



# The High Chaparral Newsletter

April 2014 Penny McQueen, Editor

*A Penny For Your Thoughts Productions*

## The High Chaparral Season 4 on DVD!

Season 4 of The High Chaparral is now available! <http://thehighchapparalreunion.com/merchandise.shtml>



This 4th season DVD set has a copy of the Bill Claxton 'director's cut' of the pilot of The High Chaparral. Transferred from the original 16mm, this fascinating artifact is old and faded but still a treasure for fans as it contains never broadcast scenes.

The 4th season of High Chaparral introduced Wind (played by Rudy Ramos) and includes the two part tribute to Frank Silvera's Don Sebastian Montoya - *New Lion of Sonora*.

## All seasons in stock.

## OMG, Wow! The High Chaparral Reunion 2014

By Marianne Rittner-Holmes

Many of you may remember that last year I wrote about



## Upcoming Events

High Chaparral on INSP

November

[Check the Schedule, set your DVR](#)

The High Chaparral Reunion, Tucson

MARCH

[make reservations now](#)

**MARCH 20-23**

**BEAT THE DEADLINE**

20

Not open to the general public, reservation required for Reunion events

HC on DVD

Get your very own copy of The High Chaparral on DVD - authorized, uncut, digitally remastered.

Purchase direct from [The High Chaparral Reunion](#).

being at my first Reunion.

The endorphins from that event carried me through the entire year! All I could say was OMG! Just when you thought it couldn't get any better, it did! And, well, OMG!

This year, I was actually able to talk to the celebs. Last year all I could muster was a big grin with gibberish! So, having settled down a bit, I'll just say that this year's reaction is Wow!

Over the weekend of March 20-23rd, I joined more than 200 fans in Tucson to meet and visit with the THC cast and crew of our beloved show. This September will mark the 47th anniversary of the show's pilot on NBC, making some of us older than we wish to say. However one thing that was uplifting (oh, there were so many uplifting things), was that it was also attended by a new generation of fans! Wow!

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So where to begin? Thursday's early registration included an impromptu visit with Henry, Don and event coordinator Penny McQueen in the Ballroom while early arrivals checked in for their super goodie bag and name tag.

Then, everyone who signed up to go to The White Stallion Ranch worked up a huge appetite in preparation for the fresh-grilled steaks that were awaiting us on the most-beautiful piece of property ever! Imagine: Dining on 3,000 acres of Sonoran Desert complete with saguaro cactus, cattle and horse



herds, some of the most stunning spring flowers—with our host Don Collier! Wow! Roving troubadour Bill Gantz played guitar and sang to us as we mingled and chatted; we even mugged for a group photo!

We had a little dessert (okay, maybe a lot?) and did a little shopping (okay, maybe a lot?) then back to the hotel for a night's sleep, assuming people could sleep from all the excitement in preparation for opening day on Friday!

Friday morning was electric with people milling in the ballroom with each other while investigating the hundreds of silent auction items that were laid out around the entire perimeter.

Reunion guest and author Boyd Magers and wife Donna brought a beautiful display of Western memorabilia from their collection. It included pistols used by Lorne Greene and Michael Landon in Bonanza, boots and hat worn by Roy Rogers, a pistol and derringer used by Richard Boone in Have Gun Will Travel, a gun belt worn by Peter Brown, and even a game called Outlaws with Don Collier's picture on it from the



early 1960's! Wow!

A new dynamic this year was the joy of watching Facebook friends greeting each other. The THC and THC Reunion FB pages have been around a while and have been a great outlet to keep in touch about the show and with each other. However, last year saw the creation of pages for Leif Erickson, Cameron Mitchell, Mark Slade, Linda Cristal and those forever-fun-loving Buffalo Gals. Many of the page administrators came to the Reunion; it was heartwarming to see members meet each other for the first time while feeling they had known each other for years. Lots of great emotion! Wow!

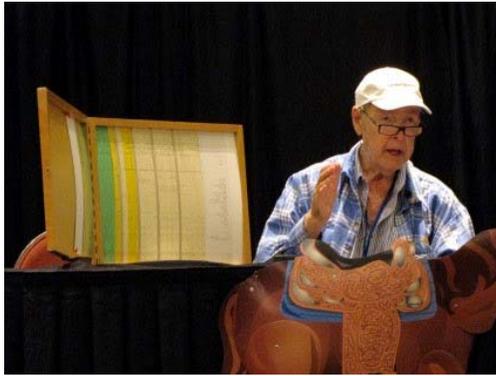
Penny officially opened the Reunion with a video by Sarah Ortega, one of Sarah's many wonderful digital displays that honor the legacy of The High Chaparral. Penny's gracious welcome and humorous stories set the mood for meeting the celebrities during the first question and answer panel, hosted by Boyd Magers.

It's so hard to describe what it feels like to not only be in the same room as your childhood heroes, but also to be able to interact with them. Many fans took the opportunity to ask questions of Henry Darrow, Don Collier, Rudy Ramos, Kent and Susan McCray, Stan Ivar, and Neil Summers . Boyd intermingled his knowledge of the stars with his own questions, and the next thing we knew, it was time to move on to the next activity—the first autograph signing. Wow!



I have to share right here that getting autographs from our celebs is like having a private meeting one-on-one. Seriously. Our celebs take time with EACH person, chatting, posing for photos, personalizing autographs. They genuinely like us fans and prove it with how they interact with us. They remember us from prior Reunions and know our names! It's so personal. This description doesn't do it justice, but each celebrity does this with each fan. I watched it and was part of it. It was even better for me this year because I actually made sentences when I spoke to them and was able to listen to what they said back. It was like, like, like we were having a conversation. Wow!

But I digress...After lunch, we got to see Big Daddy Kent McCray work his Big Daddy magic. Kent took a script and broke it down into ways most of us would never even think of: by day, location, actors needed, etc. He had it color-coded and portable so he could carry it around the locations! Many of us have become fully dependent on computers to catalog and create documents of this magnitude, collating and cataloging diverse sets of data. Not Kent. He did it through hard work and diligence—and by using his brain! And what a beautiful brain it is! I've yet to meet anyone who talks to Kent that doesn't comment afterwards, "That man is so interesting. I could listen to him for hours!" Me, too. Wow!



Next, Susan McCray shared her casting talent by doing a casting call for the episode, "Tornado Frances." Susan walked around hand-picking fans to play specific roles, and I know she stretched a lot of people's comfort zones. Especially Don Collier's. She cast him as Woman #1!

Hilarious. The rehearsal was just hilarious. Picture the scene at the beginning of the episode when Frances is about to descend on the saloon. She talks to the saloon's owner (the Dub Taylor role) and the sheriff and then the women march. Twenty-plus fans stomping around with protest signs singing Bringing in the Sheaves, doing dialog (Sharon Dell Laura Morton did a beautiful Irish brogue), and in the midst of things, big Don Collier with his hand on his hip using a high-pitched voice for his female character.

Utter beautiful, coordinated madness! Susan, your casting was brilliant! Wow!

It took a while to settle down after that, but by evening, we were ready for the Sponsor's dinner and live music by Vinnie Falcone and his trio. I had the honor to sit with Kent and Susan

McCray, Stan Ivar, Vinnie and his drummer Joe LaBarbera and bassist Tom Warrington. I do believe Mr Falcone lives his work in all things. He shared some wonderful stories about Frank Sinatra, recounting how he was asked by Frank to become Frank's musical conductor, as well as the time Frank first rehearsed with Luciano Pavarotti.

After a fine meal and great conversation, the Trio went on stage for about an hour of live jazz, with Susan introducing each song written by her father Harry Sukman. Vinnie did the arranging and the whole room was aglow with Harry Sukman vibes via Vinnie's fingertips and those of his trio. They made a CD of this music called, "Warm Heart, Cool Hands." Yes, I have one. Yes, it's signed by Susan, Vinnie, Joe and Tom. Wow!



Saturday morning brought trail rides and a visit to the location shooting for THC: Old Tucson. I lived in Tucson for 10 years and have made many trips to Old Tucson...but each time it's like going home. Really. The dusty streets, the familiar buildings seen in many Westerns over decades of movie-making and TV shows. And then, there's the Cannon ranch house! Wow!

The celebrities set up inside for their autograph session, and I can't begin to count the hundreds of people that poured in over a two-hour period. The place was alive with fans, hand-shakes, hugs, photos and signings. Meanwhile, outside, Don Collier was rescuing us all from the bad guys by doing a live stunt on Cannon soil. Let's just say, the good guy won and the bad guys won't be botherin' us anytime soon!

In addition to the non-stop fans, the thing that stuck out in my mind at the ranch was that there must have been 5 to 7 or more Old Tucson stuntmen (those on payroll) who took time to come to the ranch house, stand in line in full stunt costume, just to say to each star: "Sir, it's an honor to meet you." Such reverence. These were goose-bump, warm-fuzzy moments to watch. Wow!

Then everyone joined together in front of the ranch for a group photo. Off to lunch at Soundstage 2, but really, who could eat? Wow!

We went back to Casino del Sol to brush the Old Tucson dust off of us (while keeping it on our shoes to bring home and remember) and prepare for the premier of Rudy Ramos' "Geronimo, Life on the Reservation." I must say, we all cleaned up well, and we were full of that anxious excitement you get when you've waited a long time for something that's now about to happen. I was lucky to sit with Marc, Cameron Mitchell's nephew. Marc had brought a folder of personal

memorabilia about Cameron, which he graciously shared with me and others during his time at the Reunion. We sat with Mallory Furnier, the archivist for the David Dortort papers at The Autry Museum in L.A.

Throughout the weekend, I've described all the emotion floating around the hotel and Old Tucson for more than two days: laughter, hugs, jokes, singing, etc. Not tonight. Not for Geronimo. You could hear a pin drop. Not a sound from us as Rudy, or should I say, Geronimo came on stage to tell his story. There wasn't even any noise when Geronimo left in between acts. Then, when it was over: an uproar of applause and whistles and joy and happiness. Wow!

Rudy nailed it! He and director Steve Railsback (a renowned actor in his own right—and a really nice man) had put together Janelle Meraz-Hooper's play so very powerfully as to move many to say afterwards, "Now they have me thinking. I'm going to have to research this more when I get home because I want to know more."

The performance was brilliant, and Janelle was absolutely thrilled to see her work come alive. Speaking of Janelle, she is one vibrant, joyful woman. You can see how alive her spirit is in her eyes. They draw you in and embrace you. Wow!

The end of Saturday. Oh, my, only one more day left of this fantasy-come-to-life weekend. Sunday brought Cowboy Church and brunch and more autograph sessions. By now, we'd spent several days with our celebs and the atmosphere was very calm and intimate, like being around old friends.

Somewhere in the morning, Penny and Don were auctioning off the table centerpieces. That sounds pretty straight forward...until you add Neil Summers and Jeff McCarroll into the mix. Neil was a stuntman/extra on the show and Jeff is a current stuntman (who'll appear in the movie C-Bar to be released soon). Those two started bidding on a straw hat and a kiss from Don! Too funny. Jeff beat out Neil, but it was Don who lost, having to kiss Jeff...well, I think Jeff may have lost, too. Let's just say they ended by each wiping off their lips on their sleeves!

Boyd Magers hosted our first-ever Trivia Contest. All participants formed a line and were asked a question. If they answered correctly, they went back to the back of the line for the next round; if not, they sat down.

Boyd had some tricky questions, but last-fan-standing was Michele Simmons. Congrats, Michele! She won \$100 from the Reunion, a THC poster, and a one-year subscription to Boyd's magazine, Western Clippings. Well-done. Wow!

Another Q&A panel with Rudy, Don, Henry, Neil and stuntman/extra Steve DeFrance hosted by Boyd. (Hey, Steve has some great stories,

not to mention the ones from Neil and everyone else! You'll notice Steve in the episode, "The Peacemaker." He's the guy dressed in costume as the Apache that kills Blue's beloved Moonfire.)

The time went by so quickly, and we soon found ourselves congregating outside the room where Don Collier's "Confessions of an Acting Cowboy," was going to be unveiled. The lights dimmed and some video clips of Don's work were shown...then out came our Foreman with Penny McQueen. The two led us through more than an hour of questions and antics and behind-the-scenes stories of Don's acting career.

We mostly know Don as Sam, the serious and loyal foreman who took a drink or two and who threw a punch or two on occasion. However, picture this six-foot-plus-huge cowboy with the beautiful blue eyes imitating a bird at Penny's request by flapping his arms and jumping up and down on stage with that deep voice emoting, "Tweet, tweet, tweet, tweet." He was demonstrating some of his acting class exercises with us.

We were roaring with each imitation he did: frog, mouse, etc. Funny! And then his props: he donned an Egyptian headdress to explain how he tried out for a pyramid movie. Uproariously funny. And on it went. I don't want to share more so as to ruin it for those who haven't seen it. Maybe they will as Don takes his show on the road. Penny and he were perfect. Wow!

After Don's show, the Reunion was technically over. Wow, in a different way. How could that have happened so fast? Well, yes, the weekend was done for another year, but it still left the endorphins like before and it still left a set of memories that only could come from such a gathering.

Driving back to New Mexico the next day, I realized that in just one short year, I had gone from a babbling, pinch-me-is-this-real fan, to a person who was able to appreciate our celebs as people—lovely human beings, talented, friendly, caring folks who genuinely love us back. It doesn't get much better than that. I wonder what 2015 will bring. Wow!

[Download your FREE e-book, 'How To Attend The High Chaparral Reunion!'](#)

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**Cam-Bustion**

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## *The Movement to Remember Cameron Mitchell is Catching Fire!*

Just a little over a year ago, the Cameron M. Mitchell (Buck Cannon) Fans Facebook page was begun by one of the many fans of The High Chaparral who, like thousands of others, began participating in a revival of our beloved show and its characters due to the growth of The High Chaparral Reunion. A year later, the page has in excess of 600 members and multiple administrators.

Flash forward eleven months and two-thousand miles east of Old Tucson Studios (where The High Chaparral was filmed). In York County, PA, Bryan Sellers had an awakening of a different sort.

Sellers, an employee of the local Emergency Services in the Glen Rock area, was attending a meeting at the old high school in New Freedom one day. The building, now used for business, still has the Student Recognition plaques on the wall from the time when the high school used to single out a Student of the Year. One plaque, from 1937, showed the name Cameron Mitzell.

“I asked the people around me if they knew who that was,” Sellers said. “Most did not. I thought it was a

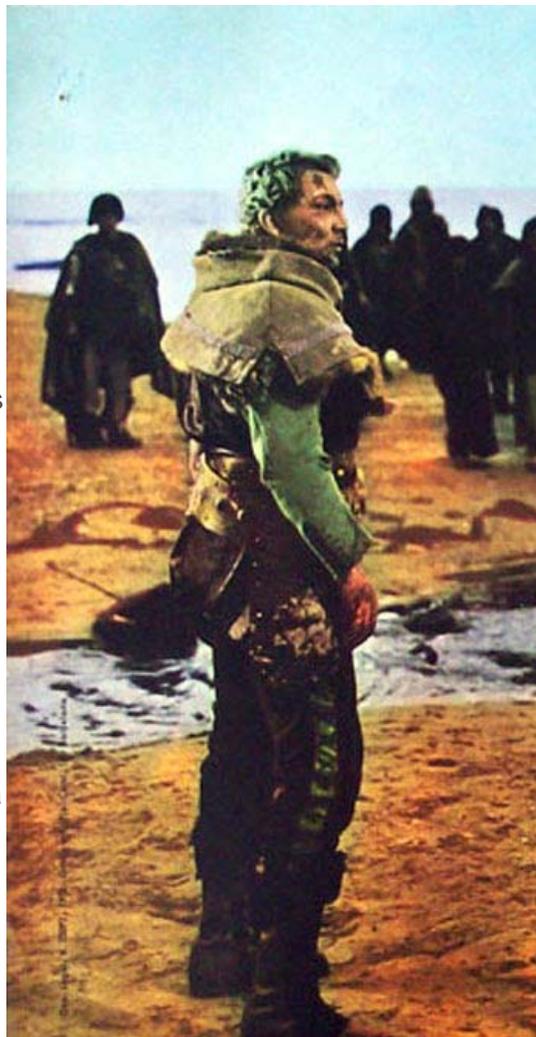


shame because he (Cameron) is probably the most famous actor to come out of York County.”

Sellers has a great reason for knowing so much about Cameron Mitchell, whose given name was Mitzell. Born in Dallastown, PA on Nov. 4, 1918, Cameron was raised in Shrewsbury, right next to Glen Rock. Sellers’ father, Bruce, and his uncle, Herman Sellers, were childhood friends of the actor, playing baseball and tennis and acting in local plays together in the Shrewsbury, Glen Rock, and New Freedom area. In fact, Sellers says Cameron talked Uncle Herman into going to Hollywood with him after their World War II service.

“Cameron presented to my uncle that he go to Los Angeles with him,” Sellers said, “and he promised to help my uncle get work...Herman got work at MGM Studios where he eventually became supervisor of the film processing section and Cameron’s career took off. He would ask my uncle to take care of his personal affairs while Cameron took off to Canada or Europe,” Sellers said. When his uncle passed away in 1983, Sellers inherited all the correspondence between the two as well as photos and other memorabilia.

Mitchell hit the big time during the hey-day of Hollywood, starring opposite such actors as Jimmy Cagney, Clark Gable, John Wayne, Doris Day, Marilyn Monroe, and Lauren Bacall. He worked for renowned directors Elia Kazan and John Ford, plus, he had a huge European following working for director Mario Bava in various swashbuckling roles in movies like Erik the



Conqueror and Knives of the Avenger. Then, in 1967, the actor was cast by show creator David Dortort as Buck Cannon on *The High Chaparral*, a historic Western that brought Uncle Buck into the home of millions from the show's location in Hollywood and at Old Tucson Studios in Arizona.

So when Sellers, who is a member of the Glen Rock Historical Society, was asked to present information on a local topic in January of this year, he opted to do one about Cameron Mitchell to re-educate the community about their famous native son. The January 28th meeting announcement in the *York Daily Record* stirred up so much local interest that it had to be moved to a larger location to accommodate all those attending—in spite of a series of huge snow storms in the area.

#### Glen Rock Meets Social Media

The article announcing the meeting was emailed to one of the administrators of the Cameron M. Mitchell (Buck Cannon) Facebook page by one of Cameron's relatives still living in the York area. Nephew Marc and the administrator had met at *The High Chaparral* Reunion in 2013 and had stayed in touch throughout the year. The administrator called Sellers immediately and introduced him not only to the Cameron Facebook page, but also to *The High Chaparral* Reunion organization, the underlying source of the show's and Cameron's revival. Sellers' meeting was announced on the Cameron Facebook page, and one of its members was even able to attend despite the freezing temperatures and snow.

Sellers, the local newspapers and numerous residents who personally knew, or whose family members knew, the famous actor have stirred up excitement in York County that continues to grow. Sellers has held or participated in more than five meetings with the local business community as well as members of the public, the media and the Facebook groups to try to identify the best way to keep Cameron Mitchell's legacy visible in his native area.



"We'd like to see a scholarship fund set up and possibly a sign or

plaque,” Sellers said. “We also want to include Harkey in the scholarship fund because she helped him (Cameron) and so many others in the area.” “Harkey” is the nickname of Helena Hartenstein, a high school teacher who is credited with lending Cameron the money and encouragement to go to New York to pursue his acting career.

Sellers is also reaching out to connect with The High Chaparral Reunion organization, the Cameron M. Mitchell Facebook page and others who have expressed interest in helping with fundraising for the scholarship. Monies would be set aside for York area high school seniors pursuing studies in the media arts including acting. There’s also talk of a Cameron Mitchell Day back in the hometown area.

“I think this recognition (for Cameron) is long past due,” Sellers said. This July 7th will mark the 20th year of Cameron’s passing.

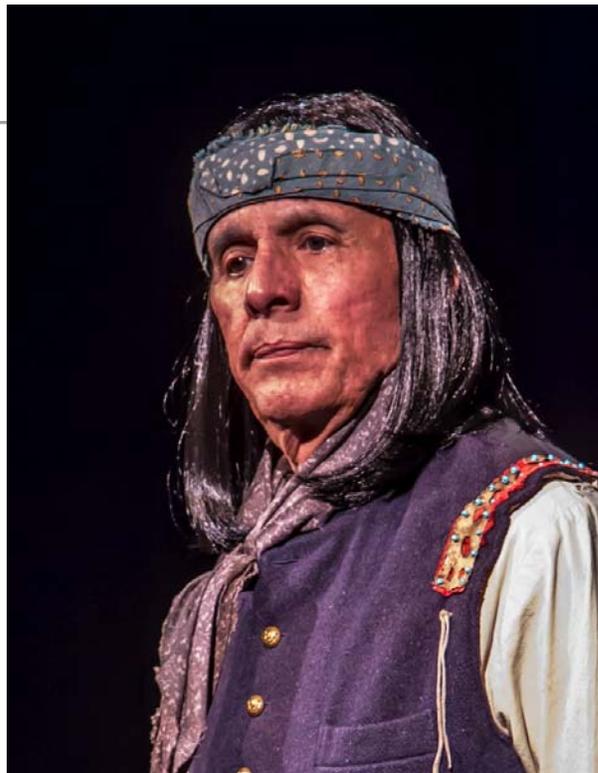
Apparently a lot of folks agree with Sellers because the movement to honor Cameron’s memory is catching fire not just in York County, but also on a global scale through The High Chaparral Reunion’s Facebook page as well as the others that sprung from the show’s revival. Plus, INSP has been airing the iconic Western since September 2012, introducing it to even more generations of fans who simply love Uncle Buck and the story of the Cannon and Montoya families as they struggle to make a life in the Arizona Territory.

Look for more updates as this effort moves forward.

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## **Geronimo, Life on the Reservatio n**

**starring  
Rudy  
Ramos**



Lawton Community Theater

Lawton, OK

May 3, 2014

Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame

Muskogee, OK

May 6, 2014

Send us local contacts to get Rudy's Geronimo in YOUR area!

<http://www.geronimolifeonthereservation.com/>

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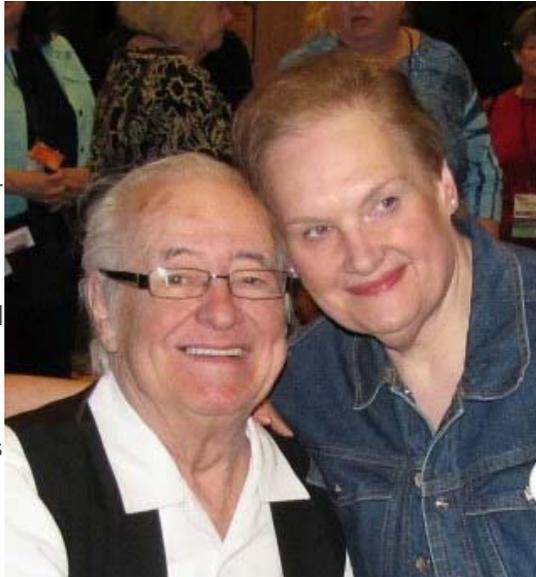
## Destination: Dream

*by Susan Getty*

I have always been a shy introvert and never did anything alone. I don't make waves – I make cookies! I am a stay at home mom and grandma – but the magic of the High Chaparral took over last year when I happened across the show on INSP. I was enthralled!

I hadn't seen the show since it first ran when I was fourteen. A look on the net revealed there had been Reunions going on since 2003. Websites were dedicated to my heroes and it took only a few minutes for me to join the sites on Facebook dedicated to The High Chaparral. My family looked at me in shock. This certainly wasn't who they were used to.

Then I announced that I MUST go to Tucson for the Reunion! It was like a magnetic draw. I knew I had to go – whatever it took.



O.K., so I was never going to meet Henry Darrow. (I got verklempt each time I read he wasn't coming.) But, hey, I wanted to meet everyone who was involved and also the new friends I was talking to each day on Facebook--people who understood my feelings very well.

Soooo... I booked a hotel room – alone. My flight from Spokane by myself. I signed up for my first-ever horseback ride – a trail ride in the desert. I could feel big changes happening in my life. And I was happy and determined. I got all plans in order and then suddenly got “buyer’s remorse” and the “what ifs.” I started feeling that everyone was paired up and what if I didn’t fit in? What if it’s all different in person than on Facebook? What if I don’t like it?

A very smart leader of the Buffalo Gals, Lydia Tilbury Hopkins, told this worry wart to not be afraid to go alone to the Reunion because as soon as I saw my “sisters” there it would be O.K.” Was she ever right!

I arrived after five on Thursday. Registration closed for the day and people were sitting in the lobby waiting for the shuttle to the dinner at the White Stallion Ranch. I didn’t have a name tag on and since I look nothing like my Facebook icon Tinkerbell, no one knew me. I recognized Vickie Nelson sitting on the couch looking and acting as vibrant as you all imagine she is.

I said, “You must be Vicki.” She jumped up and gave me a big hug. Then with her back to me, I said, “And you must be Lydia.” She stood up and looked me over and in her sassy southern accent said, “Who ARE you?” When I said Sugeti, she hugged me and gave me a Tinkerbell keychain. I



looked around and introduced myself to those people that I had enjoyed so much on the Facebook sites during the year. It was as if I was in a room full of celebrities that I knew and it was an instant feeling of warmth and friendship.

Soon they were leaving for the dinner, and a lady came walking into the lobby from the elevator. M.J. turned to me and said, “This is Lauren, Henry’s wife.” I don’t know what I said. My mind was thinking LOUDLY, “He’s here! He is in this hotel!” and

I was so glad that in the last week he had decided to come. I managed to say hello to this kind and approachable lady with the ready smile.

Approachable is the word to describe all the heroes of the Reunion. The stars are not just there for an autograph signing or a photo op with you. They are there at all the get-togethers. You have many opportunities to talk with everyone. And they are patient, and friendly.



One day Henry was buzzing down the same hallway, both of us heading to the Sponsors dinner. I knew this was a good opportunity to talk to him. I needed something interesting – no gushing with “how wonderful” he is or “how much I’ve loved” him for years! He has heard that so much. I know he loves baseball and I have two nephews on a major league team so I mentioned them. He told me about the old Brooklyn Dodgers and various players he had liked. Suddenly I was looking into the eyes of Manolito and I just couldn’t help myself. I said, “I’ll love you forever.” (And I meant it.) He still has that ability to move you and make you feel like a teenager again.

In the Sponsors dinner I found the Buck Cannon table I was assigned to. I wistfully thought it would have been so fun to be sharing my table with Cameron Mitchell. My table was full except for one last seat beside me. A man appeared apologizing for his lateness and introduced himself to all of us as Marc, Cameron Mitchell’s nephew. I was thrilled. Such a pleasant man and very fun to be able to ask him about his Uncle. After dinner we enjoyed Harry Sukman’s music played beautifully by the Vinnie Falcone Trio.



Saturday morning I was down early to see if I could change to the first trail ride. I couldn’t, but Marc appeared with photos of his Uncle and postcards that Cameron had sent his father while in Europe making movies. What a treat to look through these family treasures.

Next, onto the shuttle for Old Tucson. Susan Nobley (did I mention I counted six Susans?) and I explored around the town and collected bottles of Cannon soil when we reached the ranch house. We walked the grounds where we saw our favorites come riding up so often. Our group photo was taken and then to the sound stage for lunch. Stan Ivar, Susan and Kent McCray, Marc, Susan Nobley, David Crist, Sondra Hill and I shared a table and were treated to stories of Michael Landon, who was a dear friend of the McCrays. (He was best man at

their wedding.)

Speaking of the McCrays...Kent has an amazing mind. Listening to his talk on production scheduling back when he was working on the High Chaparral, you realize his tremendous capabilities. Computers handle now what he did himself manually. It is probably why his mind is so clear now – he has exercised it throughout his life.

Lunch over, Lydia gathered the Buffalo Gals in front of the ranch for our photo then off to the trail ride. Never having ridden before can we say I was a little nervous? A few weeks before, I had done a little research online about riding. I studied an online trainer who had suggested an exercise to keep your heels down while riding. You can bet I practiced. I was happily surprised to find the instructor, Kathleen Vann Ausdall, on my trail ride! (I wonder if she noticed my heel position?)

M.J. and Debra Cox were right there to record our mount ups and ride out of Old Tucson. Kathryn Phipps, an expert horsewoman, added to the fun as she rode in front of me pointing out Apaches and other things of interest on the trail. To give me some extra excitement she told me to hold on and had her horse run down and up the gully with mine in pursuit. It was fun. Thank you, Kathryn. She also got us singing Buffalo Gals as we returned.

Back at Casino del Sol, Susan McCray made me the happiest woman in the room during the casting call. She chose me for Tornado Frances. As I was looking at the script in shock, I heard Laura Morton (Sharla to me) really getting into the Irish accent. I knew she would do a terrific job so we went to Susan to switch. Sharla was a sensational Frances!



We ended the night with Rudy's Geronimo play. I know he felt all our support. If you have a chance as he tours around with his one man show be sure to go and see this talented actor.

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Sunday was Cowboy Church and brunch. Penny sang, which was a nice surprise. I had no idea she had such a terrific voice. But what stands out to me the most when I think of Penny – aside from her warmth and graciousness—is her sincerity. She told us before beginning Reunion plans and all the way through, she prays for us. Believe me we were reaching for tissues when she said, “You are here because God wanted you to be here.” (Right, Ana?) Thanks for your prayers, Penny.

Ginger Kullman very sweetly offered to take me to visit the San Xavier del Bac Mission which was the Montoya ranch site. We had a good time seeing it, talking and going to lunch before we returned for even more!

I can't forget the stunt men and all their stories. Really enjoyed them. They added much to the Reunion. Boyd Magers was an excellent narrator for the panel, and had some hard questions for the trivia contest.

Don's show was Sunday evening. What a way to end the Reunion. Don is much more than a pretty face! What a talented and funny guy. I truly want to see and hear that show again.

Believe me I haven't written everything or about the many fun happenings – but this should give you an idea.

To those of you who have not yet made the “pilgrimage,” let me tell you it is an experience you will never forget. Do whatever it takes to be there with us. There is truly a closeness and belonging you will feel from the moment you arrive, and you will cherish the memories and the friendship long after.

P.S. I don't know what Penny has in store for us for the next Reunion, but whatever it is will be a treat. Perhaps it's a shuttle to the tattoo parlor where we will all get tats of the HC brand on us like Uncle Buck did! Just kidding – I threw that in to see if you were still reading!

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## **Don Collier Updates**

Check out [www.doncollier.com!](http://www.doncollier.com!)

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Green Valley Radio Club

June 11, 2014

Green Valley, AZ

Hopalong Cassidy Festival

May 2-3, 2014

Cambridge Ohio

WESTERN LEGENDS ROUNDUP

Kanab, UT

August 21- August 23, 2014

Solsberry Hometown Fair

Solsberry, IN

Saturday, Sept 20

TOMBSTONE

HELLDORADO

*Confessions of an Acting Cowboy*

October 17-19

Schieffelin Hall

Friday night 7pm

Saturday 11am Saturday 3pm

Sunday 11am & 3pm

2015 Memphis Film Festival, dates TBD

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## Foreman T-Shirt

Why? Now you know! Get a **Sam Butler t-shirt**, personally signed by Don Collier if you prefer.

<http://www.thehighchaparralreunion.com/merchandise.shtml>

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## THC and Buffalo Soldiers

All High Chaparral fans know that John Cannon's prime directive (a' la Star Trek Federation) was that all people were to be treated equally, regardless of color, race or ethnicity. Only one thing set men apart to Big John: they were either honorable or dishonorable based on their actions.



That's how the characters judged a person each episode. Behind the scenes, however, the decision-makers on the show were the ones who cemented that prime directive into reality by insisting on casting ethnic actors in ethnic roles and on portraying ethnic characters outside the stereotypes that riddled Western productions up to that time. And they did it in the midst of the Civil Rights movement. People like David Dortort, Kent McCray, William F. Claxton, Buck Houghton, James Schmerer, Don Balluck, Walter Black and, yes, the entire cast as well, made it happen, embraced it, and left their mark in history for it.

So, the second season episode called "The Buffalo Soldiers" should not have been a surprise. Touting Yaphet Kotto as the polished and more-than-capable Sgt Maj Creason, leader of the 10th Cavalry unit, the renowned Buffalo soldiers rode into Tucson. They came at the request of the townsfolk to establish martial law until the local town boss McCoy Hilliard (Morgan Woodward) was corralled. The show's climax is a cinematic

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spectacular display, shot from 70 feet in the air per Kent McCray, in which the Buffalo soldiers perform some outstanding horsemanship maneuvers and literally round up the henchmen and return the town's control back to the residents.

The episode featured members from the 10th Cavalry Regiment from Los Angeles. It aired on Nov. 22, 1968, the fifth anniversary of JFK's assassination, and two years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1966.

Flash ahead 46 years later. Those of you who attended the Old Tucson visit on the Saturday of our recent High Chaparral Reunion were probably thrilled to see a contingent of Buffalo soldiers on hand. However, instead of declaring martial law, they were there to greet you on Main Street to educate you about the real Buffalo soldiers.

The men are part of the Territory of Arizona Buffalo Soldiers, one of several Buffalo soldier groups in the state. Spokesman Charles Young said there are a total of 25 to 30 men in the various units who are proud to represent the Buffalo soldiers and who are also eager to educate all who will listen.

"I enjoy sharing with the public," said Young. "Did you know there are a number of Buffalo soldier Medal of Honor winners? Did you know that Gen. Black Jack Pershing got his nickname because



he was the commander of the 10th Cavalry at one time?" he asks. "History doesn't always tell things the way they happened. Teddy Roosevelt took San Juan Hill," Young continues, "but the 9th Cav gave cover to allow him to go up the hill."

According to Young, after the Civil War, most of the soldiers returned home and the military was depleted. Congress reorganized the Armed Forces by creating two black mounted units, known as the 9th and 10th (Colored) Cavalry, and four ground units that were eventually combined into the 24th and 25th (Colored) Infantry. Many of the units were sent out West to deal with bandits and Indian uprisings.

"If it weren't for the Buffalo soldiers," Young continues, "we may never have settled New Mexico and Arizona." Indeed, history shows that the 9th and 10th Cavalries were stationed in Kansas, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Montana (and many more places) and fought battles against Geronimo, Tularosa, Victorio and other Apache chiefs, as well as the Cheyenne.

According to Young, three different theories all point to the Indians as the originators of the Buffalo soldiers' nickname. "The first is that their hair reminded the Native Americans of the buffalo," said Young. "The second is that in Montana, the Native Americans saw the soldiers wearing buffalo coats. The third version is that the Native Americans knew the soldiers fought tenaciously like the revered buffalos that were central to their survival. After all," said Young, "these soldiers were former slaves, and would go toe-to-toe with anyone."

In addition to staving off hostile attacks, Buffalo soldiers helped protect travelers and mail deliveries, and were even some of the earliest park rangers. They are also credited with opening hundreds of miles of new roads as well as stringing hundreds of miles of telegraph wire. The 9th and 10th Cavalries were decommissioned in the mid-



1940's and 50's and re-commissioned later as racially integrated units.

One thing is for sure, The High Chaparral cast and crew recognized how special a place the Buffalo soldiers had in history. (The National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma recognized the special place this episode had in history—by bestowing on it the Western Heritage Award Fictional Television Drama in 1969.)

Of The High Chaparral's 98 episodes, "The Buffalo Soldiers" is the only one which included a tribute to those depicted in the story. While actors salute and otherwise show respect on camera, Cameron

Mitchell's voice speaks the following words as the mounted men in blue leave town:

The Buffalo Soldiers of yesterday were the stuff of which legends are made and hope rekindled. That hope has been translated into action by these men, the Buffalo Soldiers of today, who carry on in the tradition of the famed 10th Cavalry, determined that the patriotic spirit of that great troop must live and must flourish so that all of us can recall and cherish the historic and continuing contribution of the Black American to the life and progress of our Nation.

The visionaries who made The High Chaparral will likewise be remembered for their bravery to do the right thing at a time when it was not necessarily popular. Forty-six years later, their legacy is validated by the continually growing base of fans who cherish what The High Chaparral stands for, and who recognize its global contributions.

For more information about the Territory of Arizona Buffalo Soldiers, contact Charles Young at [ewyoung@aol.com](mailto:ewyoung@aol.com), or visit an affiliated group at [www.10thcavtroopb.org](http://www.10thcavtroopb.org).

For more information about The High Chaparral, you're already in the right place.





## THC Reunion With a 2nd Gen Fan

*By Joyce Rice*

I am part of the “younger generation,” as some of y’all call it. Born in the 80’s, I grew up watching the old movies, westerns, musicals, comedy—The Classics! Thanks to my parents, Ken and Jeanette Rice. They knew that if their children were going to be entertained by television, it was going to be with good honest gunfighting! Plus, these old westerns were not only entertaining, but also had a moral to their stories. (Gunsmoke, Have Gun Will Travel, The Big Valley, Hopalong Cassidy, Gene Autry, Roy Rogers were some of the shows I watched—and, of course, The High Chaparral.)



I didn’t know about The High Chaparral until a few years ago. It was not on prime time TV but was like the other western reruns on other channels. My Dad was watching it one night when I asked him what this show was. He told me the name and said it was made in the 1960’s. Cool!

Uncle Buck became my very favorite Uncle on the show. I also liked Manolito and Blue Boy. I was a love-struck girl in her 30’s, having fallen in love with some actors who, unfortunately, had already passed away. How sad to find that out—but it made me do some research on the internet. That’s when I found out there was a High Chaparral Reunion.

I needed a vacation, right? Really! Yes, I needed time off to travel to this Reunion. I signed myself and my parents up to attend. After all, they would want to go—they’re the ones who introduced me to it!

So, I planned and scheduled the events we wanted to attend: White Stallion Dinner, Q&A sessions, autographs, meet the stars, Old Tucson Studios! This was too good to be true, but it was almost a year away. What was I to do in the meantime? Watch reruns of the show, of course! I watched those

reruns over and over. Then I found the Facebook groups with other High Chaparral Fans and a group of fans called The Buffalo Girls.

There were also sites for Cameron Mitchell, Henry Darrow, Mark Slade, and Linda Cristal. These groups of people also loved westerns in general, but especially The High Chaparral. I finally found people who held the same interests as I had! Throughout this time, I made a lot of friends that would soon be attending the Reunion!



Don Collier also interacted on these sites. I was impressed that a famous actor would take time to speak with us guys and gals online! Way cool! Way cool! To have someone that well-known take time to spend with individuals was fascinating to me.

As the Reunion got closer and became more of a reality, I got more excited and told everyone at work where I was going and who I was going to see. LOL. I was finally going to meet the famous stars of The High Chaparral and friends I had made on Facebook!

March 2014 finally arrived. My parents and I drove up to Tucson and arrived after about three days of traveling. I thought we'd never arrive at the hotel. Then, we saw Casino de Sol standing in the desert by itself. We had arrived! As soon as we walked into the hotel, I was looking around for the stars of the show: Henry, Don, Rudy and the McCrays. I didn't see anyone at that time, but we had just arrived, so I was okay for the moment.

Later that night, I went walking around the hotel and saw Marianne Rittner-Holmes sitting with a group of people. (I had never met her in person but knew who she was right off from Facebook.) Then, I realized she was sitting with Don Collier, Penny McQueen, Stan Ivar and the McCray's! OMG! I found them! What do I do next? Do I just walk up and interrupt their conversation and introduce myself as a love-struck fan? Not gonna happen.



It took me two to three times of walking back and forth before I got my

nerve up. Finally, I walked toward Marianne and introduced myself. She then introduced me to Don. I was excited, all smiles and nervous, so of course my hands were ice cold. LOL. The first thing Don Collier said was, "Wow, your hands are cold." I could have died—in a good way, though! I was then introduced to Rudy Ramos who just about melted my cold hands. He was so gracious and kind. I hugged Penny McQueen who was just as sweet as she can be!

I didn't see Henry Darrow and wife Lauren until the next morning. I found him sitting in a chair in the lobby area. I walked up to him. He smiled. Then he did something I didn't expect: He hugged me and gently kissed me on the cheek and hand. Ok, I melted right then and there, blushing—oh, yes! Mr Darrow is such a kind, gentle man with a big heart! His wife Lauren was very kind and loved meeting people. I would have loved to spend more time speaking with her.

That night we went to the White Stallion dinner. We rode on a school bus—boy, that brought back memories. The ranch was filled with tall cactus and shrubs. It was like we were already on the set of the show! The food was delicious! Good times with friends! The people were wonderful—as if I already knew them. The lady taking pictures was so friendly and she took very good photos.



The next day was the opening of the Reunion. As the Reunion team was putting finishing touches on the meeting room, I was put in charge of "guard duty" to ask the fans to wait a few moments until all was ready for them. Holding Buffalo Gals at bay was a tough job, though (smile), because everyone was gung-ho and ready to go in!



The Reunion was finally here. Friends, family, stars, and stuntmen all in one big room! Wow! It even got more surreal when we went to Old Tucson Studios and actually walked where Uncle Buck, Blue Boy, Manolito, Sam, Joe and the rest of the Bunkhouse Boys walked, survived and lived. Taking a picture under the High Chaparral sign was proof that it was all very real!

While I was getting a photo autographed, Don Collier had a shoot-out in front of the High Chaparral ranch house—too cool! All of the stars were so personable. Although I didn't go on the trail ride, those who

did said it was great fun.

The best memories were mine to cherish: the ones spent with family plus my new friends from Facebook and those I met while at the Reunion, meeting the stars of The High Chaparral and how they melted this girl's heart!



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