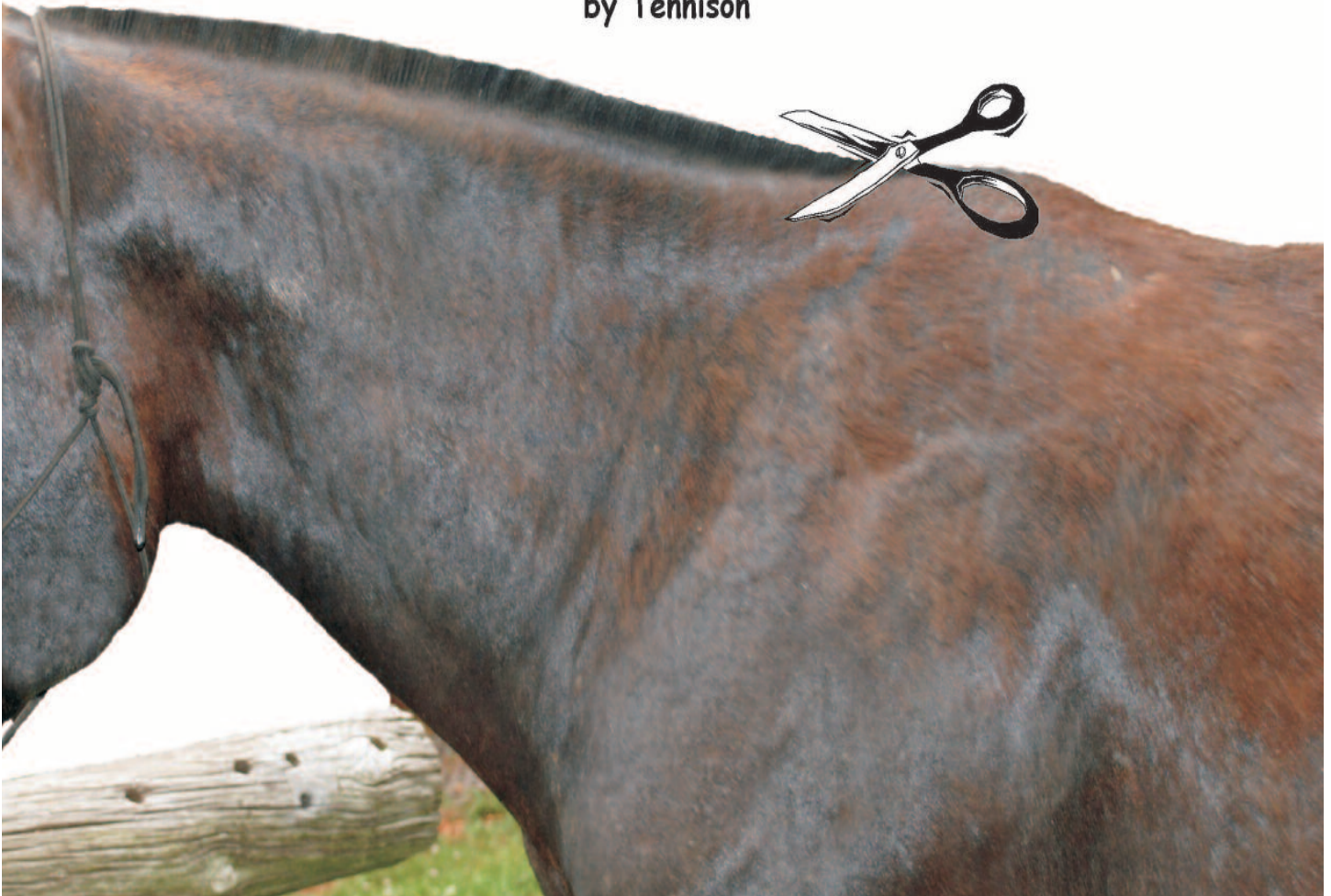


# Them Mules

## Shave and a Hair Cut!

by Tennison



**I** defy you to show me a more diverse animal than the mule. Whatever your hearts desire you can find in the mule. Do ya want a great trail animal? You can have that in about any mule. Do ya want a mule that will work a cow or work a rope? You can have it. Do you want a gaited mule? You can; a jumping mule? Stand back and watch 'em go! Whatever your heart desires you can have in a mule.

As diverse as them mules are, so go their owners, wealthy and poor, educated and not educated, intelligent, and not so much, big, little, skinny and not so much. I've met them all and there are

many different twist as to why they have a mule and why they like them.

As it is with mules and thir owners, there are many different ways to trim a mule. The way a mule is trimmed is all in the eyes of the beholder. The mules don't have any say in the matter, and if he did I believe the mule would choose to let it all hang out. There are no mules at my place crowding in line to get a hair cut.

I have learned, trimming a mule in any fashion is easier for some than it is for others. The butch trim, buzzed down to the neck (roched), is a preferred trim, but many I've learned, roach the mane down to the neck because they know no

other way. Hopefully, in this article I can give you some insight on trimming a mule differently. Not that I don't think a roached mane doesn't look good on a mule, I do, but many have asked to show them how they might do it another way.

The first thing you must have is a good pair of clippers that are sharp. We could do an entire article on clippers I suppose but to simplify it, clippers are like chain saws; there are many different styles, sizes and amount of power they produce. The good saw with lots of power will produce lots of wood at the end of the day in the right hands. I like the best saw I can afford when cutting



This mane had grown out and fallen over. The first step is to start somewhere, it can look overwhelming. Simply give it a rough cut with scissors as a place to start.



Next I cut out the bridle path, how long you make the bridle path is up to you. See in another photo the different look a bridle path length has.



I roach (buzz) the bridle path all the way down. I have seen some leave the bridle path standing up a little, still shorter than the mane. A mule that's not used to clippers can have some trouble letting you do this. The more you do it the better they get with it. A twitch or Stableizer will be handy for those mules that can't take it.

wood and I like the same in my clippers. I can't cut much wood with a dull chain no matter how much power, and so it is with clipper. I CANNOT and WILL NOT trim a mane with dull blades.

Also needed is a good, sharp pair of scissors. A sharp pair of scissors cost less than \$10 and when they go dull, I throw them away and buy another pair. My cousin cuts hair for a living and his scissors cost from \$100 to \$300 a pair and to have them sharpened every two months the cost is \$25 a pair. I can buy lots of \$10 scissors and have another pair on standby for the cost of the real good ones. The pair I have now is going on two years old. The quality I feel for my scissors and clippers are quite different, but the sharpness is not, I WILL NOT because I CANNOT trim a mane with dull scissors.

On a mane like this I will take the scissors and give it some shape. I suppose you could thin it first, but it works best for me to give it some sort of shape first.

I then take the clippers and cut a bridle path. The length of a bridle path is up to you. In the horse world the bridle path is normally cut the length of the ear.

I've tried this on a mule, on some mules it looks good, on some it looks best to trim shorter than the ear. The mane on the bridle path is roached completely off.

I then take the clippers and thin the mane by coming in from the sides. How thin? This is a personal preference. I like mine thin. Before you learn just how far to go trying to get it thin, you will go too far. I've done it; this is part of the learning process. Once you have it thinned to your liking, using the scissors, trim the mane to the desired height. You can trim it straight, you can put an arch in it, whatever you like.

This is not hard after you've done it a few times. I don't think you have to be an artist to accomplish a nice mane trim. Patience and practice will make you a good mane trimmer. I've seen a few who could take the clippers and trim without the scissors. These folk, I believe to be an artist. As for me it takes two sessions to get it right. The next day I will likely see something I've missed.

You're done! If you don't like what you see...roch it all off, it's your mule, you paid for him.

*Continued on next page*

Right: Here in photos 4 and 4A is the key to making the mane look good, thinning it. Thinning it may be the hardest part of trimming a mane. Don't be intimidated practice makes perfect. With the clippers come in from the sides thinning the mane. How thin is a personal preference. If you haven't done this before, before you become an expert you will get it to thin. When you do try not to cuss, (good luck) it doesn't do any good, (I know what I'm talking about here) just work with what you have, it's obvious you need the practice. Of course you need to thin from both sides. As for me the right side is easier than the left side. Once you have it thinned to you liking it's time for the scissors. Thinning the mane isn't real hard but neither is brain surgery if you know how.





photo #5



photo #6

Here is when it all falls into place. How high do you want it? Do you want it stright? An arch in it? Let your imagination soar. I do this trimming with scissors, I've only seen one man in my life who could do this with a pair of clippers and keep it stright. I do truly believe this guy was an artisit. He made it look easy, I've tried it, my hand is too shakey.

If you will look at picture #6 it's not perfect, but it will be in two or three days. I can't get it perfect the first time. The next day I'll see something higher than it should be and I'll fix it, pecking at it a few days I'll perfect it.

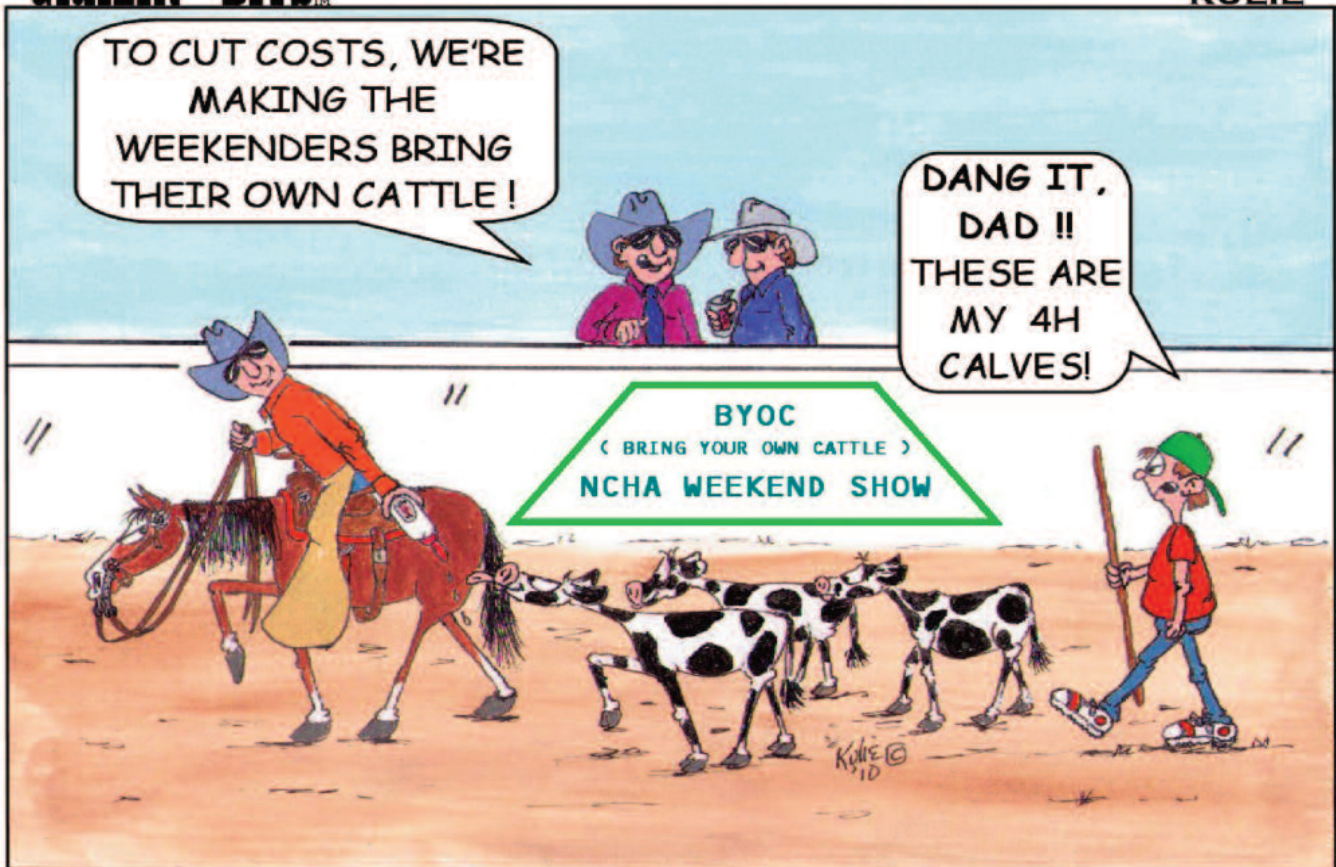
Because this mane was grown out and had fallen over, it will show a wave on the sides for a few day. This will be hard to see before long and the next time you thin it there will be no wave at all.

Conformation does play on how a trim will look from one mule to another.

I've probaly seen every kind of trim job known to man. Some I liked, some I didn't. I've seen many a hair cut on men in my life, some I liked, some I didn't. I've computer enhanced some photos of this same mule so you can see how different hights, lenghts of bridle paths etc might look.

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Same mule, same pose, all but one picture has been computer enhanced so you might get the jest of different cuts.

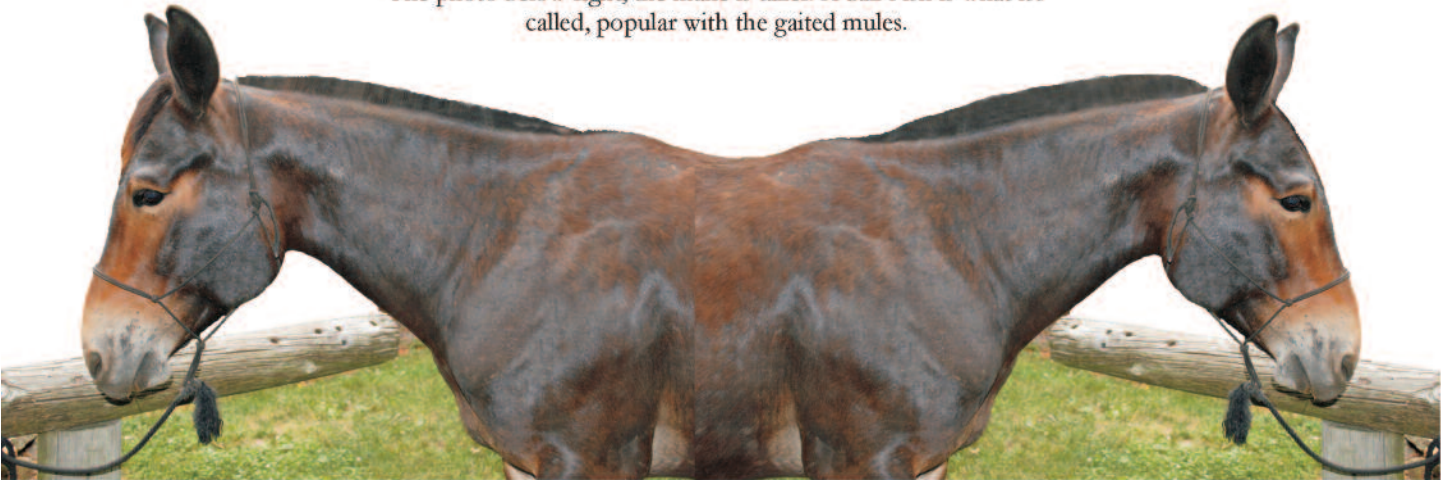
The cut, below left, is a roached (buzzed) mane and forelock.

The cut below right is the only picture that has not be enhanced. Note he has a forelock.



The photo below left, the mane is taller.

The photo below right, the mane is taller. A Sail Fish is what it's called, popular with the gaited mules.



The photo below left, has a longer bridle path.

The photo below right is called a Gear-Cut, popular in the late 80's and early 90's.

Yes, when it comes to giving a hair cut you can let your imagination go wild!

