

A Cowboy Custom

Hardworking volunteers make Ketchum Kalf Rodeo a 77-year Glenwood tradition

By Jeanie Senior

Glenwood's annual Ketchum Kalf Rodeo marks its 77th year June 18-19, with a rich mix of Wild West and hometown traditions.

A Northwest Professional Rodeo Association-sanctioned event, the rodeo usually attracts around 200 cowboy competitors. About 2,000 people come to watch, many of whom park their RVs and camp in the pine woods next to the rodeo grounds.

"It's kind of a big family gathering," says Keith Kreps, president of the Glenwood Rodeo Association for several years.

Area ranchers started the rodeo in 1934 as entertainment for local cowboys. It has been held at different sites through the years, but now occupies a permanent space on the Trout Lake-Glenwood road about one mile west of town.

Promoters like to say that Ketchum Kalf features all of the events of a much larger rodeo. It is not

unusual for Glenwood to get some of the cowboys who make it to the national finals.

"Cowboys know they've got a good chance here at Glenwood," says Keith, whose grandfather was one of the rodeo founders.

This year, the rodeo—which is always held on Father's Day weekend—will open with an empty saddle ceremony, a memorial to Kenneth Sheridan. The retired rancher and logger died in January at age 85. He was a 62-year member of the rodeo association, also a former president.

His daughter, Barbara Warren of Glenwood, says she thinks her father was the oldest member of the all-volunteer, nonprofit rodeo association. He continued to attend meetings until a couple of years ago.

Barbara, whose earliest rodeo memories date back to when she was 6 or 7, remains active in the association, as does her sister Joann Hutton, who lives in Ellensburg. Barbara's son Kenneth is a third generation rodeo member.

Barbara's cousin, Jerry Ladiges, is rodeo historian, with a collection of photos and memorabilia that dates back to informal rodeos held as early as 1910. Among the items in his collection are handwritten membership lists from the 1940s, when rodeo association dues were 50 cents a year. Members serving in World War II, including Jerry's father, Art Ladiges, were "carried on" for the war's duration.

Jerry's archives also include several early rodeo tickets. Admission to the "Camas Prairie Pioneers Glenwood, Wash. Rodeo" cost 40 cents in 1934 and 1935, \$1.25 in 1945.

Jerry also got involved with the rodeo early on. "When I was knee-high to a grasshopper," he says, recalling his father asking him if he wanted to help with the ticket gate. "I wanted no part of the (rodeo) stock, but I told Dad, I will join you in a heartbeat."

Several decades later, Jerry still takes tickets. He proudly displays the rodeo buckle presented to him by the rodeo association in 2002, marking 42 years of service.



Ollie Kreps, left, and Bill Leaton carry the colors during the 1968 Ketchum Kalf Rodeo.

Through the years, the rodeo and rodeo association “has changed just a little bit from what it was,” Keith says

He notes, for example, there are female members now. It originally was an all-male organization.

Keith grew up on rodeo stories. One favorite involves old-timer Osmar Kuhnhausen and his “chariot,” a home-built affair on two Model A Ford wheels. He would barrel into the rodeo arena with the chariot hitched to a wild cow.

The rodeo used to include a dance at the old Glenwood school. Keith says it was a rowdy moneymaker, with “a lot of people thrown in jail, lots of fistfights and drinking.” The dance was succeeded by the more sedate beer garden, which features a live band.

Keith remembers first going to rodeo association meetings when he was about 13.

“All I did was drive nails back in, repairing where the boards were loose,” he says. “Now we’re all steel except for some wood in between. We’ve changed everything.”

He credits Charles Allen as instigator of the change to steel. Chuck, who now lives in White Salmon, was a rodeo association member who also served as president. He pushed for replacement of wood in the early 1980s, when steel was much cheaper.

“It started with the bullpens,” Keith says, noting the changes moved to the grandstands, corrals, roping chutes and beer garden area. “The whole thing is steel right now. It’s a really nice facility that doesn’t take a lot of maintenance.”

Mary Pierce, who is doing rodeo publicity this year, says the entire community gets involved with the rodeo in some way or another. The Glenwood Homemakers prepare and serve the cowboy pancake breakfast on Sunday. The Glenwood Women’s Club runs what is now a modern-looking cook shack at the rodeo grounds.

“In 1934, they built a campfire and cooked grub over the campfire and sold it to rodeo visitors,” Mary says.

Mary, who grew up in Trout Lake, moved back to Glenwood a few years ago with her husband, Glenn, who grew up in Glenwood. They live on his family place. Both Mary and Glenn, a forester, are retired from the U.S. Forest Service.

In the 40 years they were gone, living in Oregon, Washington and Alaska, Trout Lake “changed a lot,” she says. “But Glenwood is so much the same.” ■



Jerry Ladiges and Barbara Warren look at memorabilia from past Ketchum Kalf Rodeos.

Two Event-Filled Days

The Ketchum Kalf Rodeo starts at 1 p.m. both days, June 18-19. Kids games and entertainment are held during the show. There will be a beer garden with live music.

- ▶ General admission is \$8 a day for adults; 12 years and under are \$3. Camp sites are \$10 a day.
- ▶ The Sun Sation mounted flag team will perform during the rodeo on both days.
- ▶ The Sunday schedule includes a cowboy breakfast, 6:30 a.m. to 10 a.m., served at the Glenwood School. Cowboy church services at the rodeo grounds begin at

9 a.m. A rodeo parade through Glenwood begins at 11 a.m.

Prizes include:

- ▶ The Shawna Roberson Memorial Buckle awarded to the winner of junior open barrel racing.
- ▶ The H.L. “Tye” Murray Memorial Jacket goes to the cowboy who wins the most money.
- ▶ The Ladiges family presents the Hank Ladiges buckle to a hardworking member of the rodeo association.
- ▶ A saddle is presented to the man or woman who is top all-around competitor in the Bickleton, Glenwood and Goldendale rodeos.