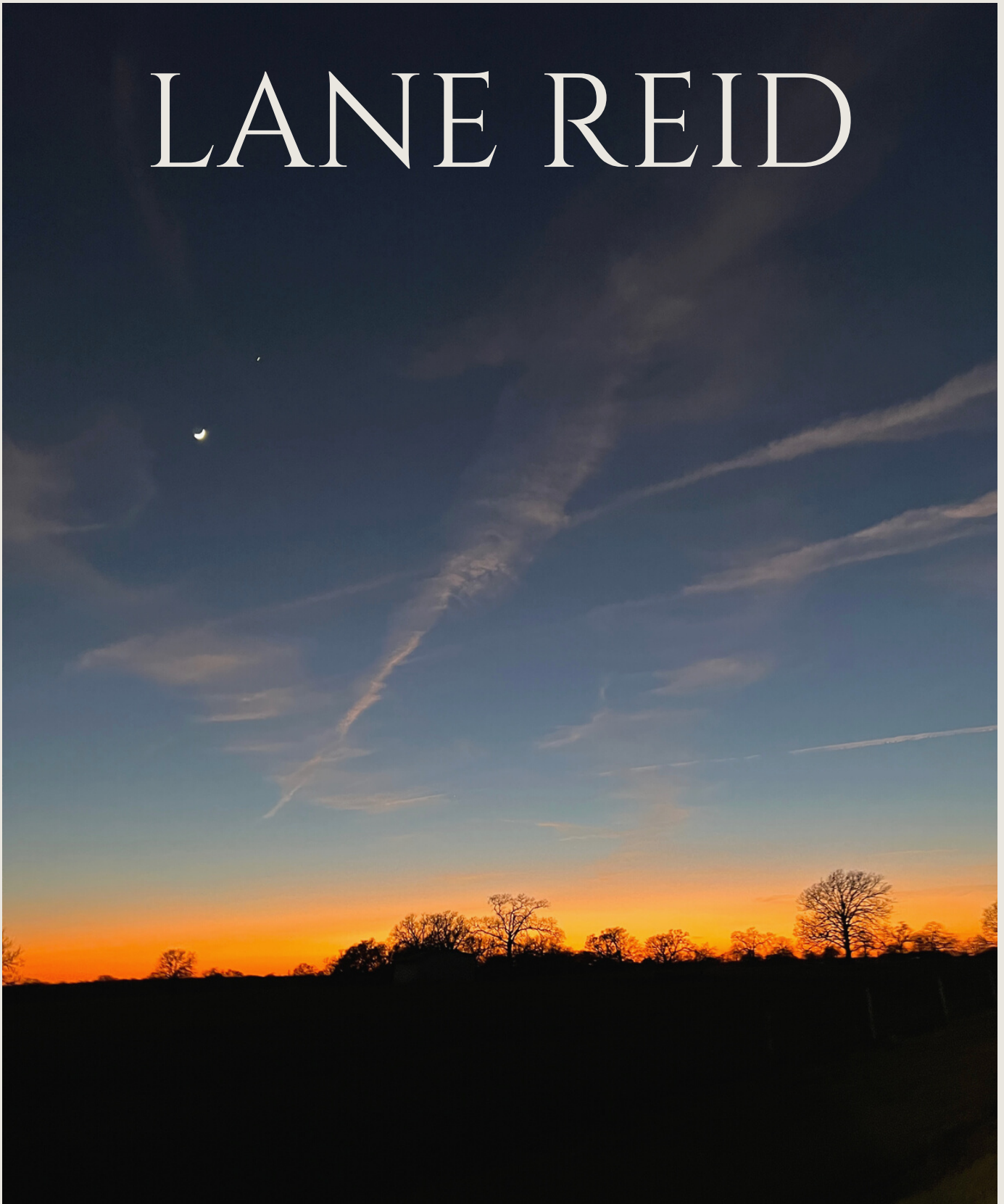


# LANE REID



CREATIVES OF THE RURAL AMERICAS

“Local work. Global impact.”

# INTRO

## A Note from the Publisher:

Since I was young, I have loved creativity. My wild imagination has helped me create entire worlds made up of beautiful landscapes and fascinating people. I enjoy writing stories, poems, and songs - all with the hope that I'll bring meaning to people's lives using my words. Now, I'm not sure I'm succeeding in this mission, but I do know that I'm having fun in the process.

I view the "Creatives of the Rural Americas" project as one stepping stone towards my larger purpose. Ultimately, I want to use my writing to inspire, connect, and entertain humanity. I want to "tap into" the creative pulse of remote places - those small towns or rural communities where creative energy abounds. When doing my research for this gazette, I discovered that rural parts of North, Central, and South America are bursting with creative energy... folks using their gifts for personal reasons as well as perfecting their craft for entrepreneurial pursuits. For each issue of this gazette series, I wish to capture that spirit...the creative heart of the rural Americas.

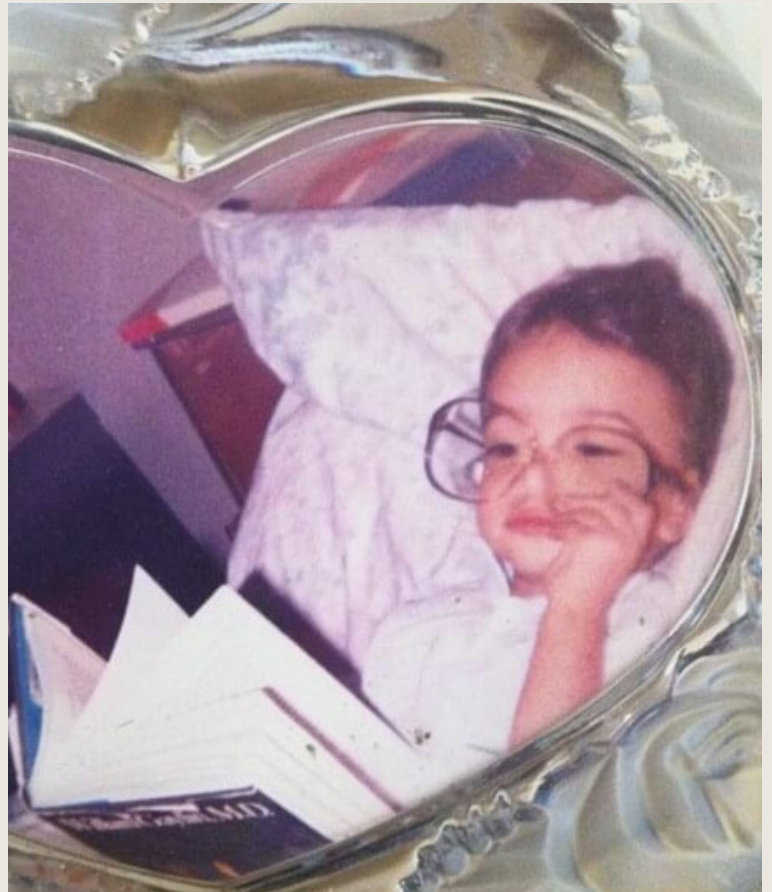
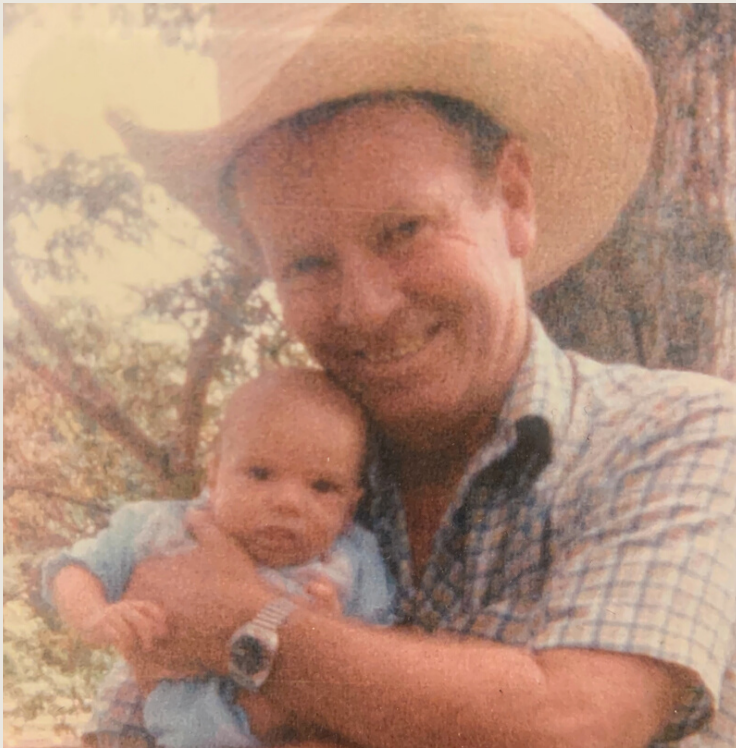
I'll admit - attempting to describe this type of creative energy using a a gazette format feels a bit like an injustice. The people featured in the forthcoming issues deserve much more than a few pages. It's my hope that I can honor their work and encourage readers to dig deeper into their stories. In a sense, I want you , my reader, to meet the unique creatives highlighted in these pages. Then, I would encourage you to do your own research. If a particular craft catches your attention, further explore it. And better yet - open your eyes to the creative activity near you. New and innovative adventures are being birthed around the corner. You must simply pay attention and lean into your curiosity.

Love,  
Maria





LANE REID



**MARIA LAZO HASLAM**

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Founder and writer, Lane Reid, LLC.



GERRY GESELL

# NO FAME, ONLY LOVE

When Devin Conley's article about Gerry Gesell featured in Horse & Rider was released, I instantly knew I had to learn more about this unique Texan. For those who have not had the opportunity to read Devin's feature on Gerry, I highly encourage you to head over to <https://horseandrider.com>, and learn all about Gerry's impressive tack collection and his perspectives on what makes a horseman.

For the purposes of my curiosity, I wanted to learn more about Gerry's life as a creative. So, from October to December of 2023, I had the privilege of spending time with and getting to know this Texas rancher, cowboy, horse trainer, creative leatherworker, and genuine storyteller.



“...Texas rancher, cowboy, horse trainer, creative leatherworker,  
and genuine storyteller.”



## The Art of Chap Making

When Gerry talks about his leatherwork, he says, "It's really just a hobby based on what I do for a living – taking care of ranches and horses."

Gerry explains that making chaps or leggings (pronounced "leggings") is simply his imagination expressing itself, and it stems from his life with horses, traveling, and meeting people from all over the world. When Gerry reflects on his own history, he explains that he's been connected to chap making since the beginning of his life. Gerry's mom, a lifelong horse trainer, had an incredible influence on how Gerry approached his work.



He says, "Mom was tough love," and when I observe Gerry working on a pair of chaps, it's clear that his mom's influence permeates how he approaches his craft and refines his work. Never quite satisfied, Gerry is constantly striving for perfection as he meticulously takes notes and learns from each project he completes. The process of making chaps is something Gerry has refined over many years. He began years ago by creating a pair for himself, and by building upon his mistakes, he continued to hone his skills. Over time, people appreciated Gerry's craftsmanship and requested custom chaps from him. According to Gerry, making chaps is still his hobby, but it's become a hobby that can now supplement his income. He emphasizes, "It's not about the money, but the money helps."

Gerry tells me that his dad, unlike his mom, was an overtly giving man. He says, "Dad loved to cook for people and feed people." And as I've come to know Gerry, he always seems willing to support other artists and fellow cowboys and cowgirls. It's clear that both Gerry's mom and dad had a great impact on his approach towards art and life itself.

Ultimately, Gerry views his leatherwork as an outlet for his creativity, and he confidently explains to me that leatherwork is actually his *second* creative passion.

# THE ART OF WRITING

When Gerry describes his *first* creative outlet, his tone changes. Suddenly, the excitement shines through, and I see a bright smile come on his face as he tells me about his love of writing.



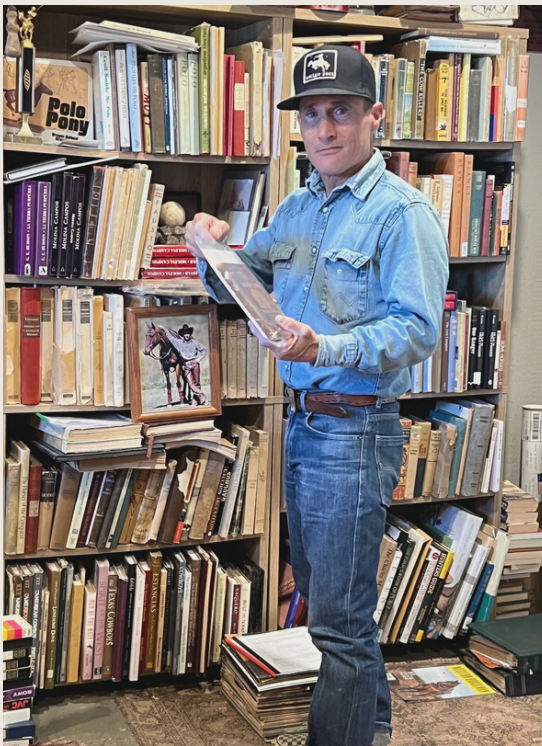
"It's not the leggins that create the story; it's the story that creates the leggins."

– Gerry Gesell

Although Gerry isn't quite sure which came first - chap making or writing - he feels that they influence each other. He tells me that in some instances, "It's not the leggins that create the story; it's the story that creates the leggins." His leggins evolve from his stories and vice versa. Gerry believes there's a "give and take" between the two forms of creative expression







Pictured: Gerry Gesell as he proudly shares with me his love for books and other forms of creative expression.



## REFLECTIONS ON CREATIVE EXPRESSION

### Creative Spaces

As Gerry discusses creative expression in general, he ponders the idea that we can't identify what comes first - the creative mind or rural America. Gerry believes that creatives seek solitude in order to refine their work, and rural America enables that experience. For example, Gerry describes Marfa, TX as a sanctuary for artists from all over the world, and he suggests that part of its magic is how geographically isolated Marfa is on the map.

According to Gerry, creatives want isolation. Marfa doesn't make people more creative. Instead, people go to Marfa *because* they're creative. Gerry tells me, "I've lived in a lot of isolated areas, and I'm comfortable in those places. And I think it's because I was born with a creative mind. The stories I write are about the places I've been...the stories are my way of giving thanks to those rural settings, but also, I'm connected to those places..."

The horse culture, the cowboy culture, the leathercraft, the storytelling...it's all connected."

According to Gerry, it's important for other creatives to stay connected to these natural settings and exercise courage when things don't go as planned.



THE MORE I LOOK  
AT WHAT I MAKE,  
THE MORE I  
LEARN ABOUT  
WHAT I CAN DO  
BETTER OR  
DIFFERENTLY.”

– INSTAGRAM: @GERRYGESELL



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## ADVICE TO FELLOW CREATIVES

When Gerry talks about fellow creatives or anyone starting in their creative journey, he explains that staying true to oneself is key. He says, “Don’t let anyone discourage you from it [creativity]. Keep doing what you do.”



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Gerry also suggests that creatives should “put their creative work out there.” When talking about his experience with social media specifically, Gerry explains, “At first, I was hesitant because it felt like I was exposing myself. But you have to have thick skin when you create...there will be far more critics when you create than people who sing your praises.” As time has passed, Gerry has become more comfortable with the vulnerable act of sharing his creative work with the public. He says, “The more I became vulnerable, the easier it became to *be* vulnerable.”



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After speaking with some of Gerry's friends and reviewing comments on his Instagram posts, the consensus is that Gerry is making a difference in the lives of his readers and podcast listeners. From my time spent with Gerry, I can conclude that he's a man who isn't motivated by the algorithms and increasing his social media follower numbers. He genuinely cares about the loyal readers and listeners who take the time to read his words and listen to his stories.

In Gerry Gesell, we have a creative who authentically represents what the rural Americas are all about - grit, authenticity, and love.



# THANK YOU

Thank you, readers, for taking the time to support Lane Reid. This gazette issue is made possible because of your interest and the generous financial support of our sponsors - Fernando Lazo and Miguel Lazo.

I want to extend my sincere gratitude to Macey Zboril for the time she spent not only listening to my wild ideas, but also for her attention to detail and editing suggestions.

Additionally, I wish to thank Jake Zielke for his encouragement and support. I “tip my hat” to you, kind sir.

Finally, I am deeply appreciative of Mr. Gerry Gesell for responding to my initial request for an interview, the subsequent invitation to his workshop, and his authentic friendship.

I look forward to many more traveling adventures.



