

Book Group Guide for *Bull Rider* by Suzanne Morgan Williams
Margaret K. McElderry Books, February, 2009.

A. Discussion Questions:

1. At the beginning of *Bull Rider*, Cam wants to be a skateboarder. His brother is a bull rider. Why do you think Cam is not interested in bull riding? What changes his mind? Would you rather be a bull rider or a skate boarder if you were Cam?

2. Why doesn't Mom want Cam to bull ride? How would you feel if you were in her position? How does Ben's injury affect her decision? Should it?

3. Why do you think Grandpa Roy and Grandma Carl support Cam's decision to ride Ugly at the end of the book? They know he is underage. Is that ok? Should they have stopped him?

4. How do you think Cam feels about war at the beginning of the book? At the end? How does Ben feel about it? Are their views different? Why or why not? Do you think Ben's sacrifice was worth it? Why or why not?

5. What do you know about injured and disabled veterans? Do you hear about it on TV? On the radio? What do you think the United States does or does not owe to the families of men and women injured in war? Why would veterans not get the medical and community support that might help them?

B. Recipe or Snack Suggestions:

Grandma Jean's Quesadillas and Tomatillo Salsa:

Equipment: Large cast iron frying pan or electric skillet; knife, cutting board, grater, large spoon, spatula, blender.

Ingredients:

quesadillas:

two large corn or flour tortillas per quesadilla.
Cheese.
A little oil.

Tomatillo Salsa (green salsa, salsa verde):

six to eight tomatillos,
½ medium onion,
three to four garlic cloves, peeled
1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro,
one or two fresh jalapeno peppers (seeded for a milder salsa)
juice of ½ lime

For Quesadillas:

- 1) put a little oil in the bottom of the frying pan or electric skillet. Heat on medium high.
- 2) When oil is hot, place two tortillas in the pan to warm.

- 3) After about one minute, flip one tortilla and top its heated side with thinly sliced or grated cheese (about a ¼ to a 1/3 cup depending on size of tortillas).
- 4) Place the second tortilla, warm side DOWN on top of the cheese.
- 5) Wait about another minute and flip the quesadilla. Cook until cheese is melted.

For Tomatillo Salsa:

- 1) Remove the papery skins from the tomatillos and rinse well.
- 2) Place tomatillos, garlic, and pepper in a HOT frying pan and stir until outsides are toasted. Remove from heat.
- 3) Chop garlic, tomatillos and onions into medium small chunks.
- 4) Open peppers and remove seeds and stem. Chop into chunks. Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly after handling peppers.
- 5) Place tomatillos, garlic, peppers, cilantro, onions and lime juice in the blender. Pulse until all ingredients are chopped. Do not blend into a liquid. Salsa should have a chunky texture – like pickle relish or a little smaller.

Serve with quesadillas. Salsa should be stored in the refrigerator.

C. Project or Craft Idea:

Bull Rider takes place on the O'Mara Ranch and they brand calves with the circle M brand. In Nevada, all brands are registered with the state. Have each student create a brand that represents him or her and create a class registry. You can see examples of Nevada brands at:

<http://agri.nv.gov/OFFICIAL%20LIVESTOCK%20BRAND%20BOOK/COMBINED.pdf>,

D. Web links:

Disabled American Veterans; <http://www.dav.org/> ,
 Fischer House Helping Military Families <http://www.fisherhouse.org/>,
 Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America; <http://www.optruth.org/>
 National High School Rodeo Association, <http://www.nhsra.com/>
 Professional Bull Riders, <http://www.pbrnow.com/> ,
 Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association <http://www.prorodeo.com/> ,
 State of Nevada Livestock Brand book (17.8 MG download!)

<http://agri.nv.gov/OFFICIAL%20LIVESTOCK%20BRAND%20BOOK/COMBINED.pdf>,

Nevada tourism board <http://travelnevada.com/> ,

Tony Hawk Foundation - builds skateboard parks across North America

<http://www.tonyhawkfoundation.org/>

E. Play list – anything Country and Western. Grandma Jean likes Reba McEntire.