



Like a memorial to the horses that have served the ranch, many old horseshoes hang on the saddle house rails.



The old cowboy puts a feed sack to one of the colts. You may steal a cowboy's girl, but you better not touch his horse. Above, this snake has trouble getting a bird started down head first. Almost anything can be seen while riding "home on the range."

## Cosmic on a

By Larry Chandler

"Ya either gotta work or fight out here. Ain't nobody gets fired."

That's a perfect description for the 66-year-old cowboy I worked for — he's spent his entire life working and fighting.

He quit school at the age of 14 and found a job on a ranch near Brownwood. Within a year, he was breaking horses and riding with the best of cowboys. Ever since, he has been working on ranches and now runs a successful working ranch near Sonora, in southwest Texas.

By a working ranch, I mean a ranch that makes money from ranching, not oil. There are few ranches left that succeed in showing profits solely from livestock.

In the summer of 1975, I jumped on a bus in Houston and jumped off in Sonora. Now, I spend my semester and summer breaks enjoying the simple and healthy life of ranching.

Five o'clock in the morning brings a cool breeze through the bedroom window. It's a time to enjoy a sky full of stars and the pre-dawn hours. I still have never learned how to shake off drowsiness very soon after awakening.

So I stumble into the blackness of the barn, knowing that rattlesnakes often are found coiled in the straw, but sleepy enough that I decide what the heck, if I get bit, I get bit.

James and I are the rancher's main cowboys. There are five other hands that have the misfortune of doing most of the hard labor. How-

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## focus

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