

Cowboy

Ex-rodeo star Larry Mahan finds life enjoyable at a 'slower pace'

DENVER — Old soldiers never die, they just fade away. And old rodeo riders? They sell shoes.

Well, boots actually, and shirts, sport coats, jeans and belts. In fact, six-time Pro Rodeo All-Round Champion Larry Mahan has an entire line of clothing named after him.

Mahan, 39, looks more like a well-off western businessman than a rodeo rider.

With a distinguished graying head of hair, conservative plaid shirt and western-cut sport coat, he could fit in at just about any country club west of the Mississippi, and probably a lot on the other side of the river.

He even has a son at an expensive New England prep school.

Larry Mahan has always run against the grain, and if there is one thing you can say about him, he defies stereotypes.

Mahan became a member of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association in 1963 when he was 18, and rode full-time until 1973. During his 10 years on the circuit, Mahan competed in approximately 120 rodeos a year. He would often ride in one rodeo in the morning, then jump in his plane and fly 500 miles to participate in another that afternoon.

Today he is riding in an occasional team-roping competition, like the one being held at the National Western Stock Show in Denver.

Those who have followed rodeo say Mahan was one of a new breed of riders who changed the face of rodeo.

That is true, Mahan concedes.

"We were more intense," he said of the group of men with whom he competed. "As in other sports, our group was different from the group before us. The group before us was closer to the 'Old West.' We were trying to get to more rodeos. The game was growing at the same time," and the combination meant rodeo riders started making more money.

Mahan was the first pro

Since his rodeo riding days, Mahan has seen entry fees go from \$30 to \$200 per event. The most money he ever earned in a year was \$63,000. This year, Roy Cooper, one of the pro rodeo's best riders, will take in close to \$150,000.

rodeo rider to win more than \$50,000 a year.

He also set a new style for the rodeo rider in the way he dressed and promoted himself and the sport.

"Larry never turned down an interview," said one pro rodeo observer, Mahan's wife Robyn. "He always made himself available to the press."

He also brought in flashy western shirts, and an old style by tucking his pant legs into his cowboy boots.

Says Mahan, rodeo never

was a conservative way to make a living, and he was just dressing the way he liked to dress.

"There was a certain amount of just stretching out involved," he said of his appearance and demeanor.

He admits he received some ribbing for his antics.

"When I started winning a lot, everybody seemed to wear their hair short. As my hair started to grow, I was terrorized because of it," he said.

At the same time, he said, his group of rodeo riders became more professional in their approach to the sport.

And the sport has continued to grow in popularity and financial size. Since his rodeo riding days, Mahan has seen entry fees go from \$30 to \$200 per event. The most money he ever earned in a year was \$63,000. This year, Roy Cooper, one of the pro rodeo's best riders, will take in close to \$150,000.

Mahan said he is glad he is out of the business, which he calls "an endurance test."

He has become primarily a businessman, with a line of clothing, the Larry Mahan Cowboy Collection. He spends his time at one of his two horse ranches, in Arizona and in mountain valley near Guffey, Colo.

When in Guffey, Mahan and his wife, Robyn, who were married in November, live in a three-room bunkhouse, with a wood stove for heat.

He said he rarely misses the life of a pro rodeo rider.

"It's nice to be able to do it on occasion, but I'm spoiled now," said Mahan. "I enjoy a slower pace, and I like to take time to smell the flowers."

Paper checks near extinction?

United Press International
NEW YORK — Every business transaction comes equipped with its train of paperwork, and all that documentation carries its own substantial pricetag.

The costs are high enough to make some executives yearn for a system that would computerize the process. Westinghouse estimates it could save more than \$2 million a year if bills, invoices, payments and receipts all moved through an automatic transfer system.

The present Westinghouse system is "paper intensive and highly reliant on the post office — two areas that alone indicate there may be room for improvement," said Robert Caruso, director of cash administration.

Westinghouse was one of a handful of major corporations that took part in a pilot program testing an automatic system known as Corporate Trade Payments (CTP). The recently-completed pilot was dubbed a big success, but all those concerned admitted there's still a long way to go before the paper check is eliminated from the world of business.

Automatic transfers of funds have become commonplace in an increasingly computerized world. Consumers are getting used to doing their banking with automatic tellers. The federal government has been using automatic transfers to deposit social security payments directly in some recipients' bank accounts.

The problem with corporate trade payments is that they involve so much documentation. In the CTP pilot, records covering each transaction ranged from 1 to 130. But in a less structured system, the number of invoices involved in one electronic payment could reach into the thousands.

During the six-month pilot program only 300 transactions were processed, with a total dollar value of \$14.5 million. They involved 45 companies, of whom eight, including Westinghouse and Sears Roebuck, originated the payments.

"The CTP system is more accurate and efficient than the paper check-based system," said Caruso, "and in the long run we anticipate significant cost savings through the use of this product."

The National Automated Clearing House Association sponsored the experiment. The clearing houses are set up by major banks to process checks and

other payment transfers, and are a crucial link in the CTP loop of seller-buyer, bank-bank-seller.

NACHA said its research showed there was surprisingly little concern among businesses about the "float impact" of automatic payment transfers. The float, which can go on for days, is the period between when a check is made out and when the money actually is extracted from a corporate account.

While the float has become an increasingly important financial tool in an era of high interest rates, most businesses said they thought they could make adjustments to a new system, NACHA said.

"The float is a two-edged sword," said Caruso. "It slows the inflow of funds to an account, but it also slows the outflow. You can neutralize the impact, and control it."

Now that the tests are over,

Robert Brubaker, president of NACHA said, it will be possible to offer CTPs "to companies of all sizes, from Mom and Pop operations to the largest in the country."

The Treasury Department, he added, is planning to begin making some corporate trade payments through the clearing house network sometime this year. "Their involvement will be a major catalyst in stimulating acceptance and utilization."

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Steak-and-lobster dinner free for dorm residents

By MICHAEL RAULERSON
Reporter

A steak-and-lobster dinner is priced at \$12.25 at a local restaurant, but it's a free dining experience again this semester for Texas A&M students who are on the board plan.

"We hope we can send one invitation to each board student during the year," said Lloyd Smith, assistant director for food services. "We're trying to give all students the opportunity to participate."

The dinners, held in the basement of Sbis Dining Hall, will begin again Feb. 1 and will be held once a week during the semester, Smith said.

About 160 seats are available each week, and the dinners usually average about 80 percent to 85 percent full.

"I feel it's (the dinners) been very successful," Smith said. "I think the ones that have attended enjoyed it."

The menu for the candlelight dinners will be the same as last semester with soup and salad, lobster tail and rib eye steak, snow peas and rice, Sparkling Catawba, a "non-alcoholic grape juice", and a Napoleon, or éclair, for desert. Each course is brought separately, so the meal takes about two hours to complete, Smith said.

The dinners are formal. Men wear coats and ties and women

dress. A maitre d' greets the guests, captains seat the guests, and waiters and waitresses wait on the guests. In addition to these, a guitarist strolls around playing softly. Students who are already employed by the food services department serve in these positions, so the dinners become a learning experience for the personnel as well as the guests, Smith said.

Dorm residents, as well as off-campus students who are on the board plan, are invited on a random basis. Those invited also may bring a date (non-board plan dates are charged \$25 for the meal). Some students bring dates while others pair up with their friends at the door, Smith said.

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