CELEBRATING THE
LIFE OF OUR FRIEND AND MENTOR,
CHARLIE CRIDER
1936-2018
A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Congratulations to all the award winners for 2017! It is fun to recognize our members who work so hard to prepare and compete their horses (and mules!). There would, of course, have been no awards presentation without the hard work of Esther, Victoria, Sherry, and Tanya. Thanks to them and congratulations on a job well done.

We are now in the heart of our spring season, and we need for you to get out there and compete. In 2017 we had an almost 20% reduction in riders compared to 2016. Ride managers are having to scrape to get 25 or more riders, and at that level it is a certainty that the manager will lose money. If we want our sport to survive, then the simple fact is that we need to attend rides. I understand and appreciate all the reasons why folks can’t get to rides or don’t get to as many as they would like to, but if collectively we don’t support the rides then the inevitable consequence will be bad if not devastating for NATRC. So please “Come ride with us.”

As a group we are looking for ways to help NATRC sustain itself, reverse the downward trend of membership, and return to a growth pattern. Much of that conversation focuses on getting new members, and that discussion often turns to identification of a “target market”. I was recently reminded that as we focus on a target market it is important to not forget our current members. Many of us simply don’t fit the “target market,” and for recruitment that doesn’t matter since we’re already hooked. Each of you is important to NATRC and to Region 5. Without your continued support and participation there will not be an organization to bring folks to from the “target market.”

There are important proposals for rule changes for NATRC. They are reported in detail on the national NATRC web page. Please look at them and offer your opinions about them. Among the proposed changes is a proposal to divide Competitive Pleasure into the same classes that are in effect for Novice and Open (lightweight, heavyweight, and junior). While the proposal has not received unanimous support in NATRC, the National Board believes this change is important to help us hold Novice riders who “ribbon out” and are not comfortable in moving directly to Open. There are multiple reasons why riders prefer C/P over Open. In 2017, 25% of the riders were C/P, yet they had to compete in a single group instead of the multiple classes available to Open. That disparity of options, that concentration of all talent in one class seems too many, to be unfair and a hindrance to growth of our organization.

NATRC, with the help of an outside professional, conducted a survey to try to identify areas of strength and weakness in the organization, to try to identify what things interfere with ride participation. Following tally of those results, NATRC has established a six-person commission to study the areas of concern and to put together proposals to address them. Change is hard in any organization, identifying what change can be helpful, not just change for the sake of change, is a time-consuming effort. NATRC has changed, evolved over time, but now we find ourselves in an environment of declining participation with declining revenue which may require faster or different change to survive. We look forward to this commission’s report and recommendations, and then we’ll all have to work together to see what changes should be made to improve our sport and encourage new participation and to do so without losing the core and strength of the organization.

Bill Moore, President, Region 5
Welcome to Region 5
New and Rejoining Members!
For a complete listing please visit
www.natrc5.org

-from the editor

Greetings! I am happy to see the new ride season seems to be kicking off another successful year for Region 5! It’s great to see so many new faces getting involved.

I need help from all of you, our newsletter needs articles and photos! Please submit any photos (need full size rendering—no iphone photos please) to katcasey4@icloud.com. If you have interest in contributing by writing an article or funny ride story, please contact me. Thanks for all of your help!

Until next time,
Katrina Casey

“Why not make it a great one?”
~ Steve Schulte
A Tribute to Charlie Crider
by Gail Milner

A FRIEND, 
A COMPETITOR & 
NATRC LEGEND

As most of you know by now, Charlie Crider passed away on January 28, 2018 at the age of 81. He was an employee of Delta Airlines for 34 years. Charlie was a farmer and a cattleman, as well as an accomplished horseman. He was also a Team Conasauga Volunteer with the Forest Service which he truly enjoyed.

He rode 14,100 competitive miles, had 10,040 competitive miles on Pals Handy Man and won multiple awards, trophies, medals and ribbons. Among his many accomplishments, Charlie was an eight-time winner in the NATRC Team Award Heavyweight Division, seven-time winner of National Championship Competitive Trail Rider, four-time winner of the Polly Bridges Excellence in Horsemanship Award, eight-time winner in Region 5 as 1st Place Horseman, his horse Pals Handy Man won 14 National Championships and was Best of America's Horse in the American Quarter Horse Association as a multiple year winner.

I know most of you knew Charlie as a friend, competitor and a real cowboy. He truly was a real cowboy. He taught me everything that I know about riding and how to enjoy life. He was a mentor to lots of new riders and was always willing to show anyone a new way to handle a particular problem with their horse. Charlie was a talker. He loved sitting around a campfire telling tales of rides, funny stories about his friends and just plain talking. We were enthralled with his stories and would sit for hours listening. He will surely be missed.

On more of a personal note, Charlie and I had a song that was special to us. It was a Don Williams song which goes like this:

"You're my bread when I'm hungry; you're my shelter from troubled winds;
you're my anchor in life's ocean; but most of all you're my best friend.

When I need hope and inspiration; you're always strong when I'm tired and weak;
I could search this whole world over; you'll still be everything that I need.

You're my bread when I'm hungry; you're my shelter from troubled winds;
you're my anchor in life's ocean; but most of all "you're my best friend."

Charlie was the love of my life and I miss him every day but the most important thing about him -- he was my "best friend."
Dear Friend...
You will be missed,
but never forgotten.

Photos courtesy of family of Charlie Crider

On the cover:
Charlie Crider
Photo courtesy of family
At every ride, something happens that, once again, allows the spirit of NATRC to shine. This past weekend at the New Year Resolution ride was no exception. Let me tell you…

Friday was a beautiful day. Riders were pulling into camp, and McCulley Farms was coming alive with riders preparing their horses for vet in. Registration was open, and a steady stream of competitors was going into the meeting room and coming out decked in blue, orange and green pennies.

Marsha Howard was schooling her mentee, Kinsley Edelstein. Kinsley was going to ride Marsha’s sorrel horse, Harley. While working with Harley, Marsha discovered he was lame. Kinsley was disappointed, but was prepared to go with the P&R crew the following day and help. Marsha offered to let Kinsley ride her main horse, Pepper if a mentor could be found. I offered Paul’s horse, Percy, to Marsha, but in working with him for just a few minutes, it was obvious he was not ready for his first CTR. Enter Jennifer Mulligan, who had already registered and was proudly wearing her penny. She was going to ride her horse, Memphis Squirrel (aka Squirrel) in his first CTR, but offered to pull so Marsha could ride instead. Jennifer felt she couldn’t buy the kind of experience Squirrel was going to get with an experienced rider and NATRC competitor such as Marsha. As I watched the events unfold, Marsha willing to give up her ride for Kinsley, and then Jennifer giving up her ride for Marsha and Kinsley, I thought, “This is NATRC.”

Event number two was a bit more dramatic...
Carolyn Chapman and Regina Broughton were riding on the Twin Rivers Forest side of the ride on Saturday, heading for the second P&R. Carolyn, on Manny, was a few feet ahead of Regina, on Lucky Sunday. Manny had a slight stumble, and Sunday, for whatever reason, spooked and took off through the woods at a dead run. Regina, seeing the potential for a disaster, chose to bail. When she landed, her hands were out in front, and her shoulder took the brunt of the fall. The reins had slid through her hands, causing rope burns. Sunday kept on going. Carolyn called for help, and we got to her and Regina. We had a physical therapist, Susan Hope, at the P&R when the call came in, and Susan went with us to evaluate Regina. Carolyn had stayed with Regina and was fully prepared to sacrifice her ride. We asked Carolyn to go on, following the trail back to camp, in the hopes that Sunday was somewhere on the trail and was headed in the same direction. It was determined that a trip to the nearby hospital was in order for Regina. Carol McCulley called the hospital to alert them that Regina and Susan were on their way. Meanwhile, Carolyn came into camp and had not spotted Sunday. Richard McCulley and another camper got on four wheelers to start looking while Paul and Mike Daniels got in Mike’s truck. Several riders went back out looking, but no Sunday. Everyone came in. Dark was fast approaching so I asked Richard if I could go out with his son, Hunter, on a four wheeler one more time. Trish James saddled up and headed out, too. Meanwhile, back in camp other riders were moved to the front of the afternoon vet out line so they could join the search. Hunter and I were on our way back in after a fruitless search, when lo and behold, there was Sunday standing next to the trail, with Trish just on his other side. I quietly got out of the four wheeler and walked over to gather up Sunday’s reins. Trish had a nice, long lead line with her, and, after removing Sunday’s hoof boots (which had come off his hooves), I snapped the lead line onto his halter and removed his reins. Trish ponied Sunday back to camp, where a comfy stall, warm mash and lots of hay waited for him. Regina, still in the hospital, was notified immediately that Sunday had been found without a scratch on him. Everyone was relieved when the announcement came in that Regina had no broken bones. Just cuts, scrapes and bruises. As I watched this wonderful group pull together, I again thought, “And this is NATRC.”
The Fountain of Youth

I started my NATRC journey three short years ago, and boy what an experience it has been. My time as a junior has now come to an end, and now I must compete with the people I have looked up to and held to such a high standard over the last few years.

My journey began at the age of 15 when Cindy Keen introduced me to the sport in March of 2015 at the Benefit Ride, where she had me and my grandmother volunteer doing P&R’s. Throughout the weekend I learned so much about the sport and became very interested and was ecstatic when Cindy asked me if I would like to give it a try… of course I said yes! So, Cindy let me borrow her trusty mare Spirit of Spotted Alen, and we set a goal for me to be ready by Heart of Dixie that fall. Over that Summer I remember working hard to build a relationship with Spirit and trying to master horsemanship skills I didn’t even know existed…like backing around a tree with your hand on it (still haven’t quite mastered this one yet).

So, September came, and off to Troy Alabama we went. When we arrived, I quickly learned there was way more to NATRC than just riding, you have to camp with your horse! I learned more that weekend than I did in high school. I met tons of people who were all so encouraging and helpful, offering advice wherever you may need it. After my experience that weekend I was hooked! That ride season and the next one I competed on Spirit, improving after every ride, shedding a lot of tears (I was very emotional), and making memories I will never forget.

In June of 2016 I got my very own horse named Caper. Caper was very skinny and malnourished, pretty much untrained, and scared of everything. I started working hard to get weight on him and trying to train him. Amy Long took me under her wing and helped me teach Caper how to do the ‘simple things’ like back up and stop, and even being mounted using a mounting block. Over the next few months I continued competing Spirit and training my new horse. In January of 2017 at the New Year’s Resolution Ride, Caper and I competed for the first time. I nearly didn’t make it five minutes into the ride when a heard of cows scared my horse nearly to death. So, Amy helped me get my saddle back on top of my horse and not on the side, and off we went. I made through all 17 miles because I only did a one day and I remember the joy and pure pride I felt after completing it, because I had worked so hard to get Caper ready.

...Continued page 9

The Fountain of Youth this quarter was written by Region 5’s, Hannah Hatcher. Congratulations to Hannah on her achievements in Region 5!
About a week before the NATRC clinic on February 17th, Dr. Stephanie Ostrowski asked if I’d be interested in coming along with her and Jameson to Hatchet Valley Farms. Though nervous and unsure of what it entailed, I jumped on the opportunity to broaden my knowledge and understanding of trail riding in itself. Having only four months of experience on horseback under my belt, I am always looking to improve my skillset. Practice and observation of experienced riders are some of the best ways to do so, and this clinic offered just that and then some.

In addition to providing transportation to Rockford, Dr. Ostrowski graciously offered to bring along her horse “Baby Girl” for me to ride. Baby Girl was 100% new to me under the saddle, but I had spent some time loving on her when I helped Jameson feed the horses. Luckily, “Baby Girl” turned out to be a great fit for me, as she offered remarkable patience with my wobbly and nervous temperament.

Now, I’d like to expand on all that I learned over that weekend and how each of the techniques could benefit all levels of riders. First and foremost, I continually come to realize the importance of maintaining a calm and composed mindset while on horseback. There are yoga poses and meditation habits that can contribute to the calmness of the rider, and ultimately improve the experience for both the horse and the rider. We also focused on the importance of positioning while in the saddle and the most efficient ways to maintain it; I can even apply these methods to my English style riding lessons. Surprisingly, NATRC does not solely focus of the speed or endurance of the horse and rider while on the trail, but focuses heavily on the health of the horse. As an aspiring veterinary student, I learned things about horses that my animal science classes have not taught me yet. The fact that veterinarian judges evaluate the soundness and condition of the horse shows the interest that the judges take in every single rider and horse. Each of these aspect makes me respect the sport even more so than I previously had and also made me more eager and excited to compete this year.

I would also like to emphasize how kind and welcoming everyone was to me. I enjoyed watching everyone reconnect. The friendships that are made while competing in NATRC events are easily made and maintained, and are often encompassed by something deeper than human connection. The mutual love and respect for these animals inspires a connection that continues to remain special to all of those involved.

-Margaret Tanner
This quarters Diamond Award goes to Esther Diaguila. Esther sets a wonderful example in leadership for Region 5. She is always willing to step forward and take on a task. From board member, to managing rides, to writing articles for our newsletter, she is always a willing participant! She gives unselfishly. Thank you Esther for the time and energy you contribute to make our Region shine!

Is there someone you know that exemplifies what NATRC stands for?

Nominate them for Region 5’s Diamond Award. This title will be awarded in each edition of the Hoofprints of Region 5. Deadline for nominations for Summer/Fall 2018 is June 15. Please send in a brief recap of your nominee’s Diamond character to katcasey4@icloud.com or lindaclay@aol.com.

The End of an Era
continued from p7

The months went by and Caper was improving and so was our relationship and he was finally beginning to trust me. At the Garrie Bates memorial ride in June of 2017, Caper made me so proud, he listened and completed every obstacle and received a 98+ score. I knew then Caper was definitely a keeper.

Fast forward to October of 2017 at the Broxton Bridge ride, my Caper was not his normal self. That whole ride he would not listen, and struggled tremendously with P&R’s, I knew this was odd because Caper’s usual P&R’s were low but it was also very hot at this ride. Although we completed this ride I was not happy with our results. About a week later on October 16th I went out to the pasture to get Caper so we could go on a five-mile trot. I immediately noticed he looked sad and depressed, and he felt hot to the touch, and had green mucous in his nose. We took his temperature and it was 105.2, then 105.8 and was continuing to rise.

I called every vet I knew to call close by and no one would help us. So, Cindy called an equine vet about an hour away, and off my grandpa and I went late at night to see what was wrong with my Caper. That night I found out my horse was dangerously anemic and was close to death, and the most likely cause was ulcers. The next morning, he had a scope done that verified the ulcers, and the vet sent us on our way. The next day we were bombarded with even more bad news, the lab reports were in, and Caper had the Strangles. This threw us all for a loop, and we still have no idea where he got it from. So we quarantined for 30 days cleaning everything with bleach continuously. Caper was reevaluated by the same vet on November 27 and tested clear of the strangles and was released from quarantine and was no longer anemic. I continued to give Caper time off to help him recover to his full potential. On December 16th, I started to ride him again increasing time and distance with each ride.

After my time off I’m excited to return to the sport I love and continue to further my horsemanship and grow my bond with my horse. Throughout my journey so far I have learned how to win and how to lose, how to not to let my fears overtake my opportunities, and most importantly how to do something I love with a smile. I want to thank everyone who has been a mentor to me and an asset to my success, I truly appreciate it! Here is to MANY more miles in the CP division!
Charlie Crider was a very well-known and successful NATRC Competitor when Mark and I began Our career in NATRC in 1986. We quickly learned that Charlie would be helpful to us Newcomers! Charlie was a friend to us and gave us needed information many times. He was just that person with lots of experience and you could trust him. Charlie endeared himself to friends because of his Love of NATRC. He loved to find out about the history of towns around NATRC ride sites. He would share this information with his friends and it was always very interesting. We have lots of memories from those early days!

One day Mark and friend, Jim Price, were talking to Charlie at a NATRC competition. They were at the trail-head standing around with their horses. Charlie was talking and telling a story. Right in the middle of his story Charlie looks off in the distance and pauses, then said “And Um”, as if he was going to continue talking. But then as Mark and Jim were expecting him to say more, Charlie got on his horse and rode away. Mark and Jim looked at each other and wondered if Charlie forgot to finish his story. But the truth was Charlie had somewhere else to go and knew he could finish the story later! That was not the only time the “And Um” was used by Charlie. We noticed it many times and would just chuckle because it was just how Charlie told his stories!! So one day Mark got a phone call and the person said “And Um” and hung up the phone! He was puzzled but then figured out that it was Jim Price calling just to be funny. So of course Mark had to call him and return the favor.

On one rare occasion in the early 1990s, I was riding up front near Charlie. We started talking and riding along, and a young lady was riding up closer and closer behind our group. Her horse was in a big hurry to catch up. So in a few minutes she said she wanted to pass us. Charlie said OK. So she passed and her horse immediately slows to a crawl right in front of us. So Charlie being aware of what was going on the whole time said, “Wonder who is in charge?” It was so true and comical at the same time because the young lady was trying everything she could to get her horse to move on, but he was having no part of that! Her horse was in charge for sure and she was just along for the ride! So Charlie’s message was subtle but ended up being a huge lesson for me. To this day I study Natural Horsemanship where you have a partnership with your horse, but the human is the leader and in charge of the horse’s feet. CHARLIE was pretty SAVVY!!

IMPORTANT NOTE

If you wish to receive a print publication of the Region 5 Newsletter, please mail your check ($15.00) payable to REGION 5 c/o Linda Clayton PO BOX 313 Hope Hull, AL  36043

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In 1983, my Vet, E. Larry Bentley, hauled my horse and me to my first NATRC ride. It was in Rockmart, Georgia on the farm of Brice Hutchings. I knew absolutely nothing, and as soon as I got there Dr. Bentley had an emergency call and dropped my trailer and drove away. I saddled up and rode out to find the other riders. No one was in camp. It was Friday of a 3-day 90-mile ride and everyone was out on the trail so I just rode out. I didn’t know about registering, paying money, or vetting my horse in with any judges.

The road out of camp turned up into a single-track wooded trail and the open riders were headed back to camp. I had one little spot to get out of the way and I watched as they navigated a very strenuous and steep downhill section one at a time, all in a line, with a tall, handsome, cowboy that looked like the Marboro Man from the cigarette commercials leading the descent.

For me the weekend was a time of blissful ignorance, but I learned that the handsome cowboy was Charlie Crider and he lived just a few miles from me in Powder Springs, Georgia. He shared his phone number and experience with horses with me over the next 30 years. I am so grateful for the hours of advice and coaching Charlie gave to me when I entered the sport naively unprepared. For all of us that knew Charlie we are better riders and NATRC workers because we knew him.

-Marty Findley
Many years ago when we first discovered NATRC at a Clemson ride there was this tall cowboy figure who we referred to for many months as the “Marlboro Man”. Over time we discovered that Charlie was a real cowboy in every sense of the word. If you ever truly watched Charlie present his horse for vet check you would have observed that he had the rare sense of timing that only a few true horsemen have. Over time as we progressed to the open level we began to interact with Charlie on a much more frequent basis and we developed deep personal friendships with Charlie, Gail and Shirley. Our niece, Mimi Gaines (now a Surgeon in Chicago) spent many summers with us that included traveling and competing for many years as a junior rider. Her dad once asked her what we did at the rides. Her response was “On Fridays we load up in Raymond’s truck with Charlie, Gail, Shirley, Bucky and anyone who was willing to go for a “Low Ride” and drive around in the back roads of the country until we got lost”. Those Low Rides provided the basis of many a tale about this band of musketeers. Charlie was always the navigator searching our Forest Service maps to try to figure how to get us back to camp. In later years when many of us had retired from active competition we continued our Low Rides on our annual New Year’s gathering at Big South Fork or at the cabin in Blue Ridge.

It was on these ventures that we learned a lot about the character of Charlie Crider. Many of you may know that Charlie was a top aviation mechanic and his final role for Delta Airlines was as chief jet engine inspector. Charlie did not have a PhD, MBA or college degree but he was one of the most well read and knowledgeable people we’ve known. When we traveled our low roads with Charlie he would share interesting historical tidbits about the area that we found ourselves in. His comments might address agricultural or livestock issues, the history of early settlers or Native Americans or the geography/typography of the area. He always sought out books of the historical nature wherever we traveled. One thing that interested Charlie was where the water flowed from the creeks and streams in the land we found ourselves at a particular point in time. At Big South Fork he would share how these creeks and stream flowed from this river to that river where it traveled north past Paducah Kentucky and made a big loop in turn to join the Mississippi River well north a Big South Fork. In the North Georgia Mountains near Clayton he pointed out that rain that fell on the south side of the particular mountain we were on flowed to the Atlantic Ocean and rain that fell on the north side flowed to the Gulf of Mexico. There is an old cowboy saying (that I believe is really attributed to Confucius) that states “You can never cross the same stream twice”. I guess that’s so since the water that flowed by just a few seconds ago whenever flow through that spot again. I believe Charlie always found it intriguing to contemplate where that water was going and what would happen to it along the way. In a sense that’s the course of life.

Charlie was a great storyteller and had the unique ability to tell a story in exactly the same way that he told it before. Over the years some of his punctuating lines in his stories became as familiar to many of us as those often repeated lines from a favorite movie. One characteristic of Charlie’s storytelling was when he would get distracted or pause he would mark time by repeating in that slow drawl ” . . . and uh . . .” Sometimes these “and uhs” would string out over quite a bit of time and be repeated in a cadence that was similar to a needle being stuck on a record (if you’re old enough to remember playing records on a phonograph). It was actually captivating because whenever he picked up the story he had put on pause it would begin exactly where he left off.

So as we pause to ponder the life of Charlie Crider we might be inclined to reflect upon his Life Story . . . and uh . . . and uh . . . and uh . . . and uh . . . and uh . . . and uh . . . as there is a lot to contemplate.
Spring 2018
Upcoming Events

March 10-11 Spring at Broxton Bridge Ehrhardt, SC A&B-O, N, CP
Paula Riley, 903-926-3950, parrides@aol.com

March 24-25 Region Five Benefit Ride Toomsboro, GA A&B-O,N,CP
Cindy Keen, 478-290-3868, cindytk@hotmail.com

April 7-8 Spring in Dixie Troy, AL A-O; A&B-N,CP
Patty Lucas, 205-999-7580, patty2014@aol.com

April 21-22 Carolina Derby Whitmire, SC A&B-O,N,CP
Andrea Rogers, 803-992-3178, 803-658-6017, carolinaluck@yahoo.com

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C

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A LIFE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT
-REMEMBERING CHARLIE-

Charlie Crider was a giant in our NATRC world. In fact I suspect he was a giant in every part of his world. What makes a person a giant? Not just stature, although when one looks at a giant there is probably an almost unconscious tilting of the head as we attempt to take in the larger than life persona. Is it accomplishments? Is it service? Is it skill? Is it dependability? Or maybe it is a combination of those things to the point that a persons name and reputation are known so far, and so wide, to so many people for so many things that they can only belong to a giant.

Charlie Crider surely had his share of accomplishments in our NATRC horse world and was well known for those accomplishments and his skill as a horseman. He won….a lot. And it’s impossible for someone to have his level of success and not be noticed for it. Charlie was “handy” at whatever he did…meaning whatever he did he did well and could be counted on for that skill. NATRC R5 depended on Charlie for many years for his skill and effort on trail work, trail clearing and trail marking. And not just NATRC benefitted from Charlie’s skill in this area. He also logged untold hours as a volunteer for the United States Forest Service in trail maintenance.

Charlie accomplished much with his horses throughout his life. From western events, cow work and foxhound field trials he was wise to spread his reputation and skill over many equine venues. This served to enhance his horsemanship and I’m sure contributed to his success in NATRC. However I think what contributed the most to Charlie’s success as a horseman was the fact that he constantly “did stuff” with his horses. You would rarely see him riding just one horse….he almost always ponied a second whether he planned to ride it or not. He packed everything imaginable on his horses and they all knew the patience born of pack work. Such work turned out some handy horses for Charlie, and I think there’s a lesson there for all of us.

We depended on Charlie for his support of our rides, our clinics, our conventions and meetings and the spirit of our organization. And we depended on him for his friendship. Charlie knew it required effort to succeed and was quick in his support of anyone putting forth that effort. His helpful tips on everything from conditioning, to tack, to parking your truck, to starting a green horse or making the best fried fish, hushpuppies, and potatoes were the little things that grew over time into the makings of a giant’s reputation. Charlie wasn’t just good at what he did…he wanted you to be good at what you did as well and perhaps that is what I think of first and last about Charlie Crider.

Respectfully,
Kim A. Cowart
COVER PHOTO CONTEST

Submit your photos for the chance to have it on the next cover of the Hoofprints of Region 5.

Photo Requirements:
Color photo with no edits
Full size rendering
No iPhone photos please

Submit all photos to katcasey4@icloud.com