Champion rider later that day. Gavin Jordan and Russ Westfall helped Martin, too.

"The most important thing is when you're down there, it's not a one-man show," Martin said. "It's all about your team. Morgan and Tim were there and kind of kept me on track of where the cattle were. Everything changes. They can pick them out."

### \$200,000 Limited Non-Pro Champion

Katie Fonsen Young, Windsor, Calif., and For Instance, the horse who carried her to a PCCHA Non-Pro Futurity Championship in October, failed in their quest to earn a March PCHA Derby Non-Pro title, but they did capture the \$200,000 Limited Non-Pro title with a 213 to earn \$4,415 and they also picked up \$937 as the division's Gelding Champions.

Tiffani Banuelos, Jacksboro, Texas, finished second with a 212 to earn \$3,886 with This Spotz Taken, a gelding (Spots Hot x Lacy Jo Lena x Doc O'Lena) that the rider purchased from her son, Las Vegas, Nev., trainer Adan Banuelos.

For Instance, sired by SR Instant Choice and out of a Travalena mare, Travalen Tessie, goes by the barn name "Radar" because of antenna-like ears passed on to him by his sire. Young's father, retired cutting trainer Stan Fonsen, trains Radar and Katie's mother, Marti Fonsen, warms the horse up in the back pen before he competes at each cutting.

Young, 27, will celebrate her first wedding anniversary on June 19. Her husband, vineyard grape grower Brent Young, recently joined her as a cutting competitor and he has fared well during his early efforts, his wife said.

### \$50,000 Derby Amateur Champion

While he had achieved success in the past riding older cutting horses, including a Western Nationals title two years ago, Ronald Faris, Gresham, Ore., admitted he's still got a lot to learn about riding younger horses.

In fact, the 2011 PCCHA Derby was the first limited-age show Faris competed at. He passed his first test with flying colors on March 12 by guiding his 4-year-old mare Smooth Lil Remedy to a 213 and a Derby Amateur Championship – the first limit-



Katie Fonsen Young and For Instance won the \$200,000 Derby Non-Pro to earn \$4,415.



Ron Faris and Smooth Lil Remedy captured the \$50,000 Derby Amateur title with a 213.



Tiffani Banuelos and This Spotz Taken finished as \$200,000 Derby Non-Pro Reserve Champions and placed eighth in the Derby Non-Pro finals.



Scott Gaddy and SG Dixie Starlight were \$50,000 Derby Amateur Reserve Champions with a 212.5.



Jerry Erwin and Smart Little Ultimo finished third in the \$200,000 Non-Pro Derby and won the Senior division.



Karen Brody and Oak III Be Peppy placed third in the Derby Amateur and won its Gelding division.

ed-age title for both horse and rider. They earned \$1,244, plus an extra \$960 for winning the event's \$25,000 Amateur class-within-a-class.

"I only showed once last year and the year before, just a few times," said Faris, a prior career earner of less than \$24,000 as a cutter who owns 10 cutting horses.

He plans to start competing more often this year.

Smooth Lil Remedy (Smooth As A Cat x Remedy For Sweets x Grays Starlight) is a horse Faris never competed with at all until the pair arriving in Paso Robles. The duo made it to the finals by posting the preliminary round's third-best score, a 207.



Alex Penovaroff and CD Lil Man won the \$50,000 Derby Amateur Senior division.

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Roger Booth and Smart Michealangelo won the \$200,000 Classic/Non-Pro with a 219, and they also won the event's Senior and Gelding divisions. (Below) Suzi Rodoni Silverberg and Reys Hot Wheels were \$200,000 Classic/Non-Pro Reserve Champions with a 218.5.



sired by its signature stallion, Dual Rey, is out of the Shorty Lena mare Sweet Shorty Lena. He had passed through the hands of several prominent horsemen, including NCHA Futurity Open-winning brothers Wes and Beau Galyean, and Metallic Cat owner Alvin Fults, before finally winding up with a friend of the Shehadys as a 5-year-old cutter.

### \$200,000 Non-Pro Classic/Challenge

It would be hard to top Roger Booth's day on March 12 at the PCCHA Derby as the Acton, Calif., construction business owner won his first limited-age cutting title, plus Senior and Gelding division titles, and three checks totaling \$7,991 on his 57th birthday.

He did that by marking a 219 aboard the 6-year-old horse Smart Michealangelo, who had carried his late wife, Liz Booth, to a Classic/Challenge Amateur victory with a 220 at the South Point Winter Championship in Las Vegas in February 2010. The gelding sired by Doc O Wena, out the Smart Little Lena mare Smart Masterpiece, was the last mare Liz Booth competed with before dying from complications of cancer last summer.

### Classic/Challenge Amateur Champion

Traci Shehady and His Reyflection topped the charts for the third time in a week on March 11, winning the Classic/Challenge Amateur finals with a 217 to earn \$2,714.

Shehady, a 45-year-old artist who specializes in equine paintings, and His Reyflection, a 6-year-old gelding she and her husband, Daniel Shehady, bought last summer, also topped the first round of the \$200,000 Non-Pro with a 218 to earn a spot in its finals. They had posted a first-round best 216.5 before coming back with their winning 217 later in the same day.

The winning horse, bred by Double Dove Ranch, Benbrook, Texas, and

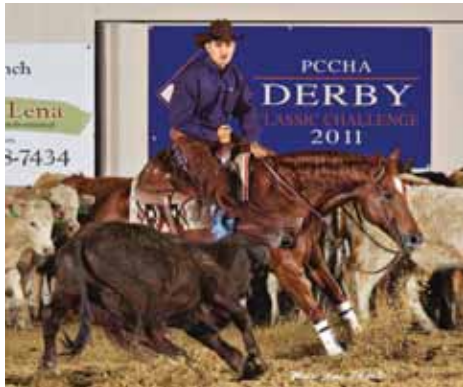


Traci Shehady and His Reyflection won the \$50,000 Classic/Challenge Amateur with a 217 to earn \$2,714. (Below left) Jerry Erwin and Iced Out tied for \$50,000 Classic/Challenge Amateur Reserve Champion honors and won the event's Senior division. (Below right) Christine Bates and Snowcat 105 tied for Reserve Champion honors in the \$50,000 Classic/Challenge Amateur.



Julie Sandford and Smart Exactacat won the \$50,000 Classic/Challenge Amateur Gelding division.

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(Left) Stephen Silva and CD Headlight won the \$50,000 Classic/Challenge Amateur's \$25,000 class within a class to earn \$2,040 – his top check as a cutter so far. (Center) Ryan Denier and Sweet Pepto Lena won the Senior Youth title with a 218.5. (Right) Brooke White and Miss Rip N Dual were Junior Youth Champions.

"How much better can it get?" Booth said. His winning run also wasn't routine. "It was just a fun run. Booth and Michealangelo worked their second cow about 30 seconds to set the bar high enough to win. "We worked it to the buzzer," Booth said. "That little horse had run out of gas at the end, but he stayed with me and he was good."

### Senior Youth

**Ryan Denier**, an 18-year-old roper on the Fresno State University Rodeo team, won a Senior Youth Cutting Championship on March 13 at the PCCHA Derby with a 5-year-old gelding, Sweet Pepto Lena, he originally purchased as a roping horse prospect.

The son of Steve and Stephanie Denier, Galt, Calif., said his new cutting horse earned a shot at the job by reacting well while working with cows.

"I used him to cowboy up in the hills," Denier said. "I started working him on cows and I thought, 'We might have a horse here.' I showed him one time and marked a 72 on him. I thought he was pretty solid, so I brought him here."

Jessica Cardon, 18, Caliente, Calif., daughter of cutting horse trainer Chip Cardon and non-pro cutter Kathy Cardon, marked a 217 with Tavis Mate, a horse she'd never ridden before. Cardon did not have a horse to compete with, but Ross and Carol Jenkins, Brawley, Calif., found out about that and loaned her a ride.

"They just came up to me yesterday [March 12] and said, 'Hey, do you want to show this Little Tari mare?' I said, 'Yeah, sure.' "

### Junior Youth

**Brooke White** and her 11-year-old mare Miss Rip N Dual sure looked like they could be a force to reckon with on the high school rodeo circuit while marking a 212 Sunday to win a Junior Youth title at the PCCHA Derby.

The only catch in that notion is that White, 13-year-old daughter of Dan and Casey White, Sanger,

Okla., is only in the eighth grade. She competed quite well in Paso Robles with the horse sired by Mr Dual Pep, out of a Rips Sport Model mare, Rips Playgirl.

"My sister [Ashley White, 19, a freshman at Fresno State University] made it to the Nationals in high school cutting. I've just shown her in the Pacific Coast and I've done pretty good."

Paso Robles resident Dave McGregor originally trained and once owned Miss Rip N Dual. The mare and White also won a Junior Youth Championship at last year's event. ★

### Entries Up A Little As Show Goes Well

A continuing slow economy and competition from several early season limited-age cuttings didn't seem to hurt the 2011 Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Association Derby.

As has been the case in recent years, Open entries again decreased a little, but entries were "way up" in both the Non-Pro and Amateur divisions. More Non-Pro and Amateur entries provided a long-term positive sign for West Coast cutting, PCCHA Executive Director Phil Benadum said.

Benadum, a veteran cutting horse trainer who took on the PCCHA's top management job two years ago, is familiar with the situations and decisions West Coast trainers and non-professional riders face. Considering the circumstances, the PCCHA's second-largest limited-age cutting event continued to fare well economically and aesthetically, he said.

"I think right now, with the economy, the owners are deciding not to double up quite as much and riding their own horses," Benadum said. He'd rather see Open entries dip a little, rather than have Non-Pro and Amateur entries decline or stagnate. "That [rising Non-Pro and Amateur entries] is a good thing because they pay the bills."

Overall, limited-age entries increased slightly from last year. Open and Non-Pro any-age events attracted strong interest and high entry levels, too. The bottom line is the latest edition of the PCCHA's second-biggest show featured more horse and cow power.

"We used 200 more cows than we did last year," Benadum said. —MT

### PCCHA Derby History

Year	Entries	Added \$\$\$	Total \$\$\$
1982	133	\$10,000	\$58,281
1983	132	\$15,000	\$81,544
1984	161	\$13,000	\$96,147
1985	155	\$12,000	\$75,113
1986	243	\$27,750	\$145,240
1987	212	\$32,601	\$148,478
1988	464	\$76,000	\$300,689
1989	339	\$56,000	\$229,828
1990	272	\$44,000	\$178,172
1991	255	\$35,000	\$164,226
1992	244	\$35,001	\$159,538
1993	213	\$35,000	\$139,545
1994	243	\$38,000	\$141,889
1995	207	\$38,000	\$136,727
1996	268	\$62,000	\$183,740
1997	295	\$64,000	\$195,619
1998	289	\$64,000	\$192,574
1999	386	\$115,000	\$289,789
2000	480	\$113,000	\$301,846
2001	445	\$114,000	\$320,633
2002	525	\$184,000	\$465,564
2003	573	\$184,000	\$493,367
2004	620	\$184,001	\$501,612
2005	516	\$184,000	\$456,695
2006	403	\$109,000	\$311,954
2007	710	\$132,000	\$427,327
2008	619	\$132,000	\$382,903
2009	462	\$106,000	\$296,325
2010	415	\$106,000	\$295,302
2011	421	\$106,000	\$299,113
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,700</b>	<b>\$2,426,353</b>	<b>\$7,469,777</b>

# Who Is George Hearst Jr.?

**This businessman and philanthropist never expected to profit from cutting.** Article and photo by Mark Thompson



**“It’s a lot of fun. It’s good horses, and it’s good people.”**

—George Hearst Jr.

Owner George Hearst Jr., and trainer/rider Bonnie Johnson pose with 2011 PCCHA Classic/Challenge Open Champion My Lil Lanta Lena.

When asked how long he’s been in the cutting horse business, Estrella Ranch owner and prominent Paso Robles, Calif., resident George R. Hearst Jr. looked at the reporter a little funny, then laughed.

“It’s a good thing I can afford it,” said Hearst, the great-grandson of newspaper publishing legend William Randolph Hearst, great-great-grandson of businessman and United States Senator George Hearst and chairman of the board of the Hearst Corporation.

“Everybody needs a regular job if you are going to do this,” Hearst said. “It is not a business. It’s never been a business. It’s a lot of fun. It’s good horses, and it’s good people. What more could you want?”

Hearst, who will turn 84 in July, has owned, bred and ridden cutting horses since the mid-1980s. He purchased Estrella Ranch in 1989, when he moved to Paso Robles from Ventura, Calif. The ranch has provided a home to as

many as 102 horses at a time. In March, George and his wife, Sue Hearst, also a cutting horse owner and breeder, owned about 55 horses, but that number was going to rise as several mares were expecting.

When asked if he got nervous watching two of his horses compete in the Classic/Challenge Open finals at the 2011 Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Association Derby in Paso Robles, Hearst just laughed again.

“The last time I got nervous was when I was in Korea and people were shooting at me,” he said, explaining he served in the military for “nine years, five months and 29 days” during the Korean conflict in the 1950s. “I was flying helicopters. This is just horses.”

One of Hearst’s two horses in the finals, My Lil Lanta Lena, went on to win the Championship title. Money earned by his horses at the 2011 PCCHA Derby pushed Hearst’s career total as a cutting owner above the \$500,000 mark,

according to **Equi-Stat** records. He also has competed quite well as a cutting horse rider, earning about \$75,000 during his career.

Hearst has not competed as a cutter since marking a memorable 216 in the Paso Robles Event Center during late fall of 2009 aboard his signature stallion, a then 12-year-old Mylanta Lena. Hearst, 82 at the time, and his stallion drew a huge crowd response by simply walking into the arena. The duo’s strong performance made everyone smile.

“It was a good ride,” Hearst recalled of the moment. “He’s a great horse to ride. He’s easy for me to stay on. He’s a sweeping mover and not a lot of jumping around.”

While he has not competed as a cutting horse rider since then, Hearst does still ride horses. He hosted a riding party for about 120 of his friends in March during the PCCHA Derby. “We’ve been roping and playing all kinds of games,” he said.

Mike Rawitser, another promi-

nent Paso Robles resident and cutting horse owner and rider, met Hearst soon after he purchased land there, about 20 years ago. They met after Rawitser accidentally drove off a cattle trail located on his new property. He got his truck stuck and then called the only person he knew in the area, asking her to find help.

“She called George Hearst,” Rawitser said. “He came out in his Jeep with his winch and pulled me out. So, that’s how I met George.”

Rawitser and Hearst, who typically introduces himself simply as “George,” became friends. They also eventually put wheels in motion leading to the former Wine Country Futurity and present PCCHA Derby and Futurity events taking place in Paso Robles.

“He’s just a low-key kind of person,” Rawitser said. “It’s kind of hard for him to fly under the radar, but that’s how he likes it. He never asks for anything. He does so many things for people that no one ever finds out because he’s not going to tell them. He’s just an incredible guy. He’s in a whole league of his own.”

It’s well known that Hearst has done much to aid the California Mid-State Fairgrounds and Paso Robles Event Center, but he’ll be remembered best for two things, Hearst said.

“We [Hearst and other donors involved in the Heritage Foundation] built the big arena and the livestock pavilion in back, but my legacy is the women’s bathrooms. Some ladies that I know said they had terrible bathrooms here, so we built those. And then we did the decomposed granite [landscaping]. So my legacy is bathrooms and dirt.”

Vivian Robertson, Paso Robles Event Center CEO for eight years, said Hearst is also “largely responsible” for horse and livestock events running better at the facility. Many improvements were made through money he provided from his own pocket, she said.

“We would not be where we are without him,” Robertson said. “He keeps in touch, and he wants to know what he can do to help us.” ★

# 'Toddy' Wins Turnback Challenge

Horses known mainly by their barn names steal the spotlight for a night.

Article by Mark Thompson • Action photos by Midge Ames



Las Vegas trainer Cookie Banuelos and "Toddy," a horse owned by Carol Ward, Rancho Murieta, Calif., won the PCCHA's second annual Turnback Challenge.



Jason Taylor, Rancho Murieta, Calif., and this unidentified horse he borrowed at the show, finished a close second, just a half-second behind the event winners.

"Muffin," the Champion horse at the 2010 inaugural event, and Los Olivos, Calif., trainer Russ Westfall were both banned from trying for a repeat because they had won too easily.

Nine other turnback horses and riders negotiated, just barely in some cases, an obstacle course set up throughout the arena during the Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Association Derby's second Turnback Challenge, March 10, in Paso Robles, Calif.

As the dust and the laughter cleared, a 14-year-old gelding known as "Toddy" and Las Vegas, Nev., trainer Cookie Banuelos prevailed this time by navigating the course a half-second quicker and better than a horse ridden by Jason Taylor, Rancho Murieta, Calif.

Banuelos trains and raises cutters along with his wife, Katie Gaughan Banuelos, in Las Vegas, Nev. He and Toddy opened and shut a swinging gate, picked up and put down a brightly colored raincoat along the fence, completed a roping assignment, leaped (sort of) across four small, wooden jumps and weaved their way through a pole bending pattern.

They did all that in 34.169 seconds, which included a two-second assessment for penalty points, and secured a winner-take-all \$180 jackpot.

Banuelos' biggest thrill, beyond a doubt, was cleanly tossing a rope around a roping dummy. The cutter can actually perform a few rope tricks, but none of them include lassoing from the back of a horse.

"I had roped one time on horseback," Banuelos said. "That was eight years ago. I didn't think I was going to be able to rope the dummy, but I did."

In a twist of play from last year's event, this time, the riders did not get to compete on their own turnback horses. They instead rode each other's, drawing barn names out of a hat shortly before the event started. Banuelos knew he had drawn a good one in Toddy, a horse his closest rival in the event, Taylor, often uses to turn back cattle at

cuttings.

Still, Toddy's usual rider and the second-place finisher, Taylor, warned Banuelos in advance about the horse's probable reluctance to leap over the jumps placed in the arena.

"I went for it, and he went for it," Banuelos said. "I was surprised. Jason said he wasn't very good [as a jumper], but he cleared them all."

Carol Ward, Rancho Murieta, Calif., has owned Toddy for eight years. He's taller and stouter than most cutting horses. He did compete once as a cutter, as a 3-year-old at the National Cutting Horse Association Futurity in Fort Worth. At one time, Toddy was also a team roping horse. He's handled ranch chores and turnback duties for the past several years.

"Last year, he didn't like the jumps," Ward said. "This year, he kind of figured it out. He learned something. He might have thought about those jumps all year."

Last year's Turnback Challenge Champion "Muffin," an 8-year-old buckskin gelding, was bred and originally owned by Carol Rose, Gainesville, Texas. Russ and Janet Westfall's 10-year-old son, Brandon, owns him now.

Muffin never broke the bank as a cutter, but he and Brandon's dad, Russ, earned \$4,175 by tying for ninth in the Futurity Open finals at the 2006 Mebane Ranch Festival in Fort Klamath, Ore. Under his registered name, Smart N Shine Tari (Smart Shiner x Tari Darlin x Taris Catalyst), the gelding has earned \$6,212 overall as a cutter.

Muffin's value increased, though, when Rose negotiated a long-term ownership deal with Brandon when he was 6 and the gelding 4 years old.

"Carol gave him to Brandon with two conditions: You can't change his name, and you can't sell him," Janet said. "Muffin is just one broke horse. You can cut on him. You can rope on him. We use him to gather cows. Of course, he's the horse everybody wants. They are always asking Brandon, and he says, 'I can't sell him for anything, not even a million dollars.'" ★