

## Two Feet Further, Different Story

*By Liz Gibbons*

My best childhood friend, Sis Bauman, lived directly across the street. We both loved horses and spent many a Saturday afternoon at double-feature western movies. Her father had relatives who lived on a farm about fifty miles away. When we were in junior high the relatives loaned Sis a white horse named Cannonball which she kept for a little over a year.

Conveniently, there was a small farm on the edge of town about three blocks away where she could board it. I often accompanied Sis as she daily went to the farm to feed and care for Cannonball. My Mother had told me she did not want me to ride the horse. But that did not stop me. Sis instructed me on horseback riding, took me for some rides, and then let me ride Cannonball by myself. I had this romantic idea that living on a ranch in Arizona and riding horses all day when I grew up would be the ideal life, so this was the next best thing.

One day, a classmate, Ginny Barnes, accompanied Sis and me to the farm. Ginny wanted to ride Cannonball. She had no experience with horses, so Sis said I could take her for a ride. I mounted Cannonball and Ginny got on behind me. We started moving down the dirt road that ran through the farm. Suddenly Cannonball bucked, which I had never experienced with him before, and we both went flying off. I landed on the ground about two feet away from a disc harrowing machine that had sharp circular blades used to plow the fields. Ginny landed behind me further away from the machinery that was lining the road. We believe Cannonball bucked because Ginny had sunk her heels into his sides. One or two steps further down the road we both would have likely landed on top of the farm machinery. Cannonball took off galloping, and it took Sis quite a while to corral him and lead him back to the barn.

I walked home for lunch feeling achy and sore. After lunch I told my mother I was tired and was going to take a nap. She was puzzled, as I never took naps. She asked if I felt I was coming down with something or had a temperature. I replied, "No". Soon Mrs. Bauman came over and asked my Mom if I was okay. Oh, oh, the jig was up. Mrs. Bauman related what had happened. Mom came up to my room and after confirming that I was okay, just achy, she reiterated that she had told me never to ride that horse. "I hope you learned your lesson," she added. Of course, I hadn't. I continued to ride Cannonball.