

Stick Horses Ride Again!

By Judith Beaudet Reed

Despite the morning snowfall, a good-sized crowd of cowboys and cowgirls of all ages, mounted on stick horses of all breeds, showed up at the Seneca School arena (gym) for the fourth annual stick horse rodeo on Jan. 28.

Spectators and contestants filled their bellies with camp cookies Kris and Darla Long's chili and cornbread, browsed the trade show, and made last-minute entries for rodeo events. Vikki Rider's Root Beer Garden and Kaidee Weaver's Broomstick Bakery enjoyed a brisk business all afternoon.

Jack Southworth, rodeo announcer extraordinaire, kicked off the rodeo at 1:00 with the Grand Entry, led by Grant County Rodeo Queen Mary Jo Larssen mounted on a pink stick horse. She was followed by the flag-waving Seneca School rodeo court, Queen Fallon Weaver and Princesses Jessica Carter and Jaylynn Bishop. Next came the contestants. All circled the arena, and then stopped in the middle with quiet respect as Derrik Rider sang the Star-Spangled Banner.

After they circled out of the arena, a fine paint stick horse, bred and donated by Mary Branstetter, was led in for auction. The high bidder was Tammy Cartner, whose lucky daughter Rheanna rode the new steed in the day's events.

The first event was just for the fun of it, the sheep tail untie for preschoolers. Each little cowpoke rode up to the sheep, dismounted, and untied the ribbon on its tail.

Ed Newton, flagger, and Alan Miller and Julie Reynolds, timers and scorekeepers, readied themselves for the real competition.

First up was the barrel racing. Spectators witnessed many interesting patterns and some heated competition among the adult cowgirls.

The Calcutta barrel race was highly-charged as well, with bidder Mat Carter enjoying a doubly-sweet success as the team he bought, consisting of



Contributed

Edison Hahn, 3, is already a professional stick horse rider.

himself and son Jerry, rode into a blistering first place win.

The bronc riding event this year featured some extra-rank broncs from the Seneca School remuda. Many cowpokes bit the dust long before their eight seconds were up, and Nurse Goodbody (Lindsey Sachs) was hard put to doctor their many injuries.

Rodeo clowns Krista Qual and Jolynn Bishop, pickup man Mat Carter, and pickup girl Mary Larssen made sure all bronc riders survived this dangerous event.

Will Meyers wowed the crowd with such a high-style ride that judges Dennis Reynolds and Jina Carniglia awarded him a whopping score of 90.

The Seneca School Stick Horse Drill Team (the K-2 class), led by Andrea Officer, performed to music and delighted the crowd with their precision and stick horse control.

A second auction was then held, and after a hot bidding war between Alan Miller and Jonna Bishop, Jonna emerged victorious with an Indian horse created by Linda Starbuck. Linda began with a Breyer model, then painted symbols on it and adorned it with her hand-crafted leather saddle, horsehair braided reins, beaded cradleboard and breastcollar, tiny clay pots, and a pine-needle basket.

The final event was the pole bending, in which the crowd enjoyed the many variations of patterns and riding styles. Poles have never been bent with such flair!

At the rodeo's end, Queen Mary Jo Larssen presented High Point prizes to Ely

Carniglia (preschool-kindergarten), Leonard Radinovich (grades 1-3), Jonathan Delaney (grades 4-6), Jolynn Bishop (grades 7-12), and Kaidee Weaver (adult).

• Judith Beaudet Reed is a retired Seneca Elementary teacher.

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We have already built the store front for the mercantile-dry goods store, a saloon, the marshall's office and Howdy's kitchen.

Howdy has 501 (3) tax exemption status and will give anyone that donate supplies to build the town a receipt for full value of the items.

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