

*Susan Hargrave travels the continent*

# Rodeo Queen's dream came true



Susan Hargrave of Brooks realized her childhood dream of becoming a rodeo queen. And she did it twice. In 1982 she became Medicine Hat's Stampede Queen and the following year she won the title of Miss Rodeo Canada. She took time off from her university studies to travel as part of her duties as Miss Rodeo Canada.

— News photo Frank Webber

## ANGELA STUBBS Of The News

Susan Hargrave's winning personality has helped her accomplish a childhood dream.

As a little girl she and her grandfather used to attend the Brooks rodeo and it was there that she first saw a rodeo queen contest. From then on she says she's always wanted to be one.

At the age of 16 she saw her first Miss Rodeo Canada pageant and at the time wondered what it would be like to participate in that national competition.

On neither occasion did she believe that either dream would come true. However, she must have wished, and certainly she tried, hard enough for she became Medicine Hat's Stampede Queen in 1982 and less than 16 months later she won the Miss Rodeo Canada title.

Susan is the 20-year-old daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Doug Hargrave of Brooks. She's a third year fine arts student at the University of Calgary and she hopes to complete her studies after the fall semester.

Winning seems to be a Hargrave family affair. Her sister Sheri is the Jenner Rodeo Queen and Tannis recently won the Miss Lethbridge beauty pageant.

Laurie Sharland, who has co-ordinated the Medicine Hat Stampede Queen Contest for 13 years, says Susan is only the second girl from the Medicine Hat competition to take part in the pageant. The 1980 first princess, Sheri Saville, was the other.

Susan was a rather shy 19-year-old when she entered the Medicine Hat contest, but her natural charm and friendly personality soon overcame that problem. In fact her personality won her the crown and despite Mother Nature's decision to provide a torrential downpour the first night of the horsemanship section, she took top honors there too. And when it came to speeches she once again took first place.

At that time she had just had her first taste of leaving home and it was on that subject that she gave her five minute speech.

"Experience is the only way to find out what it's like to leave home for the first time," she told the crowd that Friday evening at the Medicine Hat Legion hall.

Since then she's not only

learned what it's like to leave home, but how it feels to spend weeks on the road.

Her experience in 1982 stood her in good stead when she was accepted as a contestant in the 1983 Miss Rodeo Canada pageant. There was a heavy schedule lined up for the girls.

They were judged on public speaking, personality and poise, horsemanship, rodeo knowledge and off-stage presentation. There was also a fashion show and a written rodeo examination.

In '82 her dream had come true and the following year her question was answered. She was a queen and in her role as Miss Rodeo Canada, a goodwill ambassador for the Canadian Professional Rodeo Association.

On both occasions she was overwhelmed with the gifts she received — saddles, belt buckles, outfits, chaps, jewelry. But an unexpected gift has proved to be a boon.

"I've been 'dodging' (in my Ram Charger) all over the place since I became Miss Rodeo Canada," she said in a recent telephone interview.

Susan does promotional work and gives talks to schools, service clubs and the news media. And she travels the professional rodeo circuit.

She says she's thoroughly enjoying herself though the schedule gets hectic at times.

"I recently attended all four Labatt's Super Series Rodeos — I'm on the go all the time — in fact I'm just off again to ride in the Calgary parade, then on to Shaunavon, Edmonton for Klondike Days and back to the Hat on July 23."

She says she's learned through the other queens about the do's and don'ts, about what to expect and what not to expect about her role.

"It's pretty good, really interesting, a good experience. I go to places I'd never go to and I've made a lot of friends. It's opened doors for me."

She says she's hoping Miss Rodeo Australia will join her shortly and hopes in October she will be able to travel to Warwick, Queensland, to take in the rodeo finals there.

Her duties are such that she has not been able to take a summer job nor will she be able to take the fall semester at university. However, she believes this is not detrimental.

"I've gained a world of knowledge that I don't think could be taught in university."



One of the perks of her new title is the truck Hargrave gets to drive. As Miss Rodeo Canada, she has to attend rodeos all over Canada and the United States. She also acts as an ambassador for rodeo.

— News photo Robin Schlaht

## Contest picks Stampede's ambassadors

### ANGELA STUBBS Of The News

Summer and the sun is at its zenith. It's hot and dusty, the grass has already turned brown. The river has dropped and people are heading to the cooler air in the Cypress Hills. It's July and Stampede time again.

For a moment my mind wanders back to last year's holiday. Pictures of the majestic mountains of Scotland, hazy in their mantle of early morning mist, pass fleetingly. I hear again the skirl of the pipes and the soft greeting of a highlander as he strides by through the purple heather. Then I see an English garden and smell the sweet fragrance of roses, honeysuckle and Sweet William. In the distance the bells chime on an old country church and the stream tumbles merrily across smooth brown rocks on its way through verdant valleys.

Oh to be in England, where the sun is more gentle and the grass so green.

Suddenly the heat of the day penetrates the refreshing thoughts. Who would rather be in England now that Stampede's here? Me? Maybe. But then I'm a sun worshipper — the hotter the better — and if I was in England I'd miss the heat and the Stampede Queen Contest.

Strange lady some may say. I don't think so. Having been behind the scenes as a judge, and in front as a reporter, you really get to appreciate all the effort and hard work that goes into an event such as this.

Life gets hectic at Stampede time. There's the parades, chuckwagon races, the carnival and the rodeo. Weeks before this big event happens posters proclaim its coming and every year it never fails to amaze me how little fanfare the Stampede Queen Con-

test seems to get.

What would a parade be without the queen and her princesses (what's a parade without the glamor), who would ride in the opening ceremonies at the rodeo, and who would quietly represent the city and Stampede board at so many events throughout the year?

If it was a beauty pageant would it attract more attention? You bet your boots it would. But this is a rodeo and a beauty queen in her swimsuit or evening gown would look daft on the back of a horse amidst a bunch of cowboys. Mind you a beauty pageant may attract more competitors (and bigger crowds) — but how many of them would be able to even ride a horse?

Heaven only knows why it's this way. Any notice about the event is buried in small ads or deep in a list of other Stampede events, yet a great

deal of hard work goes into the contest.

Laurie Sharland, co-ordinator, spends weeks getting it altogether. Then she takes time off work, without pay, to chaperone the girls and make sure everything runs smoothly throughout the five days. She's late to bed and early to rise, she opens her home and her heart and even her family pitch in.

Then there's the judges, many of them take time off work, and certainly they all take time away from their families to be a part of this event and they do it out of the goodness of their hearts. The contestants too give of their time and even city businesses are involved.

I for one enjoy the contest. I really think it sets the mood for the stampede. In fact, if the truth be known, I prefer this part the best. Though I

love to wander the exhibition, I hate carnivals and I think the chucks and rodeo are cruel to animals — but we won't get into that.

It may be a competition, but it's a two-way street. The girls have to stand up in front of strangers and give a speech, smile all day, put their horse through its paces even when it's skittish and be a fashion model on a busy city street. But they do make new friends and meet new people, learn how to apply their makeup properly, get an insight into what fashions and colors suit them and learn to be thoughtful of others. But above all, they learn self-confidence and that's always a plus.

Maybe, like women's liberation, the contest will eventually come into its own. One day, hopefully, it will kick-off the Stampede celebrations with the fanfare it deserves.