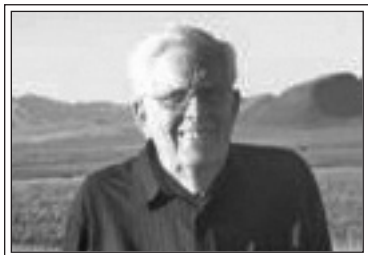


Geology Rocks Babbitt Ranches

With the tenacity of a bulldog, the patience of a wildlife photographer and the keen sense of a homicide detective, Ben Donegan's dogged



ability to sniff out prospective oil and gas sites makes him one of the most respected exploration geologists in the western frontier.

Whether pouring over volumes of scientific information or studying the ground itself, Donegan is said to know every stitch of land when examining an area of interest. Where others have plugged their wells and moved on, Donegan takes a closer look. And when he identifies a promising area he motivates select oil companies to join him in carrying the project to the next level.

Right now he's looking at Babbitt Ranches' Espee and CO Bar ranches. Utilizing geochemical and geophysical remote sensors, Donegan and the oil companies are seeking evidence of near-surface hydrocarbon micro-seepage and sedimentary basins.

Oil-rich Precambrian source rocks are present in the eastern Grand Canyon. With a reputation for following every reference, clue or lead, Donegan is convinced those rich source rocks also lie beneath the high desert of the Coconino Plateau. "We wouldn't be spending our time there if we didn't think it was promising."

Donegan will tell you a deep well used to be 5,000 feet, but shallow oil is now harder to find. So go-

ing deep today in the hunt for hydrocarbons may be 10,000 feet or more into the ancient Precambrian Formations. So hidden are these resources, only one well has been drilled to the Precambrian in the two million-acre area north of Williams.

Donegan was born in Amarillo, Texas, during the Great Depression. His lifelong interest in geology began to form in high school when he found some fossils. "A Texas Tech professor took the time to explain paleontology to me and invited me to go on field trips."

Earning a rock-solid education from Texas Technological College, University of Texas and Stanford University, Donegan began laying the foundation for a career that would span more than 60 years.

He started out as an oil exploration geologist in West Texas after serving in the U.S. Navy in 1945 and '46. With his brother Bob, he expanded into mineral exploration in 1952 with Union Uranium Company at Albuquerque where they later organized Coral Oil and Gas and Eldorado Oil companies. Operating as an independent exploration geologist, principally in the Rocky Mountain states, he has been working with Babbitt Ranches for nearly two decades.

After a fall that broke his back, Donegan spends less time in the field these days and more time in his office working with his extensive collection of geological data. "I've lost some altitude, but not any attitude."

His biggest success? He says he's still looking for it.

Article III Cowboy Essence Section 11. Skill

Be prepared with knowledge and the ability to properly and quickly execute the fundamentals. Cover every little detail.

Colt Sale Auctioneer Knows Pedigrees and Babbitt Ranches

Ron Berndt knows horses. He has a particular fondness for the Driftwood bloodline and the people of Babbitt Ranches. And that makes him the perfect fit as Babbitt Ranches Annual Colt Sale auctioneer.

This summer marks the fifth year for this particular duty at Spider Web Camp. With Berndt's help, Babbitt Ranches enjoyed another successful event July 10 and sold 40 colts and geldings.

"It was a lively, fun crowd and the colts sold for more than last year, averaging about \$2,000 each," he said.

Retired in Goodnight, Texas, this longtime horseman has raised and bred horses for three decades. He continues his role as auctioneer for his favorite ranches. He says the Babbitt Colt Sale is special.

"It's down-to-earth and unique. Those cowboys know all about those horses and the customers do, too. Harvey Howell has known those horses for 40 years!"

Through the past two decades, Berndt has been in big demand to work horse sales because of his knowledge in pedigrees. He's been auctioning at horse events from Montana to Pennsylvania. Through this work and through his western art business, which included handling Bill Owen's artwork, Berndt became acquainted with Babbitt Ranches.

"Babbitt Ranches has some neat people: the cowboys, the management, everybody there."

He sold his own 40-horse Hudson, Colo., outfit in the early '90s. "A lady drove up with a horse trailer and bought them all in an afternoon."

He says he was ready to sell when his two children had grown and were no longer interested in raising horses.

"The people I wanted to hire all had their own businesses. There are a lot of folks who want to play cowboy, but working the ranch is more than putting on spurs and

riding all day."

Always a fan of good usable horses, at age 73 he keeps four mares with colts. "I'm raising saddle horses for my son-in-law and grandson."

He plans to be back at Spider Web next July.



Article III Cowboy Essence Section 2. Enthusiasm

Enjoyment for what you are doing motivates those with whom you come into contact.



Photo by Darren Choate

Longtime Colt Sale participant Ron Berndt connects with the crowd at the annual event.

T BABBITT RANCH HORSE SALE T

Now I don't know if yer familiar with a Hashknife horse?
They come from a pretty big outfit up north.

Bob, Cookie, and myself decided to head up country one day.
We climbed in the car and we were on our way.

After two 'er three hours, we turned left on a dirt road,
we were getting excited, but it hardly showed.

The gauge read 60, when we crossed them railroad tracks;
We was headed to a horse sale with the sun at our backs.

A steady hand on the wheel, kept our tires 'tween the ruts,
now some of you folks may consider us half nuts.

Since 4 a.m. it has been nothing but a rush,
but to go see quality critters, it's well worth the fuss.

We showed up early, so we went to the corrals to have us a peek.
That's when I saw a buckskin filly that made my knees go weak.

She was built, just a pretty little thing.

There was no tellin' how much she would bring.

"With the head of Princess, and rear of a washer woman," as Bob would say.
Yes siree, we saw some fine lookin' horses that day.

The sale started up and folks began to buy.
I'll tell ya this and it's no lie.

A lady from England was sittin' on top of a rail.
Quite aways to travel to attend a ranch horse sale.

"Goin' once, goin' twice... sold!" to Mr. so and so.
It didn't take long for each of them li'l ones to go.

It was all 'bout over, time for us to head back from where we came;
Then the sky clouded up and down came the rain.

People scattered like chickens in a chicken house, goin' left and right.
It was funny how a bit of water can get people all uptight.

The cowboys had to finish in the barn, there was a few more horses to sale.
The rain got worse, then it started to hail.

The storm was loud, but the auctioneer got the job done.
As for horses, we didn't buy us a one.

Empty handed we headed home, but it was fun to watch and see,
the kind of stock they raise out in Hashknife country.

— Amanda L. Stucky, July 2001

