

KNOX: Volunteers make Sisters Rodeo happen each year

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a beating.”

Knox always wanted to participate in Sisters Rodeo, but for many years after she moved here in 1977, that just wasn't in the cards. She operated a horse breeding barn for Patterson Ranch, and it was an all-consuming endeavor.

“So I had *no* time,” Knox said.

Horses have been at the center of Bonnie Knox's life since she was a girl.

“I wanted a horse from the time I was 3,” she recalled. “And finally my dad said, ‘If you can save enough money,

I'll match what you save and we'll get you a horse.’”

Knox put her nose to the grindstone.

“I collected acorns for the pig farmers and they paid by the pound,” she said. “I washed dogs and I walked them. This is how I made money.”

She's been in the saddle ever since — though she's annoyed at the lack of trail time with her friends in the Sisters Saddlebags Club so far this year. Weather again.

“I wasn't on my horse from October till May,” she said.

When Knox isn't riding or working, you'll likely find her at one of Sisters' music venues enjoying her favorite local players — Dry Canyon Stampede, The Anvil

Blasters, Bitter Creek or Bill Keale.

“I just enjoy it a lot,” she said.

She's almost always turned out in high Western style — often representing Sisters Rodeo's black-and-red colors with a custom hat made by Gene Baldwin of Sisters, featuring her Scottish Clan badge.

At the Rodeo, Knox serves as an usher — a more demanding job than it may appear. Keeping people away from the arena rail is critical to safety. Clods of dirt can spray through the rails, and riders have been known to be launched over them. But people are drawn to that rail like moths to flame.

“That's the hardest part — keeping them off the rail,” Knox said. “As they walk in, they want to see what's going on.”

Ushers often don't get to watch much Rodeo action during their shift. But Knox says she'll be fully attentive during the entertainment intermission this year.

“I'm going to be watching with both eyes this year, because John Payne's



PHOTO BY JIM CORNELIUS

Bonnie Knox represents Sisters Rodeo's black-and-red colors — with her custom-made Gene Baldwin hat with her Scottish Clan badge.

coming back — the One-Arm Bandit,” she said. “That's who I got my dog from.”

Knox is proud to be part of a volunteer crew that brings an extraordinary range of skills and experience to bear on producing the event. If something needs to be done, somebody knows how to do it, has the equipment to get it

done — and there are willing hands to do the work.

“Every year we get something more done,” Knox said. “I'm very proud of how it looks.... We're out there working and getting filthy and we're laughing and talking and you get done and look around and — ooooooh, that looks really good!”



PHOTO PROVIDED

Bonnie Knox in her element — working on the Sisters Rodeo painting crew.


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