



Wildlife scenes such as this one grace stationery artist Grem Lee (below) produces. Lee was asked by noted author Max Evans to illustrate his book *Rounders 3*.

Mountainair cowboy enjoys a sketchy life

GROWING UP ON THE Y RANCH on the southwest portion of New Mexico's Plains of San Agustín, Grem Lee confesses that as a kid he loved to draw bulldozers. "Maybe bulldozer operators' kids like to draw horses," he says. "But I drew a lot of horses, too."

Lee's first drawing was of a mule deer, a precursor to the wildlife scenes he draws today. Since then he has drawn scenes depicting ranch work, episodes of cowboy hilarity and wildlife cameos. He particularly likes to illustrate incidents. "I love to make people laugh," he says.

To that end Max Evans approached Lee to illustrate the University Press of Colorado's 1997 edition of *Rounders 3*. The two together are quite a pair. Max had been a good friend of Lee's uncle, noted Western artist Bob Lee. The young artist spent a lot of time with his Uncle Bob, who taught him quite a bit.

Lee's work with a pencil details the curve of the top feather on a Gambel's quail, the look in the eye of a horse like Ole' Fooler in

Rounders 3, the creases in a cowboy boot. Such attention contributes to a realistic, thoughtful and often humorous view of Western life.

No doubt about it, Lee's biggest break to date has been hooking up with Max Evans. "I'd say Max has probably helped me out, encouraged me, more than anybody," he says.

Presently Lee is working on a book of old-timers' tales that he is illustrating himself. Max Evans has agreed to do the foreword for the book and Elmer Kelton, the afterword. "I'm planning on doing 16 stories for my book and doing four to six illustrations for each story."

Lee, with his wife, Debbie, has produced a line of stationery, prints and T-shirts marketed from their home as well as at the county fairs and fiestas they attend throughout southwestern New Mexico.

The Lees can be contacted at HC 66, Box 605, Mountainair, NM 87036, (505) 423-3254.
—Nancy Coggeshall



DEBBIE LEE