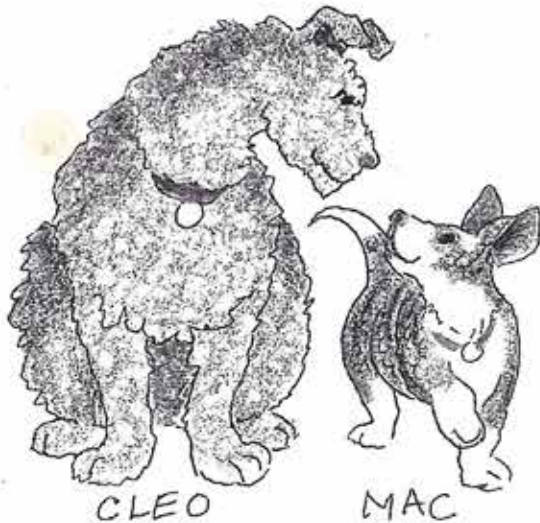


The Tennessee Mule Artist
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JAN. 2020

WOW--2020!!!! I don't know whether to be proud or scared!!!

Things on the Brass Ass are hanging in there. We're still old and stove-up so there's no news there. Crittur-wise, Terry's old dog, JOY died in late May. I think she was 14. Not bad for a Golden. We were down to one dog--although she's a BIG one. (Cleo the giant Airdale) but we couldn't take the peace and quiet so Terry perused the local shelter and he found a "doggie diamond".

His name is "MAC" and we suspect he is a Corgi cross. Heavy on the Corgi. They claimed he was 2 years old and definitely he is a HEELER! Smart-Smart and happy and forever buisy, he keeps Cleo "entertained" by heeling her constantly. They are a happy pair!

The couple that rents Dottie's house are just wonderful, especially for two old farts like Terry and I. They told us from the first that they had two horses and had never lived where they could have them close. They would love to have them here. I balked at first as I still had two mollies on the place and didn't want to have horses hustling them, etc. And, I needed to be able to feed them special and that wouldn't work with two horses involved.

But, in February we had to put old "Cookie" down and Iris was very lonely so I relented and told Cassie and Matt they could bring their horses. Of course, they had to do some work on the place to keep roudy mares home so they went to work fixing fence, cleaning the big barn and moving lots of hay. By late June they borrowed Iris's 2 horse trailer and here they came!

I put Iris back in her front pasture/shed complex so now she is "safe" but can visit over the corral gate. PERFECT!

2.

Friend, Dottie Bosley moved back to Oregon to be with her brother who was dying of Cancer. He bought her a house nearby and they got to be together for almost a year. He died in October 2019. A GOOD GUY, he is missed by all who knew him, but Dottie is now back with her son, Bruce, and doing just fine without the cold and snow and ICE.

Terry and I bought her house on our place so now I am officially the evil landlady! But the "kids" are grand to have around and Cassie even "modeled" for me as the main character in Irene Brown's next book, "Tangled Times". She even had the costume down as a housewife in the early 1900's.

Speaking of Irene Brown, she won a silver award this Oct. from the Academy of Western Artists. AND, our Liz Hughey (and I) won golds for "Packstring Problem" and "Trash Talk", our last two children's books about mule-packing

Also on the subject of childrens' books, buddy, Meredith Hodges wrote a new Jasper story, "An April's Mule Day" and I spent a lot of winter with the illustrations and we got it all together and printed in time to launch it at Bishop Mule Days in May. Along with our book, the final wagon of the 20 mule Borax wagons, the water wagon, was completed in time for the parade and Jasper, Meredith and I got to ride in them again!! You can't even imagine what it feels like to a mule-lover like me to look up that line for 60 feet or so and watch those critturs work that wagon!

Pal, Debbi Gullo stuck with me again for Bishop and with Liz and her books and Meredith and her books, Deb and I liked to work our little brains into the dirt.. By the way, the 20 mule team is part of the new Jasper story.

I spent March and April illustrating a grand little childrens book about a Clydesdale stallion that lives just down the road from me. "My Name is Ramsey" was written by his owner, Jack Parnell, and delivers a wise message for everyone--child or adult. Look it up on AMAZON. If you were REAL lucky, you saw our spot on RFD's "Gentle Giants" program last October. Wish I could sell you this book but I have so many anymore it is getting over-whelming to handle that part. Maybe I can have some "Ramseys" at Bishop this May.

Now, this letter is kinda going off schedule, but it all will be in

here, so pay attention.

Once the illustrations for the Jasper book were done, Meredith hit me with painting all 20 mules AND THE THREE WAGONS ON THE CENTER POLE ON HER Jasper Carousel they were building on her ranch. She'd said all along I was supposed to do this and I kinda gulped hard and trudged on hoping she'd forget, but OH NO!! It was TIME.. So, I persuaded friend Cheryl Munde to ride with me in the truck to Loveland, CO and be my helper. And, we had a HOOT with the crew and Meredith, and I painted for 7 days on that big pole! We couldn't tell anyone outside of the ranch what we were doing as Meredith was keeping it a big secret so we had to zip-lip when we got home.

AH, but I wasn't done yet with that carousel. Had to drive to Loveland again in early October to paint all the Jasper book characters lined-up on the fence, watching the mules and wagons going by. That time I was alone and it came up a sudden and severe cold front and I like to have frozen out there in that metal round-house. The great crew on the ranch built me a door and brought lots of heaters inside for me and I painted for 4 days that time.

BUT WAIT!!! I was not through! Next she wanted a portrait of each of the 8 animals in the books for the eight doors on the carousel. Luckily, she had decided to print them on magnetic sign material so she could take them on and off so that meant I could work in my own studio in Idaho. This project only took 10 days--at home.

What I haven't told you yet is that she flew me to CO in April to help the REAL sculptor of the four figures the kids would ride, Robin Laws, finish the clay.. All I had to do was "cartoon" up their faces so they looked like they do in the books.. Robin had do the heavy lifting and I got the fun part.. And, we had a BALL doing it. Got all four pieces done and delivered to the mold-maker and then visited the foundry to discuss the color patinas we wanted.

As I understand it, the figures are done--or nearly so, and the ranch crew is finishing up the construction and finishing touches on the actual carousel. This amazing crew designed this whole thing and built it "in HOUSE". We are hoping to have it up and running by summer. Gonna be some lucky kiddos that get to ride Jasper and his buddies this summer.. You can "keep-up" with the carousel by getting on the Lucky THree web site. Mer likes to post pichurs!!!

June was "recover from Bishop" time and get ready for the draft horse/Mule show in it's new home in Coeur 'd Alene, Idaho over the July 4th weekend. That one I had to do all by myself as Cheryl's car decided it was a good time to break-down. It wasn't the same as the 40 years it was in Sandpoint, but it worked and they will do it again this year. Same time, same place (Fairgrounds)

September, Cheryl and I did Hells Canyon Mule Days again in Enterprise, Oregon. That Saturday it got REEL WESTERN!! We were involved in a doozy of a lightening storm with one awsome bolt hitting the metal in-door arena as well as the infield where all the trailers and critturs were. Miracle! No one got hurt, but it shure scared us!

September 27-29 my Cowboy Cartoonists assembled at the Western Pleasure Guest Ranch just above my place here in Idaho. It wuz REN_ DEVOUS TIME. Mother nature started us off with the first snowfall of the season. Kept us inside and out of trouble, anyway, and we cartooned and shared skills and stories till Sunday night banquet. We put them all up for sale (auction) and made us a little puddle of \$ for next year's doings

November, I finally got to the next book illustration job I had promised since March! It is tennitavely called "Harry's Horses" and was written by a gal in Nevada about her husbands kid-fantisy about all the horses he wanted to ride as a kid.. It's a DOOZY and lots of work and I am still submitting sketches and waiting on illustration boards to paint on. It is being published by Whitehall Press who does Liz;s books Love working with Miss Bonnie "M" there. She keeps everyone on track.

December is definitely winter in north Idaho and this year it is WANKY!!! Not much snow but lots of ICE! That ice GOT me Dec. 20 and I fell hard. Don't even remember falling, just waking up wet and woosey with a goose-egg and feeling funky.. I did get myself up and to the house, but I just didn't feel right. Long story short, I did the local ER where the x-ray showed a concussion and a small brain bleed, whereupon, the white coats wrangled me onto a helicopter and shipped me off to Coeur 'd Alene hospital. Now, I've always wanted to ride one of those things but this didn't fit my fantisy. Two handsome young guys had me in that thing and I was strapped down to where I couldn't get to them!!! RATZ!

Well, they kept me overnight, not letting me get much sleep, and had to turn me loose that Saturday. Those next two weeks I've been dizzy some days and fine some days but the ice is still there. I think I will be fine. Still working and taking care of hubby and the animals.

On Christmas Eve, Terry and I celebrated our 32nd anniversary!! Who'd a believed it? He is slowly getting more and more handicapped with walking and standing. Lots of pain. But, he still cooks wonderfully and my waistline attests to his skill. We "putter-on".

Early in December I discovered my "digi" guy who photographed all my work and printed my prints had SOLD OUT AND NOT TOLD ANYBODY!!! I had NO way to access images or print my prints and they were not answering their phones. Their website still worked and I kept dinging that untill the guy e-mailed me back and he did fix me up with a thumb-drive with my images on it. Hallalulah!! In the meantime, some women in town have started up a printing busines doing art prints, so I think I am back in business when we get it all sorted out--soon.

Also, the historical Museum in my old home-town of Springfield, TN has started carrying some of my Mule prints. I am honored. It was upsetting to have this come up and suddenly I could not supply them with prints. But, FEER NOT BS fans. This world NEEDS mule pichurs to keep our souls intact.

Bishop will be my next adventure in May. July is the DHI in Coeur d Alene, ID Hells Canyon Mule Days the weekend after Labor Day in Enterprise, OR

Irene Brown is working on book #3 of the "Nickle Hill" series (with a dash of mule in there). I am hoping she will let me do cover #3. All my "business" involves great people and great friends from all over. I am truely blessed.

SO, GOD BLESS AMERICA, AND PASS THE POTATOES. Like Leroy always said--Keep your Traces Tight!

Hope you have enjoyed the typos and fixes. No extra charge

Hugs and Grins, Bonnie

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