



**Anniversary!** Austin Street Coffee House in Robert Lee celebrated their two year anniversary on Friday, September 29. In honor of the day, many Coke County residents stopped by to grab a coffee, cupcake, and participate in giveaways.



“The Rest of the Story,” doesn’t it? So what happened? Well, the Luddites were on the wrong end of victors writing history. You see, the Luddites created a widespread rebellion that inflamed the English working class. English political and industrial leaders were uninterested in the Luddites’ plight and they used military force to quell the uprising. They broke up the protests. Luddite leaders were imprisoned or executed. Factory owners went right along consolidating the textile industry. The craftsmen were cast aside in favor of a smaller group who could do things cheaper and faster. The rich and powerful got even more

rich and powerful, until one day their factories were displaced by those who could do things even cheaper and even faster. Today, the English textile industry is all but gone and the English working classes has been in a technology-induced state of flux for over two centuries.

Technology and tools are neither good nor bad. Their status as a creative or destructive force is entirely a result of human decision-makers who use them. The Luddites did not hate technology. They believed that technology could be a creative force. If used wise, technology could have brought more prosperity across their industry. They also saw that technology could be a

destructive force if used unwisely, so they protested. English political and industrial leaders only saw the enriching possibilities. And so they created enrichment for some and destroyed it for others.

When you start to understand the full story of the Luddites, it becomes more reasonable to consider oneself a Luddite too. If you support technology improving and enriching our lives, but you are wary of technology being used to amass

obscene power into the hands of a few who desire to control the rest, well, congratulations, you might be a Luddite too!

Next week: what would the Luddites think about the technologies of 2023? The answers might surprise you.

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wished that they were bull riders earlier in their lives,” Sandifer says with a laugh.

The decision was made to drop the more dangerous events from the schedule but not because they didn’t have competitors. “It was hard to get producers to haul animals for eight or 10 people,” says Sandifer, a member of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative.

Today, many of TSPRA’s 300-plus members are former pro rodeo riders, ropers and barrel racers from Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Ages range from the association minimum into the 80s, and competitors are grouped by age.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Still in the Saddle Again

By Julia Robinson

Competitors pace their horses before a barrel racing event on a warm October day at Circle T Arena. It’s the statewide finals, and competitors are wearing their finest—spotless boots, hats and tack. Their high-strung mounts trot back and forth at the dusty arena in Hamilton, about 70 miles west of Waco, awaiting their call times.

When the clock starts, horse and rider burst from the gate in a blaze of energy and graying hair. Precision turns, pivots and raw speed streak through the arena. Cheers of support rise from the grandstands: “You got this, Grandma!” and “Let’s go, Gram!”

It’s all over in a few blinks.

Billie Bright, 63, takes the win with a time of 15.8—only 2.5 seconds slower than the current national champion, who is about 35 years younger. Not bad for an oldster. Four-time National Finals Rodeo world champion Hailey Kinsel, 29, holds the fastest barrel time—13.34 seconds.

Today’s statewide finals are one of the 23 events the Texas Senior Pro Rodeo Association, celebrating 45 years in 2023, hosts for competitors 40 and

older. Rex Sandifer’s father, Morris, was one of the founding members of the organization in Waco in 1978.

“There were lots of amateur rodeos at the time, but it’s just difficult as a 40-year-old to compete against 20-year-olds,”

Sandifer says. So Morris and a few other aging cowboys organized calf roping events for the older crowd. That grew into steer dogging, bareback and bull riding. “And all of them said, well, why don’t we just go in and make a rodeo association out of it?”

The TSPRA put on full rodeos, including bull and bronc

riding, in the 1980s. “There were probably two or three of those guys that were pretty good bull riders, and then the rest of the guys were people who



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In Observance Of



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