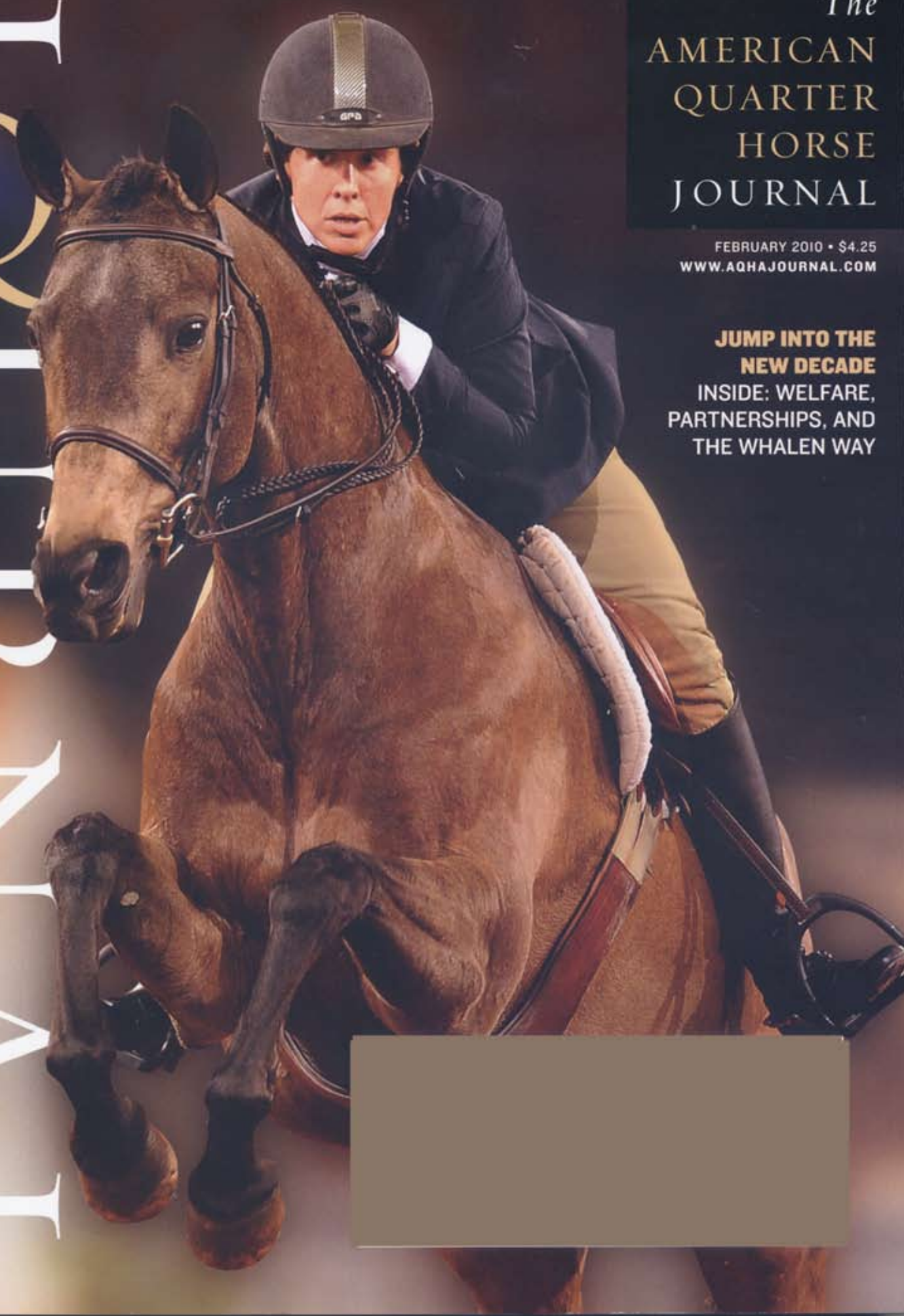


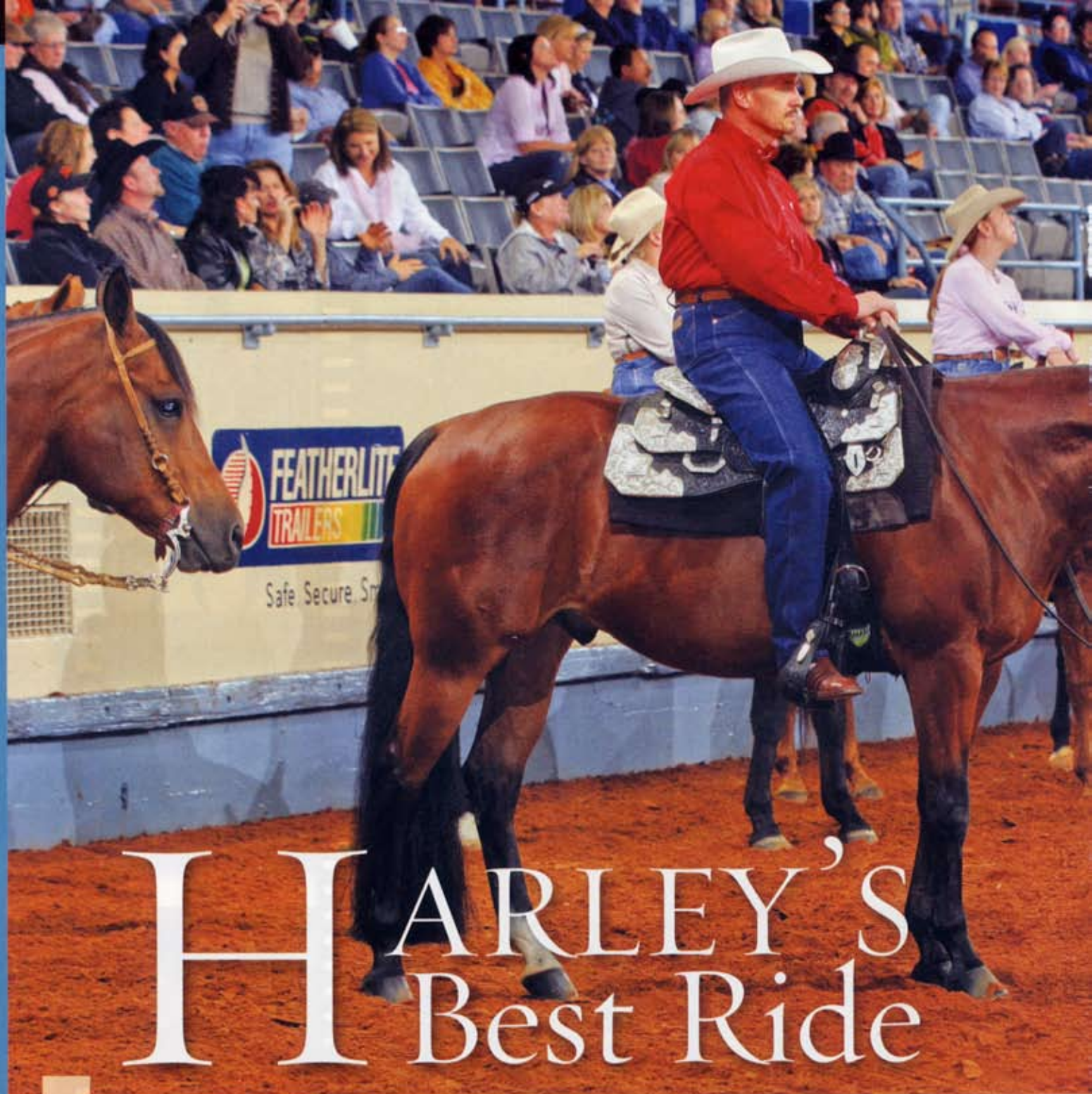
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HARLEY'S Best Ride

LEGENDARY HARLEY D ZIP HAD AN INCREDIBLE 2009 AQHA World Championship Show: He won amateur western riding with Kristina Papendick of Rapid City, South Dakota, and he topped a historic senior western riding class with AQHA Professional Horseman Jason Martin in the saddle.

But perhaps his most important ride in 2009 was carrying show photographer Larry Larson in the Saddle Up for Life cancer survivors' ride November 13 (See "Survivors' Honors").

Larry was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in April 2007.

"They diagnosed me as having tonsillitis and gave me antibiotics," Larry said. "I knew it was worse than that, so I

went to a nurse practitioner who told me I had something serious and that I needed to be checked. Within 10 days, I was in chemo."

A longtime horse show and ranch photographer from Rapid City, South Dakota, most people don't realize that Larry has worked for 25 years at the Black Hills Regional Eye Institute, an eye surgery facility.

"Most people think I am just a horse photographer," he said. "They don't realize that I have a real job that has benefits and all the good things that go with that."

Throughout his chemotherapy and radiation treatments, Larry stayed busy, never missing a day of work or a single show. It wasn't until the very end of his radiation treatment

SURVIVORS' HONORS

Since 2007, AQHA has teamed up with the University of Oklahoma Cancer Institute to honor cancer survivors during the AQHA World Championship Show. The Saddle Up for Life cancer survivors' ride is a one-night tribute to cancer survivors in the Quarter Horse industry.

In 2009, the Saddle Up for Life ride was November 13 at the close of Bank of America Amateur Week. During the evening finals performance, participants either rode into the arena or were driven in via Hummer limousine. Each announced how long they had survived cancer and/or the person they came to honor or in whose place they rode.

Spectators and participants were asked to wear pink and donations were taken to support the Shirley Bowman Nutrition Clinic at the University of Oklahoma Cancer Institute. To learn more about the clinic's work, visit: www.aqha.com/showing/shows/world-show/09behindthescenes/shirleybowmanclinic.html.

Foundation senior director of development, mentioned it to him at the AQHA Convention in San Antonio, he made his decision to come.

"And then I was offered Harley D Zip (to ride)," Larry said.

Larry has known "Harley's" owners, the Papendick family – Lew and Kerry and their son, Sam, and daughters Kristina and Ali – for more than 20 years through the horse show world. He counts the family as close personal friends.

When they offered to let him ride the legendary gelding, Larry was more than honored.

"Two years ago at this time, I didn't even know if I would be here," he said. "And to be in the World Show arena on a horse like Harley D Zip? It's an unbelievable experience. He's an awesome horse, and (the Papendicks) are awesome friends."

Though he spends a lot of time at horse events, Larry hadn't ridden a horse in many years. To prepare for his ride, he took a lesson from a friend in Rapid City and discussed what to expect from Harley with the Papendicks.

"I was told that the horse I rode (in Rapid City) rides exactly like Harley and has all the same cues," he said before the evening performance. "So I was to leave his head alone, use my heels sparingly, and at a walk, I thought I could manage."

"I did ask (Kerry) if I could do a sliding stop, and I think we all got a good laugh out of that. And then I asked her if I got to win one of those big gold trophies if I did good. We laughed again. But it was an honor to ride him."

Participating in the Saddle Up for Life ride meant a great deal to Larry for a number of reasons.

"I was really touched by the crowd's response that night – the congratulations, hand shakes, high fives, from friends and people I didn't even know," he said. "It hit me harder than I had expected."

"Cancer can be a curable disease, and I think that's why we were out there that night," he added. "We need to let people know that cancer can be treated. I'm here to bear witness to that." ■

Stephanie Land was the A.H. "Bud" Ferber marketing intern for fall 2009. To comment, write to aqhajrnl@aqha.org. To learn more about AQHA's internships, visit www.aqha.com/association/who/openings.html.



Show photographer Larry Larson rode the legendary Harley D Zip in the cancer survivors' ride at the 2009 World Show.

By Stephanie Land

protocol that he became so tired he was forced to take six weeks off of work.

Today, Larry is finished with chemotherapy and radiation treatments, but must visit his doctors regularly for blood tests and checkups. While his cancer is in remission, he must stay vigilant to make sure it doesn't return.

"Once I finished chemo and radiation, I haven't had to be on any type of treatment of any kind," he said. "It's just: See the doctor, and get a blood test to let you know if you are doing well. It's been good. I am lucky, one of the lucky ones."

When Larry was first asked to participate in the Saddle Up for Life survivors ride, he was apprehensive. But friends were persistent, and when Chris Sitz, American Quarter Horse