

# ROBERT "SHOOFLY" SHUFELT

BY JANICE BRYSON



Western artist Robert Stratton "Shoofly" Shufelt has earned world wide recognition for his graphite drawings telling the story of the American cowboy in

moments of everyday life. His art is a dedication to the medium of pencil. By taking the element of color away, Shufelt relies upon his skill using design, composition and lighting to tell his story.

Shufelt was born in 1935 in Champagne, Illinois. He loved to draw at an early age and his parents encouraged him to take lessons at the Art Institute of Chicago at age eleven. However, when Shufelt reached high school, football became his main focus rather than art. He explains that he did some drawings to further his popularity, but had no intention of being "arty."

An athletic scholarship paved the way to a higher education at Lake Forest College and the University of Illinois. A stint in



"Honest Horse"

reality not fast enough to maintain a career in professional sports." Sports car racing followed football until an accident finally convinced him that he needed to find a better way to make a living.

During Shufelt's time with the Cardinals, he would make sketches of his fellow teammates. An uncle of a former teammate worked in an advertising agency in Chicago and his sketches opened the door to a career in advertising. Shufelt spent fifteen years as an illustrator in national commercial art markets. Working his way up in the industry, he illustrated ads for companies such as International Harvest, Schlitz Beer, United Airlines and Ford Motor Company.

Despite his success as an illustrator, he felt something was missing in his life. "I'd spent my life illuminating the thoughts of others, and I suddenly realized I was doomed to failure if I couldn't find out what was important to me as an

individual. I have always loved the western way of life, but it was not until I began using cowboys as my subject matter, that I finally found out what I had to say through my art."

Shufelt believes that as an artist, the "cowboy way" holds his admiration and nurtures his inspiration. He notes that it was a pleasure to "rim" with some of the very best in the West. Shufelt relates "My cowboy friends work for low wages, doing joint-aching, heat sucking, dust-chewing labor – all for the privilege of looking at the rear end of a cow, riding a good horse and being solitary, independent and proud. They are the keepers of the American spirit." The artist will often spend long days in the saddle alongside the regular hands. He feels working with them is never a chore.

It was on a Verde Vaquero's Ride in 1967 at Sunflower, Arizona that his brother-in-law christened him "Shoofly" and the name stuck. Shufelt and wife Julie lived on two of his brother-in-law's ranches in Arizona from 1976 to 1990 when the couple moved to New Mexico. He began his career in Western Art on the Effus Ranch outside of Wickenburg. The artist advises that so many special moments were drawn from Arizona cowboys. "They are the Top Hands in my crew



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of subjects and my work is honored through our friendships. They know who they are and I have fond memories of our good times.”

Some of his best loved ranches were in Santa Cruz County. They included the PO Ranch, the HQ Ranch, and the San Rafael. It breaks his heart that the wonderful old spreads are long gone now. The entire grasslands and mountain range is now threatened by a huge open pit mine.

Shufelt taught five day workshops at The Scottsdale Artist's School for ten years beginning with the school's inception in 1984. The students there challenged him to analyze his opinions. Yet he feels so much of art just happens and can't be defined; this is the magic. He believes there are some fundamental rules and that once these principals are ingrained in the subconscious; an artist is free to explore his own individuality and stretch the limits of their talents. For a true artist, individual expression defies explanation; it is an act of faith.

Galleries and shows include the Settlers West Gallery in Tucson, Legacy Galleries in Scottsdale and Jackson, Wyoming, National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City as well as the Mountain Oyster Club in Tucson.

The artist and his wife Julie reside on a small ranch in the foothills of The Back Range in Lake Valley, New Mexico. Shufelt feels that his greatest reward is from the support of his collectors and most of all acceptance into the fraternity of the cowboys that he draws.

Barbara and Tim Jackson have been associated with Shufelt and his artwork in the course of their Animal Health Express business in Tucson. I am lucky enough to own a Shoofly

print that the couple donated to an Arizona State Cowbelle fundraiser. Barbara notes “He is truly a cowboy artist who has walked the walk. He has cowboyed with the best. It has been a real pleasure for us to work with he and Julie over the years.”



“Buck Booner”

Don't even suggest retirement to this artist. He just finished up his Prix de West drawings for the invitational art exhibit and sale at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.

Shufelt says of retirement “At an age when many retire...I'm enjoying a calm within. That catch-up-have-to-do scramble that bounced around in my subconscious for decades has subsided. Notions about achievement, reputation, goals and results have disappeared. The real milestones are less prepossessing and come to memory unannounced. The longer I work the more I understand my kinship and response to graphite. I have no intention to lay down my pencil, but aim to hold off Father Time long and hard. If I can keep my hand steady and find that little hole in the pencil sharpener...I'm good!”

Article made possible by a grant from the Arizona Cattle Industry Foundation

*Get a one-of-a-kind Shoofly print at ACGA Summer Convention!*

Donated by the Cochise-Graham County Cattle Growers Association is this beautiful signed print “The Water Lot” to benefit the Litigation Fund.

The print is an artist proof and what makes it one-of-a-kind is the special pencil drawing of a horned hereford at the bottom of it done by Shoofly himself prior to giving it to Mike Wear for their donation.

Thank you to Shoofly and thank you to the Cochise-Graham Cattle Growers for this generous donation. The print is currently framed and on display at the ACGA office but will be auctioned at summer convention in Prescott this July. Plan to get your bids in on this special print!



# modernlivestock merchandising



## How Ranchers Can Use Facebook

by Rachel Cutrer

According to their corporate page, Facebook's mission is "to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected." Founded in 2004, Facebook users can communicate with one another through chat, messaging, wall posts, and status updates. The online site currently boasts over 500 million active users around the world. Here is a look at how ranchers can use Facebook for personal and business networking.

**Getting Started** To join Facebook, visit [facebook.com](http://facebook.com) and register for an account, which is completely free. Within a matter of minutes you can join and start participating on this site. Before signing up, decide if you wish to register as an individual, a business, or both. It seems that there is a slight trend in the livestock community to create Facebook accounts under business names. An example of how to accomplish this would be to list the first name as "Jones" and the last name as "Angus", thus creating a personal account for a business. However, the more appropriate use of the online community is to first create a personal account for yourself, and then create a *Fan Page* for your business.

Initially, new users should complete as much information as possible on their profile page. Upload a profile picture, fill out the bio section, list some hobbies and interests, and create photo albums. Next, find close friends and leave a comment on their walls, as well as updating your own status. These activities will help you get a feel for the online community and build your Facebook skills.

After creating a personal account, you will then want to **find online friends**. Users can search for people by typing that person's name in the search field, then clicking "Add as a Friend" beside the people they wish to connect with. Facebook can also help you find friends by searching through your email contacts and matching addresses with member accounts. Once you get started with a few friends, Facebook will continue to offer friend suggestions through its linking. According to the founder of this social network, the average user has 130 friends online.

**Creating a Page for your Business** While individuals maintain personal accounts, they can set up *Fan Pages* for businesses or organizations; or even community pages for unique hobbies or interests. As the creator of such pages, you will have administrative rights to update the content and photos. After creating a *Fan Page*, fellow users can choose to "like" your page. Once someone "likes" a page, the page's status updates will appear on all followers' news feeds. In 2010, there were over 900 million pages, groups, or community pages that people interacted with on Facebook, and the average user "liked" 80 *Fan Pages*.

It is important to update these subpages in the same manner you update a personal page. Include your ranch logo or a unique photo on your ranch's *Fan Page*. Create online photo galleries featuring

interesting pictures of show champions, sires, or family photos. Update your *Fan Page* status with pertinent news on a regular basis. Recruit friends to join this page by "suggesting they like" the site, another feature of the software. However, avoid spamming others and follow the general etiquette of only inviting people to join your page once, as opposed to inviting the same people to join your page over and over again.

**Tagging** is a common practice among Facebook users that allows users to identify Facebook friends in photos and status updates. To tag a friend in a photo, you simply click on the person in the photo and choose the option that says "tag this photo." You then type the name of the person to let others know who is in the photo. To tag someone in your status update type the "@" symbol in the status box, a drop down menu will appear showing the names of your friends, highlight and click the preferred names. Of course, users can "un-tag" themselves if they desire more privacy.

**Privacy Concerns** Facebook users are able to control the amount of information they wish to share, or keep private. After creating your account, it is a good idea to check the default privacy settings and make adjustments depending on your level of comfort. To access these settings, click on the "Profile" tab in the upper right corner of the screen, then choose "Privacy Settings." A very low level of privacy would be allowing everyone to see everything you post on Facebook, where a high level of privacy allows only your confirmed friends to see your information. As with any promotional tool, remember to maintain a high level of professionalism in all of your online activities, especially Facebook.

**Go Mobile!** In 2010, there were more than 200 million users who accessed Facebook through their mobile devices. Those who use an iPhone or Blackberry often find that there is a Facebook application pre-loaded on these phones. Establishing a mobile account is as easy as following a simple application wizard and answering a few questions. A benefit of being a mobile user is the ability to upload photos from your camera phone to your Facebook wall.

Facebook offers a variety of options for both individuals and businesses to get connected – and stay connected to the worldwide community. The immense popularity of this online phenomenon, combined with the fact that it is free, makes it a tool that modern livestock merchandisers should consider utilizing.  
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