

# Of a certain age.....

By Sue Stafford  
Columnist

Every year on Saturday morning of Rodeo Weekend, I can be found standing on the corner of East Cascade Avenue and North Larch Street, where the parade turns left, watching the quintessential small-town-America affair with horses, hotrods, flags, floats, and fire engines.

The parade holds a special place in my memory because when I was eight years old, I rode a horse in the rodeo parade.

My longest-time friend (we've been friends since we were four) had an Uncle Ralph, who, at that time, owned a ranch in Camp Sherman. That ranch, across the road from Lake Creek Lodge, is now the residential area known as Metolius Meadows, with houses standing where cattle and horses used to graze.

I was fortunate to spend many wonderful carefree summer days on the ranch because my friend's father, Harold, was Ralph's brother and also had a house on the ranch. The house backed up to Lake Creek and is still there today, although it has been broken up into several

condo units.

As a child, I didn't just wish to have a horse – I wanted to be one and would gallop around snorting and pawing the ground. When at the ranch, I lived for the time spent with the horses in the pasture. I loved the trail rides we took with Judy and Terry Moye, the children of the ranch foreman and his wife – Dolly and Ardith.

The previous summer, my friend, also named Susie, was thrown by her horse, Rosie, as they were riding up Black Butte. Besides being badly shaken and frightened by her fall, Susie received a deep gash on her chin, which required stitches and is still faintly visible today. For the rest of that summer and the beginning of the next, she was a little horse-shy.

When plans were made for Terry, Judy, Susie, and me to ride in the Sisters rodeo parade that next summer, Susie refused to ride alone on her own horse, so we rode double, with me at the controls, on the old gray gelding Syracuse. Donning our cowboy hats and boots, we piled into the back of Dolly's pick-up with the horse trailer hitched behind to drive into town.

Sixty-five years have

passed since that one and only time I got to ride in the parade. After moving to Sisters in 2004, I did march in the Garden Club rake and shovel drill team once.

Lots more horseback riding took place in the years following that summer of 1952, and Susie and I remain close friends. Neither of us still rides horses but we love to reminisce on her visits to Sisters about our grade school summers spent at the ranch. We caught crawdads in Lake Creek. Raw bacon on an open safety pin at the end of a string attached to a willow branch worked well for catching those small crustaceans.

The fresh cold water of the creek was used to fill the ranch swimming pool. The only way to get in the pool was to run and jump because it was just too frigid

to submerge slowly.

The square dances on the weekends at the Camp Sherman Community Hall held great allure for us. I liked watching all the young cowboys because, at that point in my life, I had decided I was going to marry a rancher and have five boys. Things changed!

The Camp Sherman Store was a big draw for us to wander on down for candy or ice cream or soda pop. In those days we would stand on the bridge over the Metolius and throw breadcrumbs to the fish.

I still remember the

straight stretch of Highway 20 after coming down off the pass. It was paved with red cinder asphalt and was beautiful with the giant green ponderosas right down either side. We were filled with anticipation from that point to the turnoff to Camp Sherman and could hardly wait to pull through the gate onto the ranch and one more memory-making visit to Camp Sherman.

As I watch the parade this Saturday, in my mind's eye I will see Susie and me and old Syracuse coming down Cascade and waving.

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