

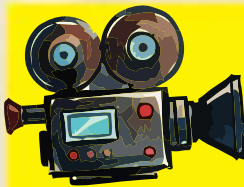
Western RENDEZVOUS 2026



A supplement to
the Okanogan
County Chronicle
July 29, 2026

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Western RENDEZVOUS

INSIDE:

Schedule of events.....	4
Stampede gallops to Omak.....	5
Suicide Race.....	7
Anthem singers.....	8
Kids' Night.....	8
Miss Omak Stampede.....	8
Encampment.....	9
Grand Parade.....	10
Carnival.....	11
Night Riders.....	11
Christians in Action.....	13
Art show.....	15
"Run, Appaloosa, Run".....	16
Stampede museum.....	19
Stampede history.....	20

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The Chronicle 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, Aug. 13-16, features not only four performances of PRCA rodeo action 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.

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. The Night Riders perform following Friday and Saturday nights, directly following the World-Famous Suicide Race.

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 Western heritage.

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

92ND ANNUAL OMAK STAMPEDE

2026 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday, August 13

- » 10am - 5pm- Stampede Museum, 410 E. 2nd St., Omak
- » 10am - 6pm- Western & Native Art Show - Omak Elks, 110 S. Ash St., Omak
- » 4pm- Wrangler Kids Night
- » 5pm- Encampment Vendors
- » 5pm - 9pm- Stampede Outreach
- » 5pm - 12:30am- Paradise Amusement Carnival
- » 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 14

- » 9am- Slack - Timed Events
- » 10am - 5pm Stampede Museum, 410 E. 2nd St., Omak
- » 10am - 6pm- Western & Native Art Show - Omak Elks, 110 S. Ash St., Omak
- » 11am- Encampment Vendors Open
- » 2:30pm- Run, Appaloosa, Run showing at Omak PAC, 20 S. Cedar, Omak, WA
- » 5pm - 12:30am- Paradise Amusement Carnival
- » 5pm - 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 15

- » 10am- Stampede Grand Parade - Downtown Omak
- » 10am - 5pm- Stampede Museum, 410 E. 2nd St., Omak
- » 10am - 6pm - Western & Native Art Show - Omak Elks, 110 S. Ash St., Omak
- » 11am- Encampment Vendors Open
- » 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
- » 5pm - 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 16

- » 10am- Western Church Service at the Stampede Outreach Stage (Free Continental)
- » 10am - 5pm- Stampede Museum, 410 E. 2nd St., Omak
- » 10am - 2pm- Western & Native Art Show - Omak Elks, 110 S. Ash St., Omak
- » 11am- Encampment Vendors
- » 1pm- Grand Entry at the Indian Encampment
- » 1pm - 6pm- Paradise Amusement Carnival
- » 1pm- Omak Stampede PRCA Rodeo & World- Famous Suicide Race



STAMPEDE GALLOPS TO OMAK

THE OMAK STAMPEDE, Aug. 13-16, will draw top cowboys and cowgirls for its 92nd 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. 13-15 and 1 p.m. on Aug. 16 at the Omak Stampede Arena, 421 E. Stampede Drive. Tickets can

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

Kids Pony Relay racing will be featured during each rodeo performance.

After each rodeo performance, the World-Famous Suicide Race takes place. The Paradise Amusement carnival opens on Thursday, Aug. 13, 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

NEXT PAGE

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 Blasdell, along with Okanogan-born clown and barrelman J.J. Harrison, will assist the cowboys, with Kory Keeth serving as the rodeo announcer.

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



AL CAMP

J.J. Harrison returns as clown and barrelman.

Encampment, Thursday through Sunday.

• Ride-in, 8 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 13, Okanogan County Fairgrounds through Okanogan to Omak.

• Grand parade, 10 a.m. Saturday, downtown Omak. The Okanogan American Legion will serve as grand marshals.

• 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.

• The Stampede Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Stampede week.

• A screening of "Run, Appaloosa, Run," will be at 2:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 14, in the Omak Performing Arts Center.

• A screening of "Eagle Boy" will be at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, at the Mirage Theater.



JULIE BOCK
The Stampede Grand Parade returns Aug. 15. See Page 10 for more details.

Riders prepare for 91st Suicide Race

PARTICIPANTS IN THE World-Famous Suicide Race are gearing up for the 91st running of the event.

The Suicide Race is planned for Aug. 13-16 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 weekend is the overall winner.

In 2024 and 2025, 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

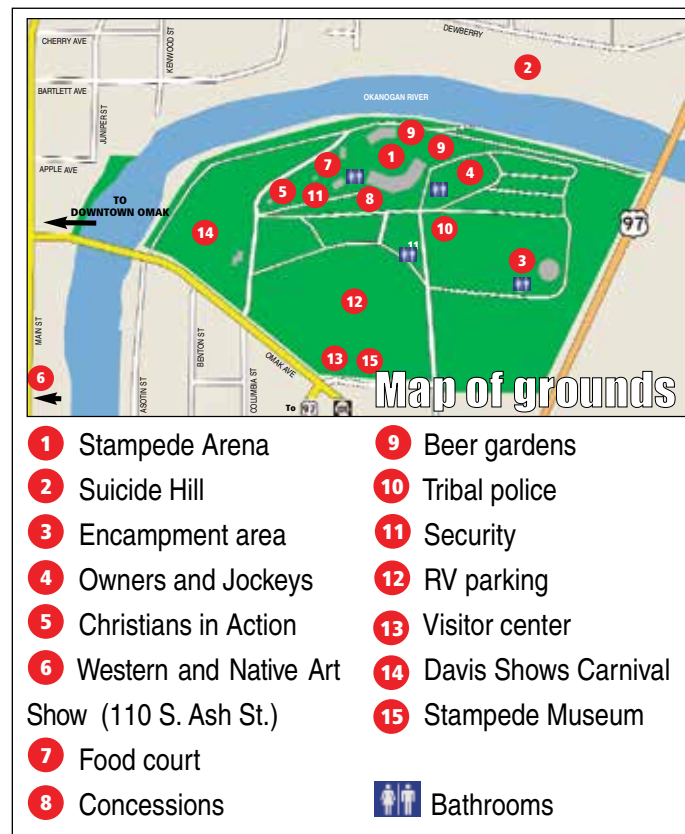


AL CAMP

Racers speed down the hill during the 2025 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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Singers honor nations

National anthems open rodeo performances

There will be no shortage of vocal talent to honor the United States and Canada during the Omak Stampede rodeo performances.

On Thursday, Elaina Mariscal will perform the U.S. national anthem, followed by Heather Baumgartner singing "O Canada."

Friday's performance will feature Miss Omak Stampede Kayden Coffey singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and Autumn Martin performing "O Canada."

On Saturday, Jody Evans will perform both the American and Canadian national anthems.

For the final rodeo performance Sunday, Natasha Gordon will sing "The Star-Spangled Banner," followed by Nicole Pearce performing "O Canada."

The grand entry includes the presentation of the U.S. and



Baumgartner



Coffey



Evans



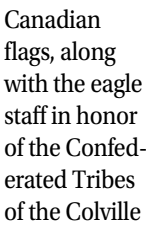
Gordon



Mariscal



Martin



Pearce



Pearce

Canadian flags, along with the eagle staff in honor of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

Wrangler Kids' Night returns

Wrangler Kids' Night returns at 4 p.m. Thursday afternoon, Aug. 13, 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.

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.

Miss Omak Stampede welcomes visitors

For Kayden Coffey, rodeo has never been just a sport. It has been a way of life.

She grew up competing in junior rodeos and 4-H, experiences she said shaped her passion for western traditions and led her to pursue a future in rodeo journalism.

Now continuing her reign as queen, Coffey is serving as an ambassador for one of the Northwest's signature rodeos while representing the values and heritage of the western lifestyle.

"I am truly excited for the amazing opportunity to continue my reign as the ambassador of the Omak Stampede with grit and grace," Coffey said.

A graduate with honors from Curlew High School and Spokane Community College, Coffey plans to continue her education in English journalism and digital marketing. Her goal is to build a career covering the sport that has been a central part of her life.

"As the current Miss Omak Stampede, I am truly honored to be able to share the values and traditions of rodeo and the western way of life as a whole



with people from all different walks of life," she said.

The ambassador role keeps Coffey on the road throughout the rodeo season, traveling to events and promoting the Omak Stampede while representing the community.

She encouraged visitors to attend all four Stampede performances and to experience the history and culture that surround the annual event.

Beyond the arena, Coffey said guests can explore attractions including the Omak Stampede Museum, the Indian Encampment and downtown Omak's locally owned shops while visiting the community.

"We would love to see you," Coffey said.



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Encampment showcases culture

The annual Omak Stampede Indian Encampment and pow wow will open Wednesday, Aug. 12 and continue through Sunday, Aug. 16 at the east end of East Side Park.

This year's royalty includes Miss Omak Stampede Indian Encampment Skylar Peone, Junior Miss Omak Stampede Indian Encampment Na'Taye Nelson and Omak Stampede Indian Encampment Brave Frank Adolph.

Opening ceremonies will begin at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13.

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 tepee 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



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

welcome to enjoy the beauty, grace and sacred traditions of

the Native American culture, organizers said.

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American Legion to lead grand parade

THE OMAK STAMPEDE grand parade will step off at 10 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, through downtown Omak, featuring royalty, floats, marching bands, equestrian groups, community organizations and more.

Sponsored by the Omak Stampede, the parade route will follow Main Street from Fourth Avenue before turning at Apple Street and returning past Civic League Park on Ash Street.

This year's parade will be led by the 2026 grand marshals, Okanogan American Legion Post 56. The honor also recognizes The Colville Confederated Tribes American Legion Post 114, American Legion Columbia Post 97 of Brewster, American Legion Post 82 of Tonasket, American Legion Post 84 of Oroville, other American Legion posts across Washington and all veterans and active-duty



JULIE BOCK

The Stampede Grand Parade returns at 10 a.m. Aug. 15.

members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The parade is dedicated to veterans and military members as the nation marks America's 250th birthday.

Parade entries will include visiting royalty, civic groups, cultural groups, trucks, tractors, Native dancers, children's entries and Omak Stampede Queen Kayden Coffey. Fire trucks traditionally close the parade with fire hose demonstrations.

The 2026 Grand Parade Lil' Miss is Maci Monville, the 11-year-old daughter of Elaine Monville and Tyler Millerup.

Monville will begin middle school this fall and participates in gymnastics and cheer with

2 Hot Elite. She also volunteers with younger students and is active in Girl Scouts, where she mentors younger troops.

Organizers said Monville's kindness, leadership and community involvement make her a fitting ambassador for the annual parade.

Spectators are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and visit downtown Omak businesses before or after the parade. Main Street businesses include retail shops, restaurants, coffee shops, ice cream and other local attractions.

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BROCK HIRES

Paradise Amusements will offer a variety of rides Aug. 13-16.

Carnival offers rides, attractions

PARADISE AMUSEMENTS will return to the Omak Stampede with a variety of rides and attractions, but carnival ride tickets and wristbands will be available only through online sales this year.

The carnival opens at 5 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13, at the west end of East Side Park.

Hours are 5 p.m. to 12:30

a.m. Aug. 13-14, 4 p.m. to 1 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, and 1-6 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 16.

Paradise Amusements will not sell ride wristbands at the carnival. All ride tickets and wristbands must be purchased online in advance at paradiseamusements.magicmoneyllc.com/MagicMoney_Web/ETicket/EventDetails/49.

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Night Riders perform

THE NIGHT RIDERS will provide music following rodeo performances Friday and Saturday in the south beer garden.

Formed in Omak in 1981, the band is known for its mix of traditional country and Southern rock.

The Night Riders have played rodeos, concerts and dance halls throughout the Northwest for 45 years.

The band's current lineup includes Glen Lisenbey on guitar, Gary Bowling on bass, Brock Hires on keyboards and Artie Litscher on drums.



PAM FANCHER

The Night Riders will perform post-rodeo dances.

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FACEBOOK
Maci Monville is this year's Grand Parade Lil' Miss.

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August 13th – 16th

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Christians In Action offer music, message

CHRISTIANS IN ACTION will continue its long-running outreach during this year's Omak Stampede, offering free refreshments, Bibles, music and fellowship at Triangle Park between the carnival and rodeo arena.

According to the organization, the outreach traces its roots to the nationwide interdenominational "Key 73" effort in 1973, when Luke and Acts from the Bible were distributed across the country. Local residents from several churches brought that effort to the Omak Stampede grounds, providing inspirational music, guitars, coffee, ice water and cookies for visitors.

The group said it returned

each year and incorporated in 1977, opening membership to anyone interested in voluntarily promoting the Christian faith in the area. The original board included the Rev. Loren Parman, the Rev. Roger Barr, John Townsend, Dave Schindler, Dan Powers, Bunny Detoro and Judy Harris, with Kelly Hancock serving as attorney oversight.

The outreach now includes a gospel stage, free Bibles and refreshments, along with about 50 volunteers from churches throughout Okanogan County who greet visitors, perform music and share personal stories.

Activities are scheduled from 5-9 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. A Western church service



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Youth enjoy music and ministry at the gospel stage.

with a free continental breakfast will be at 10 a.m. Sunday.

Participating churches currently include Omak New Beginnings, Tonasket Bilingual Iglesia del Tercer Día (Church of

the Third Day), Okanogan New Life Church and Oroville/Omak Valley Christian Fellowship,

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along with other musicians and volunteers.

The organization also plans to share information about the Sonshine Cross, which it said was erected and dedicated in 1986 on Shellrock Point between Omak and Okanogan by local residents from several churches. The cross will receive special emphasis during Sunday's service.

In addition to its Stampede outreach, Christians in Action sponsors an interdenominational Easter sunrise service each year at Omak Cemetery and hosts a decorated booth during the Okanogan County Fair in September.

The organization is seeking volunteers and can be contacted through President



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Ted Rollins and family (Kimberly Pfitzer's grandparents and mom Ramona on right).



The inaugural dedication of the cross in 1986.

Kimberly Pfitzer at 509-429-5262, Treasurer Kathleen

Christensen at 509-422-4660, or through the Okanogan

County Christians In Action Facebook page.



Pastor Kimberly Pfitzer and her mom Ramona.



Erecting the cross in 1986.

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Art show returns Stampede weekend

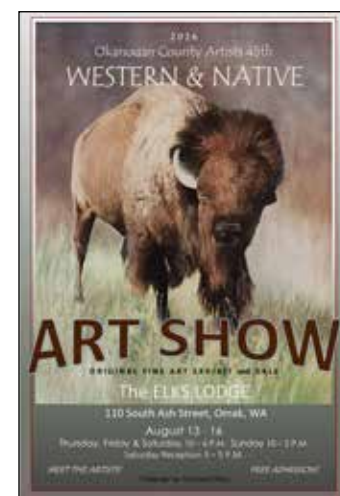
THE 45TH ANNUAL Western & Native Art Show will return during Omak Stampede week, featuring original artwork by invited artists from across the region.

Founded in 1980 in conjunction with the Omak Stampede, the invitational show was established to promote appreciation of fine art in the community. Since 2004, Okanogan County Artists has organized the annual exhibition, which showcases original paintings, drawings and sculpture.

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. at the Elks Lodge, 110 S. Ash St., across the city bridge and one block west of Main Street.

In addition to artwork available for purchase, artists will demonstrate their techniques daily. A "Meet the Artists" reception is scheduled from 3-5 p.m. Saturday.

This year's featured poster artwork is "Challenge," an



SUBMITTED GRAPHIC
This year's art show poster.



TIM VINCENT Jack Babcock works on a piece at last year's Western and Native Art Show.

original watercolor by southern Okanogan County artist Tina Reeve Tharp.

According to Okanogan County Artists, the painting was inspired by a visit to the CSKT Bison Range in Moiese, Mont.

"He suddenly stopped, anticipating a charge from another bull," Tharp said of the buffalo depicted in the painting.

Tharp earned a degree in fine arts education from Washington State University and taught art in the Republic, Bridgeport, Selah and Pateros school districts, as well as through community education programs at C.O.C.C. and B.M.C.C. in Oregon. Now retired, she continues teaching through Disciplined Based Art Education.

Working primarily in watercolor, Tharp also incorporates media including cast or embossed paper, graphite, colored pencils and white charcoal. Her work has received numerous awards and is included in private collections throughout

North America, Canada, Europe and Japan. According to Okanogan County Artists, her paintings emphasize composition,

color balance and emotion while inviting viewers to explore fine details up close.

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'Run, Appaloosa, Run' marks 60th anniversary

Sixty years after Disney released 'Run, Appaloosa, Run' to theaters, the family film continues to preserve one of Omak's most recognizable traditions.

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, 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 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



THE CHRONICLE
Adele Palacios (Mary Blackfeather) and Larry Lansburgh.

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 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

NEXT PAGE



THE CHRONICLE
Scenes for the film's finale are shot atop and Okanogan County PUD boom truck inside the Stampede Arena.

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THE CHRONICLE

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

PREVIOUS PAGE ➤

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 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



THE CHRONICLE
ABOVE: Crews films in Okanogan County in 1965.
LEFT: Adele Palacios as Mary Blackfeather



THE CHRONICLE

Cameras are adjusted in the Omak Stampede Arena in 1965.

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



WALT DISNEY CO.
The theatrical poster for the Disney film, 'Run, Appaloosa, Run.' The film will be shown at 2:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 14, at the Omak Performing Arts Center, 20 S. Cedar St.



The Stampede Museum is open Stampede week.

Museum offers glimpses 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

The final scene is filmed in 1965.

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.



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Omak Stampede Builds Western legacy

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.

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 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



THE CHRONICLE
The Indian encampment during the 1965 Stampede.

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.

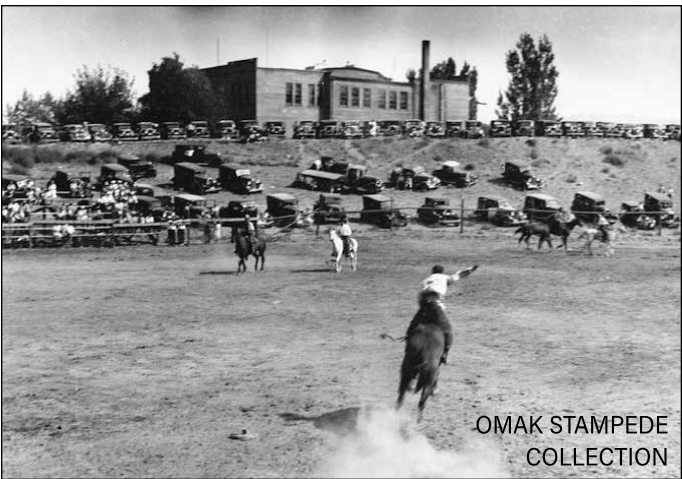
Royalty

In 1935 Bert (Robbins) Avelsdson 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 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



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.



THE CHRONICLE
Youngsters on trikes gain applause from the grand parade crowd in 1966.

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.

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 Washington. 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



AL CAMP PHOTO

Suicide Racers splash through the Okanogan River in 1995.

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 no Omak Stampede or World-Famous Suicide Race.

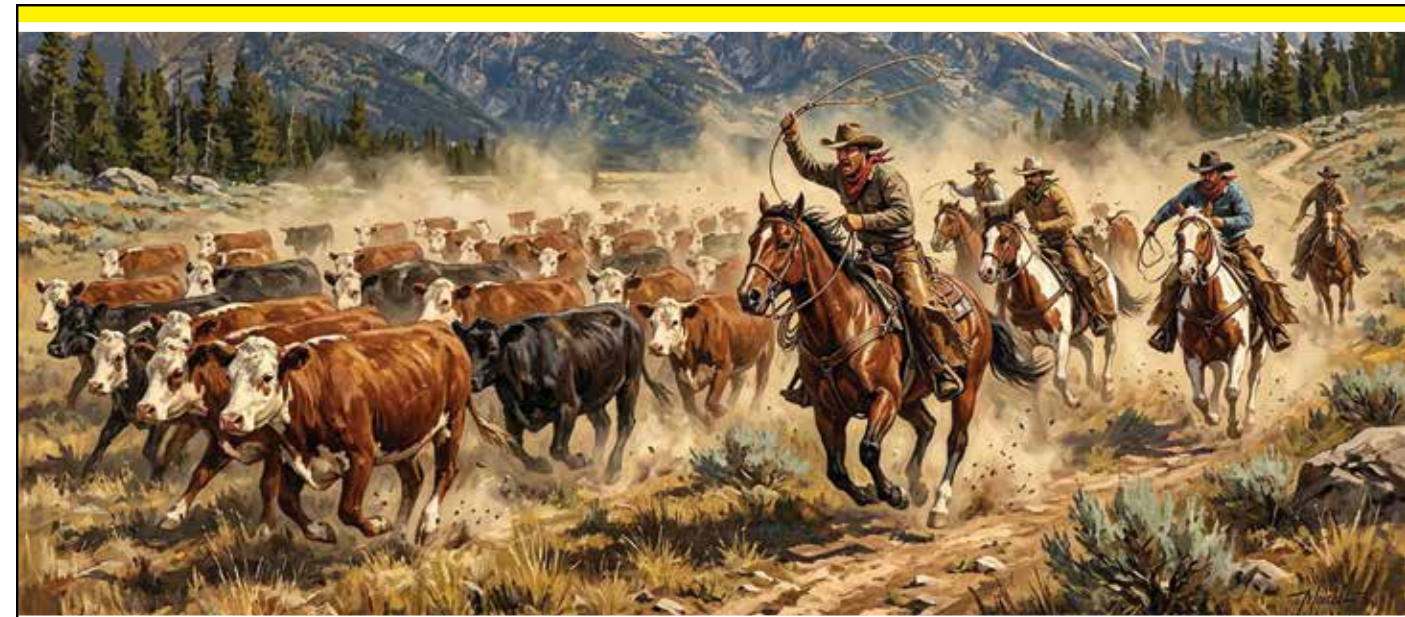
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