2017
Most Honored Packer

BOBBY TANNER

Bob and Bobby Tanner ride together in a Parade in Bishop

Mules and Mule Days have always been a huge part of Bobby Tanner's life. This year's Most Honored Packer grew up at Red's Meadow Pack Station, where life was all about packing mules and taking guests into the wilderness.

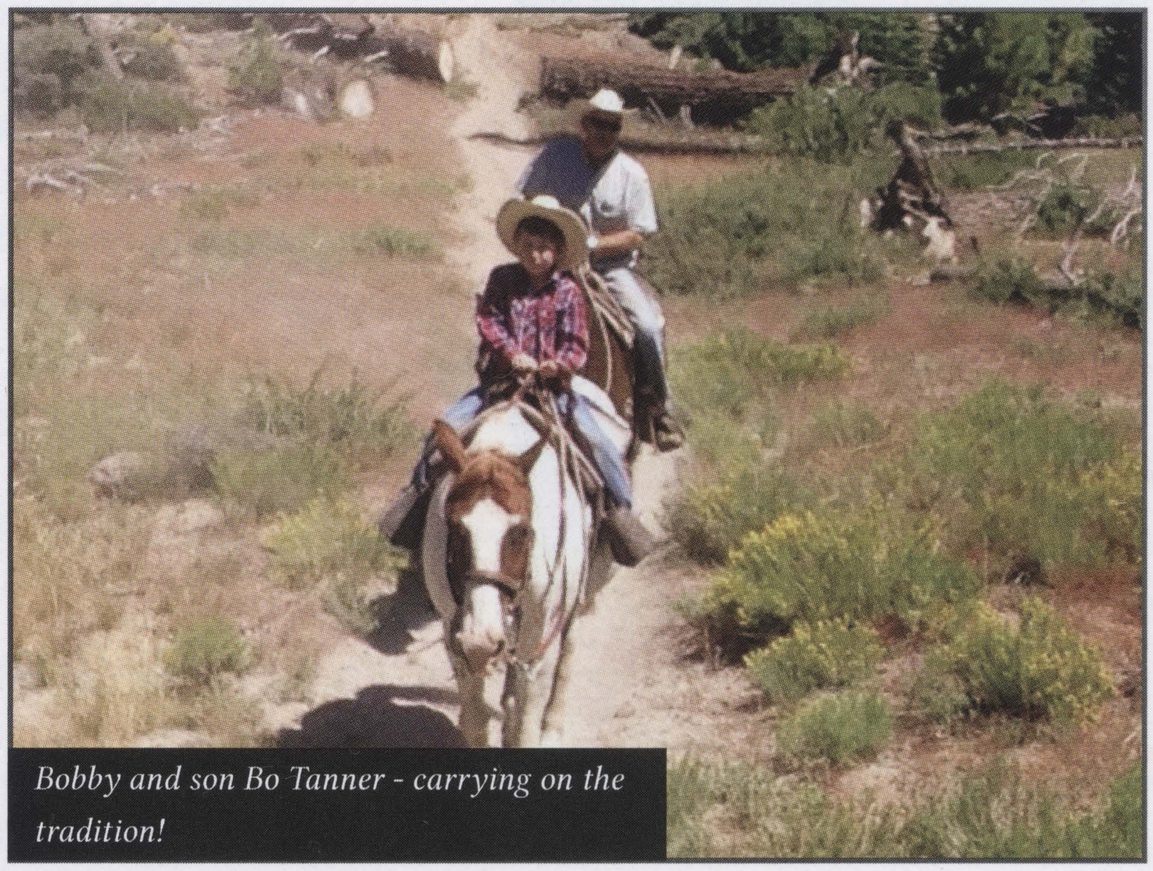
His father, Bob Tanner, made sure that Bobby grew up loving and respecting the packing lifestyle and the opportunities that exploring the Sierra backcountry presented.

Bobby graduated from Bishop High and then attended Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. The urge to return to his roots to help Bob run Red's Meadow was strong enough to lure him home. He cannot remember a time when he did not compete and/or participate in Mule Days. His skills in the individual packing contests were awesome. When he was part of the Red's Meadow pack team, they were really hard to beat! At times, both Bob and Bobby worked together as part of the Red's team.

Bobby states firmly, "Mule Days is a great event for Bishop, both economically and recreationally, as it has successfully spotlighted the versatility of mules, exposed many thousands of people to the Sierra Nevada, and given many of those folks the idea of packing into our Wilderness areas."

These days, most people recognize Bobby Tanner as the man with the lines guiding the 20 Mule Team and the famous Borax wagons. He has become a familiar sight not only at Mule Days, but also at events around the Western States, including the Rose Parade. Training those mules to jump the chains is no easy task. It takes perseverance and patience, but then Bobby knows mules and has for his entire life.

When Bobby is not busy with the 20 Mule Team, the pack station, and Rock Creek Lodge, he finds time to serve on the Mule Days Executive Board. In addition, Bobby's wife Claudia is now in charge of Mule Days souvenirs, and she is doing a great job. Their son Bo at age 8 is already the third generation Tanner to compete and participate. Mule Days is fortunate to have the Tanner family so enthusiastic, and still actively involved in the celebration of mules that Bob Sr. helped to establish so many years ago! ■



Bobby and son Bo Tanner - carrying on the tradition!