

City

City Editor: Gordon Wright

Animal group accepts rodeo pushes safety

CAM McCULLOCH
Of The News

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is willing to accept the Medicine Hat Stampede and Exhibition rodeo under certain conditions.

Krista Munroe from the Medicine Hat SPCA says the group is opposed to rodeos and other uses of animals solely for entertainment, especially when there is risk to the animals.

"However, accepting rodeos exist, we're also pushing for greater safety for the animals and humans involved," she says.

Joy Ripley, president of the Alberta society, says one of the organization's biggest concerns is that at more than half the rodeos its special constables attended last year no veterinarian was available on the grounds.

"Animals would get hurt and there would be no one there to attend to them," she said.

The response from the various rodeo associations is that they'll be paying closer attention to this now, she said.

An independent veterinarian will be on hand at the rodeo and the chuckwagon races here, said Dann Sodero, general manager of the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede.

And it's the chuckwagon races — especially the figure-eight loop at the beginning of the race — which cause the society concern.

The figure-eight is a high-risk aspect of the race, said Ripley.

There are lots of horses, wagons and outriders, and the horses are attempting to manoeuvre around the barrels at high speed, she said.

When the chucks come out of the first barrel, they have to be within their lanes or they are penalized, said Sodero.

But 32 horses are on the track at the same time, if four horses and four outriders are counted for

each of four wagons. That's too many bodies at once in the same restricted space, insists Ripley.

The chucks are trying to go fast in a small space, she said.

In 41 races that Alberta SPCA constables attended in 1987 and 1988, a total of 19 accidents caused injury to 15 horses — seven of which had to be killed.

At the 1986 Stampede, nine horses were killed in one race after a spectacular crash sent animals and riders tumbling onto the track.

This year at the Calgary Stampede, no horses were killed in chuckwagon races, said Ripley.

"It was a big relief."

The whole 10 days went by without a major spill, she said.

"It's just incredible."

Chuckwagon racing has been cleaned up 10-fold in last 10 years, said Sodero.

The stove racks at the back of the wagon used to be low so horses often stepped into them from behind.

Now the stove carrier is raised or in the wagon.

And poles that used to be just thrown in the back of the wagon are attached so they can't fall out now, said Sodero.

As for the figure-eight loop, Sodero said its purpose is to display racing skills.

"It would be boring if it (the race) was just straight away," he said.

Sodero said every precaution is taken to ensure the animals are not in a stressful situation.

The constable for the Medicine Hat SPCA will be at the rodeo every afternoon to check the rodeo stock, petting zoo and the barn stock used in chuckwagon racing.



ROYAL WAVE — The 1989 Stampede queen and princess, Shawna Kelly, (left), and Tracy Becker, wave to the crowd after being crowned Saturday at the Cypress Centre. Kelly, 19, hails from Bassano, 20-year-old Becker from Bindloss.

— News photo Paul VanPeenen

Bassano's Kelly rodeo queen

ANGELA STUBBS
Of The News

Shawna Kelly had the 1989 Stampede Queen crown placed on her cowboy hat Saturday night by outgoing queen Sherry Crocker.

She was surprised and said she couldn't have done it without the support of her parents, Dave and Gail Kelly.

"I know I will just love my reign," she said quietly and confidently.

It was a different story when Tracy Becker from Bindloss was named princess.

"Well, I don't know what to say," she said, her voice choked with emotion and almost inaudible as she thanked everybody.

Kelly, who comes from Bassano, also received a buckle for placing second in the horsemanship section of the contest and first in speeches. In addition, her fellow competitors chose her as Miss Congeniality.

Becker's ability on horseback also won her the first-place buckle in the horsemanship

section of the week-long contest.

Tammy Quinn won second place in the speeches; her topic was The Family.

The judges this year were: for horsemanship, Rob Renner and Angie Linden; for personality and speeches, Tracy Heller, Dolores Walburger and Larry Godin.

From the many sponsors, each of the five competitors received a bag of gifts, including buckles, scarves, socks, T-shirts, crystal and perfume.

The queen and princess received numerous other gifts as well.

Laid out for all to see were dresses, jackets, luggage, tack, perfume, makeup, jewelry, glasses, scarves, horse blankets and pictures — to name but a few.

Kelly will now be able to saddle up her horse, Isle Be Fancy, with a new engraved saddle, and he and Becker's horse, Double Value, will be trucked down the road in a brand new horse trailer. Both were pre-

sented by the Medicine Hat Exhibition and Stampede Company.

After Miss Rodeo Canada, Stacey Soffel, and family and friends congratulated the pair, Kelly said she entered the contest because Laurie Sharland had talked to her about it, but being chosen Stampede Queen had really left her speechless. It was obvious, however, by the hint of tears in her eyes and the smile on her lips, that she was feeling very proud and happy.

The pair will represent the Stampede Board at many functions over the next year. After a shopping spree today they can be seen in the parade Thursday morning and in the Grand Entry at the rodeo in the afternoon.

Laurie Sharland, contest co-ordinator, announced that last year's queen, Sherry Crocker, will be entering the Miss Rodeo Canada contest this year. Two former Medicine Hat Stampede queens, Susan Hargrave and Shellie Sodero, have won that crown.

Judge Chalmers searches for imagination in art

ANGELA STUBBS
Of The News

In Jacqueline Chalmers' business — she owns an art gallery in Calgary — one looks at things differently, seeing things others don't see.

"And that's what I'm looking for in the visual arts exhibition," she says.

Chalmers has been involved in the art business for many years, but her first major involvement came in 1981 when she co-ordinated two art auctions for the Stockmen's Foundation.

"I don't really have any academic art background. I'm not really an artist. In fact, my background is in agriculture, but I wasn't the oldest son so I had to find something else to do."

She had wanted to go into business for herself, and the opportunity presented itself in 1985 — and she took it.

Chalmers said what she was looking for in the exhibits was imagination.

"Which I guess is an interesting interpretation of whatever they're doing."

"I want the artist to go beyond the ordinary. It has to strike an emotional response and then follow through with presentation."

It was, she said, a difficult show to judge.

"In the fibre arts, for instance, there's a beautiful quilted wall-hanging, and then there's an equally beautiful doily — so it's an interpretation of the medium."

By interview time she had already completed the photography section, which she said was generally really well done.

"But what surfaced again and again were pieces that showed something out of the ordinary."

"One piece I chose was a seed

pod of a sow thistle. The reason I chose it was because it was something extremely commonplace but the photographer's interpretation made it a very beautiful thing of nature."

She said she was disappointed with the pottery.

"When I think of Medicine Hat I think of potters, and I have to say there wasn't a sparkler there. There were some nice pieces, but that's all I can say."

"I'd like to challenge Medicine Hat potters to strut their stuff — it's an opportunity to show what they're about."

There was one sculpture that she reacted to emotionally. It was, she said, not perfect, not anatomically correct, but the sculptor had breathed some life into it.

She couldn't comment about the paintings as she hadn't judged them, but her impressions seemed favorable overall.

"There's some pride in regionalism here, and there was a variety of medium."

She hadn't judged the children's work either, but did say there was a variety of subjects that made her want to talk to the child personally.

"Adults are inhibited, but children put their feelings down on paper."

Chalmers said the overall presentation of the show was good, but she would emphasize attention to detail, which in the final analysis is the difference between losing and winning.

"I look not only at, say, a painting, but at the frame too. It's the overall look. Presentation is a package. You should make it as dynamic as possible."

Allan Jensen, co-ordinator, says that the Best of Show will be announced this evening at the Exhibition Preview at 8 p.m.

- Painting:
1st. Margaret Butuk
2nd. W.C. (Bill) Stewart
3rd. H.E. Smith
Graphic:
1st. Fred Newton
2nd. Jim Hauser
3rd. Dale Beaven
Sculpture:
1st. Richard (Dick) Schafer
2nd. H.E. Smith
3rd. Robert Davis
Photography:
1st. Kelly Rasmussen
2nd. Conrad Sonntag
3rd. Carol Bell
Fibre Arts:
1st. Goldie Berreth
2nd. Susan Minor
3rd. Donna Maclean
Pottery and Glass:
1st. Clara Matthews
2nd. Ed Phillipson
3rd. Eliza Herle
Ethnic Crafts:
1st. Jean Richardson

- 2nd. Irene Knutson
3rd. R.T. (Bob) Colley
Cowboy Crafts:
1st. Howard Jones
2nd. Roy Watson
3rd. Gary Armstrong
Children's Art: Pre-school:
1st. Andrew Kershaw
2nd. Katrina Perekudoff
3rd. Jamie McElgunn
Grade 1-3:
1st. Amanda Sehn
2nd. Jennifer Pahl
3rd. Sarah Neigum
Grade 4-6:
1st. Michelle Rickert
2nd. Corlille Richardson
3rd. Keri Burnett
Grade 7-9:
1st. Ian Wilson
2nd. Gavin Chow
3rd. Brenda Chow
Grade 10-12:
1st. Sheila Earl
2nd. Ian Kirlik
3rd. Andrew McFetridge

Military base safe habitat for wildlife gene pool

PETER HAYS
Of The News

When the Department of National Defence annexed 2,600 square kilometres of farm land to establish CFB Suffield, an oasis of wildlife free of hunting pressure was created, says Fish and Wildlife officer Murray Bates.

"The base is a resource haven for wildlife, doubly protected by military trespass law and classified as a wildlife management unit, totally closed to all hunting," Bates said in a recent interview.

"It is a gene pool. In it we have some very good habitat, and the fact that it's not hunted provides a protected area."

Using the range for military manoeuvres and defence research has allowed large numbers of big, tame antelope, deer and other species to flourish, he said.

The recent explosion of a buried shell that injured three British soldiers suggests the prairie will be used for military training — and stay in its natural state — for the foreseeable future, Bates added.

"The way I view it, it's one of the last stretches of native prairie grassland in Canada which is still the home to many species of wildlife, undisturbed except by occasional military manoeuvres," Bates said.

The migratory pronghorn herd has grown from around 800 in 1971 to around 3,500 members, he said.

Herd growth should not be seen as the result of excluding farming from the range, says Nancy Boutillier, agrologist with the public lands division of the department of Forestry, Lands and Wildlife.

"I can't argue that the block plays a really important part in the overall scheme of things. But agricultural lands also support wildlife," she said.

The Suffield Block may be covered with native grassland, but may not be an ideal wildlife sanctuary, she added.

"I have to question that, because they keep blowing it up, and burning it out during the British Army exercises," said Boutillier.

Each year around 8,000 British troops perform live-firing exercises within a 1,700-square-kilometre zone of the base.

In 1988, 25 per cent of the block — around 700 square kilometres — burned after being ignited by shellfire or by natural causes.

Bates discounts the effect of the fires on the resident flora and fauna.

"I don't think it's that significant. The fires are usually in minimal environmental impact



PRAIRIE BASE — The 2,600-square-kilometre range of CFB Suffield is home to native animal species whose only human concern is to avoid British Army live-firing exercises and occasional vehicular traf-



fic. Prickly pear cactus, this one with a resident june bug, are abundant on the range. Base commander Col. Angus Brown says the antelope population has grown to nearly 4,000 head.

— News photos Paul VanPeenen

areas, and the grassland often grows back better than before," he said.

Base commander Col. Angus Brown is well aware of the potential risk of a big prairie fire caused by live-firing. His range control men fight to stop hundreds of smaller fires from flow-

ing out to neighboring agricultural land each year.

Live-fire training is not allowed in the environmentally sensitive areas of the Middle Sand Hills and the South Saskatchewan River that runs south to north along the east side of the range, Brown said.

"Having a military range here has actually increased the wildlife, which is quite a common phenomenon in bases across the world," he said.

The numbers of large animals on the Suffield Block prompted a recent visit by members of the World Wildlife Fund.

Although the range is often populated by hundreds of armed men, animals are less wary of them than they are of civilians in unprotected areas, said Brown.

"I've actually watched a large (live firing) attack, where a young antelope sprang up, and almost to a man soldiers stopped shooting"