

Round-up draws horses, riders

Fairgrounds hosts rodeo menagerie

By RICHARD WIENS
Of the Emerald

Last week, Eugene played host to an entire sub-culture as 252 cowboys arrived with their motor-homes and horse trailers for the four-day Emerald Empire Round-Up.

In search of bucks, cowboys travel around the western United States and Canada with their families or girl friends. They pay their own traveling expenses and equipment costs, and even have to shell out entry fees for each rodeo they compete in. Only the very best make substantial salaries.

"Nobody's getting rich in this business," says Peter Powell, a promotions official for the Eugene rodeo. He cites as an example Danny Torricellas, who is seventh in the nation in all-around earnings, yet has made only \$19,000 this year.

"It's truly a sport that is still done because people like to do it," says Powell.

People apparently like to watch it too, because the fairground bleachers were filled Thursday for the second night of competition. The audience was dominated by straight-looking, middle-aged folks, most of whom probably came from rural areas outside the city.

By the time the competition started, most of the crowd was hooting for action. A greased pig chase held before the rodeo was a dismal flop. First off, the piggies were not greased. When let loose, they congregated near a fence and refused to run when the stampeding contestants came racing toward them. It was over in a matter of seconds, as the fastest runner scooped up the squealing porkers.

After that, piped-in country music was the only entertainment.

"In Salt Lake City, Utah
He told me that he loved me
But even then I knew

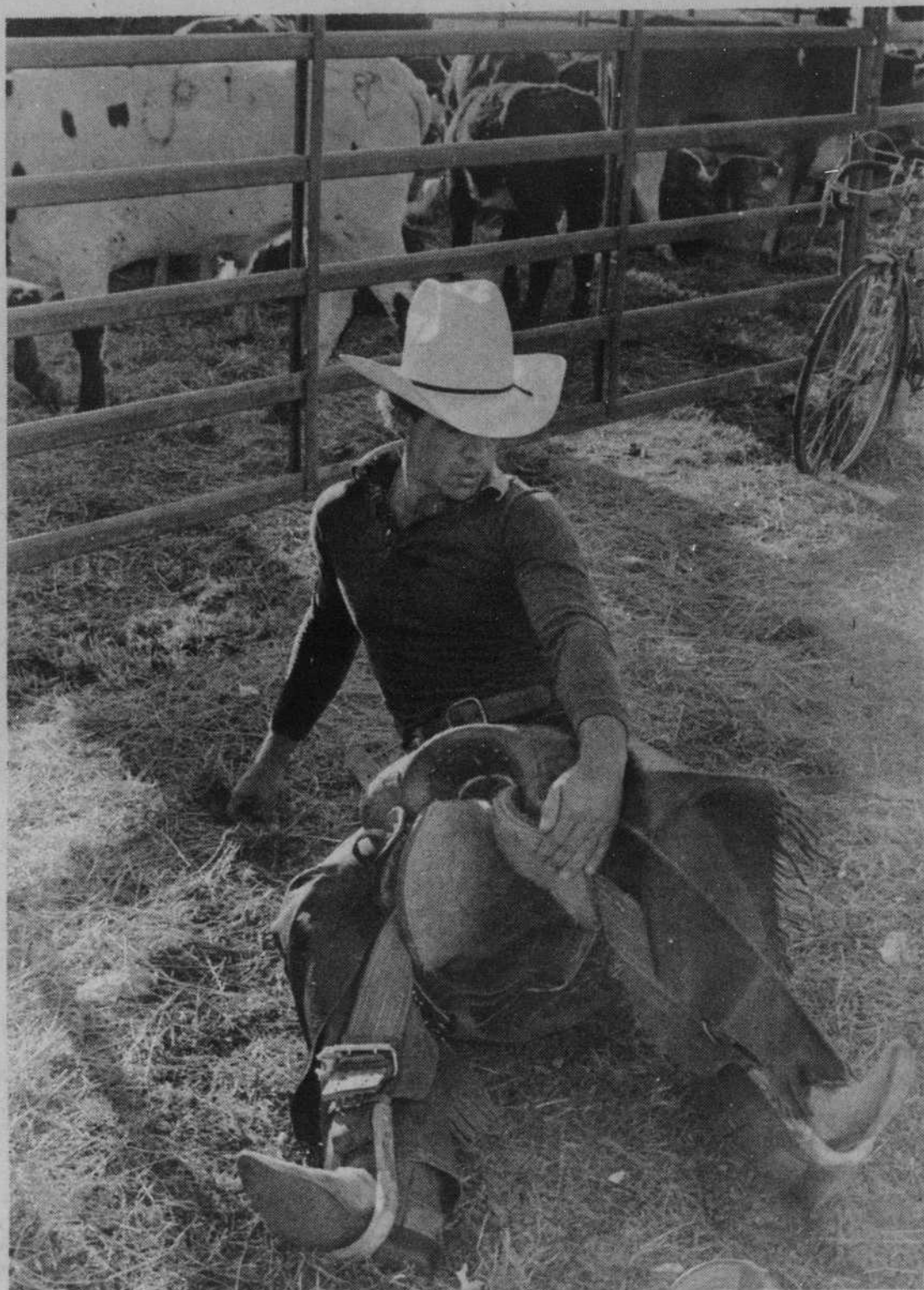


Photo by Morry Celnik

The horse probably presented a bigger challenge than the ground, but this rider made sure his stirrups were the right length before his run at the Emerald Empire Round-up Thursday.

He was not the settling kind
Rodeo cowboy, he'll never settle down."

After a taped invocation prayed for "the cowboys in cowboy heaven," a bareback rider mounted a bronc in stall number one. He tightened the reins and wedged his left hand into the hand-hold of the bareback rigging. Then he waited, mentally preparing himself for various sorts of rides.

"There's endless possibilities of what the horse can do," says Barry Ruda, a bareback rider from Baker, Ore. "He might go right, left or not buck at all. You have no control over where the horse goes."

The gate flew open, and the cowboy was on the first wild ride of the night. Attempting to exploit the bronc's bucking motion, he dug his spurs into the horse's shoulders each time it kicked back its hind legs. For a moment he seemed in control. Then, on the fourth buck, his jerky ride came to an abrupt halt as he crashed to the ground.

The fallen cowboy rose slowly and walked out of the arena. He was sore all over, but especially in the thighs, butt, crotch and right arm. Meanwhile, the furious bronc continued bucking until the bareback rigging was pulled off of him.

The riders were judged half on their own efforts and half on the performance of the horse. To be judged at all, they needed to stay on the horse eight seconds. Thursday night, the first four riders failed to do so.

Unlike most sporting events, there is no home team to cheer for in rodeo. The crowd cheers the few Eugene cowboys loudest, but every rider staying on his bronc for eight seconds receives a noisy ovation.

After bareback riding comes calf roping. The cowboys are on more cooperative horses in this event, and when their stall gate opens they gallop after a fleeing young cow. After giving the calf a whiplash by lassoing it around the neck, the rider dismounts and ties the calf's legs as fast as possible.

This event stems from branding season on ranches, when cattle must be harmlessly incapacitated for branding. Indeed, "everything done out here is born out of work on the ranch," says Powell.

(Continued on Page 5)



'Major Charles Winchester'

'LUV'

an adult comedy

with

David Ogden Stiers

co-star of M*A*S*H

ON STAGE with
George and Priscilla Lauris

NOW PLAYING JULY 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15

At the air-conditioned Oregon Repertory Theater
2nd Floor Atrium Building
Curtain at 8 p.m.

Admission is \$6.50 by advance reservation,
\$7.50 at the door.

Tickets available at Skeie's Downtown 345-0354,
Skeie's Valley River 342-4496, Van Duyn's
Interior Accessories SouthTowne Shops 686-9276 and
Oregon Repertory Theater Downtown Atrium 99 W. 10th 485-1946

HELD OVER
one week only



STORE WIDE SALE

Jeans Sale
Jeans Sale
Jeans Sale
Jeans further reduced! Sale
Jeans \$16.99- Sale
Jeans 13.99 Sale
Jeans Sale
Jeans Sale
Jeans Sale
Jeans Sale
Jeans Sale

13th AVE.
CLOTHES WORKS
880 E. 13th on campus • 342-2320

