

W&E

WESTERN & ENGLISH TODAY

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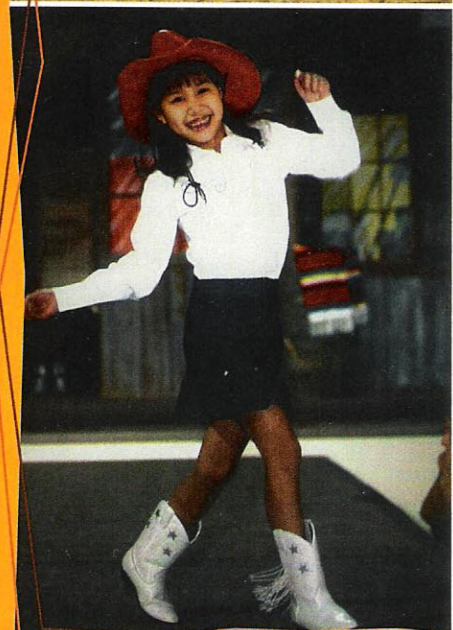
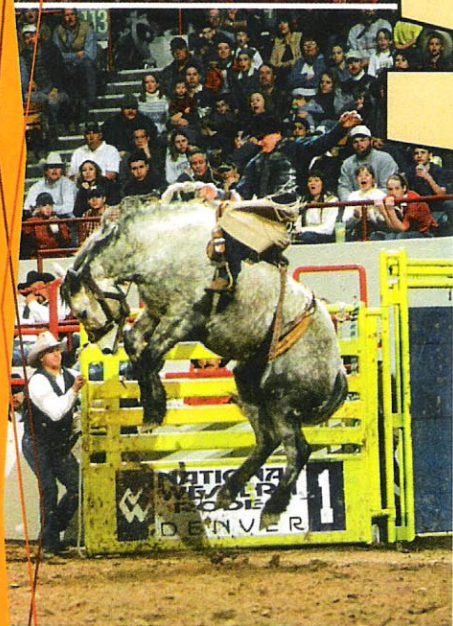
SHOW TIME!

How to Make
the Most of
Denver WESA

Stanley KOP
Becomes
Stanley Atlantic
City

PLUS: How to Fit Tall English Boots • Sell More Blankets • Western Décor and More • The Tailored Sportsman's Breech Mystique • Bring in Buyers with Seminars • Thinking Big for Ultrasmall Retailers





OUTSMART

SURVIVE

DENVER

OUTSTAY

You've planned, you've calculated, you've driven or flown hundreds of miles... and you've just thrown caution to the wind as you enter the market, armed and ready to buy. *It's show time!*

by Corinne J. Brown



OUTBUY WESAS HANDING

IF YOU'RE LIKE THOUSANDS of other Western specialty retailers, Denver's January WESA market can be a make-or-break opportunity that tests your professional expertise and physical stamina. This four-day marathon can be the most profitable time you've ever spent, or the most taxing, *if you're not prepared.*

We'd like to suggest combining business with pleasure and getting the absolute most out of your effort by planning ahead and using valuable resources in and outside the trade show location.

Remember that January is an exciting time in Denver, with plenty to offer the Western visitor. If you can juggle the options, WESA can be both a good business investment and a personal getaway. With luck, you should return home not only with a wealth of new products but renewed and supercharged. Here's how...



Planning Ahead

Famous last words, but a simple checklist to structure your market trip should include advance confirmation of everything from plane and hotel reservations to the receipt of entry badges. Speaking of entry badges, did you request enough? Advance registration can still be made, up to Dec. 15, through the Western and English Sales Association office at (888) 933-9372, or call (800) 295-1041 for general information. This move alone could save you precious minutes waiting in line. Anything that saves time is worth doing ahead. Savvy buyers and manufacturers also routinely reserve rental cars before arrival, if needed, and often make dinner reservations at favorite eateries, especially if entertaining clients.



WESA January Market

Early on, consider a hotel on WESA's preferred list, all of which offer complimentary shuttle service to and from the building on the half-hour during published market hours. By just eliminating the hassle of driving in Denver's somewhat uneven weather and clogged highways during peak hours, you can focus on the job at hand and lower the anxiety level. (These hotels are posted on the WESA Web site at www.denver-wesa.com)

Good planning always starts weeks ahead in your own office, incorporating solid feedback from your employees, plus useful statistics. You should know which items sold and which didn't, what your sales force are requesting, and what your various customers want.

Consider a rolling checklist to remind yourself of priorities as you search for the new, re-order the old, and shape your company to the times.

Don't Say We Didn't Tell You

- List current store items that sell well and those that should be re-ordered each month. Then, file them: These don't need to be ordered at market.
- Look instead for trends, style changes and better price points. Study the competition before you go. Analyze your

clearance area and count your losses. Come equipped with data.

- Bring photos of your showcases or galleries. Even with a list, remembering what you have or how you display it can be taxing. A photo reference can save time and confusion and might even enhance your next deal.
- Always have a notebook and digital camera at hand so you can document your negotiations. It's amazing how memory fails, or how purchase orders seem vague when you haven't added a complete description or a photo.
- Remember to print up extra business cards for you and members of your crew. It's amazing how fast they disappear. These should be on hand and on your person, not in a briefcase. Seems as if you always need one when you least expect it. Also, if you're a new buyer, bring copies of credit references.

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At Market

Few buyers appreciate what a well-orchestrated effort the Western Apparel and Equipment market really is, executed by a hardy team of dedicated professionals under the guidance of WESA director Toni High. Her office handles vendor registration, buyer registration, seminars and special events, plus production of the show directory. They also can be consulted for lost and found articles, directions, and most problems encountered on site. Make sure your staff back home has your cell phone number and WESA's easy-access number, (303) 292-6278, extension 5259.

Buyer Secrets to Success

Cheryl Clark, a longtime member of the WESA team, recommends this classic advice: If all else fails, please read the manual. In this case, the market directory. Yes, the WESA Market Directory is more than just a picture-packed catalog: It's a tool, in and of itself. That first day out, take a break and study it from cover to cover.

- **Use it to make a plan.** Consider working with the permanent showrooms on Pre-Market Day, Thursday, January 12. They'll be open while the temporary exhibitors are setting up their displays. On the opening day of market, plan to shop one building a day in order to use your time efficiently.



Denver International Western/English Apparel & Equipment Market

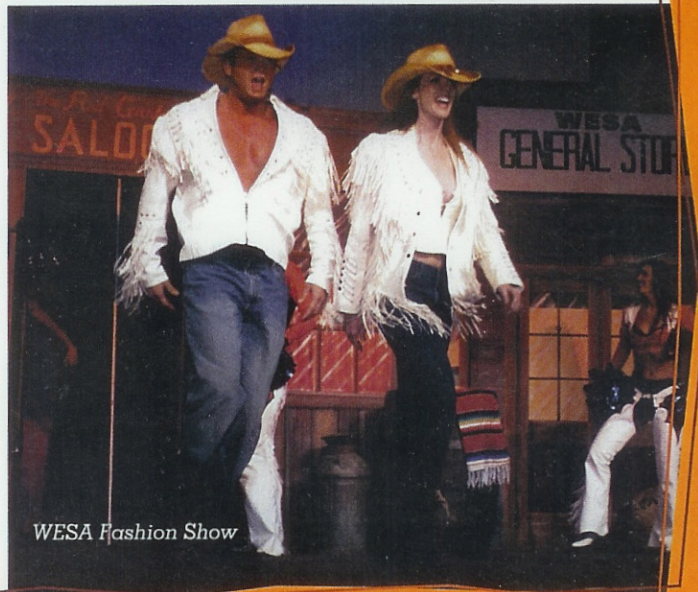
- **Set up appointments** as soon as you can, starting with your most significant suppliers. Nothing's worse than running out of time with someone you especially came to see.
- **Copy the floor maps** at the handy business center and use them to navigate. Highlight the showrooms you want. Even the most seasoned buyers get confused now and then—the maps are essential.
- **Be on the lookout for new magazines and product knowledge** material you can use in your store or on your Web site. Then, stash these valuable brochures and catalogs in the hospitality lounge instead of carrying them around with you all day. The courteous staff there is happy to check your briefcases and tote bags, too.
- **Stay hydrated.** This is Denver—a mile high and ultradry. Carry a water bottle or stop for frequent refreshment. Make note on your maps of the best pick-up stops all around the complex, as in cappuccino and fruit smoothies, quick fixes based on your needs. The many market concessionaires offer something for everyone.
- **Eat.** Shopping takes strength. Two convenient restaurants, plus a buffet in the center Plaza Building, are also at your service throughout the day. Many showrooms serve an informal lunch to their customers; so, if this is your first time out, know that you can easily work right through a meal.
- **Participate in special events**, such as the opening night party with its bonus Market Certificate drawing, special business development seminars, the not-to-be-missed fashion show and equestrian/tack clinics. If you can spare the manpower, assign staff or a spouse to catch as many of these as possible and bring their enthusiasm and expertise back with you. These resources are there for your benefit!

- **Dress in layers.** No matter how cold it is in the morning, the heat builds up in the showroom hallways, and the market buildings are often toasty. Being overdressed is the worst. (Wear your fur coats, cowgirls, but check them.)

Special Services

Solving the Parking Mystery: How do all those buyers find a place for their vehicles? Most of us know how frustrating it is to arrive midmorning and drive around aimlessly in search of a space. Forget it. Cross Washington Avenue, to the east of the Mart, and park in the outlying lots. A shuttle/van will magically appear and ferry you in.

The Hospitality Suite: This oasis offers free coffee, snacks, a coat and luggage check, comfy couches, and tables to plan and spread out a day's work. It's a great spot for an impromptu meet-



WESA Fashion Show

ing and a good place to check in if you get separated. Not a bad place to catch a nap, either. Wireless Internet services are now available.

The Boot Shine: Until you've tried it, you can't imagine what a great boost this service is. You sit down for 15 uninterrupted minutes, enjoy a coffee or cold drink, listen to music when there's live entertainment, and step down with your boots looking like new. You can even bring other boots and leave them for the end of the day. These gals are the best in the business.



The National Western Stock Show

Once in the Saddle

Start thinking about how to enjoy your evenings. With luck, you'll be so organized and efficient, you might even end up with a free day to spare. Or, you might have a spouse who's got four days to enjoy Denver while you focus on work. Either way, consider any or all of the following:

The National Western Stock Show

An easy drive over Interstate 70, the **National Western** is a first-class venue celebrating its centennial year. In addition to live animal exhibitions, catch the PRCA-sanctioned rodeo, the **Great American Wild West Show** (Jan. 14 and 15, at 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. respectively), the Night of Dancing Horses, the Coors Western Art Exhibit, plus great daytime education and entertainment for children. More than 375 vendors fill Colorado's largest indoor public tradeshow. (www.nationalwestern.com)

Don't forget: WESA arranges a special apparel buyers night, with comp tickets to the rodeo, on a first-come, first-serve basis. This year's performance will be Sunday night, Jan. 15.

Entertainment Attractions

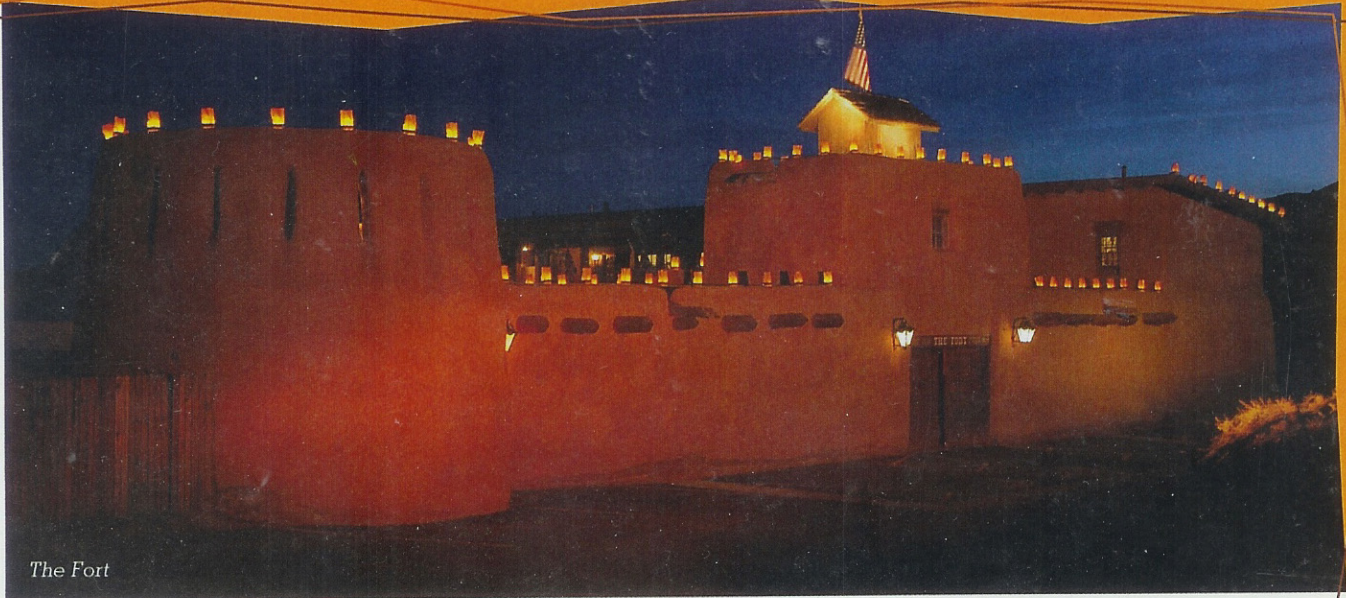
In addition to the many manufacturer parties and company dinners you can't miss, save a night to savor some of Denver's best Western entertainment.

Start with the Arvada Center's **17th Annual Colorado Cowboy Poetry Gathering**, Thursday, Jan. 12-15, featuring yarn-spinners, sagebrush side-ticklers, yodelers, singers and Western musicians. A broad range of performers will be on the theater stage in one of five evening and matinee concerts. Call for ticket information now at (720) 898-7200.

For a memorable evening, enjoy Western music at its best, backed by some of the finest wild game, buffalo and beef, served seven nights a week, at the century-old **Buckhorn Exchange**, 1000 Osage St. Catch the recent winner of the 2005 Academy of Western Music's Western Male Vocalist of the Year Award, Bill Barwick, performing Saturday nights in the snazzy Victorian bar. Roz Brown entertains Thursday through Sunday. Dinner reservations at Denver's most historic restaurant are a must: (303) 534-9505 or www.buckhorn.com



Buckhorn Exchange



The Fort

A fitting reward to a hard week of work is a romantic dinner at **The Fort**, Colorado's premier restaurant nestled in the foothills west of Denver. A 20-minute ride from downtown, this magnificent adobe landmark, a scaled-down re-creation of Bent's Fort, is the ultimate dining experience. Reservations are recommended, and can be made online now at www.thefort.com, or by calling (303) 839-1671, assuring you of a table at the only restaurant chosen to host the Summit of the Eight. Sam Arnold, your host.



Lannie Garrett, as "Miss Patsy Decline"

As always during January, Colorado's most celebrated comedienne and songstress, **Lannie Garrett** will be bringing back her endearing Western show queen, "Miss Patsy Decline." A fabulous spoof of a country music diva, Patsy and her steel pedal band have become a favorite nightclub act that delivers plenty of laughs and

memorable music. Check local listings in January or go to Garrett's Web site, www.lannie.com, for the club location and times.

Be Inspired

During daylight hours, everyone in the business should visit the newly renovated **Rockmount Ranch Wear** store at 1626 Wazee St. in Lodo (Denver's lower downtown area). The Weils have succeeded in restoring their flagship 1908 Prairie-style building with the company's wholesale headquarters to its former glory and adding an additional presence in Denver as an industry retailer, making Western wear more appealing than ever. Check it out for ambience and display ideas. Makes you proud to be an American.

Finally, a visit to the **Brown Palace** piano/lobby bar for a drink or an afternoon tea is a Colorado tradition, sure to chase a chill or warm up an evening. Begun back in the late 1800s, it's a great place to meet friends or transition into dinner.

If all else fails to soothe your weary body and soul, consider a massage or spa treatment at any of Denver's four **Antoine du Chez** salons, full-service sanctuaries for a guaranteed revival. One phone call can book any location: (303) 393-9666. Located in the four quadrants of the city, they're easy to find and both men and women are welcome. Facials, stylists, manicures, massage and more can all be a fitting reward for a job well done. Lie down, close your eyes, relax—and start planning for next year! **WE**

Born and raised in Denver, freelance writer and businesswoman Corinne J. Brown is a veteran of the retail industry, having partnered in a successful Colorado home furnishings/accessories and design business for going on 28 years. This year marks her eighth WESA January market.



Rockmount Ranch Wear