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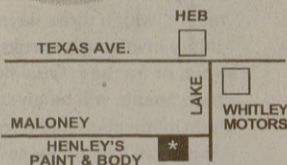
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## No 'dudes' allowed at dude ranch

### Founder says all-female retreat allows women to experience ranch life

The Associated Press

MATFIELD GREEN, Kan. — Lisa Ribar pulls a long plastic glove over her arm, yanks it in place and looks at the cow standing in the chute.

She slides her arm inside the cow and, gazing upward, listens as the veterinarian tells her to poke around gently and find a spot that responds to her touch.

"Oh! Awesome. I feel it. A baby cow. Awesome."

Ribar, 35, an office worker from Rogers, Ark., paid for the experience as a weekend guest at Prairie Women Adventures and Retreat.

On this clear autumn Saturday, about 40 cows wait to be run through the chute so the vet can learn if they're pregnant. Cattle also will be vaccinated, and some will have their horns cut.

The work is done by the dozen or so guests, three ranch hands, the vet and Jane Koger, who operates the retreat out of her 6,000-acre ranch in the Flint Hills of southeast Kansas.

Koger notes after Ribar does her pregnancy check that the guest has what's called "the prairie woman look."

"That's the look that says, 'I just caught the cow's head as it came through the chute, and I'd never touched a cow before and didn't know what a chute was, and yet I just did this,'" she said.

That's what life is about at Koger's ranch: women feeling courageous and capable, like there isn't much that can stop them from doing what they want — especially when they're driving a 2-ton hay bailer.

It's also what Pulitzer-Prize winning author William Least Heat Moon may have seen in Koger when he wrote about her and the rest of Chase County in his latest book, "PrairieEarth."

Koger, 40, a fourth-generation Chase County rancher, left the region briefly for college and returned home in 1979 to get into the family business. But she defies the stereotypes of a cattle rancher.

She drives a four-door Mazda, loves Broadway and travels to New York City for the shows. And, although she grew up eating meat twice a day, she

now limits that to about two times a week.

"The truth is that I wanted to prove to myself, and to others, that I can play this game of ranching. And, I have done that. I can do this, and I can do it well. But what I'm about now is education and women, and the good ol' boys can't do that."

Koger started Prairie Women Adventures and Retreat in 1986 because she felt a need among women to experience ranch life and do chores that meant getting smelly, dirty and sore.

Female-only guests stay in the bunkhouse, which was designed by women and built by an all-women crew in about two months last year. Guests start the day about 8 a.m. and spend their time herding, branding, castrating and vaccinating cattle depending on the season. Meals are served in the bunkhouse, which also has a deck and a hot tub, where guests often linger long into the night.

Why only women?

"Men have so many more opportunities in life, and ranching is so traditionally male anyway, that we're here to help women understand ranching and let them take from it what they can, which I happen to think is a lot," Koger said.

Since "PrairieEarth" chronicles the past and present of Chase County, Koger said she knew there would be a surge of interest in the area and in her ranch. She was right.

Prairie Women Adventures and Retreat costs about \$200 for a weekend and has become a popular draw for women from New York to Kansas City to Washington willing to trade their suits, heels and Volvos for jeans, boots and horses.

"Prairie Women is really about three things, education, environment and empowerment," Koger said. "The women who come here get to do non-traditional jobs, and it is empowering."

Many come not so much for what they can learn about ranching but rather for what ranching can teach them about themselves.

"I got here, and I just felt: 'Ah. At last. A place I can be comfortable,'" said ranch hand Jessica Panko, 24, of Boston.

Panko, who recently graduated from Harvard with a degree in comparative religions, had been working at the ranch for about a month and planned to stay for a year.

"It's so exciting. They come from all walks of life," said Prairie Women director Rhea Miller, a longtime friend of Koger's.

"When the ranch hands first see the guests, they think, 'Oh no, they'll never get along or that they'll never be able to do this work.' But by the end of two days they are pushing up cattle and getting each other's addresses," she said.

## Two earthquakes hit southeastern Pennsylvania

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Two light earthquakes shook southeastern Pennsylvania Saturday night. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damages.

The first quake measured 4.0 on the Richter scale and hit at 7:43 p.m. EST, said John Minsch, a spokesman for the National Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colo. The second quake measured 4.6 on the Richter scale and hit at 8:49 p.m., he said.

"It probably shook pretty violently for 10 or 20 seconds," Minsch said. "You'd have to be there to really feel it."

The earthquakes' epicenters were near Wyomissing Hills, just west of Reading, Minsch said. Reading is 50 miles northwest of Philadelphia.

Both quakes were classified as light, but the second one could have been felt as far away as New York City, which is 105 miles away, Minsch said.

No injuries had been reported in Reading as of 10:35 p.m., a police dispatcher said.

"The room just shook. It was hard to explain. I've never experienced one before," said city police Officer Fred Brossman.

"It wasn't that extensive, but it shook really good. I was watching and my soda can started trembling," he said.

In Philadelphia suburbs, police departments said they were deluged with phone calls. Residents of West Chester, about 25 miles from Reading, said they felt the ground shake, KYW-AM reported.

The Richter scale is a measure of the strength of an earthquake as recorded by the ground motion. Each increase of one whole number indicates a ten-fold increase in the strength of the quake.

The great San Francisco earthquake of 1906 has been estimated at 8.3 on the Richter scale. An earthquake with a magnitude between 6 and 7 can cause severe damage.

## Officials plan to tear down 25-year-old HemisFair Arena

The Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — City officials say they are hoping to tear down the 25-year-old HemisFair Arena to clear space for a \$140 million expansion of the city's convention facilities.

The 16,057-seat arena, which opened for the 1968 World's Fair, lost one of its main tenants when the NBA's San Antonio Spurs moved this season into the Alamodome, a new state-of-the-art stadium that anchors the city's hopes for luring major conventions.

Converting the HemisFair site into an additional 192,000 square feet of contiguous exhibit space to the 240,000-square-foot Convention Center could be another drawing card, officials say.

"The Arena has got to come down," said Mayor Nelson Wolff, who has taken an active role in preliminary plans to expand the Convention Center. "That is the only option."

"We tried to save it, but we couldn't work around it."

Roland Lozano,  
Dome Development director

The city council is expected to begin reviewing and discussing an expansion plan within a few weeks.

If plans are approved this spring, construction would begin in mid-1996 and would finish by the end of the decade, officials said.

Wolff said using the arena site would help ease some of the problems associated with expanding the center, while continuing to use it for conventions.

"We tried to save it, but we couldn't work around it," said Dome Development Director Roland Lozano, the team leader for all conven-

tion-related activities. "We're talking contiguous space, not a 50-foot corridor."

Added councilman Roger Perez, whose district covers the downtown area: "There is no doubt that when the plan is discussed and debated, it will be a difficult decision, but we need to address the needs of the Convention Center for the next 25 years."

Jack Orbin, president and owner of Stone City Attractions, which has booked road shows and concerts in San Antonio since 1972, said demolishing the Arena "would be a disaster."

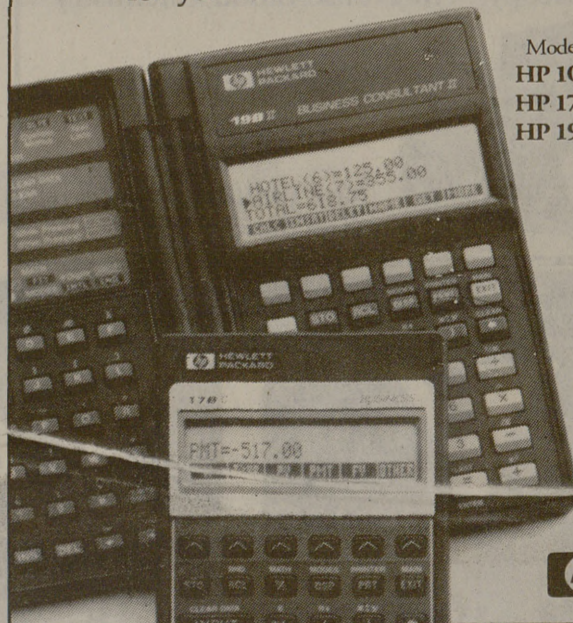
The arena is the only facility in the city that can accommodate concerts in the 5,000-to-14,000 attendance range, he said. The arena has 16,000 seats suitable for sporting events and about 14,000 for concerts.

Keeping the arena also could prove costly to the city. It already needs as much as \$25 million in repairs.

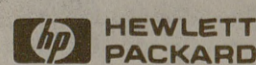
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