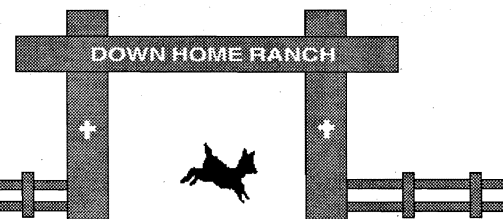


# THE SPIRIT OF DOWN HOME RANCH



February 2001

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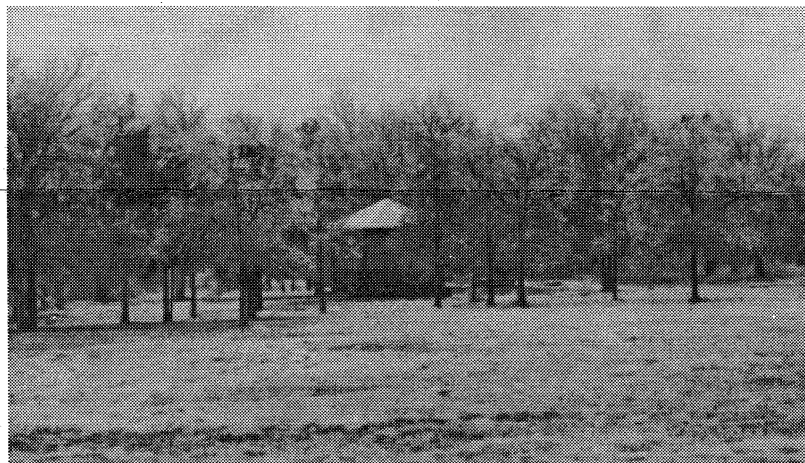
## HEB and St. Edwards University Team Up for Ranch Business Plans

Enterprise at Down Home Ranch will provide training and employment for (future) residents and income to help support the Ranch. Enterprise income has increased from 1% to almost 20% in three years—mostly from greenhouse sales and service fees.

Soon the facilities rental begins, with San Jose Catholic Church coming for a retreat in February.

And, the Ranch may open a high-end consignment and retail store in Elgin. The store would serve as a retail outlet for Ranch products and donated items—furniture, jewelry, etc.

HEB has given a grant for a St. Edwards's University student to do a business plan for the consignment store. Plus, the SEU Capstone class—the final class for MBA students—will help develop an overall business plan for the Ranch. A big *gracias* to HEB and St. Edward's!



*Winter storm produces icy landscape at Down Home Ranch*

## New Barn Coming Soon

When lightning struck and burned the barn last year it was a terrible loss. We not only lost the barn but the "corn crib" as well—the only structure on the Ranch that went back to 1854 when Maramaduke Gardner settled the property.

But recently some dedicated supporters have come forth and offered to get a new barn built.

Jerry and Stephanie Gregoire are raising the funds, and contractor (and former camp director) Rusty Signor will build it. Jerry and Rusty are collaborators in the Madrone Ranch development on Hamilton Pool Road.

## Ranch Camp 2001 Calendar

Spring Break ..... March 11-16 (all ages)  
 Summer I ..... June 10-15 (Adults)  
 Summer II ..... June 17-22 (Adults)  
 Summer III ..... June 24-29 (Teens, Young Adults)  
 Summer IV ..... July 1-6 (Teens, Young Adults)  
 Christmas Camp .. December 7-9 (all ages)  
 Call 888-926-2253 or E-mail at dhr@flash.net  
 for information and applications.

## 11 Months and Counting, Or Why We Really Need More Ranch Hands

"Ranch Hands" aren't the folks who come out to scoop a little donkey poop on the weekend. They are the ones who donate monthly, in amounts ranging from \$5 to \$50 or more. And they are the lifeblood that support the Ranch's programs.

This year—and there are 11 months remaining—we are going to ask everyone we can to consider being a Ranch Hand. We hope to have 100% participation by our staff, board of directors and advisory board. Right now we have about 60 Ranch Hands, but we need to grow to 500, then 1,000!

It isn't impossible. But it is difficult. And we must do it.

As we prepare to invite Michael, Terry, Daniel and others to make the Ranch their home, we must increase the level of support for them. Each of them will bring a little over \$500 to contribute, much less than is needed. It will be an army of angelic Ranch Hands that makes up the difference.

Please give it some thought. And then extend the hand that can really make a difference.

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## director's chair

Recently I've been asked the same question—not once or twice, but three times. It is this: "What kind of plan do you have for when you are ...(pause)...gone?" (Gone meaning dead.) It's an excellent question and I have an answer.

First let me say, I have no plans to retire or die anytime soon. The Ranch is my life's work and I want to see it completed—developed, mature and financially sound. Then I may "be ready."

But we have taken steps to protect the Ranch should I (or Judy, or both) die. First of all, we have a great Board, one with the expertise to shoulder the financial and legal irresponsibilities they would inherit. We have a "key man" insurance policy that would give the Ranch money to hire a new director. We have a Master Plan, almost done, that will be a guide to the future.

Moreover, we are working hard to broaden and deepen the financial support of the ranch, a key ingredient of which is the Ranch Hand program. These are our indispensable monthly donors.

Recently we started putting a tiny but regular amount into a DHR endowment fund—which will add a measure of financial stability.

Enterprise income is growing, along with the jobs it creates. The greenhouses are doing well, camp continues to be popular, and we are just embarking on renting our facilities to churches and others.

And, we might start a retail store in Elgin. This would open the door for in-town employment, for those that might want to live at the Ranch and work in town.

Progress is being made—not fast enough to suit me, but progress nonetheless. And, a plan is in place. May God grant me a few years more, then I'll gladly shuffle on.

## Residency Coming!

Labor Day Weekend 1991 is when the Horton family moved onto the Ranch. This year it may mark the beginning of the residential program.

Grants from the Meadows and Justin Paul Foundations will allow us to build three 4 1/2 bedroom homes—for nine residents. Construction can begin after the Master Plan is completed, and engineering and infrastructure done.

The residential Village will ultimately consist of 24-26 homes of varying sizes, with a target population of 60 residents and 30 staff and volunteers. There will be an intermixed housing pattern, designed to replicate the feel and function of an old-fashioned neighborhood. Homes will be built along a meandering road in the woods to the south of the Pavilion.



*Lance Armstrong's "Ride for the Roses" enjoyed the beauty of FM 619 for their spring ride. The DHR Ranch Ride will be on October 13 this year.*

## First Workshop To Be Offered At Ranch "Journey through the System" and "Planning the Future"

On Saturday, April 7, the Ranch will host a workshop for parents of children and adults with disabilities (such as mental retardation.) The \$30 fee (\$40 for couples) includes all materials and lunch.

The purpose of the workshop is to familiarize parents with the legal and financial issues they face as parents of an adult with a disability. Guardianship, special needs trusts, wills, government benefits and more will be covered.

The presenters are Norma Archer, founder and director of "Parents As Case Managers," and Henry Moreland, President of "Planning for Persons with Disabilities." Norma and Henry have presented the popular workshop to hundreds of Texans—usually to rave reviews.

Dr. Jerry Horton, Ranch Director, pointed out the difficulty in finding good centralized information on SSI, Medicaid, guardianship, trusts and other issues.

"This workshop is a gem—crammed with facts and well presented. The three-ring binder full of great information is itself worth the price of admission."

Even families with babies will gain information of great value to them. Call to register.

## calendar

Mar. 11-16	Spring Break Camp
Feb 15 thru May	Greenhouse Plants for Sale
April 7	Workshop: Parents as Case Managers
May 6 & 12	Berry Picking Days
May 8-13	Jelly Making Days
May 19	Rogation: Blessing, Pottluck, Dance
Oct. 13	Ranch Ride Bicycle Classic
June 10 - June 15	Ranch Camp: Session 1
June 17 - June 22	Ranch Camp: Session 2
June 24 - June 29	Ranch Camp: Session 3
July 1 - July 6	Ranch Camp: Session 4
July 8 - July 13	Ranch Camp: Session 5
Nov. 26	Begin Poinsettia Deliveries
Dec. 7-9	Christmas Camp

## Facilities to Rent

For years we have wanted to have facilities where churches and other groups could have meetings or retreats. We figured that when not in use for *Ranch Camp*, we could rent them out—for jobs and income, and to welcome folks.

That day is dawning.

With the bunkhouses, Pavilion and Camp Center in operation, we are starting to open our doors—with San Jose Catholic Church coming for a retreat in February.

If you are interested in the facilities for your group, call for a rate sheet.



*Kelly & Sterling haul pumpkins*

## Wish List

- Ranch Hands to give monthly
- Someone to level our costal so we can get some hay this year. Help!
- Golf carts. Oh please!
- Hood vent for gas stove
- Commercial dishwasher

## CORRECTION

In our last issue of the Spirit we erred. The beautiful bunkhouse flooring is a new product from Wilsonart in Temple—which they donated and installed. We send thanks and apologies.

## Waiting For Your Visit: downhomeranch.com

Down Home Ranch's Web site is up and running, although we're still tweaking it. The address is [www.downhomeranch.com](http://www.downhomeranch.com).

Go check it out, and please make suggestions for improvement. Our hope is to progressively utilize the Web site for camp information, including applications that can be filled out on-line.

Also, the more hits we get, the more traffic will come our way, so visit often. And, if there is a "webmaster" that wants to provide ongoing help, please call.



*Jackie, Mickey, Kelly and Judy sleeving poinsettias for delivery. The Ranch grew, sold and delivered close to 4,000 plants before Christmas.*

## judy's views

One of the hardest things about being a mom is having to tell your children things you'd rather they didn't have to know.

Lately, I've been trying to tell my daughter Kelly about abortion.

Kelly is 16, but just doesn't get it. She's certain that anyone in their right mind would want a baby—*any* baby—for heaven's sake! What's not to want?

I confess: I haven't been able to bring myself to tell Kelly that *in utero* babies with Down syndrome, like her, are #1 on the prenatal hit list. Some things I just cannot do.

It's not that I don't understand the fear new parents face. I do. I did not dance a jig when I became the mother of a child with Down syndrome. I was afraid—for myself, for my marriage, my family, and my new daughter.

But then a mother (now a dear friend) showed up. She was the mom of a seven-year old boy with Downs, and she was armed with her son's baby book and a heart full of love and wisdom.

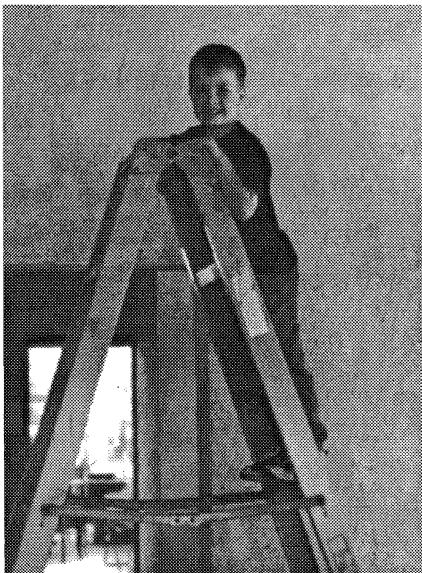
She told us about life with a child with Downs, and it didn't sound so bad. She hooked us up with people and programs to help our daughter.

But best of all was the obvious and great love she and her husband held for their son, a love that confirmed in us our right to accept and love our daughter, just the way she was.

And love—even imperfect love—has amazing powers to cast out fear.

Today, we can't imagine life without Kelly—funny, spunky, opinionated, loving, obstinate Kelly. Our hearts ache for those who are persuaded that such babies are nothing but mistakes and burdens.

To the contrary, we have found that becoming the parents of a "special" child grounded us quickly in what was important and what is not: Faith, hope, and love...and a place for it all to happen.



*The youngest Aggie to come help with the A&M Habitat for Humanity team.*

### Volunteer Projects

Could you or your group come out for a day and work on a major project? Here are some projects:

- Design and/or build lake dock
- Build bunk beds for camp
- Paint and stain
- Re-plumb Camp Center
- Haul items to landfill ( Ranch will pay fees)
- Help out in greenhouse
- Mow pastures
- Prep for Spring Break Camp on Saturday March 3
- Build cabinets for kitchen
- Work with donkeys
- Pick berries in early May
- Make jelly in early May
- Help erect another greenhouse

### Justin Paul Foundation Awards Grant

The Justin Paul Foundation of Leander has made a second award to the Ranch for residential housing.

The Foundation is named in honor of the son of Harvey and Martha Walker. "J.P." as he is known (or "Jack" when he's at camp!) has Down syndrome and the Foundation was created and named for him.

The Justin Paul Foundation has assisted the Ranch every year since our inception. In 1991, looking out over the rain-soaked fields of mesquite and fire ants, Judy Horton wrote the Foundation asking for emergency funds to help pay the first mortgage payment, due in a matter of weeks. In a few days a check arrived, and that was the beginning of a very rewarding relationship.

We are deeply appreciative and greatly honored by this continuing investment by the Walker family.



*Barry examines a hanging basket, while Judy and Mickey look on. This year the Ranch will have many more spring plants and baskets to sell.*

## organization

### Values

*Down Home Ranch seeks to be faithful to the Christian mission to provide for those in need.*

### Mission

*The mission of Down Home Ranch is to build a rural community for adults with disabilities such as mental retardation, offering training, housing, recreation and dignified employment, as well as opportunities for growth in mind, body and spirit.*

### Board of Directors

Gerald Bramlett, President ... Austin  
 Jim Crosby ..... Manor  
 Fr. Jim Evans ..... Austin  
 Carroll Fultz ..... San Antonio  
 Judy Horton, Secretary ..... Elgin  
 Michael Paulsen ..... Round Rock  
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### Staff

Jerry W. Horton, Ph.D, Director  
 Judy Horton, Program Director  
 Mickey Harris, Foreman  
 Jackie Chelberg, VESS Volunteer

Down Home Ranch  
 20250 FM 619  
 Elgin, Texas 78621  
 (512) 856-2246  
 (512) 856-0128  
 (888) 926-2253

Fax: (512) 856-0256  
 e-mail: dhr@flash.net  
 www.downhomeranch.com