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JULY 2014

NOW

Cycling's Perfect Storm

Bill Mendrop
rides for fun and
reaps health
benefits

Whiz Kid

The Versatile Stripe

Learning to Jump

In the Kitchen With Ryan Mordecai

Rustic Elegance

At Home With Lindy Burch



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ON THE COVER



Bill Mendrop rolls around town on two wheels.

Photo by Sarah Claussen.

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Subscriptions are available at the rate of \$35 per year or \$3.50 per issue. Subscriptions should be sent to: NOW Magazines, P.O. Box 1071, Waxahachie, TX 75168. For advertising rates or editorial correspondence, call (817) 613-1533 or visit www.nowmagazines.com.



Editor's Note

Greetings, WeatherfordNOW readers!

I love summertime! I know, I know. The 100-plus temperatures are a bit much, but it sure is fun to take a dip in the pool or chat around the picnic table with family and friends. Plus, my children are enjoying their break from school. We are busy most summer afternoons. We spend them together hunting for treasures in our backyard, feeding the ducks and geese at the Lake Weatherford

Marina or just curling up with a book on the hammock.

We also take time to savor some of Parker County's tasty peaches! The 30th Annual Parker County Peach Festival will be held in Historic Downtown Weatherford on July 12. Tens of thousands will visit the downtown area to enjoy all types of peach treats, as well as live music and arts and crafts vendors. Why not join them?

Happy summer!

Amber

Amber D. Browne
WeatherfordNOW Editor
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Little Feather Equestrian Center

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www.littlefeather.org
Little Feather Equestrian Center is also on Facebook.

Hours:

Monday-Saturday: Lesson times vary



Rebecca Innerarity teaches students traditional English horseback riding at Little Feather Equestrian Center in Weatherford.

Learning to Jump

Little Feather Equestrian Center offers beginners and advanced riders English horseback riding lessons.

— By Amber D. Browne

Galloping through a lush field on horseback, jumping hay bales and fences may be just a dream for some, but it's a reality for Rebecca Innerarity. At Little Feather Equestrian Center in Weatherford, Rebecca shares her knowledge of English horseback riding with others. Rebecca is a hunter-jumper instructor and trains both riders and horses in the sport.

Hunter riding is based on fox hunting. "We want our horses to go around the way they do if they are in open field — jumping brick walls, hay bales, hedges — like they do in the English countryside," Rebecca stated. Jumpers are about power and speed. The jumper competitions are timed and judged on

the number of rails knocked over by the horse and other faults. "Hunter-jumper riders learn the basics, so they can do either one. It's just a matter of which they favor and which their horse prefers doing."

Rebecca grew up in West Texas and began learning the western style of horseback riding at just 3 years old. At 8, she began taking English riding lessons and started to compete. Rebecca has been riding professionally for just over a decade and is certified with the American Riding Instructors Association.

She opened Little Feather in the spring of 2013, shortly after moving to Weatherford from Lexington, Kentucky. Rebecca

chose Weatherford for its close proximity to horse shows. Over the past year, she has added jumps to the Little Feather arena and several pens for her five horses. Her father, Ed Innerarity, works on various projects at the farm. "He's helped me out with a lot," she added.

Students of all riding levels, ages 7 and up, are welcome at Little Feather. Beginners are taught how to approach and brush the horse, how to put the saddle on and how to catch a horse in the field. Rebecca also educates them about steering, stopping, walking and trotting. For Rebecca, why something is done with a horse is just as important as how it is done.

Students learn skills to control the horse independently. Rebecca wants them to have complete control as quickly as possible. "That's where the confidence comes from. You're not working with a piece of equipment. It's a live animal that outweighs you by hundreds of pounds and has a mind," she explained. "When the rider earns dominance over the horse, it's great for their confidence and for them physically, just like any sport."

Everything the students learn at Little Feather prepares them for jumping. Many students may not move on to that aspect of English riding, but they learn how to support themselves on the horse and ride safely. "It's nice when I can just watch them ride, and they figure things out on their own," Rebecca shared. More advanced students will travel to local shows to compete in hunter or jumper trials.

Riders can wear jeans and cowboy boots, or traditional English riding attire during lessons. Little Feather will provide the helmets and horses, but advanced riders can bring their own animals. Beginners start off with 30-minute lessons, which are \$30 each or four lessons for \$115. Advanced riders can take a 45-minute private lesson for \$45 or group lessons for \$40 each.

Rebecca's friends believe if you live in Texas, you should know how to ride a horse. She agrees and teaches techniques to ride safely. "If you can be safer and do it better," she remarked, "it's worth taking a few lessons." **NOW**



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