

WESTERN RENDEZVOUS

**Your guide to the
Omak Stampede
and World-Famous
Suicide Race**

RODEO PREVIEW - p. 6

SUICIDE RACE - p. 7

ENCAMPMENT - p. 8

CHRISTIANS IN ACTION - p. 22

GRAND PARADE - p. 24

A SUPPLEMENT TO THE OMAK-OKANOGAN COUNTY CHRONICLE • JULY 31, 2019

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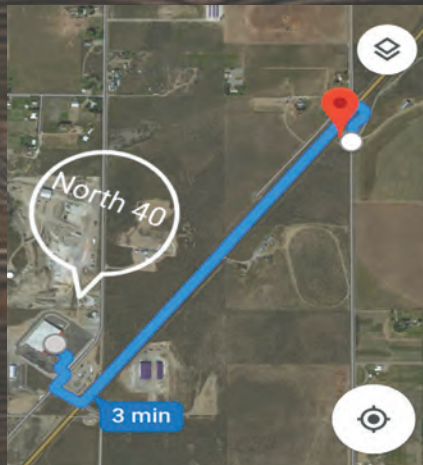
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WESTERN RENDEZVOUS

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Owned and operated by Eagle Newspapers Inc.
618 Okoma Drive, Omak, WA 98841
P.O. Box 553, Omak, WA 98841
Teresa Myers, publisher and advertising manager
Brock Hires, managing editor
509-826-1110 • 800-572-3446 • 509-826-5819 fax
www.omakchronicle.com
Contributing writers/
photographers: Dee Camp, Al Camp, Amber Hedington, Brock Hires and Katie Teachout.



Welcome to the Omak Stampede

Something for everyone offered Aug. 8-11

Welcome to "Western Rendezvous," your guide to the Omak Stampede and related events.

Besides the PRCA rodeo, the weekend brings the World-Famous Suicide Race, Omak Stampede Indian Encampment, Omak Western and Native Art Show and a variety of events ranging from a stage ministry to vendors.

Residents, businesses and other organizations have been preparing for this event for a year.

It's time to party, and you're invited to the greatest show on dirt.

The Omak Stampede and World-Famous Suicide Race will take center stage in Omak Aug. 8-11 with top-notch bull riders, bronc busters, ropers and Suicide Racers.

After the rodeo Friday and Saturday nights, adults can hit the beer garden and dance the night away.

Rodeo not your thing? Well, there's always the midway. Take a ride on the Ferris wheel, go upside down or spin out of control. Don't forget to partake in the curly fries, cotton candy and elephant ears.

There's also Christian music, a parade and more.

Downtown Omak will also have plenty going on. Take in the festivities one or all four days. And be ready for the grand parade early Sunday morning.

In short, there's something going on for everyone.

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



- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 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 |
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86th annual Stampede rides to Omak

By DEE CAMP
The Chronicle

Top professional cowboys and cowgirls are signed up to compete at the 86th annual Omak Stampede, set for Aug. 8-11.

The 84th World-Famous Suicide Race, plus the Omak Stampede Indian Encampment, ride-in, grand parade, two art shows and other Western fun, accompany the rodeo.

Show times are 7 p.m. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and 1 p.m. Sunday in the Omak Stampede Arena, 421 Stampede Drive E.

Tickets are available from the Stampede ticket office next to the arena in East Side Park, online or by phone.

Prices vary, depending on the performance and section. Special prices are offered on Thursday for family night and on Sunday for Patriot Day plus additional discounts.

Fans can expect a full range of Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association events and Women's Professional Rodeo Association barrel racing.

A wild horse race starts the Thursday, Friday and Saturday rodeo performances, and a running of the World-Famous Suicide Race comes after each rodeo performance.

Activities begin Aug. 7 with opening of the Davis Shows carnival at the west end of East Side Park, in which the rodeo arena also is located. Carnival hours are 5-11 p.m. Wednesday; the carnival continues daily throughout the weekend.

The encampment gets going Wednesday evening with campers' night, as does the Omak Western and Native Art Show at the Omak Elks Lodge, 110 S. Ash St. Hours for the art show are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Aug. 8-10, and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Aug. 11, with a reception and live auction at 2 p.m. Saturday.

Thursday brings the annual kick-off ride-in, plus continuation of the art show and carnival. The Cowboys and Indians Invitational Art Show artists' reception starts at 1 p.m. at RockWall Cellars, 110 Nichols Road. The show continues from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Preceding the Thursday night rodeo is the annual Wrangler Kids' Night, starting at 4 p.m. in the arena. Youngsters can compete in a variety of games and a dress-up contest;



AL CAMP | The Chronicle

Andy Clarys of Riverton, Wyo., hangs on during bronc riding at the 2018 Omak Stampede.

prizes will be given.

Thursday is family night at the rodeo.

Slack competition in timed events will be at 9 a.m. Friday in the arena. Admission is free.

Slack is offered when there are more contestants signed up for a timed event than can be run during the regular rodeo performances. The extra competitive time also allows contestants to make a showing at more than one rodeo per weekend.

Opening ceremonies for the Omak Stampede Indian Encampment will be at 6 p.m. in the dance arbor at the east end of the park.

The rodeo is at 7 p.m., followed by the Suicide Race and a dance with DJ Jason Brown.

Friday is "Tough Enough to Wear Pink" night at the rodeo, with \$1 from each ticket going to the campaign to raise awareness and funds for breast cancer research and detection. Stampede officials urge rodeo participants and fans to wear pink.

The rodeo is at 7 p.m., followed by the Suicide Race and dance with live music by the Night Riders.

Other Friday events include continuation of both art shows, the encampment and the carnival, opening of the Christians in Action

Stampede Outreach and a 3 p.m. showing of "Eagle Boy" at the Mirage Theater, 101 S. Main St. Another showing of "Eagle Boy" is at 10:30 a.m. Saturday.

Saturday includes the encampment and carnival, art shows – both with receptions, Stampede Outreach, an Autographs and Athletes session from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Jess Auto, 707 Okoma Drive, rodeo performance at 7 p.m., Suicide Race and dance with the Night Riders.

Sunday is Patriot Day in support of U.S. troops, with red, white and blue clothing encouraged by Stampede officials. Veterans get in free with military ID.

The encampment, Stampede Outreach, art shows and carnival wrap up.

The Stampede grand parade will be at 10 a.m. in downtown Omak.

Each rodeo performance begins with the Parade of Flags, a drill involving horses and riders carrying flags sponsored by area businesses, clubs and agencies.

Arena runs by royalty follow, with Stampede Queen Vanessa Pershing, Tonasket, reigning over the event.

Assisting the cowboys will be bullfighters Erick Schwindt and Logan Blasdell, and clown and barrelman J.J.

Harrison, who grew up in Okanogan. The specialty act is Cowgirl Sweethearts trick riders.

The announcer will be Steve Kenyon. Stock contractors are Big Bend, Ritzville, and Flying 5, Pomeroy.

Suicide Race fans wearing booster buttons, available on the grounds and in local businesses, will be admitted to special viewing areas on the hill and the dike in the park. A rodeo ticket stub from the performance preceding each race also grants admission to the dike area.

Viewing also is available from many areas of the arena for rodeo ticket holders.

Concessions will operate all weekend on the grounds. Vendors offer a variety of food and beverages, cowboy hats and other souvenirs.

Stampede Museum Association museum will be open during the weekend at 410 E. Second Ave., near the Omak Visitor Information Center and just off Omak Avenue. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily from Aug. 8-11.

Fees are charged for parking on the grounds, with day and weekend passes available. Flaggers will be on hand to help direct traffic at the end of each rodeo performance.

Separate parking fees apply in the encampment area.

STAMPEDE

AT A GLANCE

Wednesday, Aug. 7

10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Stampede Museum Association museum opens
410 E. Second Ave.
5 to 11 p.m. Davis Shows carnival *West end of park*
Evening Omak Stampede Indian Encampment opens
East end of park

Thursday, Aug. 8

8 a.m. Kick-off Ride-in *Fairgrounds to East Side Park*
10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Stampede Museum Association museum
410 E. Second Ave.
10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Omak Western and Native Art Show opens
Omak Elks Lodge, 110 S. Ash St.
1 to 6 p.m. Cowboys and Indians Invitational Art Show reception
RockWall Cellars, 110 Nichols Road
4 p.m. Wrangler Kids' Night *Omak Stampede Arena*
5 to 11 p.m. Davis Shows carnival *West end of park*
5:30 to 8 p.m. Stampede Outreach *Triangle Park*
6 p.m. Omak Stampede Indian Encampment opening ceremonies
East end of park
7 p.m. Omak Stampede *Omak Stampede Arena*
After rodeo World-Famous Suicide Race *Suicide Hill, arena*
After race DJ music by Jason Brown *Arena beer garden*

Friday, Aug. 9

All day Omak Stampede Indian Encampment *East end of park*
9 a.m. Slack for timed events *Omak Stampede Arena*
10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Omak Western and Native Art Show opens
Omak Elks Lodge, 110 S. Ash St.
10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Stampede Museum Association museum
410 E. Second Ave.
1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Cowboys and Indians Invitational Art Show
RockWall Cellars, 110 Nichols Road
3 p.m. "Eagle Boy" showing *Mirage Theater, 101 S. Main St.*
4 p.m. to midnight Davis Shows carnival opens *West end of park*
5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Stampede Outreach *Triangle Park*

7 p.m. Omak Stampede
After rodeo World-Famous Suicide Race
After race Dance with the Night Riders

Omak Stampede Arena
Suicide Hill, arena
Arena beer garden

Saturday, Aug. 10

All day Omak Stampede Indian Encampment *East end of park*
10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Stampede Museum Association museum
410 E. Second Ave.
10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Omak Western and Native Art Show opens
Omak Elks Lodge, 110 S. Ash St.
10 a.m. & 2 p.m. Autographs and Athletes
Jess Auto, 707 Okoma Drive
10:30 a.m. "Eagle Boy" showing *Mirage Theater, 101 S. Main St.*
11 a.m. to midnight Davis Shows carnival *West end of park*
1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Cowboys and Indians Invitational Art Show
RockWall Cellars, 110 Nichols Road
2 p.m. Omak Western and Native Art show reception, live auction
Omak Elks Lodge, 110 S. Ash St.
5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Stampede Outreach *Triangle Park*
7 p.m. Omak Stampede *Omak Stampede Arena*
After rodeo World-Famous Suicide Race *Suicide Hill, arena*
After race Dance with the Night Riders *Arena beer garden*

Sunday, Aug. 11

All day Omak Stampede Indian Encampment *East end of park*
8:30 a.m. Western church service, Stampede Outreach
Triangle Park
9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Omak Western and Native Art Show
Omak Elks Lodge, 110 S. Ash St.
10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Stampede Museum Association museum
410 E. Second Ave.
10 a.m. Omak Stampede grand parade *Downtown*
11 a.m. Davis Shows carnival *West end of park*
1 p.m. Omak Stampede *Omak Stampede Arena*
After rodeo World-Famous Suicide Race *Suicide Hill, arena*
After race Suicide Race winner named *Paddock area*

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Rodeo action on tap

By **AL CAMP**
The Chronicle

OMAK — The 86th Omak Stampede rodeo runs Aug. 8-11, with traditional rodeo events plus wild horse races and the 84th World-Famous Suicide Race.

Show times are 7 p.m. Aug. 8-10, and 1 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 12. The Sunday performance is an hour earlier than the traditional starting time so people can get out of the mid-day heat earlier, say Stampede officials.

Admission will be charged, with prices varying depending on seating section and performance. Thursday is family night, Friday is Tough Enough to Wear Pink night and Sunday is Patriot Day.

Slack for timed events will be at 9 m. Friday. Admission is free.

Keeping bull riders safe are bullfighters Erick Schwindt of Prineville, Ore., and Logan Blasdell of Prineville, Ore. J.J. Harrison, who grew up in Okanogan, is the clown.

Stock contractors are Big Bend Rodeo and Flying 5 Rodeo. Steve Kenyon is the announcer.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday performances begin with a wild horse race. The World-Famous Suicide Race caps each of the four rodeo performances.

The overall Suicide Race winner will be crowned Sunday in the paddock area.

Rodeo events include tie-down roping, steer wrestling, team roping, bareback and saddle bronc riding, bull riding, barrel racing and, added this year, breakaway roping.

Al CAMP | *The Chronicle*

Cody DeMoss Heflin rides to a score of 81 points.

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Celebrating a world-famous tradition

By **AL CAMP**
The Chronicle

Entries will open Friday, Aug. 2, for the 84th World-Famous Suicide Race.

Qualifying runs have been ongoing since July 20. Free, mandatory veterinary checks were July 20-21.

Entries open at 6 p.m. Friday and close at 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 3 for the race, which is run after each performance of the Omak Stampede Aug. 8-11.

A meeting is planned after entries close to determine whether there will be elimination races Sunday or perhaps a jackpot race. When more than 20 horses qualify and enter, elimination races are held to narrow the field to 20 horses for the actual races.

If qualification races are needed, they would start at 3 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 4, on Suicide Hill, with competitors running down the hill, across the Okanogan River and into the Omak Stampede Arena. Veterinary checks that day run from 1-2 p.m.

A Calcutta, open to anyone, will follow vet checks.

Last year's overall winner, Eagle Boy, entered the record books as only the second four-straight overall World-Famous Suicide Race champion.

"Winning four times means a lot to my family," said owner and jockey Scott Abrahamson at the time. "This horse is amazing. He's the greatest horse."

"Last year Eagle Boy had sewed up the title on Saturday. This year we had to go for it."

Eagle Boy entered last year's Sunday race of four with nine points and a one-point lead in the standings over Onyx, which was

owned by Shawnae and Oliver Pakootas and ridden by Pakootas.

There were three other horses within striking distance if Eagle Boy faltered and did not score Sunday.

They included Lonesome with seven points, Black Shay with six points and Jackpot with five points.

Scoring for the four races competed after each performance of the Omak Stampede from Thursday to Sunday was five points for first, four points for second, three points for third, two points for fourth and a point for fifth.

The horse with the most points after four races earned the overall championship.

That's what Eagle Boy and Scott Abrahamson did, earning the top prize by grinding out a third-place finish Sunday. The three points went with a second on Thursday and first on Friday to produce 12 points.

Abrahamson said Eagle Boy was skittish the first three races before settling down Sunday.

"Sunday was the only day he stood on the line. We are usually bad on the line," Abrahamson said. "Today he stood like a rock. We flew off the hill like I wanted, too. He was smooth."

Onyx, which had the easiest path to get past Eagle Boy by being only a point back, rode right with the leaders of the nine-horse field to the bottom of Suicide Hill.

That's when disaster struck, with the horse being cut off just before jumping into the Okanogan River.

"We landed on top of Jackpot on the bottom of the hill," said a subdued Oliver Pakootas after the

race. "We were going to take a big leap out there (into river)."

"Pretty crazy weekend," he said. "Been a long time with that many horses still in the running. I'm proud of him. He likes to go for it."

"I saw Onyx go over the back of a horse that cut in front of him," said Abrahamson, who said Onyx then rolled. "It's a hard deal. Everyone wants to control their horse at the bottom."

Eagle Boy, as he likes to do, jumped upriver into the Okanogan, which was pretty low last year. The speedy horse made up ground on the far shore and up the ramp to the finish in the rodeo arena.

Right behind Eagle Boy with 10 points each were Jackpot, ridden by Edward Marchand and owned by Bronson Peterson, and Black Shay, owned by Jonathan Abrahamson and Babe Palmer with jockey Riley Prescott.

A dozen horses earned at least one point to produce some of the tightest racing seen in many years.

There were fields of 19 for Thursday and Friday's races, 14 on Saturday and nine on Sunday.

The only other horse to win four straight since the advent of four races in 1979 was Taz from 2012 to 2015.

The 2015 race ended in a tie with Eagle Boy, which now shares the record of four straight with Taz.

Those winning overall championships three straight years include Loren Marchand and Taz from 2008 to 2010 (horse did not compete in 2011) and Les Moses on Ace from 1987 to 1989.

Taz retired in 2016 with 23 race victories (second most ever) and seven overall championships.



AL CAMP | *The Chronicle*
Jackpot with Edward Marchand (3) leads Spirit and Alex McCraigie (11) as horses leave the Okanogan River en route to the Omak Stampede Arena during the 2018 Sunday race.

Hundreds expected for encampment

OMAK — The annual Omak Stampede Indian Encampment opens Thursday, Aug. 8, and continues through Sunday Aug. 11, with dancing, drumming and stick game competitions.

The encampment is at the east end of East Side Park, with dancing and drumming in the dance arbor and stick games in an adjacent location.

The event generally draws 200-300 dancers of all ages and from all over the Northwest, Montana and Canada. Many participants camp in tepees, along with tents, trailers and motorhomes.

Arts, crafts and food vendors will open Wednesday and continue through Sunday.

Stick games are ongoing throughout the weekend.

Thursday brings opening ceremonies at 6 p.m.

Grand entries are planned Friday evening, Saturday afternoon and evening, and Sunday afternoon. Drum roll calls precede the start of dancing.

Prizes will be given in several age divisions in different dance styles.





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Museum honors Stampede history, heritage

By DEE CAMP
The Chronicle

OMAK — The Stampede Museum Association's museum, opened in 2017, will be open during this year's rodeo week.

The museum is scheduled to be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Aug. 4-11 at Omak Avenue and East Second Avenue near the Omak Visitor Information Center. Admission is free; donations are accepted.

Diana Parker, one of the museum's organizers, noted the building is air conditioned.

The museum, built with donations, will offer a special tribute to the late Bunny DeTro and Deb Copenhaver, both of whom died within the past year.

DeTro, a longtime Omak Stampede Board member, long had a dream of having a museum to house and preserve historical artifacts related to Stampede, the World-Famous Suicide Race and Omak Indian Encampment.

She died Dec. 21, 2018, at age

94.

Copenhaver, a world champion bronc rider, also was a staunch Stampede supporter and donated one of his championship saddles to the museum.

He died Feb. 6 at age 94.

Both were present at the museum's dedication in August 2017.

"We're now to the point we can preserve the pioneering days," said Copenhaver during the dedication ceremony.

Parker said Copenhaver's saddle is displayed on a stand he made at age 93 from wood from the old Stampede Arena, which was razed when the new arena was built in 2009.

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 Omak artist Smoker Marchand.

Parker said visitors can look for new displays.



DEE CAMP | The Chronicle

Longtime friends Deb Copenhaver (left) and Bunny DeTro greet each other at the 2017 dedication of the Stampede Museum Association facility in Omak.





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Stampede bids farewell to three

Hall of Famers will be honored with empty saddles

By DEE CAMP
The Chronicle

OMAK — Two longtime Omak Stampede volunteers and a world champion cowboy who called Omak his “rodeo home” will be honored during this year’s rodeo with empty saddle tributes.

Bunny DeTro, Sandy Baker and Deb Copenhaver will be remembered during this year’s rodeo, which runs Aug. 8-11.

DeTro, Baker and Copenhaver all were members of the Omak Stampede Hall of Fame. DeTro was inducted in 1994, Baker and her husband, Mike, in 2015 and Copenhaver in 1978.

DeTro, 94, died Dec. 21, 2018, in Spokane.

She was born in Canada and served in the women’s division of the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II. She and her late husband, Russel DeTro, also a Canadian Air Force veteran, moved to Riverside in 1946 and ran H. DeTro and Son, DeTro’s Country Mercantile and DeTro’s Western Store for more than 40 years.

They had three children, Virginia (Ginger), James and Scott.

After their daughter became Miss Omak Stampede in 1964, the couple served as chaperones



Baker



Copenhaver



DeTro

on many occasions. She stayed involved in Stampede and became the first female member of the organization’s board of director. She also was the first female Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association gold card holder.

Her long-held dream was to build a museum for Stampede. In 2017, the Stampede Museum Association museum, built by volunteer efforts, was dedicated in her honor.

She also co-edited a book produced by The Chronicle, “70

Years of the Omak Stampede.”

DeTro loved to travel, and was involved with her church, the Omak Visitor Information Center and the Okanogan County Art Club for many years.

Baker, 74, died June 29 in Omak.

She was born in Oliver, B.C., and moved to Omak in 1965. She loved horses, arts and crafts, reading and fishing, and was active in the Ghost Rivers horse club. She and her husband, Mike Baker, met in the Ghost Riders and married in 1980.

They were involved in Stampede for many years, first as carriers of the American and Canadian flags, and later as parking directors and grand parade organizers.

She worked for Omak Wood Products and later earned her associate degree in business. She worked as assistant



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manager of Omak Burger King until her retirement.

Copenhaver, two-time world champion saddle bronc rider and many-time Omak Stampede competitor, died Feb. 6 at his home in Creston. He was 94.

Copenhaver called Omak his "rodeo home." He was in the Omak Stampede, ProRodeo and Ellensburg Rodeo halls of fame.

"He's been a true supporter of Stampede and rodeo life in general," said Sarah Grooms, Stampede office manager. "He never wavered in his support for rodeo."

Family and love of the Lord were important to him.

During dedication of the Stampede Museum Association' museum in August 2017, Copenhaver reminisced about the early days of rodeo and the people involved.

He joked about the early days, in the 1930s and 1940s: "Day money here, in the beginning, wasn't that much. You had to be proud of your sport."

Among items displayed at the museum is Copenhaver's 1947 Omak Stampede all-around championship saddle, which sits on a frame he built especially for the museum and the saddle from wood salvaged from the old arena, which was razed when the new arena was built in 2009.

Copenhaver won the saddle bronc world championship in 1955 and 1956. He also won titles in many rodeos, from Calgary, Alberta, to Madison Square Garden in New York



AL CAMP | *The Chronicle*
A rider leads an empty-saddled horse during a tribute at the 2017 Stampede

City, and from Pendleton, Ore., to Salinas, Calif., Denver, Colo., and Fort Worth, Texas.

The Wilbur native worked on ranches during the Depression and then caught and rode wild horses near the

Colville Indian Reservation. He hit the rodeo trail, competing first in Keller in 1939.

Copenhaver enlisted in the Seabees at age 17 during World War II.

By 1948, he was back on the

rodeo trail full time and by the early 1950s, was winning consistently. En route to his 1955 saddle bronc world championship, he traveled more than 90,000 from coast to coast and into Canada, according to the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association.

Copenhaver was known as a "thinking" rider, according to a story about him on Wrangler Network. He started the style of the "dehorned" saddle, now required in saddle bronc riding competition.

The dehorned saddle came about partly by accident. After a bronc mashed the horn when it ran into the unsaddling chute, Copenhaver whittled off the rest of the horn and a new style was born, said Wrangler Network.

His last ride came in 1974 in Pendleton, Ore.

Copenhaver served on the PRCA board of directors from 1986 to 1989.

After retiring from competition, he bred and raised quarter horses near Creston and operated Deb's Cafe for many years in town. The restaurant, now closed, was known for its steak nights and country bands Copenhaver brought in to play on Saturday nights.

Copenhaver also taught at a rodeo school in Idaho and preached the gospel.

He and his late wife, Cheryl, had five children, sons Jeff, Matt and Guy, and daughters Deborah and Kelly. Jeff was the 1975 world champion calf roper; Deborah was a former Miss Rodeo Washington.

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Queen's passion for rodeo shines

By KATIE TEACHOUT
The Chronicle

OMAK - This year's Omak Stampede Queen Vanessa Pershing is enjoying representing the stampede as she has been traveling around the state and beyond this past year.

"I've been all over Washington, and just got back from the Calgary Stampede," said Pershing in early July. "I met a lot of world champions there, and had one tell me she loves the Omak Stampede."

Pershing will be traveling to Joseph, Oregon for Chief Joseph Days the last week of July.

"We went to Olympia and visited the capital in April, and visited with state legislators and lawmakers," said Pershing. "That was a really cool opportunity, and I learned a lot. It was incredible to see what happens during the session."

Pershing attended the Armed Forces Torchlight parade during the Spokane Lilac Festival in May.

"That was a very long parade, but really incredible to experience," said Pershing. Her traveling partners are her mother, Dyann Pershing and her younger brother.

Pershing expressed appreciation for employers, Cole and Michelle Garcia of the Grocery Outlet in Omak, allowing flexibility in her schedule.

"My bosses have been so great and amazing," said Pershing. "They have been so understanding of the time off I've



JENNIFER TOLLEFSON PHOTOGRAPHY

Omak Stampede Queen Vanessa Pershing.

had to take."

Pershing said she has been enjoying the summer here when not on the road.

"I ride for fun, trail rides and barrel racing when I'm not busy," said Pershing. "There are barrel races at the Stampede Grounds every few weeks, and I race some at home."

She said while not able to race in the Stampede as it is a PRC Rodeo that requires membership, "It's always been a dream of mine to be a barrel racer in the Omak Stampede."

"The Suicide Race is a longtime favorite of mine," said Pershing. "We've watched it from the top of the hill and down a little bit, and from the dike and the arena. It's cool every way. One year we got to watch it from the top of the ferris wheel at the carnival. We happened to be at the top when the gun went off."

Pershing said she looks forward to all the events the Omak Stampede has to offer.

"The Indian Encampment and the pow wow are a cool cultural experience to go

through. They do dancing and have a lot of hand-crafted items and their tipis," said Pershing. "We go to the carnival and do rides, and visit the vendors outside the arena. The food court always has really good food. And during the Stampede, there are other events going on through town, like the art show."

The Western and Native American Art Show is displayed at the Omak Elks Lodge.

A 2016 graduate of Tonasket High School where she was the softball pitcher, on varsity volleyball three years and a basketball cheerleader, Pershing said she got her inspiration to run for Stampede Queen from past royalty members.

"My best friend's sister was the Stampede Queen a few years ago, and it looked so much fun," said Pershing. "I always wanted to be more involved in the community, and I love riding horses, so I thought this would be a good way to do that while promoting the rodeo."

Pershing said she helped the former queen, 2013 Omak Stampede Queen Brianna Howell, when she was out on the road, and she and Lexi Howell served as pooper scoopers when Brianna rode in parades. Lexi went on to become the Okanogan County Fair Queen in 2016.

"I have been around horses all my life, since I was a baby, and riding and rodeoing since I was a little kid, so it's always been a passion and something I've loved to do."



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Jennifer Tollefson Photography

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Pershing did junior rodeo while living in Las Vegas and Texas before moving to Washington state with her family in 2012, and has attended the Omak Stampede every year since 2013.

"I've been a huge fan of all the royalty ever since I was just a little kid attending the Stampede. I didn't live here my whole life; my mom is from here and my dad (Mike Pershing) served in the military for a lot of years, so we lived in Las Vegas and Texas. But

we came home during vacation to see the Stampede."

Her horse, a quarter-horse mare named Justa McBride was purchased from the Waggoner Ranch in Texas.

"She's named after one of my favorite bull riders, Justin McBride, but the girl version of the name," said Pershing. "He's an Oklahoma cowboy who won the PBR World Championship back in 2005 on a pretty cool ride. Both horses I used to ride are named after my favorite

bull riders."

Pershing will hold the crown until November, then it will be handed off to the next queen. Pershing said the process to become queen started with filling out an application to be reviewed by the board, followed by a pageant in the fall featuring horsemanship, modeling and public speaking.

"You need to show you can ride, it's a big component of the job," said Pershing. "You write a speech to present during the pageant. I

wrote mine about the spirit and the freedom of the horse; the feeling it brings me and the symbol of the horse in Western American culture."

Asked what she would say to girls who are considering running for Stampede queen she replied, "I would say do it. It's so much fun, and such an honor to carry the title and represent not just the rodeo, but your community when you are wearing that title. It is such an incredible honor to be able to do all that."

Omak couple named grand marshals

By **AMBER HEDINGTON**
The Chronicle

OMAK — Jim and Linda Lewis have been named this year's Omak Stampede grand marshals.

Jim was a member of the Omak Stampede Board from 1971-1993 and was inducted into the Omak Stampede Hall of Fame in 1993.

Linda was an associate member of the Stampede board from 1971-1991. Linda was also the Stampede office manager for 14 years.

Jim was a member of the Omak School Board for 13 years. He coached Little League baseball for 18 years and Babe Ruth baseball for five years.

Jim has been part of the crew that hangs flags in downtown Omak for the Chamber of Commerce for 15 years. Linda ran Donaldson's Antiques until

her retirement and is the past president of the Omak Chamber of Commerce. Jim



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Jim and Linda Lewis.

and Linda have volunteered at the Omak Elks Lodge for 52 years and are both members.

Jim was born in Brigham City, Utah, in 1943. Linda was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1943. Jim and Linda both graduated from Omak High School in 1961.

Jim graduated from Central Washington University in 1971 and Linda attended Kinman Business School for one year and was in the U.S. Marine

Corps. for two years.

"They should have been nominated a long time ago for going above and beyond for the community," Omak Stampede Office Manager Sarah Grooms said. "The Lewises have been involved in the Omak Stampede, chamber and community for many years.

"Jim was involved in coaching baseball and was the treasurer for the Omak Stampede, while Linda had been the president of the

Chamber of Commerce," she said.

Jim and Linda have three children: Gary Smith, Brian Lewis, and Trisha Lewis, and three grandchildren.

Jim and Linda became involved in the Omak Stampede because Linda's step father Lou Donaldson was the treasurer for many years.

The couple will celebrate their 52nd wedding anniversary Friday, Aug. 9.

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Stampede pays tribute to two nations

By **BROCK HIRES**
The Chronicle

OMAK — There's no shortage of talent to honor America and Canada at Omak Stampede rodeo performances.

Each year, Stampede has open auditions for people interested in singing anthems during the four rodeo performances.

On Thursday, Aug. 8, Jayden Tonasket will perform the national anthem and LaDaija Austin will perform the

Canadian anthem.

The next night, Kristy Hennigar will perform "The Star-Spangled Banner," and Jody Evans will pay tribute to neighbors to the north with "O Canada."

Saturday evening, Amy Kraut will perform the national anthem and Tonasket resident Mike Stansbury will perform the Canadian anthem.

For the final rodeo performance Sunday, Aug. 11, Samantha Hinger and Nicole Leese will perform anthems, respectively.

LATE-NIGHT DANCING



AL CAMP | *The Chronicle*

The Night Riders will perform post-rodeo dances Friday and Saturday, Aug. 9 and 10, at the east end of the Omak Stampede arena. Band members are Glen Lisenbey, Tom McCoy, Artie Litscher, Brock Hires and Gary Bowling.



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George L. Traicheff studied art at Ecole des Beaux Arts, Montreal, Que., Arts Student's League, New York, N.Y. He also was under the tutelage of Robert Loughheed and Clarence Tillenius. His roots in art started with the study of oriental painting with Master Tom Loo.

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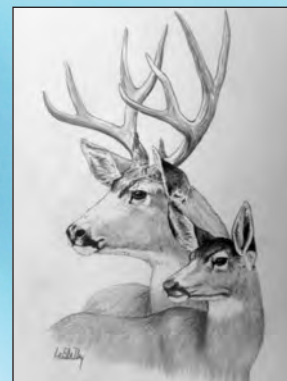
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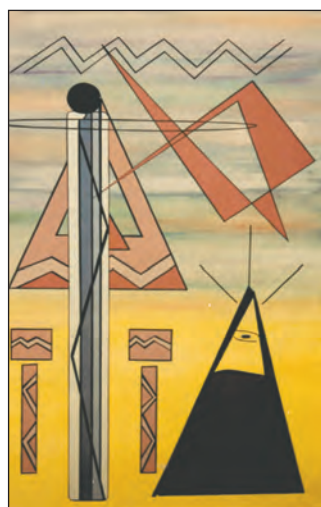
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New, returning contract acts on tap

By **AMBER HEDINGTON**
The Chronicle

OMAK — A familiar lineup of arena entertainers and safety personnel will be joined this year by a new specialty act, Cowgirl Sweethearts — Haley Ganzel and Lindy Nealey-Lica.

Bullfighters Eric Schwindt will return, along with clown/barrelman J.J. Harrison, and bullfighter Logan Blasdel.

Nealey-Lica, 28, of Bloomington, Ill., has performed in rodeos, wild West shows and dinner theaters for more than half of her life.

She graduated with a degree in environmental science from the University of Illinois, and after graduation was asked to perform stunt work on the film 'Cowgirls and Angels 2: Dakota's Summer.'

Nealey is an accomplished trick rider and roman rider. She appeared as a trick rider at Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede Dinner Theater in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., where she had performed more than 800 shows a year.

Ganzel, 24, of Collinsville, Okla., has been trick riding since the age of four, after learning the trade from her uncle, NFR contract act Shawn Brackett.

Ganzel's passion for trick riding and performing began when she was young and had the opportunity to travel with the Great American Wild West Show to many of the greatest rodeo venues in the United States.

In 2007, Ganzel was crowned as the 2007 World Champion Trick Rider; she also competed in the 2016 North American Trick Riding Championships in Las Vegas and had a role and performed stunt work in the films 'Cowgirls and Angels' and 'Cowgirls and Angels 2: Dakota's Summer.'

Schwindt, 27, is a native of Modesto, Calif., and grew up in Lyons, Ore.

He said he watched his older brother ride bulls and later a friend, Jesse Tennen, fight bulls. He attended a Danny Newman school and was hooked.

He has been a Professional

Rodeo Cowboys Association member since September 2011.

Harrison, 44, is another Stampede returnee. The Okanogan High School graduate, who now lives in Walla Walla is known for his wild antics, dancing and inflatable "fat" suits.

Harrison found an interest in rodeo in high school, which led to his being on the Washington State University Rodeo team.

"I tried all events but bull riding was what I really love" he said. "But due to the fact I'm a big sissy, I stuck with roping."

He has taught middle school for eight years and enjoys every second he spends with kids.

"I never want to grow up and the best way to do that is hang with kids," he said.

He has become one of the most sought after rodeo clowns in the Northwest and shows no signs of stopping.

"I always worry that people will someday realize it's not an act," he said. "It's just who I am."

Blasdel, 28, of Prineville, Ore., will join this year's safety personnel lineup.

Blasdel attended Feather River College from 2009-2011 and studied agricultural business. Blasdel has been bullfighting professionally with the PRCA since 2012.

In 2016, Blasdel married his wife, Kaley Mae Hook, who is the owner of KMH bucking bulls in Shandon, Calif. In 2017, the couple welcomed a son named Ridge Thomas Blasdel.



AL CAMP | The Chronicle
J.J. Harrison will return to this year's Stampede





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Tongel is this year's featured artist

By **KATIE TEACHOUT**
The Chronicle

OMAK — Georgia Orr Tongel, this year's featured artist in the Western and Native Art Show, enjoyed success as a commercial artist in New York and L.A. before returning to her native home of Okanogan County.

Her artwork has changed with her travels, from technical and detailed pen and ink drawings for newspaper ads to oil paintings with a palette knife.



Tongel

She now favors acrylic paints as they dry faster and are more amenable to changes.

Tongel, a Colville Tribal member, said her painting chosen for this year's poster, "Appaloosa in Time," is based on an award-winning racehorse in Kentucky whose colors she loved.

"The Appaloosas are prancers, they like attention," said Tongel. "They know they are beautiful and love to strut their stuff."

"Appaloosa in Time" includes symbols representing the Appaloosas being loved by royalty, the wealthy and Native Americans throughout time.

Tongel is incorporating Native American symbols in most of her paintings these days.

"The symbols are from all the different bands. They all had their own special images and symbols," said Tongel, adding she includes them out of respect for their way of life. "I am just feeling in awe of what they did so long ago, and the conditions in which they lived. It's just amazing what they did. Today we have it so easy and take so much for granted."

A painting of a buffalo called "Shield of Defiance" includes feathers illustrating successful coups, buffalo tails, a medicine bag and a half-circle of bullets symbolizing the near-extinction

of the buffalo.

Another one, called "Celebration," features a Native American man on an Appaloosa surrounded by an arch of 16 tipis with symbols from all over the U.S.

"People love to celebrate, whether it's a new baby or a good marriage," said Tongel. "I tried to not do any one symbol or tribe, I tried to generalize. The tipis are Plateau Indian style, which a lot of tribes adapted to — including our tribe — because they are easy-up and mobile. They use canvas now instead of skin."

Tongel is currently working on an acrylic painting of a skin painting which Tongel found a photograph of in her extensive research library. The skin painting includes "symbols from two different women and their imagination."

Another feature in much of Tongel's current work is baskets. One called "Huckleberry Season" shows a cedar-root basket holding huckleberries, with a smaller one worn while picking the berries. A corn husk bag holds the berry picker's lunch, often containing dried venison and camas, a bulb root that comes out in early spring. The gloves in the painting were made by Tongel's grandmother, Josephine George of the Wenatchee Band of the Yakima Tribe.

"She did the bead work on elk or deer hide for whatever was wanted. Elk was very hardwearing and long-lasting, and she would use doe or fawn for a finer quality," said Tongel. "Women could order all different lengths."

Tongel's signature on her paintings, Georgia Orr Tongel, includes "Nahumlna," which was her grandmother's name for her, as she couldn't pronounce "Georgia."

She said her married name "Tongel" was shortened from the Belgian Van Tongel by her husband Jayme when he became an American citizen. Tongel said after going to school in Brazil and working at a studio in Rio de Janeiro, he



KATIE TEACHOUT | *The Chronicle*

Georgia Orr Tongel painted this *Grass Dancer* from a powwow in the Northwest using oils and a palette knife in the early '90s. Her recent work is in acrylics.

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moved to New York and took a job with Abraham and Strauss in Brooklyn.

"That's where we met," Tongel said of her husband. Her own path to New York began, in part, with a scholarship to Gonzaga from the Colville Confederated Tribes. Her senior year was spent in Gonzaga's program at the Accademia Della Vella Art in Florence, Italy; where Michelangelo studied. Graduating from there in 1966, she headed straight for New York.

"I had my portfolio all ready, and I was determined to go into advertising," said Tongel. Taking a temporary job at Macy's, she hit the streets with her portfolio and three months later landed the job at Abraham and Strauss.

"Jayme was working there in the advertising department," said Tongel. "It was so nice working with all those artists in a wonderful atmosphere."

Tongel's work involved very detailed pen and ink drawings for black and white newspaper ads.

"They liked me because I could draw both the very tight, realistic stuff and the pretty girls showing the jewelry," said Tongel. From there the couple moved to L.A.

"That's where we did really well," said Tongel. "We made very good money, and after four years had saved enough to buy a condo in Rio de Janeiro to be by Jayme's mother."

When they returned to L.A. five years later, with Jayme working for J.C. Penney and Georgia for Buffins in Long Island, they found themselves "outdated" by the newly burgeoning computer age.

"So, we moved here in 1991," said Georgia. "I went full-circle. Born in Nespelem and went back to Nespelem."

The Tongel's art continued to flourish, and Georgia has participated in the Western and Native American Art Show yearly since 1997, winning multiple awards. Her depiction of Christine Quintasket, the first Native American woman to publish a novel and the first woman elected to the Colville Business Council, called "Mourning Dove,"

was featured on the 2014 poster. Jayme was honored as the



Tongel makes prints of her originals, including this piece called "Huckleberry Gathering." Tongel said while some artists don't reproduce their work, it gives her a good feeling to do so. "So many Indians I know do not have baskets anymore, and they buy a print and it gives them something of their heritage."

poster artist in 2011, following his death in 2010.

"I'm very happy here, and feel fortunate," said Tongel. She was recently asked to create a logo for the Sinkietqu Okanogan Basketweavers Association, who will be showing at the Western and Native American Art Show for the first time this year. The group formed in 2015, and some of the members traveled to Washington, D.C. last year, where they demonstrated their art at the Smithsonian Institution. Tongel said she had great appreciation for the way the women use the old traditions to do their work. They use tulles, cedar, cedar bark, bear grass and hemp to create the baskets. Their mission statement is to preserve, promote, protect and perpetuate traditional and contemporary Northwest Native American Basketry, and materials and gathering sites.

Returning artists to this year's Western and Native American Art Show include Ron Adamson, Jack Babcock, Barbara Conner-Reed, Nelda Patison, David Craig, Le Ella Day, Cheryl Grunlose, Tom Morrison, Don Nutt, Sherry Orchard, Tina Reeve Tharp, Bruce Townsend-Cook and George L. Traicheff. Also returning are Okanogan County Artists members Sarah Stone, Shayla Wiggins, Patty Helberg,

Cheri Bjur, Linda Vance and Suzette Cheshier.

Bob Walton, who was the poster artist for the art show in both 2011 and 2013, will be missed this year after passing

away in May. He was an avid hiker and mountain climber and his paintings reflected his love of the outdoors. He was also an artist for Leaning Tree greeting cards.

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Christians offer music, message

Christians in Action celebrates its 47th year with music, free ice water, Bibles, Western church service and refreshments at the Omak Stampede Aug. 8-11.

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 5 p.m. each night and continues until after the rodeos.

Nine or more Okanogan County churches plus three out-of-town groups will bring ministry to the gospel stage this year.

Also provided is a free continental breakfast with Western church service at 8:30 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 11.

"Many local people will be glad to reconnect with former Servants Heart band member and UPS driver, Jeff Ecklund," Christians In Action President Kathleen Christensen said. "Jeff and his wife Robie Ecklund are lead pastors at House of the Lord Church in Oldtown Idaho."

They will speak and sing at 6 p.m. Saturday, and at Sunday Western church service Sunday morning.

"In the Okanogan county area, they were Christian musicians, worship leaders, youth pastors and associate pastors at New Life Church, Okanogan, while working full time in secular employment and raising a family," Christensen said. "They continue to write songs, lead worship, train leaders, and author books. They have recorded several music projects and traveled nationally and internationally doing what they do anywhere they are sent by God."

Award-winning singer-songwriters Lonnie and Teresa Good along with other worship team members from Cascade Bible Church in the Methow Valley will also take the stage at



Loose Change performs at the 2018 Omak Stampede. They will return to the gospel stage this year at 7 p.m. Thursday and 9 p.m. Saturday

BROCK HIRES | *The Chronicle*

this year's Christians In Action gospel stage at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 9.

Combined, Lonnie and Teresa have over 50 years of musical experience. Before joining forces, each won competitions, including Teresa's state finalist in Regional True Value/GMC Showdown and Lonnie's first place in Seattle's Worthy Music Talent Competition.

Loose Change will take the stage at 7 p.m. Thursday and 9 p.m. Saturday.

The band was originally formed by Kathy Peterson in 1997 and performs a variety of bluegrass, gospel, old-time, and Christian cowboy tunes.

Peterson and husband Rod live in Aguanga, Calif. She is a U.S. Forest Service retiree and strategic planning consultant. Peterson will be joined by April Vaughn, Ark.; Lyn Pearce, Riverside; and Carl and Brenda Behrents, Omak.

Tunk Valley musician Nicole Unser will take the stage at 5 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 10.

"When asked what 'being country' means to her, Unser



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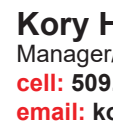


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responded: "I associate country with being an honest thing, with being a hardworking thing, being a dependable and trustworthy thing; by that definition I grew up country."

Over the years Unser's developed a heart for storytelling; a hunger for performing; and a passion for pure, honest, country music.

"I want to give people what so many country albums have given me: a chance to cry, a reason to laugh, a time to bond, a different way of seeing the world- a new perspective, a realization, a time to reflect," she said.

Unser is the 2012 Texaco Country Showdown New Mexico state champion, a nationwide talent contest. She has played legendary venues like the Ryman Auditorium and Bluebird Cafe in Nashville, Tenn.

She will be joined on stage with Curtis Willson and Kasey Pinkham of Tonasket Free Methodist Church

The Rev. Raul Martinez, Okanogan, and Iglesia Del



BROCK HIRES | *The Chronicle* **Christians In Action offer activities for youngsters at last year's Omak Stampede.**

Tercer Dia (Church of the Third Day), Tonasket, host two Spanish services at 6:30 p.m. Friday and 7 p.m. Saturday. The services will include guests from El Faro (The Lighthouse) Assembly of God church, Oroville.

Several other local ministries are planned throughout the weekend, too.

Thursday brings a local brass ensemble and the New Life Worship Team, Okanogan.

Friday brings Caleb Knowlton and the River Worship Band from Tonasket River of Grace Church at 8:30 p.m.; Shane Marlow with Breathe of Life worship team, East Wenatchee, will perform at 9:30 p.m.

On Saturday, the Behrent Family Praise Band will perform at 8 p.m.

Omak resident Tina Schmidt will perform Sunday morning following the Grand

Parade.

In 1973, members of the Omak Presbyterian Church brought KEY '73 Bibles and the first cowboy praise service to the Omak Stampede. "Stamperders for Christ" continued yearly with participants from Omak Free Methodist Church and Christian Businessmen Association, bringing music, Bibles, refreshments and craft.

The group helped the sheriff's department care for lost kids also. Incorporated as Christians In Action in 1977, the organization coordinates musicians, speakers, dramas and kids' activities from a variety of churches every year since. It also maintains the KMBI 103.9 FM Translator and "Sonshine Cross" on Shellrock Point. Christians In Action provides Bibles to high school graduates and sponsors an Easter Sunrise Service.

For more information call 509-422-4660, visit www.okanoganchristiansinaction.org, or on Facebook @okchristiansinaction.

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DEE CAMP | *The Chronicle*

Firefighters keep the crowd cool at the annual grand parade. This year's parade will be at 10 a.m. Aug. 11.

A variety of
parade
entries are
planned this
year.

DEE CAMP |
The Chronicle



Grand parade planned Aug. 13

OMAK — The Stampede grand parade, starts at 10 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 11.

Staging will be on Okoma Drive. Omak Chamber of Commerce volunteers are coordinating the event, which goes up Main Street to Apple Avenue, west to Ash Street and then south.

During the parade, traffic will be routed around the downtown areas.

The event customarily

includes bands, floats, business entries, rodeo and community royalty, service clubs and other groups.

Parade divisions include childrens entries, community floats, commercial entries, organizations, political candidates, mounted royalty, marching bands, mounted drill teams, antique cars and public services.

Parade entry deadline was July 25.



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BROCK HIRES | *The Chronicle*

The annual Stampede ride-in features dozens of horses and horse-drawn wagons through Omak and Okanogan.

Ride-in kicks off Thursday morning

OKANOGAN — The Stampede ride-in is planned for 8:30 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 8.

Horses and horse-drawn wagons will leave the Okanogan County Fairgrounds, 175 Rodeo Trail, and head south to the south bridge in Okanogan.

Once across the Okanogan River, the procession will head north through Okanogan and Omak on Second Avenue, Elmway, Okoma Drive, Fourth Avenue and Main Street to Central Avenue.

From there, riders will go across the Central Avenue bridge to the Stampede Arena, where they're asked to make one lap around the arena and then exit.

Ending time is estimated at 11:30 a.m.

A rest stop is planned at the Okanogan Eagles Club, 1820 N. Second Ave.

Registration will be from 6-8 a.m. Aug. 8 at the fairgrounds main gate.

Souvenir T-shirts will be available. Organizers ask that riders register before the ride, have just one rider per horse, not bring dogs or stallions, leave one horse length between horses, do not cross the centerline, walk their horses and pass other horses on the left, letting the rider know.

Children under age 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

All horses known to be kickers must have a red ribbon tied on the tail.

The event is hosted by B&D Ranch.

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Davis Shows carnival returns

The Davis Shows carnival will return to the Stampede this year with a variety of rides, games and food.

Davis Shows, a traveling

amusement company, provides family friendly fun at locations all across the Pacific Northwest.

Davis Shows has a base crew that travels with the carnival and local people

are hired upon arrival to help set up and run the carnival.

The small city moves on Sunday, travels to Omak on Monday and sets up the attractions on Tuesday. Come Wednesday evening,

the carnival is open to the public.

Davis Shows is a fourth-generation family business that has been providing the Stampede with a carnival for at least 25 years.



Youngsters enjoy the Rock Star ride at Davis Shows carnival at last year's Omak Stampede.

BROCK HIRES | *The Chronicle*

Davis Shows offers a variety of rides for people of all ages.

BROCK HIRES | *The Chronicle*



The Spider is a blur of color at night at the Davis Shows carnival.

THE CHRONICLE



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Stampede sees many changes over the years

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 85th year this year.

Moomaw and Bernard approached Omak's businessmen, who were eager to try anything to keep the Main Street of Omak busy. 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



OMAK STAMPEDE COLLECTION

The Omak High School provided plenty of good parking space in 1933 for the first Stampede. The football field was constructed so that scores of automobiles were able to park close enough to afford excellent views of the riders and other contestants

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,



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OMAK STAMPEDE COLLECTION

A group of Stampede organizers gathers outside the Stampede Branding Corral in the 1930s.

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 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.

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 featured twice on TV's "You Asked for It," and in dozens of newspapers, a full-length Walt Disney movie, "Run, Appaloosa, Run," 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.

In 1959 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 as its first female competitor. 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

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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. Today the encampment is a beautiful experience to visit and watch dancing, drumming and stick games.

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



OMAK STAMPEDE
COLLECTION

Omak Stampede Hall of Fame member Dr. Charles "Doc" Benson.

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.

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.

Three Stampede queens - 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 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.

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