



The One Arm Bandit will return to Sisters this summer. PHOTO PROVIDED

The One Arm Bandit will return to Sisters Rodeo

Get ready to welcome the return of The One Arm Bandit to Sisters Rodeo. The 15-time PRCA Specialty Act of the Year, John Payne is coming back to entertain crowds as the most popular rodeo act in the history of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association.

Whip in hand, black cur hounds at his bidding, he's gone exotic this year, herding a zebra stallion and three paint horses from horse- or mule-back around the arena, then onto the bed of a truck. He and his mount follow, coaxing them all to the roof of a stock trailer for the grand finale.

He will also ride in the Sisters Rodeo Parade, sometimes mounted on his horse on the roof of a moving stock trailer.

The display of horsemanship and communication is unsurpassed in this act, which has taken Payne and his long-horn steers and buffalo all over the U.S. and Canada. The act has been seen at some of the top horse shows and rodeos in the nation, always stunning an appreciative crowd. A few years ago, he even shipped his animals to Dubai to entertain royalty.

Payne was born on an Oklahoma ranch, where he spent his life on a horse with dogs alongside. When hired to herd some intractable bulls, John and his cur dogs earned

the respect of a ranch owner as the bulls were penned in short order. The ranch owner shared the story, and the result was the beginning of Payne's career in the rodeo arena.

Many years ago Payne was doing repair on a high-line power pole; believing the power was disconnected, he grabbed a line to stabilize himself. As the voltage burned through his arm and hand, he shortly fell to what seemed sure death. He was revived, took a few months off and went back to ranching, shy one arm and hand. Thus, became "The One Arm Bandit."

Payne is a most compassionate cowboy who loves to interact with children, especially those with disabilities, encouraging them with his story.

During his last visit to Sisters Payne visited Sisters Elementary School along with the rodeo queen and clown, an annual school assembly tradition. The One Arm Bandit rode a mule into the commons to the delight of Sisters students, teachers, and staff.

Sisters Rodeo will begin June 5 with Xtreme Bulls followed by four rodeo performances June 7-9. For tickets, call 541-549-0121 or 1-800-827-7522, or visit the ticket office at 220 W. Cascade Ave. in Sisters. For information visit www.sistersrodeo.com.

Fireside stories feature rodeo history

By Sue Stafford
Correspondent

The history of the Sisters Rodeo is long and storied. Some of the "facts" depend on who you talk to, but one thing is certain: The Sisters Rodeo has always been an all-volunteer, community-wide event since its inception.

On Tuesday evening, April 23, 7 p.m., at FivePine Conference Center, Three Sisters Historical Society will offer a glimpse into some of the stories surrounding the rodeo at their third Fireside Stories Evening. "Eight Seconds in Sisters: Early History of the Sisters Rodeo" will feature several storytellers with tales of earlier days — some they experienced themselves and some handed down from bygone days. Because these cowboys have been as hard to herd as cats, who the storytellers will be keeps changing. For sure, Dick Elliott and Mike Oxman are on hand with Floyd Leithauser as the "bartender emcee."



Elliott-Flagel off Mickie Sisters, 1944. Photo by [unclear]

In addition, cowgirl poet A. K. Moss will share some of her original poetry about cowboys, Western life, and rodeos. Longtime rodeo association member Bonnie Malone will read her short history of the rodeo to set the stage for the evening's stories.

The rodeo association will be on hand selling this year's rodeo poster featuring a barrel racer in action. They will also have on display photos of previous rodeo activities and several earlier rodeo

posters. Rodeo buckles, old rodeo tack, and other memorabilia will be available for viewing before and after the presentation.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with displays for viewing, history books available for purchase, and time to swap your own rodeo memories. Admission for TSHS supporters is free, \$10 for the general public. Memberships may be purchased that evening to support the work of TSHS.

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