



ALLEGANI JANI

Jo Ann Horton



Chili Cook-Off Queen, Allegani Jani Schofield, amidst a group of admirers.



Harold Gunn, Allegani Jani, Hondo Crouch and Rick Williamson.

Women's Lib strikes again! This time it was in the tough world of chili cooking, a zany, but nevertheless chauvinistic world. Houstonian Jani Schofield finally burned the chili barrier by becoming the first woman to win the World Championship Chili Cook-Off in Terlingua. Be assured that this was no accident. Allegani Jani, as she is better known in the chili world, has been working hard since 1971 to help prove that women are better chili cooks than men.

For years the State Chili Cook Off has been limited to male cooks. This frustrating fact caused Jani to help organize the "Hell Hath No Fury" Society and to help start the Luckenbach Ladies Only Chili Cook-Off in Luckenbach, Texas. Hondo Crouch, owner and mayor of Luckenbach, agreed with Jani that women should be allowed to cook chili in competition. He offered his town as the site and managed to convince Frank X. Tolbert, host of the Terlingua bash, that the top three winners should be allowed to enter his contest.

In her very first competition Jani cooked "Hot Pants Chili" and placed second. She and two other ladies were therefore entitled to cook at Terlingua. Every year since that time the ladies have cooked, but have failed to even place.

Meanwhile Jani has been hard at work trying to further the cause of women's chiliration. she has led protest marches at the State Chili Cook-Off and even paid her entrance fee and entered disguised as a man under the name of "Silent Sam". This trick back-fired when she was discovered and arrested for impersonating a chili cook.

Jani has helped organize the Houston Pod of the Chili Appreciation Society, International and to put on chili cook-offs in Houston each year. Of course women are allowed to cook in these contests. She has also given help to other towns putting on chili cook-offs, insisting all the while that women be allowed to cook. She also helped organize the Torrid Texans, a group of men and women sponsored by Pearl Brewing Company who cook chili in various cook-offs.

Not content to just tout chili by word of mouth, Jani even wrote a book about chili and other Tex-Mex recipes. Her cook-book is entitled "Mis Amigos Hambrientos" (My Hungry Friends) and features not only outstanding chili recipes, but other truly delicious dishes introduced to her by her friends, a great number of whom seem to be gourmet cooks. This dandy little book is now approaching its fourth printing.

Finally, all her work for the cause of chili was repaid. When all the dust had settled and the chili pots cooled at Terlingua and it was time to announce the winner, the master of ceremonies was all but speechless. All he could say was "Gentlemen, the winner is not a man!" When the huge roar of protest could be quieted, he managed to gasp, "It's

Allegani Jani!" Then there was a shrill cheer from the women! A winner at last!

You might think that all this chili business would take up all of Jani's time. Not so. Jani also writes for Party Line Magazine, paints, draws, does crafts and sculpture, teaches children's crafts at Camp Champions in the summers, does public relations work on art festivals, chili cook-offs, the San Antonio Folklife Festival, the Country Music Fair and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. She is on their "Go-Texan" Committee. Jani has had a papier mache pin business, has been a professional picture framer and last year designed and made masks for the Theatre Under the Stars production of "Can Can".

How does she get all that energy and creativeness? If you ask Jani she will tell you it comes from eating a lot of good chili. In fact, Jani believes that chili will cure ills. If you complain of an ailment, she will say, "Go eat a good bowl of chili." Unlike most chili cooks, Jani is not secretive about her recipe. Since she believes firmly that she cooks "The Best Chili In The World", then it's curative power is greater than all other chilis. So, being a humanitarian, she wants to share it with the world. O.K. world, here it is:

HOT PANTS CHILI

- 4-lbs. stew meat, ground once
- 3 onions chopped
- 2 Tbls. oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 2 heaping tsp. comino seeds
- 6 garlic pods, smashed
- 1 can tomatoes
- 1 tsp. sugar
- ½ can Pearl Beer
- 2 packs Vanco chili seasoning
- 1 small pack Vanco chili powder
- 3 tsp. mole paste
- 1 tsp. Tabasco sauce
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 quart water
- 4 jalapeno peppers, chopped
- ½ cup masa flour

Brown meat and onions in oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Using a mocajete, grind comino seeds and garlic with a little water. Add to meat. In blender, combine tomatoes, sugar, Pearl beer, chili seasoning and powder. Add to stew along with mole paste, 1 tsp. each Tabasco and salt, and 1 qt. water. Add chopped jalapenos. Cook for 2½ hrs. stirring well from time to time. At end of cooking time, make a runny paste of masa and water and add to stew while stirring fast. This will thicken the stew. Stir fast or it will be lumpy. Cook ½ hour more.



Daredevil Jim Jenerowitz in the Astrodome's Destruction Derby.

sociation Convention in Las Vegas. Both hope the convention is held there again next year. What a place to do business! . . . Meat man and actor Ken Hutchins hosted a cocktail party for singer Johnny Desmond. Cobweb Liquors Hal Lawson, Red Adair and the new image Dean Goss (after losing 150-lbs.) were among the many present.

ROUND-UP . . . Found Conroe's Bonus Burger King Warren Spencer with Party Line's Jani Schofield deep in conversation with Burger King's Jack Kingle and Beth Ann at the recent Farm & Ranch Club dance held at the Marriott Motor Hotel. Lewis Pierce was named "Westerner of the Year". Several faces surfacing for the event were Sheriff Jack Heard, KNUZ's David Morris, National Beverage Company's Joe Polichino, Sr., Lone Star's Jim Archer, Confederate House's Gordan Edge and lovely wife Betty, who is head of the Ladies "Go Texan" committee . . . R & M Record Shop (three locations) is the place to purchase Buddy Reeves and the Rocky Tops hit record "Reno". This is for the many inquiries we have had.

A REFRESHING LIFT . . . Shared some pleasant moments at the Royal Rib Restaurant and Club listening to Singer



Party Line Feature Editor Betty Armstrong and Hans Willi Rotheudt, Dining Out Editor with the Houston Post at Alexander's.

Mike Thomas and the Dennis Cotton Band. Mike, a combination of Lou Rawls, Johnny Mathis, and Nat King Cole came on strong and very professional. The audience really appreciated him . . . National Polymers, Inc. Prexy Bill Moll hosted a supervisors' meeting at the Red Carpet Inn recently. Afterwards, seen enjoying the music of Don & Dixie + 2 were Jack Fisher, Steve Simpson, Ray Biggs, Roger Pickett and Jim Williams . . . Afton Village reports their new manager is pretty, blond Eddy Fitzpatrick who just arrived from El Paso. Eddy is a former Houstonian and is very happy to return to Houston . . . Can't help but comment on Helen Reddy making the worst dressed women list. Bet she is laughing all the way to the bank . . . Prexy John Arden of Compamatics reports that they scored again. Sherron Tarpley and Fred English paired off for keeps after dating five months, making their home in Garland, Texas. How about that! . . . The new Safari Steak House, in the process of getting a new facelift, has not missed serving a customer since new owner, Tony Barber, took over.

SURBURBIA . . . Pretty Gale Andis, Director of Corporate Relocation for Dave Summers Realtors informs us of their new location at 5100 FM 1960 West. They are the folks with the reputa-

tion and the location when you're looking for a home . . . Photo-world of Popolo Village Shopping Center and Ross Teel, have sort of joined forces, so says photographic consultant Lovie Hylton. Ross is well-known for his horse photography and famous portraits . . . While Russ LeMay went quail hunting, charming Delores LeMay visited Bobby McGee's Conglameration along with our Party Line's Pattee McNamara . . . The Studio on 1960, formerly the Total Look, has expanded and re-decorated their hair dressing salon . . . Sancho made the rounds last month visiting NW Houston, and ending up in Pasadena. Wow! Where and what next?

AQUARIANS . . . Freedom loving Aquarians live on rainbows but have a broad outlook. Happy Birthday to Melody Jett Kinard, Curtis Jones, Carol and Jack Scott, Jim Jenerowitz, Rose Miller of Dallas, H. Miller, Jr., Dr. E.N. Goldin, Vicki Larosae, Gwen Harkins, Harvey Horton, Dr. Harry Bridge, Sarita Riley, Valentine Marilyn Cunningham, Johnny Starbuck, and pretty Judy Mondy, soon to be Mrs. Bob Lucas.

If you have some news worthy of telling our Party Line Magazine readers, please send it to Eavesdropping on the Party Line, 11822 Burlingame, Houston, Texas, 77072. Be sure and give name and telephone number of sender.




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Hondo's wooden crosses are cherished by special friends to whom he gave them. Each is intricately carved, and for sure no two are alike.

I wake up and say "There it is again! There it is again! . . ."

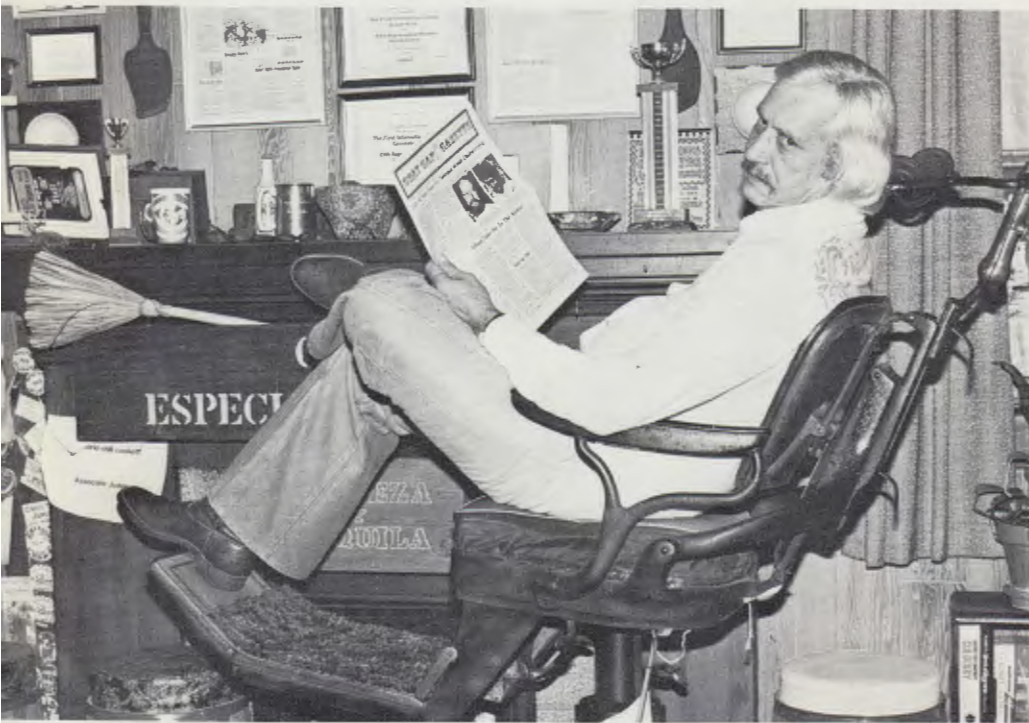
And *Luckenbach Moon*: "... We try to tell strangers who come here about our moon, but I know they won't believe we have such a *big* moon for such a small town. . . . It's the kind of moon that makes little animals see farther and feel closer together . . . that makes haunted houses uglier and ugly girls prettier. . . . The old folks in the canyon say if you sleep in the moonshine like that, you'll go crazy. I say you're crazy not to try it . . ."

Hondo had a few lines thought out for another favorite time of day in the Hill Country—*Luckenbach Sundown*. He didn't finish the narration. Hondo saw his last sundown September 27, succumbing to a heart attack.

"I can watch the sun going down from the patio—it's the only time of day you can see it from here . . . there's barefooted porchy folks catchin' up on their sittin', too tired to rock against the grain, so they rock with it. . . . I can see the smoke from little kitchens following the sun to the horizon . . . and there it is just sitting/pooching its cheeks out/holding its breath/trying not to leave this pretty world I live in . . ." 🐾



On a lazy August afternoon in Luckenbach, Hondo whiles away the time with some serious whittling outside the general store.



Hal John Wimberly, Editor of the Goat Gap Gazette, practices looking mean while relaxing in his antique barber's chair in front of his "chili shrine". The Goat Gap Gazette? That's a chili newspaper, naturally.

hal john wimberly

by Smilin' Jack Matthews

If Hal John Wimberly were writing this piece, it might start out something like this:

"A stone-cold silence filled the air as I paraded my long, lean, hardened body through the chili cookoff site. Men who ordinarily held their heads high covered before me, ashamed to look me in the eye. Women and children fell away from my path in timorous servitude.

"I pulled my domineering weight up to the speaker's stand, grabbed the microphone from the shivering announcer and proclaimed, 'All right you sons of heathens, if this cookoff ain't done my way, you'd better give your soul to God because your carcass belongs to Hal John Wimberly!'"

That's the way he would have written it. At least that's the way he wanted me to write it when I told him I was doing this story about his work as editor, publisher and resident philosopher of the *Goat Gap Gazette*, a humorous newspaper devoted to chili and chiliheads.

"Make me sound mean," Wimberly said in a forced snort.

This gesture required a bit of acting, because in the time I have known him, the meanest thing I have ever witnessed him commit was to throw away the cotton from a newly opened aspirin bottle.

You have to be reasonably gentle in his chosen line of work, for the *Goat Gap Gazette* is an "almost monthly" tabloid which chronicles one of the friendliest commodities

ever to grace an earthen bowl. A good chili will come on like a rip-snorting lion when you take it in, but it leaves you feeling gentle as a lamb.

Chili draws thousands of aficionados into its fold and entwines them into a semi-religious camaraderie with the thermal dish as its altar. Just as the heathen throngs of ancient times used to gather in an orgy of festivities and rally around the Golden Calf, thousands of fun-seeking chiliheads pilgrimage many miles at different times of the year to sing praises to the "Bowl of Red" and prepare the concoction before the god of chili, Chiligula. Their mecca is the Texas ghost town of Terlingua, where the Wick Fowler Memorial World's Championship Chili Cookoff is held once each year. Other "places of worship" around the state include Houston, San Antonio, Wichita Falls, Temple, Waco, San Marcos and Luckenbach.

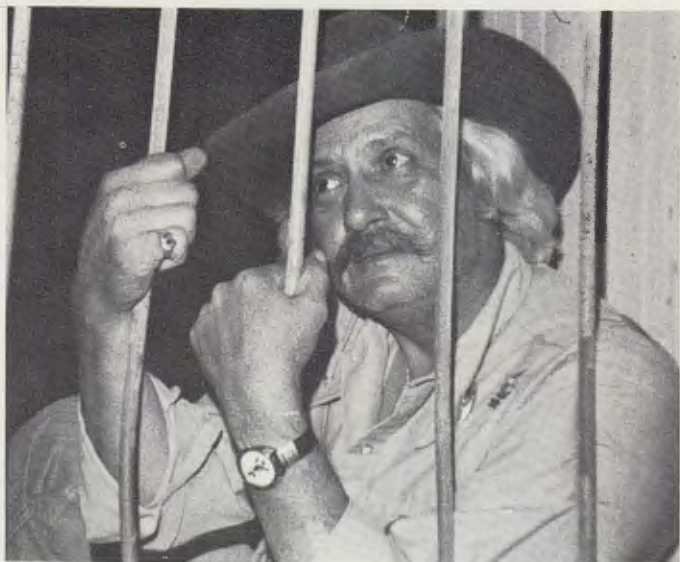
Wimberly is the scribe of the church. He compiles the happenings and reports them in the *Goat Gap Gazette*, a sort of chili bible with installments.

"Chili cookoffs are probably the most friendly gathering of drunks you will ever find," he says, "Certainly the most harmless."

Never has there been a paper devoted to a single food quite like the *Goat Gap Gazette* and never has so much been written about another dish. It would be hard - and boring - to publish a monthly periodical applauding something such as lemon meringue pie. But chili has a personality and it makes the job a lot easier and a lot more fun.

The *Goat Gap Gazette* is a "free-style" paper which has only one editorial policy - there is no editorial policy.

As Sam Kindrick, San Antonio writer and radio personality announced way back in Volume 1, Number 1, "The *Goat Gap Gazette* will specialize in nothing. It will be a non-profit newspaper, dedicated to reporting nothing of significance. Its writers will make almost as much as those who work for the big dailies. We'll be paid nothing. We



Hal John wound up in the Terlingua jail last year (above), probably because of the outfit he wore to the costume party the night before the International Cook-Off (below), dressed in union suit and western hat & boots, as Western Union.

won't even get free booze from the bar owners."

Wimberly has lived up to his task as editor of this type of format, but he can't cover every story chili spawns, even though he's spent years working for Houston, Denver and Wichita, Kansas, newspapers and an international wire service. Chili - its preparation, consumption and consequences is too broad a subject. Wimberly therefore enlists the aid of other talented writers to help him fill the pages.

Jo Ann Horton, *Party Line* Dining Out Editor, provides a "Chilihead of the Month" column about aficionados who have shown allegiance above and beyond the call of Chiligula; Dr. Aubrey Cox, a proctologist in Wichita Falls, writes real knee-slappers about flatulence and other chili by-product disorders; John Raven, ex-editor and publisher of the *Goat Gap Gazette* from Temple, chronicles hilarious experiences he has shared with other chiliheads under the pseudonym of Bad McFad, the daredevil who lives for danger (he often gets shot from a cannon during a cook-off); and Smilin' Jack Matthews, your truly, who muddles through the copy as best he can. Other journalists fill in from time to time as the mood suits them or as the chili-related event occurs.



Wimberly's wife and not-so-silent partner, Judy, is a sort of unofficial co-editor of the paper. Most of their arguments about a certain story - or even a single line - usually ends in a stalemate, but if Judy likes it, it will probably get in a future issue eventually. Judy is as warm a person as anyone could ask for, but can provide her own share of temperamental gruffness as the need arises.

Although they have their own particular pet peeves, Hal John and Judy share hostility towards those who try to use chili affairs as a "political" weapon against others or for selfish reasons.

"I'm not going to name any names," said Wimberly sternly, "Those people know who they are."

He and Judy share a combination home-office which features a living room dedicated to Chiliana. An antique dentist's chair serves as a part-time copy desk for story consideration and the fireplace mantle is a shrine which supports trophies, pictures and various cookoff memorabilia.

When Wimberly took it over two years ago, the *Goat Gap Gazette* was a two-page letter that was issued when the money could be scared up to print and distribute it. The tabloid now boasts from 8 to 12 pages - if the ads are big enough. Wimberly's present goal is to have a 16-pager which will feature the first male-female nude centerfold.

The Wimberlys venture to almost all cookoffs the Great State of Texas has to offer and set up shop in a portable booth which often doubles as a cooking camp for Relay Station Chili, prepared by Jack Lierbo, a Houston postal employee.

Hal John and Judy may at any time be called upon to judge chili, organize a side contest such as The Lemon Roll, Cow Chip Throw, Wet T-Shirt competition or Egg Toss, or be asked to take part in a demonstration for Women's Libration. Wimberly carried his sign high in San Marcos during the State Chilympiad, which bars females from the cooking competition.

In addition to cranking out the *Goat Gap Gazette*, Wimberly is charged with the task of writing and mailing newsletters to members of the Houston Pod of the Chili Appreciation Society International and inform (or warn) them of upcoming meetings, cookoffs and other events.

Although Hal John and Judy haven't cooked chili in competition for quite some time, they are far from being rusty. Their home-cooked brew is an art form.

"Making chili is like making love," Wimberly says, "Once you get the hang of it, you never forget how."

"Here in the country you get more of a feeling of life than from living in the city." His chest swelled with the invigorating air of his corner of Texas. "You can see the calves born all warm and fuzzy, and you can watch the wild animals in their daily lives. Well, you can just see more of God's creations out here than you can from the Hilton Hotel.

"The geology I studied at the university was interesting and helped me understand this area better." Hondo adjusted himself onto a sturdy wooden bench and turned to embrace a panorama he must have savored often. From this throne he had a view that stretched for miles—through the Meusebach Creek Valley, over stone fences, past weathered rock houses and into the No Name Hills beyond.

"We work this land so hard, farming and ranching, but many people don't realize what a thin slice of earth we live on. The earth we are familiar with is like the skin on a peach. . ."

Too much serious philosophical reflection caused Hondo's thoughts to drift back to Luckenbach. His town was the scene of dozens of yearly events, all with humorous themes he created, such as the Hell Hath No Fury Like A Woman Scorned Championship Chili Bust, for women only; the Annual Centennial, celebrating the invention of plywood; Happy Jazz Band concerts; and this year's Non-Buy-Centennial, a dig at the commercialization of the nation's Bicentennial.

"Four or five years ago I bought Luckenbach. Right now we're on the 'home ranch,' but I owned some land on the other side of Luckenbach that I generally worked in the afternoons each day. I would pass



Delicately rendered spoons, some done years ago, attest to Hondo's whittling talents.

through Luckenbach on the way back here, all hot and tired, ready for some refreshment, but the store there was never open that late in the day. So I bought the place—I got the key—so I could have a beer when I wanted it.

"You see, Luckenbach is my 'antique rocking chair.' I bought the town just like you'd buy an antique . . . it's mine to sit in and enjoy and share with my friends so they can enjoy it, too."

Hondo, dubbed the mayor of Luckenbach, gnawed on a piece of jerky and laughed about priceless moments he had known since acquiring his antique town. He talked of letters from sand-blasting firms offering to clean the Luckenbach water tower and rework the municipal water system (Luckenbach has neither). He boasted of bit parts in movies filmed locally. He talked of five bands marching into his town on the Fourth of July—"Ahh, the things people do for Luckenbach.

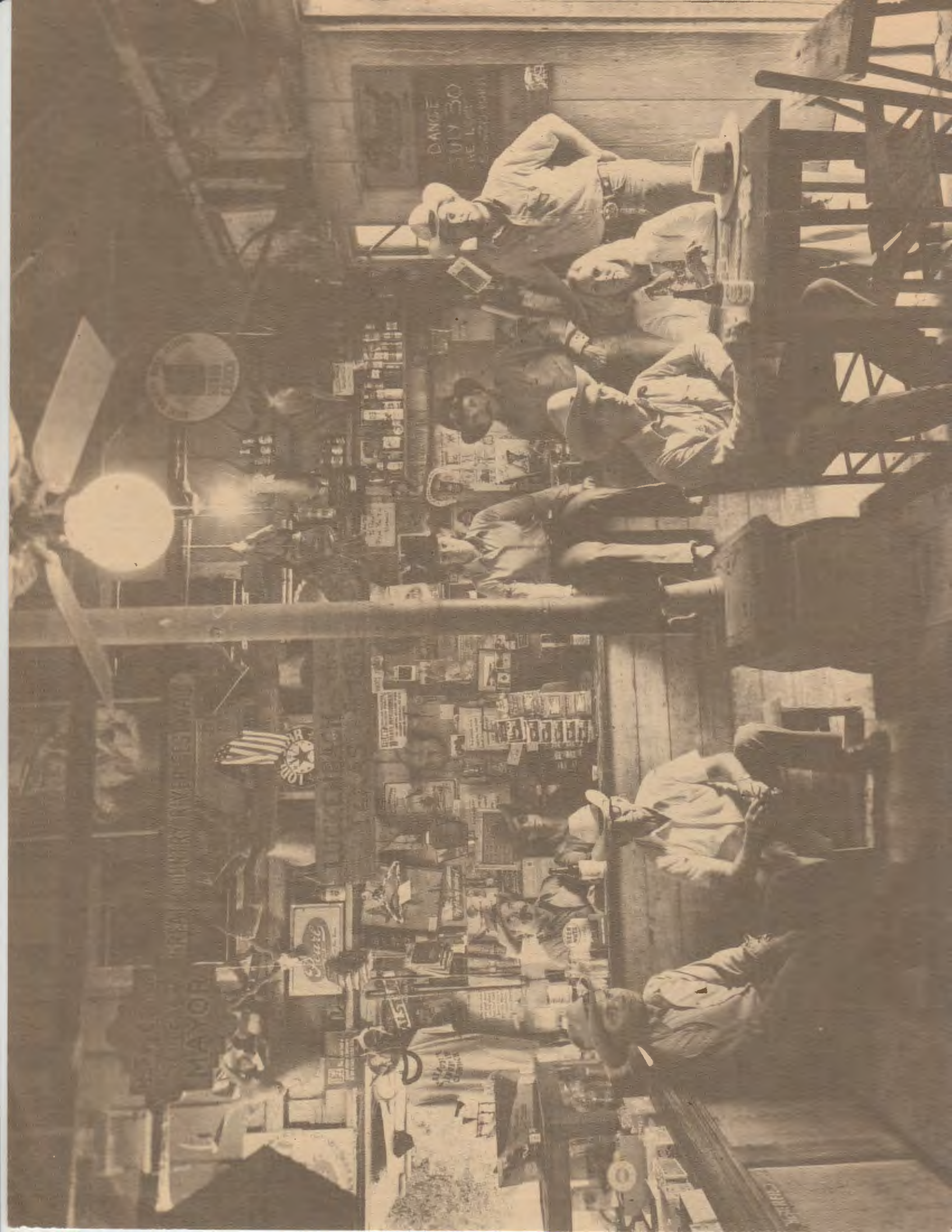
"There was a scraggly looking cowboy riding around the store on

a mule on the Fourth. Someone took his picture and asked him what the name of the mule was. The cowboy told him, 'Sonny, don't ever name anything you might have to eat.'"

He talked of his "music lovin'" friends and the many popular songs they had written under the rafters and stars of Luckenbach. That reminded him of his own musical interests, for Hondo often strummed his own guitar and crooned the ballads of the *vaqueros*, sometimes bringing tears to the eyes of his listeners.

"I took J. Frank Dobie's course in 'Life and Literature of the Southwest' when I was a junior in college," Hondo remembered. "We had to read a book a week, but I never did, and I would have flunked the course if it hadn't been for my term paper. I did it on the cowboy songs that I knew and loved, and told of the conditions they might have been written under. Dobie gave me an A++++ on the paper!"

Hondo applied his literary talent and his appreciation for the Hill Country life and Luckenbach to his own brand of poetry, like *Luckenbach Daylight*: ". . . Daylight in the winter is when little drippin' icicles get a new hold on their hosts, and Jack Frost is busy rollin' up his carpet—always from east to west—over the hills we love so. . . Daylight in the spring is when little dewdrops are clinging to grass tips just shiverin' from fright in the early morning light 'cause they know the sun is fixin' to love 'em to death . . . when all the stars that were admired last night will take a back seat in the bus . . . and little empty lunch pails are meeting full ones on the freeway. . . Sad folks wake up and say 'Another day.'



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***2-ALARMS AMBASSADOR** — Associated Press Wirephoto.
Hondo Crouch, the . . . legendary jokester of Luckenbach, Texas, dies in Johnson City Hospital.

Hondo Crouch dies at age 60

Special to The News

LUCKENBACH, Texas — Hondo Crouch, 60, the white-bearded jokester who turned this Texas Hill Country town of three residents into the site of numerous spoofs and all-night parties, died Monday of an apparent heart attack.

Crouch dressed in cowboy regalia and liked to spin tales to visitors who crowded into the Old Luckenbach General Store and Beer Parlor, about the only building still standing in the 116-year-old town.

The mayor of the town, Crouch coined the phrase "Everybody is somebody in Luckenbach."

Crouch was stricken at the ranch home of Ken and Kathy Morgan, who co-owned the town with Crouch. At 8 a.m. he was pronounced dead on arrival at the Johnson City Hospital.

At Luckenbach, Crouch had a knack for making national news. For example, earlier this year the Luckenbach store gave "bad taste awards" to those who most abused the Bicentennial in promotional and advertising gimmicks.

The "winner" was a Mississippi undertaker who featured a coffin in stars and stripes.

He later organized a march from the Alamo to Luckenbach, which featured a falling down contest and the first and only world championship mosey contest.

Luckenbach's most recent bash was on Labor Day. Crouch sent a humorous letter to actress Elizabeth Taylor inviting her to be present. L

Luckenbach, a typical "German settlement" in the Hill Country, is about 10 miles south of Fredericksburg in Gillespie County.

After Crouch and the Morgans bought the hamlet, it became a weekend gathering place for country music singers Willie Nelson and Jerry Jeff Walker and their fans.

Crouch liked to go to festivals all over the Southwest, and he was one of the most frequently photographed patrons.

Although he was a hard-working rancher he also did commercials for television, the most recent one for "Terlingua" pinto beans for an Athens, Texas, cannery.

Crouch served as host at the Luckenbach store and beer tavern that was originally a trading post.

Although the store had electrical connections, Crouch preferred to illuminate it with kerosene lamps at night. And there was a hen's nest under the pot-bellied stove in the tavern, often with a worried hen there on a setting of eggs.

Crouch was a national champion swimmer at the University of Texas and until last summer he taught swimming at a boys camp in the Hill Country.

His remains will be cremated and scattered over his ranch which is between Fredericksburg and Comfort. A memorial service will be held Tuesday at St. Boniface Episcopal Church in Fredericksburg.

He is survived by two sons and two daughters.

Hondo's Spirit Lives On

The spirit of Hondo Crouch attempts to live on in the tiny hamlet of Luckenbach.

Although the imagineer died this past summer, those who admired his wit and

ready humor seem bent upon maintaining the Luckenbach (population 3) image.

A benefit performance was held last month at the

Cheatham Street Warehouse in San Marcos. Money from the event will go to erecting a marble bust of Crouch at Luckenbach. So will funds raised during the "hug-in" and "non-talent" contest staged recently by Hondo's chili-cooking compadres.

The next scheduled Luckenbach event (not counting the semi-monthly visit by the potato chip man) will be March 19.

In Texas and internationally, March 19 will be celebrated as "When the Mud Daubers Come Back to Luckenbach Day."

Any money raised during this celebration will also be applied to the monument fund.

Since California tried unsuccessfully to steal away the world championship chili cookoff, it is unimportant that March 19 is also St. Joseph's Day, and that they claim a bunch of swallows are supposed to return to a place called Capistrano.

Cathy Morgan, first lady of Luckenbach, has appointed Jack Harmon to chairman the mud dauber return celebration.

According to Harmon, he and Crouch had discussed such an event before Hondo's death.

"We decided it was time Luckenbach stopped being so modest," Harmon said. "We've always been the mud dauber capital of the world, but we hid our light under a chili pot. We never let the world know that every March

19 the mud daubers come back to Luckenbach.

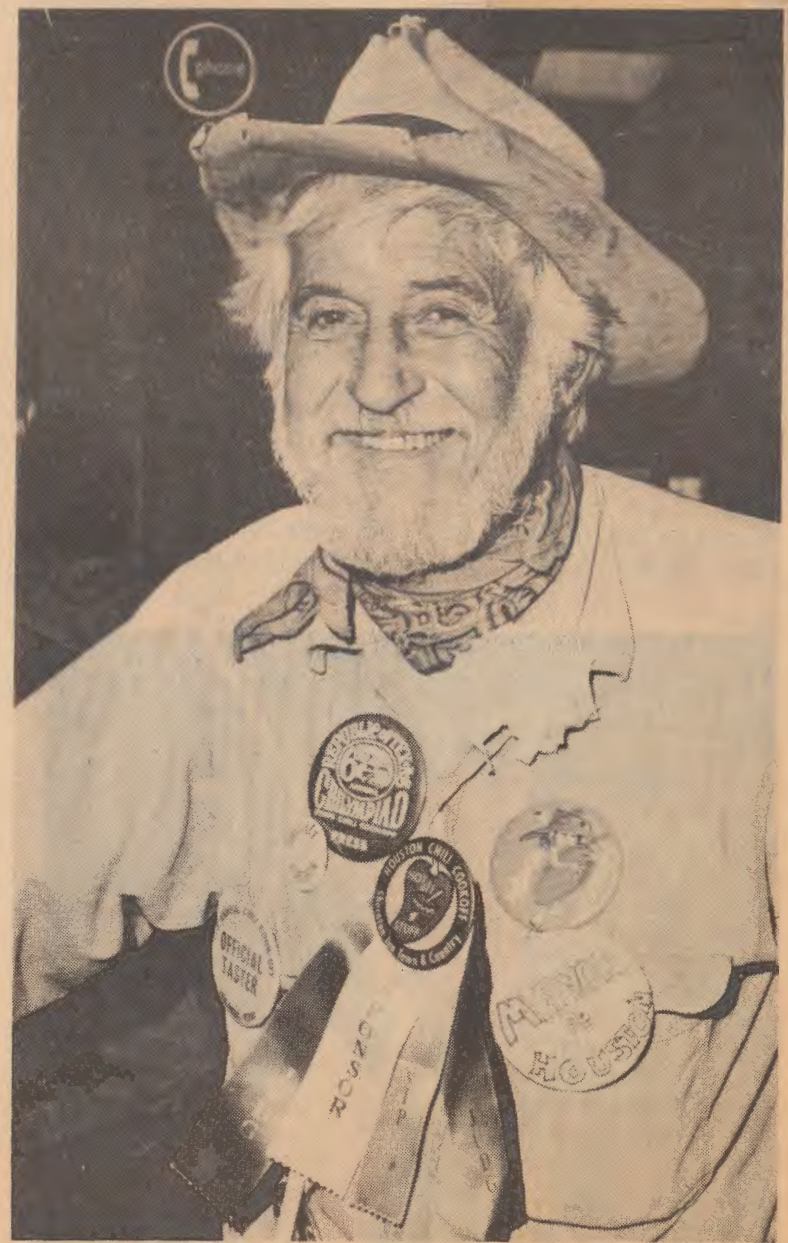
They come back--swarms of them--all rested up and ready to put their little daubers to work on creating

wonderful mud sculptures. It's a morning, afternoon and evening delight."

It is certainly true that Texans outdo Californians and Yankees in everything.



Jerry Jeff Walker



Hondo Crouch

'Chickens Don't Lay And Cows Go Dry'

Behind every great show there must be a great showman.

Guich Koock (it's pronounced Geech Cook) is the man behind the second Luckenbach World Fair in Fredericksburg.

Late-hour television viewers might have seen Guich in the Midnight Special program when he came in second in that national search for a singing cowboy.

Hollywood people took a close, hard look at Koock after he played in "Sugarland Express".

The director of "Sugarland" called him a gut-cinch for more movie parts.

CBS has just completed a Guich Koock variety show which the network is now trying to peddle.

Koock is good-looking in a countryfied way. His teeth haven't been capped, but they flash like creek pebbles on a hot summer day.

Personality

Personality, though, is the key to Koock's winning way. He could charm a hootowl out of its tree in blinding sunlight.

The big, drawling Hill Country boy was once a partner with Hondo Crouch in the tiny town of Luckenbach. But the two have now parted company, and it was Koock who decided to hold the second Luckenbach fair in neighboring Fredericksburg.

Many wonder why he and Hondo aren't holding it jointly in Luckenbach. There's a personal reason for their split, but this is no one else's business.

Both men are crowd

pleasers.

Rarely serious, Koock walks around with his tongue in his cheek and a beer in his hand.

Some 20,000 persons showed up for the first Luckenbach fair, and Guich has much more on tap for the one to be held June 7-8, including movie stars, a former Miss World, tops in country rock musicians, Indian dancers, etc.

Asked how many he expected for this fair, Guich cocked his head and said with a straight face: "Aww, no tellin'. Why I wouldn't be surprised if 600 people was to show up."

Manifest Destiny

In an interview with Vancouver correspondent Philip Naif, Koock said of the fair: "Manifest destiny prompted us to put it on."

Speaking to a group of world-traveled reporters, Koock said "Fredericksburg is the geographic center of the globe. And our science class at Luckenbach Junior High has come up with the startling evidence that Luckenbach was once in the center of Fredericksburg and due to continental drift and some hard work it moved to its present location. If the good Lord hadn't intended for us to be in the center of the world, He wouldn't have put us there."

Koock says, "This is the second world fair in Gillespie County. The first was a semi-smashing success. The semi part revolved around the livestock of Luckenbach which were so awed by the influx of people. Local farmers reported cows drying up and

chickens that quit laying."

So as not to bother the livestock, Guich grinned, this year's fair will be held at the Gillespie County Fair Grounds in Fredericksburg.

Guich has just opened his own place of business in Fredericksburg. It's a combination beer garden, restaurant and theater. Out back, there is a genuine blacksmith shop, complete with a real, salty blacksmith by the name of Roy Bellows.

'OMA Koock's'

Name of the place is "Oma Koock's". That's German for "Grandmother Koock's".

The motif is rustic. "Oma Koock's" is housed in a rough, rock German building which was constructed in 1880.

"This was an old Studebaker wagon factory," Koock explained.

Guich says his bar carries quite a history.

"The man who owned it fed his waitresses to alligators and it has King Fisher's name carved on it," he grinned.

Out by the blacksmith shop, Guich plans to build a gazebo. On the stage inside, he intends to produce melodramas.

Koock believes that more and more people from the cities are seeking quiet, out-of-the-way places such as his "Oma Koock's".

Showmanship

Guich Koock is as country as pig tracks; yet the boy from Fredericksburg, by either accident or design, possesses



GUICH KOOCK

...The Showman's Showman
He May Show Hollywood

that natural quality known as showmanship.

On the Midnight Special TV show, host John Davidson inquired of Koock: "Guich Koock? That must be a stage

name."

"Naw," Guich grinned, "up in Luckenbach where I come from, my daddy raised hound dogs. An' the hounds got all the good names."

Hondo: The first u (sometimes) worki

by **Becky Patterson**

from the book, *Hondo, My Father*

LONG before they put roller skate wheels on cowboy boots; before anyone ever heard of Luckenbach, The Palamino and Gilley's; before longneck, snuff, jerky and chili became staple grocery sack words; before the number of slick C&W bars outnumbered sleezy cocktail lounges and raunchy honky tonks; before the real old-time ranchers had to wait in line for their hand-made boots; before wearing cowboy boots to a presidential inauguration was vogue; and long before Ivy League preppies were dancing the "Cotton Eyed Joe" . . . a lone cowboy in an impeccable white Stetson attracted passers-by on a busy New York street corner.

It was in the '40s, and the cowboy in his 20s. He wore a homemade purple satin shirt richly embroidered in white. His boots, multi-stitched and triple-inlayed with a two-inch underslung heel, dangled spurs loosely. The twinkle in his eyes outshined the ruby-studded belt buckle. His name was Hondo Crouch.

He was there as a college swim camp with the rest of his famed University of Texas team. But while the others ate breakfast at a nearby cafe, Hondo preferred playing his guitar on the street corner.

In the '60s, with the same white Stetson, but a weathered face and faded denims, Hondo walks into a flashy Las Vegas hotel lobby. One-armed bandits are being feverishly overworked by the greedy sequined jet-setters.

An earthquake couldn't have shaken their attention. But the low-profile entrance of this cowboy did. Heads lifted and eyes fixed. Not because "boots and cowboy hat are always a crowd-stopper," Hondo once told me — but because Hondo was genuine. Authentic. The real thing.

Texas and the cowboy look are so universal now that you're almost stared at if you're not wearing boots. The



Urban and Ranching cowboy



bloat. Usually a trocar — a ballpoint-pen-like knife — is used to release the pressure. Getting out his pocket knife, Hondo jabbed it into the cow's back, hoping with luck to hit the fourth of the stomachs in a cow.

The liquid spewed out of the cow like green corn flakes from a whale's spout. Hondo had to hold his finger over the hole to release the pressure slowly to avoid the cow's death by heart attacks.

If the cows weren't fainting, then they were charging madly at him. I never knew ranching called for this kind of thing.

HONDO loved the challenge of coexisting with nature — living with the land, not off it. His gear was simple. He had a sharp pocketknife, a wad of Tinsley's tobacco, a toothless sheepdog, and a poet's intimate love for the land. More important than a horse now was Hondo's pickup — a status symbol to most urban cowboys today.

As inseparable from Hondo as his red bandana trademark, the truck was a proper chariot for this gentleman scamp. It was his rocking chair, his nomadic home. A vehicle for comings and goings in life. A delivery room — my brother Juan was born in it. A hearse — Hondo was buried from it.

I saw it as another shell for Hondo's soul. Hondo called the inside of the cab his "filing cabinet" — it housed everything he touched, felt, and picked up.

The truck later became like a faithful friend, taking him away from heartaches, taking him to undiscovered places and new friends. Like him, the truck rolled along at a slow pace, making time for observation of where he had been or what he was seeing along the way.

Hondo liked riding on the flatbed in the back when he could; he was interested in seeing where he'd been rather than where he was going. He usually never drove it more than 35 mph — anywhere.

There were several trucks in

... an image of everything Americans like — or would like — in themselves. . . individuality, wit and humor, free spirit, independence and nomadic temperament.

The slow-poke cowpoke is hardworking, hard-playing, God-fearing and loyal. Yet he can be a renegade and rebel.

HONDO was one of the first drugstore cowboys. But he had real manure on his boots, too. With foolish wisdom, mischievous humor and guts, he cultivated the image of a hoo-rah Texan as if he had crowned himself official ambassador of Texas.

Born and raised in the Southwest Texas town of Hondo, Hondo Crouch's first cowboy dream started as a 6-year-old when he ordered his first pair of boots — red with a white star — from a Sears catalogue. In his diary at 18 he wrote of his new hero: Gene Autry, "the idol of every red-blooded American boy."

There were a dozen white-hatted idols then, the likes of whom our youngsters may never be exposed to. Of Will Roger's death he lamented, "Will Rogers never had the pleasure of meeting me. That's one thing I hate. I'd sure like to be like him. I can swim instead of spin a rope." That's when he got the idea to become the "Swimming cowboy," meaning he should never have learned to swim.

It always had been his boyhood dream to ranch. Again from his school diary: "You don't know how I envy those kids that are living on ranches — and I guess you think I'm wrong. Well maybe I am — but you'd have to show me — and I'm from Texas."

He fell in love with country life working on his friend Squamp Finger's ranch at D'Hanis.

"I came home — to the city — all bruised, scarred and sore," Hondo wrote. " 'Twas a pleasurable sensation. Went to every dance in the canyon. Didn't know many but made *myself* known. Danced \$1 worth of leather off my boots. Bandera's the wildest town I ever seen. No law. Plenty beer, plenty dudes, plenty fights." He observed the simple honest qualities of the country folk around Medina County:

"The good, innocent, pure people who believe in tilling the soil, selling the grain — Enjoy life the best they know how while taking care of the cattle, going to church and spending their hard-earned money very usefully, sparingly, and efficiently. They believe in carrying on the old family tree and traditions of living and dying and going to Heaven. They trust everyone because they don't know how it is not to be trusted."

When he left Hondo to go to UT, he missed his country surroundings: "The poor little country boy — who was used to having beautiful, innocent and even romantic dreams and thoughts — comes to UT and is taken into the so-called social whirlpool by freshly introduced friends, and no longer does he have these inspiring thoughts. When he *does* get to bed, he sleeps too hard to dream, or if he should it would surely



Hondo Crouch established himself as sort of a spok

be of nothing but the devil. If you have a nightmare, have a palamino — they're pretty."

HONDO'S natural wit and free spirit were just as strong as his boyhood dreams. Always ready with a tall tale, he said, "You can always tell if I'm tellin' the truth when my lips aren't movin'."

How did an all-American swimmer come from a desert town? "It rained one year and I learned to swim in a cowtrack," he'd tell sportswriters.

When the swim team stayed at the Waldorf Astoria in New York on a swim tour, Hondo was not allowed to stay with the rest of the team because he had a baby pet skunk. He always carried the skunk in his coat pocket or in a cigar box.

At a restaurant, he'd pull it out at the cash register, asking the cashier to "please hold this for me" while he researched other pockets for his wallet.

Hondo made sure he attracted attention in other ways in Yankeeland. The New Brunswick paper, the Daily Home News, reported: "Hondo 'Cowboy' Crouch made a spectacular appearance with his western regalia — boots and cowboy shirt — which are seldom seen on this old and traditional campus."

A picture was shown of him sitting by the ladder in his swim suit. Impeccable white cowboy hat on head, he pulled his fancy boots off and cooled his feet in the pool's gutter.

Loyalty to his Texas homeland also meant Hondo was just as prejudiced against anything outside of the state. In 1940, as his team toured the nation, he wrote home: "Still got my boots on. Still from Texas. Rite this moment I'm listenin' to 'Rancho Grande' over a Mexican station. It makes me holler every moment.

"While home Thanksgiving we stopped along the hiway and one feller started kickin' a dagger cactus. It made my blood boil because he was destroyin' something that I connect so closely to Texas I think it's a part of it."

He enjoyed taking his city swimming friends home to the country. Upon their seeing windmills for the first time, Hondo said, "They saw the big fan in the field that cools the cows that's run by water runnin' outa a pipe."

When Hondo found out he was to room with a city slicker Yankee from

Detroit, zoot suit and all, he was prepared.

Wally knocked on the room door Little Campus Dormitory. No answer. He entered the room to find Hondo lying atop his bunk nonchalantly picking a guitar. A line had been drawn down the center of the room.

"Howdy," Hondo offered. "This is my side." Hondo pointed to a sign reading "God's Country." "That's your side," said, pointing to another that read "Yankee-Land."

Wally didn't know what kind of primitive was in his room. Jerky was thumb-tacked to the ceiling with a string. In a gesture of greeting, Hondo pulled some from the ceiling with his toes and stretched his foot out. Wally, who politely declined.

IS there any other kind of cowboy than a slowpoke one?

Hondo worked hard when there was work to do. But when Hondo woke in morning the thing he looked forward to was to see if he could break the truck's coasting record down Highway 87.

Everything was done at a slow tempo. Because nature is deliberate, 99 percent of Hondo's performance was gradual. Outdoor living softens speech. It makes you a person of long and slow words. Maybe this is how Texas drawl originated.

A cowboy had to be armed with plenty of humor to survive his life. Hondo was the cowboy clown, the perpetrator of fun.

"I think of everyone as a granddaddy long-leg," he said, "with just a little sand legs to pull."

He listened for and traded stories with other ranchers across cafeterias, at stock auctions, and especially his favorite beer joint, Bruno's Curve in Comfort. When Hondo grabbed the Rainbow Bread door handle of Bruno's, he opened smiles and tired, hard faces.

There were cafe laughs, jukebox whining out a heartbreak song, the hands and sheepshearers meeting common grounds to gripe and bicker. The moonlight blue glow of the Pearl beer light and the bubbly lighted Falstaff beer clock gave shade to the dark Levi forms. The slide cool, wet longneck down a linoleum topped bar, the slapping of dusty denim legs, the toothless smiles of hard-working men.

I like the contrast between their



Express-News photo

man for Texas and made sure he lived up to all the legends.

ged, ruddy cheekbones and tender white foreheads caused by the protection of straw hats. You want so much to know about their everyday lives. What keeps them going. They are men who live close to the land, with narrow views and wide smiles. These are the audiences Hondo relished. He had them in the palm of his hand, telling them stories, jokes, singing German songs to the Mexicans and Mexican songs to the Germans.

THEN Hondo and Roy Petsch would get involved in chicken talk. Petsch raised chickens.

"I tried to raise 'em once," Hondo told Roy soberly, "but they kept dyin'. I dug neat little rows. Planted 'em with their heads stickin' out. They died. So I thought maybe I should plant 'em like bulbs, head down. I did. They died too. So I wrote the Department of Agriculture and told 'em my problem. You know what they said?"

"No, what."

"Send a soil sample!"

Once Dan Cook asked Hondo if he ever mastered any cowboy tricks like bulldogging or roping. Hondo nodded yes and then told Cook how he once set a world record for calf roping:

"It was all perfect until I tied those three legs together, slapped the calf on the rump and waved to the judges," Hondo said. "Then I stood up and discovered that one of the legs belonged to me." Hondo kept a straight face after that, but his impish eyes were dancing and smiling.

Then someone at Bruno's would mention the livestock show in San Antonio, the big event of the year for many of the local farmers and ranchers. Hondo had been there.

"I was walking through those barns of the prize-winning cattle with my nephew David Edwards," Hondo said.

"He's a big rancher down in Sinton. Rounds up his cattle with a helicopter. As we were walking down the aisle where they keep those fat, square, well-groomed bulls, I overheard an observer ask: 'Why do those bulls go for so much money?'"

"The one they were looking at sold for \$40,000. Hearing the question, David and I walked on down the aisle ahead of them. We were looking at the next perfect specimen when they caught up with us. 'That's why they're so expensive!' I told 'em. I pointed to the bull's rump where I had tucked a \$100 bill

David had loaned me directly under the bull's tail."

"WHAT do you do in real life?" a dreamy-eyed kid once asked Hondo. Hondo laughed. "Ranch." Aside from raising four kids and thousands of eyebrows, he raised sheep, cattle and Angora goats.

"I'd love to ranch and live in the country," the youngster responded romantically. "Back to the basics, nature, the organic."

Smiling knowingly, Hondo would think, "Intelligence in the raw." Could the city folks sew up a cow's womb with a blunt woolbag needle, skin a deer, doctor a wormie?

Ranching is bite-the-bullet survival, at times demanding creativity, common sense, and self-sufficiency. It is salting the borehound so the sheep will eat it, burning prickly pear so the cows will eat it. Ticks, blowflies, the bloat. Ranching is birthing calves with a toe sack and a jeep, watering hundreds of head on a toothpick size trickle of water, and trying to move a herd of paralyzed goats from knee-deep water in their sheds.

It is keeping the needle grass from going up the tear ducts of sheep or from working its way through the fleece to the sheep's lungs. Ranching also is staying one step ahead of the confounded treacherous Texas weather.

Hondo was obsessed with improving the land. "Gotta get grass first." He loved grasses. Took him 20 years to "put the Sunday clothes" on his pastures, he would say. I'd always see him slapping the side of his pickup with a bundle of K-R Bluestem to scatter seeds before he left the pasture.

Weather dates were easier to remember than birthdays. I liked to hear him talk about the Flood of '45, when he crossed the Big Sandy River near Llano on horseback. The creek was always dry so he'd dig in the river bottom until the hole filled up with water. Then he'd throw a wooden frame around it to corral the water so the cows could drink before it filled with sand again.

After he dug for water, he crossed the riverbed. When he returned three hours later, he had to swim his horse and the cattle across Big Sandy because of the downpour that broke loose.

I remember one incident with Hondo and some angry cows that had the

The radio always was dialed to a football game, Mexican beer joint music, Henry Howell's weather report, or Fibber McGee and Molly's radio show.

One truck had an interesting deer hair cover over the stick shift knob — a deer's scrotum. Hondo put it on fresh, and when it dried and shrank to the exact size of the knob, everyone wondered how it was put on seamless.

WESTERN wear is the strongest source of individuality and independence to a cowboy. As a college kid, Hondo rebelled against wearing anything but his "big hat, boots and leather jacket." "I wore my roommate's suit to Houston and everybody accused me of turnin' jelly. Felt as nervous as a Hondo girl in church."

Whenever Hondo did dress up, he wore nothing more than a western suit and stringbean tie. He looked sharp and immaculate then, always apologizing, though, for his ratty underwear. But clothes had to be practical to him. To work he only wore Red Wing lace-up hunting shoes.

Of the *Cowboy Catalogue* and its Oleg Cassini designer suits, he probably would say — to a real cowboy — that it's a lot of bull chic.

Manny Gammage at Texas Hatters is getting rich. And there are boots made from everything — ostrich, pig, kangaroo, lizard, snake, alligator, and calf hide with the hair still on. If you asked Hondo what his boots were made of, he'd answer, "Unborn perch!"

But the uniform he wore everywhere was so formed to his body that it was part of it. He never spent money on clothes. His faded blue jeans were tucked into his knee-high boots. The chambray shirt had holes in both elbows. There was the red bandana and the beat-up Stetson held together with a deerbone hatband.

He would still stand out in a crowd today. His classic mellowed beauty matched the richness of genuine tanned cowhide.

THE cowboy touches us all. He is the root of our past, the bloom in spirit of our present, and the seed of our future — for individuality and ecology's sake. We all seek his legend.

Speaking of searching for one's heritage, here comes my junior-high son in the front door wearing the uniform: long underwear shirt topped by a flannel plaid with the sleeves rolled up, bluejeans with one leg tucked in the boot and topped off with a Caterpillar baseball cap.

While he's sucking on a hot toothpick he's whistling "Surfin' USA."

I must stop now to open the back door for my 2-year old son. He is wearing a cowboy hat, Darth Vader mask, Superman T-shirt, Captain Marvel Underoos — no other pants — and boots. Buzzing two battery-operated ray guns at the dogs, he wants to go outside and play "Cowboys and Iranians."