



Horses and People

By Fran Devereux Smith

Famous in All the Wrong Ways

T-SHIRTS are becoming a medium these days, carrying almost as many personal and commercial messages as billboards.

But, fame is fleeting, and sometimes fickle, as Montana bronc rider Kail Mantle discovered.

In addition to his rodeo skills, Kail is an unforgettable personality, a songwriter, and not averse to a practical joke or two.



Callie Meiners' photo of Kail's (short) ride in 2000. It later appeared on some T-shirts.

Here's the story: Kail rode in the 1999 bronc riding competition at the annual rodeo in Ennis, Montana. He won first place.

A group of his friends noted that the same rodeo the next year used a photo of the 1999 winning ride on the "official" T-shirt promoting the 2000 rodeo. So a bunch of Kail's many friends, including alert reader and reporter Cary Meiners, put on those shirts and came to see him ride in 2000. Alas, Kail was slam-dunked a couple jumps out of the chute.

Fortunately, though, Cary's daughter Callie, an aspiring photographer, captured the moment. And Cary, perhaps remembering a few of Kail's little jokes, was thoughtful enough to have that picture printed on some T-shirts for the 2001 rodeo in Ennis. No one, of course, let Kail in on this.

It almost came to nothing when Kail missed the entry deadline for the Ennis rodeo, but he was entered in the nearby Big Sky Rodeo on the 320 Ranch.

So, his "fan club," complete with the custom T-shirts, converged on that rodeo and walked up to him as he was preparing for his ride.

Kail's wife, Renee, reported that those shirts caused two things she'd never seen — he blushed, and he was speechless.

For the record, however, Kail cowboied up and won a first and a third in two go-rounds of the bronc riding.

— Gary Vorhes

Reining at WEG

Another venue for reining horse competition has opened on the international level. The 2002 World Equestrian Games, which will be held in Spain next September, will include reining as the newest Federation