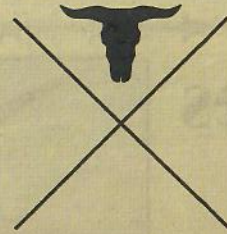


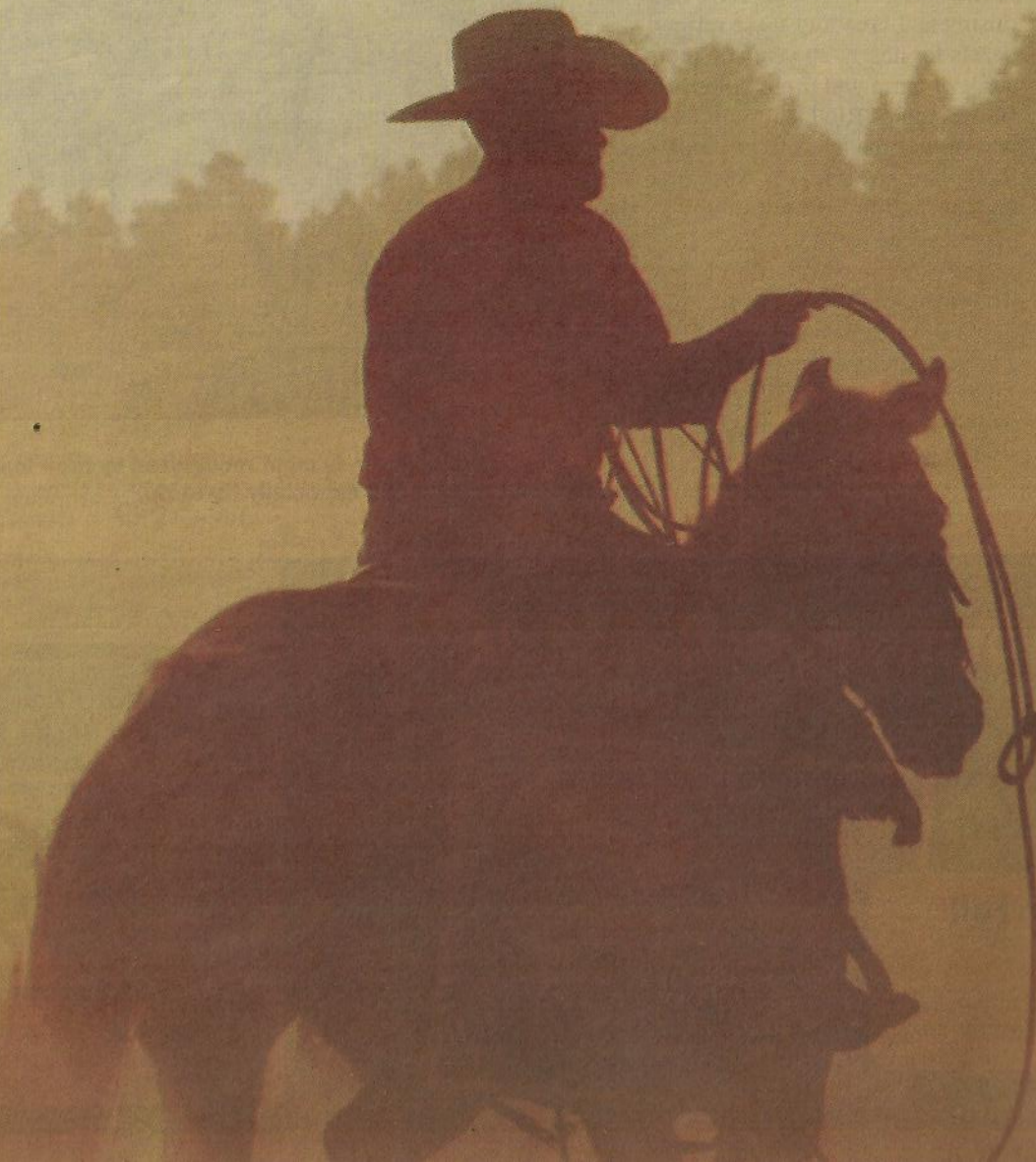
**COWBOY**



**COUNTRY**

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# Western Trails Veterinary Clinic

By **Iain Woessner**  
*Mountain View Telegraph*

Ten years ago, Western Trails Veterinary Clinic was a small operation run out of a home, with less than a handful of employees.

Now the exterior remains as a homestead, but within the clinic's confines is a maze-like interior of cramped corridors, narrow passages with pristine medical equipment ready to go. Staff bustle up and down narrow corridors.

In the back, the glare of fluorescent lights illuminates a modest laboratory, where blood, urine and fecal samples from cats, dogs and horses are analyzed and tested. There is constant movement.

Stacy Thornton, a doctor at the clinic, puts it best when she says there is never a quiet moment and today, Friday, is no exception.

"Honestly, every day is crazy," Thornton said as the team began to prepare their equipment

for the day's patients. It's not even 9 a.m. and already the parking lot is packed with cars and the kennels full of meowing and barking and sniffing and pawing patients, keen to be seen and released.

"We have digital X-ray, we do in-house bloodwork; we do mixed animals, large and small," Thornton said.

Despite the constant bustle, the staff enjoy good morale and good-natured banter as they lay the animals on the tables. It's clear that the staff cares deeply for their patients, and despite the gross realities of working medicine, they clearly take great pride in their work.

"Some people cannot stand to see animals in pain," Thornton added, "but I know the things I'm doing helps make them better."

"We have excellent staff," said Michelle Aceves, the director of the hospital. "I have 23 employees here and they rotate shifts; they mostly work just four days a week to keep

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By Iain Woessner/ Mountain View/Telegraph

**Doctor Stacie Boswell examines a sick horse in the paddocks behind the Western Trails veterinary clinic, a mixed-animal clinic that treats animals as varied as house pets to farmyard animals like goats, horses and bovines.**



By Iain Woessner/ Mountain View Telegraph

**A surgeon at Western Trails checks her patient's heart rate as she prepares to perform an operation. Surgery is the first order of the day at Western Trails, and there's never a slow moment.**

## CLINIC

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them from burning out.”

Western Trails sees thousands of patients a year. The waiting room was never empty from the moment the clinic opened its doors that day. While the doctors will on occasion go out and do house calls, particularly on large animals such as equines, most of their operations are done in-house. While they don't specialize in anything in particular, their wide assortment of resources and capabilities ensure that they get business from as far out as Santa Rosa and Albuquerque.

“I love surgery,” Stacie Boswell, the practice's only large-animal specialist, said as she snapped on her gloves and readied to spay a cat. “This is the easiest one we do.”

The operation is grisly, but brief — the real excitement doesn't begin until a handsome mixed-breed named Copper comes through. As big as a calf, the floppy-eared hound had been baying loudly in the lobby since he arrived, but once in the operating room, he quieted down.

Boswell knelt to examine a swollen abscess on his neck. Carefully snipping away old stitching and buttons, she then cut open the swollen growth, and let free a deluge of fluid that cascaded onto the tiled floor.

“It's not infected,” Boswell said matter-of-factly as she laid a towel down over the mess on the floor.

Nobody bats an eye. Just another day at the office.

“I'd recommend this place to anybody,” said Anne Haynes, Copper's owner, as she waited to be seen. “The quality, the size, the diversity they have here is very valuable. Their doctors have been top of the line.”

Western Trails is staffed entirely by women, from its head to its lowest kennel assistants. They are located on Route 66, between Moriarty and Edgewood, and are open all year, all week.

For information, you can visit them online at [www.westerntrailsvet.com](http://www.westerntrailsvet.com).