

## Ranch Roping - Branding at Hora Arena

by Shelly Hagen

Spring is just around the corner! I can happily say that now. The fall months rolled by so fast and then there was that COLD weather before Thanksgiving and all that snow. Now the snow is gone, my mares are getting very pregnant, and I am starting to get schedules for the 2006 events in the mail!

It is only fitting to do a wrap-up of some of the late summer and fall events in the ranch horse world of eastern Iowa, as we look forward to the New Year.

I wrote about the IRHA for the fall, 2005, issue of *Apples 'n Oats*, which concluded with the Long Creek Arena (Washington, IA/Mike & Cindy Hora) Firecracker Roping over the July 4<sup>th</sup> Weekend. I rode my herd stallion, Doc Freckles, for this competition.

*That's Freckles & me on the cover of this issue, taken at the Firecracker Roping event.*

Freckles was 18 last year and this was the first time I had roped off of him. I also took him to a few Iowa Ranch Horse Events in July, but for the remainder of the summer I rode my red roan paint mare, Peppy Girl. Peppy and I ended up as Reserve High-Point Amateur at the largest IRHA show ever, held in Winterset the last weekend in August!

As the IRHA shows wrapped up I began to look at other options for feeding my horse fixation. It seems that the friends I have made in IRHA are always there when I start to go into equine withdrawal!

The third weekend in October, Mark & Cheryl Lieurance of Dreamcatcher Stable in Sperry, Iowa, were holding a Ranch Roping Clinic. The clinician was to be Bob King. Bob runs a Cowboy School in Arizona and Wyoming ([www.cowboyschool.net](http://www.cowboyschool.net)). What an experience that was! There is nothing that compares with three days of being horseback with a dozen of your best equine friends for seven hours a day, with cattle no less! I also found out that Peppy Girl is not only a good cutting horse, but she is also a very good roping horse.

Bob had conducted a clinic earlier in the year at Hora's Long Creek Arena but



Bob King teaching Laura Davis how to tie a cow down for treatment.



Bob King & Mike, deep in conversation!

I was unable to attend. I am sure glad I made this one! Bob is very personable and took the time to work with each person one-on-one to help improve their roping and horsemanship skills (*and in some cases he was just working on developing them*). We spent some time talking about where we all wanted to go with our skills and what we wanted to learn. The most interesting comment from that conversation came from Mike Hora. When we got through all the nitty-gritty, his ultimate goal was to have fun and at the same time develop a group of friends that he felt comfortable with inviting over to help work his stock.

So two weeks later we put his friendship to the test!

Mike and Cindy typically have a fall roundup to move the cow-calf pairs from summer pasture to the home lots for the winter. Due to the dry weather last summer, they had to bring the cows home from pasture in July because the water source dried up. So with no roundup for the fall, they decided to work their Certified Angus Beef (CAB) replacement heifers. Mike keeps



Long Creek Arena Crew

Clint Sandburg on the head, Cindy with the irons, and Mike on the heels.



a lot of records on his cow herd to maintain his CAB status. Part of the problem with tracking this is telling the difference between each of some 80 black cows. Ear tags have been the standard for years, but unfortunately they are not a permanent form of identification and often end up on the fly rub or in the fence. This can make telling which black calf came from which black cow slightly difficult. So the solution is a more permanent form of ID; a brand.

The first Sunday in November was a beautiful late fall day. Mike and Cindy had

about 40 CAB spring heifers waiting for us in the arena. Around 25 of Mike & Cindy's closest friends showed up with horses and ropes, and another 20 or so offered to help with groundwork. In less than four hours we had safely and quietly finished identifying all the heifers. It was a great day of horses, cattle, and good food (thanks Cindy!).

Okay, I am going to cheat a little into 2006. I am really looking forward to this year and opening new doors and learning new things about my horses and myself. The new year got off to a quick start with the Jeff

Griffith Colt Starting Clinic January 6-11<sup>th</sup>. This was my first clinic of this type and let's just say I ended the six days successfully riding my first home-bred and -raised horse. *Spirit* is, of course, sired by my stallion, Doc Freckles, and he has the look, personality, and mannerisms of his sire. He will have an interesting summer and lots of new experiences including more clinics, some trail riding, and I'll bet he'll see some cows, too!



The author, Shelly, on Peppy

