

WESTERN RENDEZVOUS



20

A supplement to the
Omak Okanogan County Chronicle
July 30, 2025

25



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WESTERN RENDEZVOUS

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The Chronicle staff strives to be accurate, however, all information in this publication is subject to change without notice.



TIME TO RENDEZVOUS IN OMAK

WELCOME TO "Western Rendezvous," your ultimate guide to the Omak Stampede and its array of exciting events!

This action-packed weekend features not only the PRCA rodeo but also the World-Famous Suicide Race, the Omak Stampede Indian Encampment, the Omak Western and Native Art Show, and a variety of events ranging from ministry activities to a variety of food and craft vendors.

Residents, businesses, and community organizations have been diligently preparing all year for Stampede weekend. Now, it's time to celebrate, and you're invited to the greatest show on dirt.

From August 7-10, the Omak Stampede and World-Famous Suicide Race

will take center stage with thrilling performances by top-notch bull riders, bronc busters, ropers, and Suicide Racers. Each night promises exhilarating rodeo action and unforgettable experiences.

After Thursday night's rodeo, adults can unwind at the beer garden and dance the night away to the tunes of DJ Artie Litscher. On Friday and Saturday nights, enjoy live music by the Night Riders, creating a perfect atmosphere to socialize and celebrate.

Not a rodeo enthusiast? No problem!

The midway offers plenty of fun with rides from Paradise Amusements like the Ferris wheel, thrilling upside-down twists, and spinning carnival attractions.

Indulge in classic festival food, including curly fries,

cotton candy, and elephant ears, adding a delicious touch to your experience.

The weekend also includes Christian musical performances and testimonies, a grand parade, and more.

Downtown Omak will be buzzing with activity throughout the weekend, providing numerous opportunities to soak in the festive atmosphere. And be sure to catch the grand parade early Saturday morning.

In short, there's something for everyone at the Omak Stampede.

We invite you to join in the festive spirit and help the community celebrate its rich heritage.

Whether you attend for a day or all four, you're guaranteed to make unforgettable memories. See you at the Stampede!

91ST ANNUAL OMAK STAMPEDE

2025 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, August 7

- ▶ 8am - Ride-In
- ▶ 10am - 6pm Western & Native Art Show - Omak Elks, 110 S. Ash St., Omak
- ▶ 4pm Wrangler Kids Night
- ▶ 5pm - Midnight- Paradise Amusement Carnival
- ▶ 6pm - 9pm - Stampede Outreach
- ▶ 7pm - Omak Stampede Indian Encampment Official Opening Ceremonies
- ▶ 7pm - Omak Stampede PRCA Rodeo & World-Famous Suicide Race
- ▶ Followed by DJ Music by Art Litscher

Friday, August 8

- ▶ 9am - Slack - Timed Events
- ▶ 10am - 6pm - Western & Native Art Show - Omak Elks, 110 S. Ash St., Omak
- ▶ 11am Encampment Vendors Open
- ▶ 2:30pm - Eagle Boy showing at the Mirage Theater, 101 S. Main St., Omak
- ▶ 5pm - 12:30am - Paradise Amusement Carnival
- ▶ 6pm - 9pm - Stampede Outreach
- ▶ 7pm - Grand Entry at the Indian Encampment
- ▶ 7pm - Omak Stampede PRCA Rodeo & World-Famous Suicide Race
- ▶ Followed by Dance at the Stampede South Beer Garden with music by The Night Riders

Saturday, August 9

- ▶ 10am - Stampede Grand Parade - Downtown Omak
- ▶ All Day! Indian Encampment
- ▶ 10am - 6pm - Western & Native Art Show - Omak Elks, 110 S. Ash St., Omak
- ▶ 11am Encampment Vendors Open
- ▶ 11am - 2pm - Autographs & Athletes at Omak Dodge, 707 Okoma Drive, Omak
- ▶ 1pm - Grand Entry at the Indian Encampment
- ▶ 4pm - 1am - Paradise Amusement Carnival
- ▶ 2:30pm - Eagle Boy showing at the Mirage Theater, 101 S. Main St., Omak
- ▶ 6pm - 9pm - Stampede Outreach
- ▶ 7pm - Grand Entry at the Indian Encampment
- ▶ 7pm - Omak Stampede PRCA Rodeo & World-Famous Suicide Race
- ▶ Followed by Dance at the Stampede South Beer Garden with music by The Night Riders

Sunday, August 10

- ▶ 10am - Western Church Service at the Stampede Outreach Stage (Free Continental)
- ▶ 10am - 2pm - Western & Native Art Show - Omak Elks, 110 S. Ash St., Omak
- ▶ 1pm - Grand Entry at the Indian Encampment
- ▶ 1pm - 6pm - Paradise Amusement Carnival
- ▶ 1pm - Omak Stampede PRCA Rodeo & World-Famous Suicide Race



WWW.OMAKSTAMPEDE.ORG
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STAMPEDE GALLOPS TO OMAK

THE OMAK STAMPEDE, Aug. 7-10, will draw top cowboys and cowgirls for its 91st annual event. Highlights include the World-Famous Suicide Race, the Omak Stampede Indian Encampment, a grand parade, an art show, Christian music, and other Western entertainment.

Rodeo performances are scheduled for 7 p.m. on Aug. 7-9 and 1 p.m. on Aug. 10 at the Omak Stampede Arena, 421 E. Stampede Drive. Tickets can be

purchased online, by phone, or at the Stampede ticket office.

After each rodeo performance, the World-Famous Suicide Race takes place. The Paradise Amusement carnival opens on Thursday, Aug. 7, at the west end of East Side Park.

The Omak Western and Native Art Show opens Thursday and runs through Sunday at the Omak Elks Club, 110 S. Ash St.

The Omak Stampede Indian Encampment also opens on

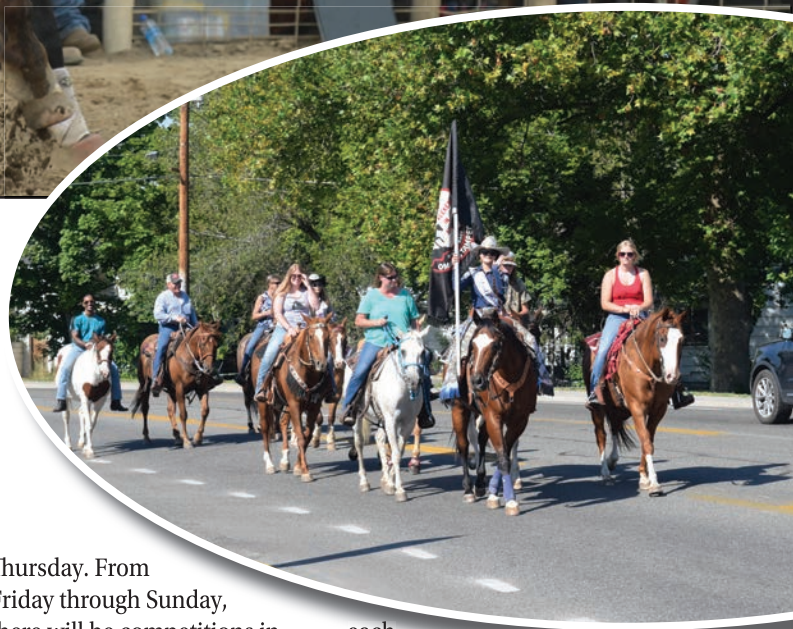
Thursday. From Friday through Sunday, there will be competitions in dancing, drumming and stick games.

The annual Wrangler Kids' Night kicks off in the arena at 4 p.m. on Thursday with games and a dress-up competition for children, with prizes awarded.

Friday night's rodeo performance is "Tough Enough to Wear Pink," with \$1 from

each ticket sold going to breast cancer research and detection.

Patriot Day is on Sunday to support U.S. troops, with free admission for veterans with military ID. Rodeo attendees are encouraged to wear red,





white, and blue.

Each rodeo performance starts with the Parade of Flags, featuring riders and horses carrying flags sponsored by local organizations, clubs, and businesses. Arena runs by royalty follow, led by Miss Omak Stampede Kayden Coffey.

Bullfighters Erick Schwindt and Logan Blasdel, along with Okanogan-born clown and barrelman J.J. Harrison, will assist the cowboys, with Kory Keeth serving as the rodeo announcer.

This year, the Stampede will honor the late Patsy "Pat" (Cunningham) Eighme, Craig Vojraska and Donnie Hutsell.

Suicide Race fans can access designated viewing spots on the hill and the dike with booster buttons, available from the venue and area businesses. A rodeo ticket stub is also required for admission to the dike area. Rodeo ticket holders can view the Suicide Race from various locations in the arena.

A variety of food and commercial vendors will be on-site. Following each rodeo performance, autograph

sessions are scheduled.

Parking fees apply on the grounds, with day and weekend passes available. Flaggers will direct traffic at the end of each rodeo performance, with separate parking fees in the encampment area.

Other weekend events include:

- The Omak Western and Native Art Show, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday; reception and live auction is at 3 p.m. Saturday.

- Omak Stampede Indian Encampment, Thursday through Sunday.

- Ride-in, 8 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 7, Okanogan County Fairgrounds through Okanogan to Omak.

- Grand parade, 10 a.m. Saturday, downtown Omak. Connie Thomas will be honored as grand marshal.

- Christians-in-Action stage ministry, all weekend, Triangle Park between the rodeo arena and carnival. A Western church service is planned Sunday morning on the gospel stage.

- Post-rodeo dances Thursday with DJ Artie Litscher; Friday and Saturday nights with The Night Riders.

Map of grounds

1 Stampede Arena	9 Beer gardens
2 Suicide Hill	10 Tribal police
3 Encampment area	11 Security
4 Owners and Jockeys	12 RV parking
5 Christians in Action	13 Visitor center
6 Western and Native Art Show (110 S. Ash St.)	14 Davis Shows Carnival
7 Food court	15 Stampede Museum
8 Concessions	Bathrooms



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Suicide Race: 90 years in the making

PARTICIPANTS IN THE World-Famous Suicide Race are gearing up for the 90th anniversary running of the event.

The Suicide Race is planned for Aug. 7-10 following each Omak Stampede performance.

Points are awarded based on the finishing position of each horse. The horse with the most points at the end of the week-end is the overall winner.

In 2024, Mohican, ridden by Tyler Peasley, claimed the King of the Hill title.

The history of the race's roots are in a mountain race run by American Indians for many years in Keller.

In 1935, Omak Stampede Publicity Chairman Claire Pentz, in

search of something exciting to add to the fledgling rodeo, patterned the race after the Keller event.

During the Suicide Race, competitors start 100 or so feet back from the hill's edge, then race down the embankment and into the Okanogan River. Depending on the water level, they either swim or gallop across the river and then race up the bank and into the Stampede Arena.

In 1993, E.E. "Hoagy" Shattuck, a Stampede board member and engineer, calculated the hill at a 54.7 percent grade that runs 210 feet from top to bottom.

The original race course, used from 1935-52, was slightly west of the current Suicide Hill. The present hill was rented from Mary Ogden for four years, then



AL CAMP

Racers speed down the hill during the 2023 Suicide Race.

the property was purchased by Omak Stampede Inc. in 1956. It now belongs to the City of

Omak, as does East Side Park where the Stampede Arena is located.



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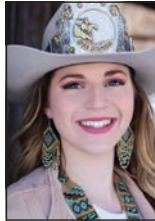
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Coffey reigns as 2025 queen

WELCOME FRIENDS AND rodeo fans to the 91st performance of the Omak Stampede and the World-Famous Suicide Race.

Hello, my name is Kayden Coffey; I am your 2025 Miss Omak Stampede. I am indeed honored to be the youth ambassador for this Amazing event!! Our prestigious and historical event is the show piece for our communities within the borders of the sunny Okanogan County and the City of Omak. I extend a heartfelt invitation to join us as we celebrate the Stampede and Suicide Race! Please plan to attend all four P.R.C.A. Rodeo performances and enjoy all the history and excitement of this great event! While you're here, you can enjoy the great food offered in our



Coffey

food court, wander down concession row, visit the Stampede Museum, Native American Indian Encampment and of course, take time to visit the unique shops in downtown Omak.

The original stock contractors, Leo Moomaw and Tim Bernard, had a dream of creating this great event. I can only imagine their pride as they watch their dream continue to unfold. Their dream is now part of my dream as well.

I truly hope that you enjoy all the festivities surrounding our event and that you take a piece of our unique culture home with you.

I look forward to seeing you somewhere down the trail during my reign and of course, at the 91st celebration of the Omak Stampede and World-famous Suicide Race. It is, indeed, a Legend in its own time.

Always-the second weekend in August!

Paying tribute to three nations

THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF TALENT TO honor America and Canada at Omak Stampede rodeo performances.

On Thursday and Friday Rolla Kennison will perform both the national anthem and the Canadian anthem.

On Saturday night, Miss Omak Stampede Kayden Coffey will sing "The Star Spangled Banner," and Heather Baumgartner will pay tribute to neighbors to the north with "O, Canada."

For the final rodeo performance Sunday, Aug. 10, Baumgartner will perform both the American and Canadian anthems, respectively.

The grand entry includes presentation of the U.S. and Canadian flags, plus the eagle staff in honor of the Colville Confederated Tribes.



Baumgartner



Kennison

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Encampment brings dancing, drumming

THE ANNUAL OMAK STAMPEDE INDIAN Encampment and pow wow will open Wednesday, Aug. 7 and continue through Sunday, Aug. 10 at the east end of East Side Park.

Opening ceremonies will begin at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 7.

Grand entries are set for 7 p.m. Friday, 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday, and 1 p.m. Sunday.

Drum roll calls will lead the start of dancing.

The encampment typically draws in 200-300 dancer of all ages from the Northwest. Prizes will be given in different age categories and for different dance styles.

Food and art vendors will also be available throughout the weekend.

The encampment is a traditional gathering that features an authentic teepee village, dancing, drumming, singing competitions and stick games — a Native American game of chance that runs throughout the weekend.

Encampment grounds are open to the public throughout the weekend, and spectators are welcome to enjoy the beauty, grace and sacred traditions of the Native American culture, organizers said.



Dancers moves around the circle during last year's Omak Stampede Indian Encampment.

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Northwest artists gather in Omak

THE OKANOGAN County Artists Association will present the 44th annual Native and Western Art Show, held in conjunction with the Omak Stampede, from Aug. 7-10 at the Omak Elks Lodge, 110 S. Ash St.

Ample public parking will be available. Admission is free, and the public is welcome to view and purchase fine art.

The show will feature accomplished artists from across the Northwest, each showcasing their individual styles in a variety of media. This year's award-winning past and present poster artist is David Craig of Eatonville, Wash. His featured image, titled *Dream Catcher*, is expected to become a favorite among collectors.

Dream catchers originate from an Ojibwe legend about Asibikaashi, the Spider Woman, who protected people—especially children—by trapping bad dreams in a web. The tradition was later adopted by other Native American nations, including the Lakota.

Participating artists include Jack Babcock, Barbara Conner Reed, David Craig, Judith Elven,



People browse art work at the 2023 Native and Western Arts Show.

Cheryl Grunlose, Tea Kurtz, Andross Moore, Tom Morrison, Don Nutt, Ian Rickman, Tina Reeve Tharp, Bruce Townsend Cook, Jennie Truitt and Lori Twiggs.

Panel display artists from Okanogan County include

Sharon Arbuckle, Julie Autry, Kim Black, Susette Cheshier, Barbara Green, Dana Miller, Julie Peterson, Verna Schwillke, Gail Seeklander and Georgia Tongel.

The show will be open Thursday through Saturday

from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. A public reception will be held Saturday from 3 to 5 p.m., though the traditional live auction will not take place this year. Attendees are encouraged to come meet the artists.



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Participants in the 2022 Omak Stampede kickoff ride-in clip-clop along en route to the Stampede Arena.

Ride-in kicks off Stampede weekend

THE OMAK STAMPEDE ride-in will take place on the Thursday of Stampede weekend, Aug. 7.

Registration starts at 6 a.m. and runs for two hours up until the start of the ride-in at 8:30. All riders must register to participate.

The ride-in kicks off from the Okanogan County Fairgrounds, 175 Rodeo Trail, before heading south to Highway 20 and crossing the south bridge over the

Okanogan River.

The route then heads north through Okanogan on Second Avenue and Elmway, then through Omak on Okoma Drive, Fourth Avenue and Main Street before taking the Central Avenue bridge across the river. Riders will then turn onto the dike before heading into the Stampede Arena for a lap around arena.

A rest stop at the Okanogan Eagles, 1820

N. Second Ave., will be available for complimentary

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Parade rolls through Omak Saturday morning

THE STAMPEDE GRAND parade will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 9.

Staging will take place on Okoma Drive again, with check-ins at the old Ferrellgas location at the intersection of Okoma and Fir Street.

The route will proceed the same as in past years, heading north on Okoma Drive and Main Street before making a left on Apple Avenue and heading back south down Ash Street.

Traffic will be routed around the downtown Omak area during the parade.

Viewers can expect a variety of floats, bands, vehicles, royalty, rodeo and other parade entries.

Divisions in the parade generally include children's

entries, community floats, commercial entries, organizations, political candidates, mounted royalty, marching bands, mounted drill teams, antique cars, public service and more.

Registration for the parade is free for all except for political entries.

This year's grand marshal is Connie Thomas.

Thomas has spent nearly three decades serving the City of Omak in roles including utility clerk, treasurer, deputy clerk, and currently as city clerk.

Beyond city government, she's been involved in the Omak Stampede, serving as grand parade director and on the honorary board of directors, and was honored as Parade Volunteer of the Year.



Omak City Clerk and longtime Stampede volunteer Connie Thomas has been named grand marshal of the Stampede Grand Parade.

She continues a family tradition of involvement in the

event and treasures having her family by her side each year.



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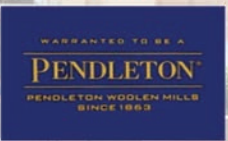
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Post-rodeo dancing

SOME WILL ATTEND THE Stampede dance after the rodeo Friday and Saturday to kick up their heels, crack a cold one and have a good time.

Others will attend to listen to the music of The Night Riders, who have performed at the Stampede off-and-one since the

1980s.

Night Riders were formed in Omak in 1981. The band has played venues large and small and has traveled the northwest playing rodeos, concerts and dance halls with hard-driving classic country and southern rock.

Kids' Night returns

WRANGLER KIDS' Night returns at 4 p.m. Thursday afternoon, Aug. 7, in the Omak Stampede Arena, 421 E. Stampede Drive.

The afternoon of fun is dedicated to children ages 12 and under.

Participating kids will receive a goodie bag as they pass through the gates onto the arena floor where games and activities will be offered to all. For the next hour, while split into four age groups, youngsters will compete in a hay scramble, boot races, stick horse races and more.

A best-dressed cowboy and cowgirl contest is planned, along with prizes.



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Wrangler Kids' night returns Thursday afternoon.

Thursday also is family night, each adult, with the purchase of an adult ticket in the family section, can take two children to the rodeo for free.

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Music, ministry planned

CHRISTIANS IN ACTION celebrates its 53rd year with music, free ice water, Bibles, Western church service and refreshments at the Omak Stampede Aug. 7-10.

The inspirational presentations are at Triangle Park between the carnival and rodeo arena. All events are free of admission and sponsored by Christians In Action, a local

interdenominational non-profit corporation.

Music begins at about 6 p.m. each night and continues until after the rodeos.

Also provided is a free continental breakfast with Western church service at 10 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 11.

For more information, see Facebook @ okchristiansinaction.

THE CHRONICLE
Christians In Action will offer music and ministry throughout the weekend.



The Stampede Museum is open Stampede week.

Museum offers glimpse of the past

THE STAMPEDE Museum Association's museum will be open during this year's rodeo week.

The museum is scheduled to be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Stampede week at Omak Avenue and East Second Avenue. Admission is free; donations are accepted.

The museum includes displays about Stampede history, memorabilia, photographs and other items. It offers a view of Suicide Hill and the arena, and a sculpture of rearing horses - a tribute to the spirit horse - by the late Omak artist Smoker Marchand.

For more information, call 509-429-1659.



THE CHRONICLE

Paradise Amusements will offer a variety of rides Aug. 7-10.

Carnival offers rides, attractions

PARADISE AMUSEMENTS will return to the Omak Stampede with a variety of rides and attractions.

The carnival opens at 5 p.m. Aug. 7 at the west end of East Side Park.

Hours are 5 p.m. to midnight on Thursday, Aug. 7., 5 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. on Friday, 4 p.m. to 1 a.m. on Saturday and 1 p.m. on Sunday.

Wristbands will be available for purchase ahead of time.

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Behind the scenes of 'Run, Appaloosa, Run'

IN THE SUMMER OF 1964, Omak found itself in the spotlight as Larry Lansburgh, a then-prominent movie producer-director, arrived with a camera crew to film the Suicide Race at the Omak Stampede. Lansburgh's goal was simple – yet ambitious – to determine whether the race could serve as the climactic scene in a film about an Appaloosa horse, a girl, and a pair of rodeo clowns. Upon his arrival, Lansburgh faced several challenges.

"There are lots of problems with something like this," he explained in the Aug. 6, 1964, edition of *The Omak Chronicle*. "We'd like to make it look like pretty wild country, but we have to find camera angles to avoid telephone poles, houses, and

other buildings."

Lansburgh planned to shoot color footage of the 1964 Sunday performance of Suicide Race, with the possibility of calling for a re-run if the initial film met his expectations. He hoped that capturing the race on film would provide national publicity for the Omak Stampede.

At the time, Lansburgh hadn't written the script yet, nor did he have the movie sold to any film studios. He is in Omak on speculation.

He pointed out that the Suicide Race only lasts about a minute and would provide only a short part of the film's action.

"We'll shoot movies of the race and some rodeo action and perhaps some crowd reactions," he said at the time,



THE CHRONICLE

Camera crews set up station atop a car in 1965 while filming the Walt Disney film, 'Run, Appaloosa, Run'

noting a former Omak resident Gordon Eastman was assisting him.

The following spring (in

1965), a production crew, led by Lansburgh, spent several weeks filming scenes along the Okanogan River. The Technicolor

STAMPEDE MUSEUM

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Open Stampede Week

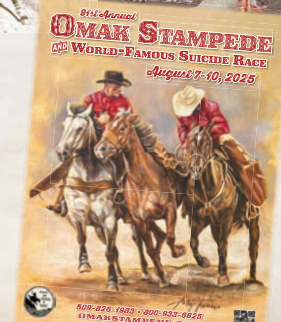
10 a.m.-5 p.m. Daily

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"Spirit of the Horse"
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film was completed in California and sold to Disney whose Buena Vista Distribution Company has dispatched prints to theaters across the nation.

"Run, Appaloosa, Run" opened in metropolitan centers in early July of 1966. Or rather, Disney's "Lt. Robin Crusoe" starring Dick Van Dyke opened in early-July with "Appaloosa" as the second attraction. (Except in Omak where the Suicide Race film has been given top billing.)

Lansburgh promised the Suicide Race would be publicized in the movie, and he kept his word.

The name in the film was changed to "Hell's Mountain Suicide Race" but Omak is memorialized once in the dialogue and twice on the screen.

Disney's press kit, mailed to newspapers in every city where the film played also did ample justice for Omak.

"The high point of the story," the press kit said, "comes when a young Indian miss demonstrates the Appaloosa's courage and stamina by winning the celebrated Omak Stampede Suicide Race."

The press kit emphasized the authenticity of the racing sequences, achieved through Lansburgh's close collaboration

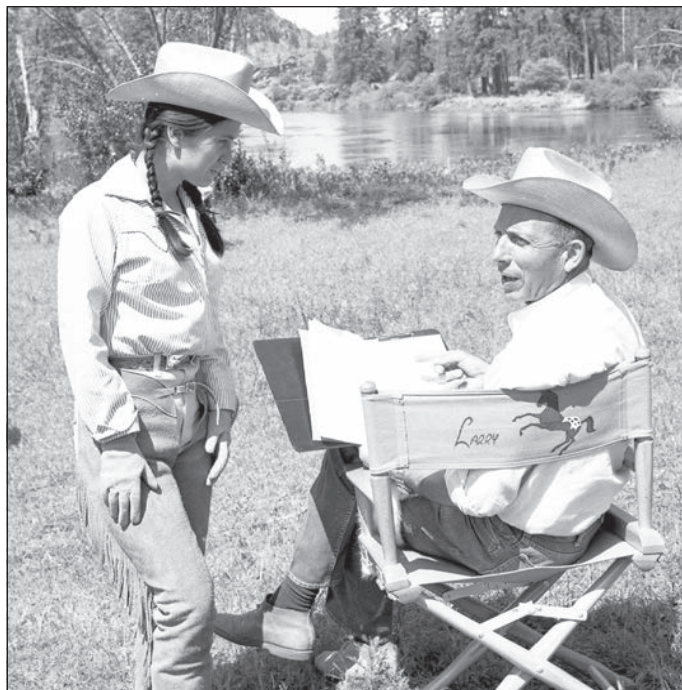
with the rodeo and race officials.

"The Appaloosa tale is fictional, but Disney and his co-producer, Larry Lansburgh, who teamed to win Academy Awards for 'The Wetback Hound' and 'The Horse With the Flying Tail,' worked closely with the Omak rodeo to depict all racing sequences authentically. Mrs. (Janet) Lansburgh wrote the screenplay. Rex Allen narrates and sings the title song of the Buena Vista release," the press kit said.

Allen was a prominent narrator in the 1950s and '60s with other works including "The Incredible Journey" (1963), "Charlie, the Lonesome Cougar," (1967) and Charlotte's Web (1973).

Lansburgh filmed part of the race himself, mounting a horse with a 35mm camera to capture the rider's perspective as they raced down the bluff towards the Okanogan River.

"While supervising the cameramen photographing the celebrated race, Producer-director Larry Lansburgh, who has a long list of Disney camera credits himself wanted an actual rider's eye view of the sprint down a bluff overlooking the Omak stadium," the press kit said. "Being



THE CHRONICLE

Adele Palacios (Mary Blackfeather) and Larry Lansburgh.

an excellent horseman, he mounted a trusty steed and holding a 35mm camera in one hand, galloped headlong down a 250-foot track of deep, loose sand to the edge of the Okanogan River, filming as he rode; Because much of the race was shot in the swirling midst of a tangle of horses and riders, as well as from a vantage point on the sidelines, moviegoers can know what it is actually like to ride in the thrill-packed event."

Despite the film being

a 49-minute featurette, it received positive mentions in industry publications like "Box Office," which praised it as an "attractive short Disney film about an Indian girl and her dog, who train an Appaloosa two-year-old to become an entry in an exciting race."

"Whether 'Appaloosa' wins an Oscar or not, it can't do the Stampede any harm and some viewers may be attracted by the beautiful Okanogan County scenery it portrays," an article in

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THE CHRONICLE

Crews film the "Hell's Mountain Suicide Race" scene.

the July 21, 1966, edition of *The Omak Chronicle* said.

The film credited local talent, including Gordon Eastman as a photographer and Bobby Weaver, who composed the "Ballad of the Appaloosa," performed by Allen.

Local citizens, especially those in the final race sequence, enjoyed seeing themselves on the big screen, with the Omak High School band making an appearance,

the newspaper reported.

"Many local people will recognize themselves in the movie," the newspaper article said. "Ray Patnaude may or may not be 'local.' Married to a Colville Indian, he had been living at Coulee Dam briefly when he was signed to play the role of the heroine's brother. Among the longtime hometown talent, only Claire Pentz drew a speaking role, as the starter for the Suicide Race."

"Hundreds of other Okanogan County citizens appear particularly in the final sequence based on the end of the race. About 2,000 showed up at the Stampede arena that day to provide a crowd

for the climax," the newspaper reported. "We'll bet you agree though — Silver the dog, trained by Jay Sisler, does the best acting of the lot."

According to the Internet Movie Database(IMDb), the film stars Adele Palacios (Mary Blackfeather), Jerry Gatlin (Gilly Trask), Ray Patnaude (Dale Blackfeather), Walter Cloud (Tribal Chief) and Wilbur Plaughter (The Clown)

Nowadays the film is considered out-of-print, but used copies can be found online in both VHS and DVD formats. It can also be viewed on select streaming services including Amazon and Fandango.

THIS STORY was originally published in *Okanogan Living Magazine*. This story has been republished with permission.



THE CHRONICLE

Most of the film was shot in and around Omak. Above, the final scene was filmed inside the Omak Stampede Arena.

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The dream that became Stampede

IN 1933 THE RODEO THAT became the Omak Stampede was just a dream of two Okanogan County stockmen, Leo Moomaw and Tim Bernard, who had started a rodeo string in 1932.

Stampede is marking its 88th anniversary in 2022.

Moomaw and Bernard approached Omak's businessmen, who were eager to try anything to keep the Main Street of Omak busy during those Depression years. The little western town, situated in the heart of cattle country, soon pulsated with the thought of having a real live rodeo that would attract thousands of people to see world-famous cowboys perform.

Soon world champion cowboys announced they would participate. The lineup included Stub Bathlemay, world champion at the Calgary Roundup; Norman Stewart, winner of both Pendleton Roundup and Cheyenne, Wyo., Roundup and world's best bronc rider; Bert Evans, winner of the north central Washington championship in 1932, and Ralph Sutton, winner at Waterville's 1933 rodeo.

Since the Cowboy's Turtle Association — which evolved into the present-day Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association — was not formed until 1936, the rules for riding were set down by the contractors, cowboys and sponsors of the rodeo.

The first two rodeos were on the high school athletic field.

The Omak-Okanogan County Chronicle



A rider hangs on during the first Stampede in 1933. The event was on the Omak High School football field, with viewing from vehicles parked around the perimeter.

In 1935 a rodeo committee was formed, with Omak Mayor R.W. Caldwell as president, E.T. Stewart as vice president and general chairman, E.G. Hubbert as secretary-treasurer and Claire Pentz as publicity chairman.

The city had purchased land on the east side of the Okanogan River from the Swimpkin family and planned a children's park there. Grandstands were built and the 1935 rodeo was held in the park.

Stampede's first queen, Bert Robbins, was crowned that

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year and the World-Famous Suicide Race also was added to the lineup.

The primitive bleachers, built with volunteer help and lumber donated by Biles-Coleman Lumber Co., seated about 750 people. Ross McNett, president of Biles-Coleman and president of the Omak Chamber of Commerce, was convinced by his brother-in-law, Paul Maley, that the rodeo would be a boon for the town.

In the early 1940s the Omak Active Club took over Stampede under an agreement that called for all profits not required by the Stampede to be used for East Side Park improvements. The park still benefits from rodeo proceeds.

The Active Club building committee, headed by Jerry Bramer, continued to improve the arena with covered grandstands that seated about 1,500. Bleachers provided seating for about 3,500 fans, with the announcer's stand built above the chutes.

Stock was held in eight pens behind the chutes. In 1949 lights were added to the arena, enabling night shows.

Stampede continued to grow throughout the 1950s and 1960s, with continual improvements being made to the arena and grounds.

In 1963 the Omak Stampede was incorporated as a non-profit corporation, and took over the event's operation through an elected a board of directors and a large group of volunteers.

In 1969 a Friday night show was added, making the Stampede a three-day event.

Seating over the bucking chutes was rebuilt in 1973.

In 1979 a Saturday matinee was added to the Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday afternoon shows. In 1996 the Saturday matinee was replaced by a Thursday night show, making Stampede a four-day event.

After being damaged in a 1997 tornado that tore off part of the grandstand roof, Omak Stampede Inc. and the city began seeking funding for a new arena. The state Legislature ultimately came through and, with state and local funding, the new arena was completed in time for the 2009 rodeo.

The 1970s chute seats — officially known as the Paul Maley bleachers — were left in place.

New bucking chutes were added in time for the 2022 rodeo.

Suicide Race

The World-Famous Suicide Race, Stampede's signature event, began in 1935. Publicity Chairman Claire Pentz, in a search for something exciting to add to Stampede, heard of a mountain race run by Indians for many years in the Keller area.

During the Suicide Race, competitors start 50 feet back from the hill's edge, then plunge down the embankment and into the Okanogan River. Once they swim the river, they race up the bank and into the Stampede arena.

The first race attracted what has become an annual parade of news coverage — from newsreels to television and

still photographers who have spread images of the Suicide Race throughout the world.

It was been featured twice on TV's "You Asked for It," and in dozens of newspapers, a full-length Walt Disney movie, "Run, Appaloosa, Run," (*see related story on Page 16*) and on national and international television.

The young boy in the movie was Casey Nissen, who is a Suicide Race winner many times over.

Riders in the 1935 Suicide Race were Leo Crossland, Leonard St. Peter, Tom Woods, Bev Conners, Mathew Dick, Pete Carden, Edward Armstrong, Eddie Parsons, Wallace Moomaw, Alex Dick and Bert Evans. Winners were Wallace Moomaw, first; Bev Conners, second, and Bert Evans, third.

Alex Dick became the race's winningest rider, with race victories starting in 1941 and continuing until his retirement in 1967. He notched the most victories on Brownie.

During their heyday in the 1950s, the pair won 23 of 28 races, including 11 in a row.

The race's first female rider competed in 1959 when Rusty Tawes, a vivacious 17-year-old from Pendleton, Ore., slipped into town announcing that she had come to ride in the Suicide Race. This threw the Stampede committee into a frenzy.

With Francis Charette as her mentor, Tawes won entry to the race. Without a saddle, only halter and reins, she crossed the finish line in sixth place.

Since that time many young men and women, Indians and

whites alike, have experienced the thrill of the Suicide Race.

The original race course was slightly west of the current Suicide Hill, which is owned by the City of Omak.

Encampment

Prior to the Omak Stampede Indian Encampment, Native Americans gathered near the present-day East Side Park.

They also would come and pick apples in the area, and to participate in the grand parade and Fourth of July celebrations.

Early day Stampede organizers welcomed the thought of an Indian village. Paul Maley and Doc Benson, two of the local businessmen involved in the rodeo during its early days, invited the Indians to camp at the west end of the park, across the road from their original encampment.

As the encampment grew, it moved closer to the arena and then east to its present spot.

Competitors originally danced in the open, enduring the sweltering August heat in often-heavy regalia. The Colville Confederated Tribes experimented first with tents and, about 10 years ago, built the dance arbor used today.

The encampment also includes drumming and stick game competitions.

Royalty

In 1935 Bert (Robbins) Aveldson was crowned the first queen of the Omak Stampede by votes that were cast in stores downtown prior to rodeo weekend.

Queen contest committee and staff assistants worked until nearly midnight counting



The Indian encampment during the 1965 Stampede.

votes that had been cast for the queen's contest. Bertha Robbins led her closest rival, Flo Huber, by a margin of a million and one-half votes and was declared the Omak Stampede queen.

Others who participated in the contest were Stella Carraher, Belva Gray, Florine Tucker, Jessamine Clark, Katherine Kumbera and Evalyn Nickel.

Robbins was crowned

during a public coronation ceremony on Main Street. She traveled with other rodeo boosters to different towns in the valley to advertise and invite people to come to Omak.

In 1964 Paul Maley thought it would be a great idea to have an Indian princess accompany Omak Stampede Queen Virginia (Ginger) DeTro. Maley went to the encampment committee and, with that group's help, selected Darlene Moses as the first Stampede Indian princess.

She went on to place as second runner up in the Miss Indian America competition.

(On a sad note, Darlene Moses Wilder died July 7, 2022, from injuries sustained in a vehicle accident.)

A Stampede-selected princess traveled with Miss Omak Stampede for about a decade, then the Colville Confederated Tribes began selecting its own royalty representatives to travel on separate schedules.

Four Stampede queens — Debbie Ferguson, Shauna Beeman, Jody Wooten and Amanda Emerson — went on to become Miss Rodeo

Washing ton. Another, Jonnie Crossland, was a two-time Miss Washington State High School Rodeo.

Community

The Omak Stampede and World-Famous Suicide Race wouldn't be possible without the support of hundreds of volunteers who donate their time and talents toward making each year's event a success.

Members of the Stampede board are volunteers, as are those who take and sell tickets, sell programs, guide fans to their seats, sell concessions, park cars and do dozens of other chores.

The community supports Stampede directly by volunteering on the grounds and indirectly by organizing parades, promotions, downtown activities, an art show and other activities.

Critical to Stampede are specialty acts, clowns and bullfighters, stock contractors, calf pushers (those folks who help get calves out of the chutes so they can be roped), those who work the gates and others who help in the arena.

Without them there would be not Omak Stampede or World-Famous Suicide Race.

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CBS reality TV stars plan Stampede visit

AT LEAST NINE PEOPLE who have appeared on CBS reality TV shows are expected to visit Omak during Stampede week, according to Jag Bains, an Omak resident and winner of the CBS show "Big Brother."

"They're very excited to check out our town and have heard great things, so we're looking forward to giving them a big Okanogan County welcome," Bains said. "They'll have a float in the Stampede parade on Saturday at 10 a.m. as well."

Those scheduled to appear include America Lopez (The Challenge and Big Brother), Cory Wurtenberger (Big Brother), Jag Bains (Big Brother), Joseph Abdin (Big Brother), Kat Dunn (Big Brother), Kyland Young (The Challenge and Big Brother), Quinn Martin (Big Brother), Red Utley (Big Brother 25) and Xander Hastings (Survivor).

It remains unclear if they are planning a media tour while in town or if any autograph sessions are planned.



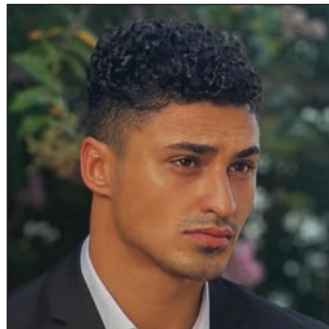
America Lopez (The Challenge and Big Brother).



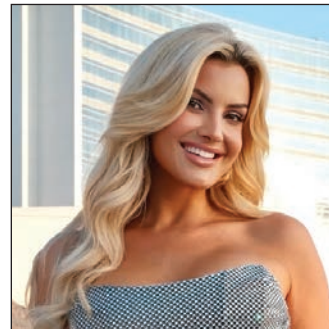
Cory Wurtenberger (Big Brother 25).



Jag Bains (Big Brother 25 winner).



Joseph Abdin (Big Brother 24).



Kat Dunn (Big Brother 21).



Kyland Young (The Challenge and Big Brother).



Quinn Martin (Big Brother 26).



Red Utley (Big Brother 25).



Xander Hastings (Survivor 41).



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DID YOU HEAR THAT?

**Sounds like the World-Famous
Suicide Race rave is about to begin!**



The very first Suicide Race was held in 1935 and won by Wally Moomaw.



The first Omak Stampede was in 1933 and took place on the Omak High School football field



Leo Moomaw and Tim Bernard founders of the Omak Stampede



The original Omak Stampede Suicide Race Hill 1935



Photos courtesy of Ted Moomaw

Wally Moomaw on Little Cougar, Chelan, WA 1947



Joe Kelsey

Arnie Will

Red Allen

Leo Moomaw

Tim Bernard

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