



ABOVE: Happy Canyon princesses Virginia Conner and Gabriella Lewis ride on the back of a four wheeler Thursday on the Pendleton Round-Up grounds.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

LEFT: Jason Lamere, of Pendleton, performs Thursday in the Native American dance portion of the Pendleton Round-Up.

RIGHT: A little boy watches Thursday's Pendleton Round-Up.

Staff photos by Kathy Aney



CANUTT: Appeared in 'Gone with the Wind' rescuing Scarlett O'Hara

Continued from 1A

The Young Buck
Yakima Canutt, christened Enos Edward Canutt, was born in 1895. The baby came in at 12 pounds, possessing such vigor that when the doctor arrived at the home, tucked in the hills of Snake River, Wash., he'd already "torn a strip off the sheet, made a loop in it and commenced to rope the bedpost," according to one tall tale Canutt recalled in "Stuntman," his autobiography. Another story suggests he teethed on a branding iron.

Canutt grew up as a maverick, learning to hunt, trap, shoot and fight. He broke his first bronc at age 11 in an act of vengeance. The horse had thrown his brother a few days earlier, cracking his skull.

Over the next five years, he'd try again and again to jump on the backs of well-known bronses, with his father stepping in to say it was too dangerous. At age 16, Canutt won a bronc competition at a county fair in Colfax, Wash. He took to the circuit and only a year later, in 1914, he was off to the Pendleton Round-Up where he competed in saddle bronc riding and bulldogging and received his lifelong nickname.

He and two pals had downed a quart of Kentucky bourbon before trying out some bronses in advance of the competition. Needless to say, the horses were winning. At some point, Canutt yelled, "Bring out another one of your good



Photo courtesy of the Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon Hall of Fame
Yakima Canutt competes in bulldogging at the 1919 Pendleton Round-Up.

bronses and I'll show you what a Yakima rider can really do."

A photographer from Portland named William Bowman snapped Canutt upside down, mid-ejection. He captioned it "Yakima Canutt." The cowboys took to the nickname in jest, and it stuck.

The Reigning Champion
In 1917, Canutt entered the Round-Up's saddle bronc and bulldogging competitions.

The audience broke the young rodeo's attendance records, and the saddle bronc competition alone featured 69 professional cowboys.

"In a contest with that many competitors, you've certainly got to have what it takes to emerge a winner," Canutt wrote. He surely had what it took, because at 21 he became the all-around champion.

The years 1918 to 1923 saw Canutt in the winner's circle many times. He gained three more all-around titles

at the Round-Up in 1919, 1920 and 1923. He won the first leg of the Roosevelt Trophy, which was granted to cowboys who accumulated the most points between the Round-Up and Cheyenne's Frontier Days. The Fort Worth Rodeo in Texas came to be known as "Yak's show" after he won the title there in three consecutive years.

In the fall of 1918, Canutt was given a 30-day furlough from his World War I post in Bremerton, Wash., to defend his rodeo titles. He wore his navy uniform in the bulldogging competition and was such a hit with the crowds that the show directors felt the need to create a mandatory western dress code for competitors, according to Randy Thomas, the Round-Up publicity director. The code is still in place today.

The Hollywood Hero
Canutt's first visit to Los Angeles was for a rodeo competition. The year was

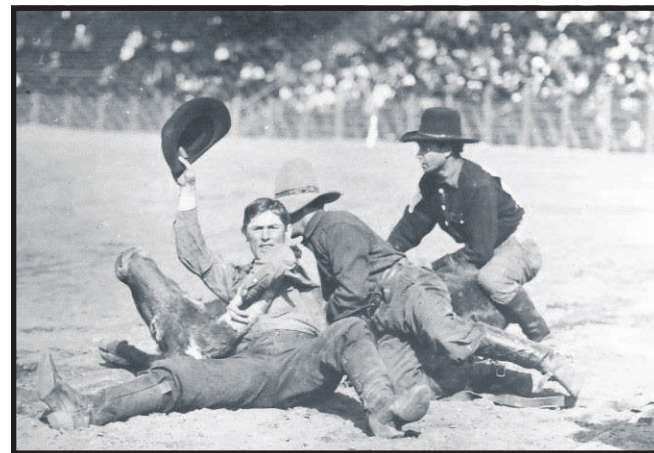


Photo courtesy of the Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon Hall of Fame
Yakima Canutt waves to the crowd in this undated bulldogging photo.

1919, and he decided to stick around through the winter, spending time with the emerging western film social set. Former Pendleton steer roping champion Tom Grimes introduced Canutt to director Tom Mix. By the next winter, Canutt held a role as a horseman for a 12-part series called "Lightning Brice." It was his first role in a 50-year career that included nearly 350 films.

Canutt spent the first bit of it as an actor, starring in "blood-and-thunder quickies," as they called them, produced by small no-name studios. But by 1928 all films were talkies, and Canutt had suffered permanent vocal damage during his stint in the Navy.

"My voice lacked resonance," he wrote. "When I heard it for the first time on a sound track, I thought they were kidding me. It sounded like a hillbilly in a well."

Fortunately, he saw his opening in what the new talkies lacked: thrills, action

and adventure.

It's his stunt work that Canutt is most known for today. According to the Academy of Motion Picture Art and Science, Canutt created the profession. He possessed the mix of courage and wits to design means of keeping actors and livestock safe during daring crashes and realistic fights.

You might have seen Canutt in "Gone with the Wind," rescuing Scarlett O'Hara from flaming debris, galloping through Atlanta's streets with only a one-horse hack. In "Stagecoach," Canutt doubles for John Wayne, fording a river in an eight-horse rig and jumping from the top of the coach to a galloping horse — "a gag that you could easily rub yourself out with if you make the wrong move," Canutt claimed.

Indeed, Canutt's six-foot frame did feel the toll of stunt work. Over his career he broke both ankles, a shoulder and six ribs. Later

in life, he took roles behind the camera as a producer and second unit director. His most famous directing work takes place in "Ben Hur," for one of the most iconic scenes in film history. Canutt orchestrated the wild chariot race using 18 cameras, 70 Lippizaner horses and a \$15 million budget.

'Full of life'
Canutt died in 1986. When asked how his grandfather wanted to be remembered, Zeke Canutt said "it doesn't matter. Everyone already knows him." He added that if given the chance, the cowboy would surely have another go at it. "He was full of life," he said.

Today, the Round-Up plays tribute to the 100th anniversary of Canutt's first all-around title. His son, Joe, and his family are visiting Pendleton this week from Santa Barbara, Calif. And folks can see Canutt as the center figure on the 2017 souvenir poster, the star of a video documentary played in the arena and a prominent feature of the Round-Up Hall of Fame.

He's one cowboy who's guaranteed to be remembered.

As acting great Charlton Heston said, "It's not only his work, but he, himself who provides us with a model of the best kind of professional — the kind who always gives his best. In a time when, increasingly, nobody cares about excellence, Yak cared."

Contact Emily Olson at eolson@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0809

DANCE: 'It's powerful, breaking down the stigma of substance abuse recovery'

Continued from 1A

Picard-Squiemphen, who has been sober for 17 years and attends the dance with her family.

The dance is put on by the New Beginnings Coalition, a group of tribal members from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla who live sober and help others try to do the same.

"We try to provide sober events for families and we do it in the way of our cultural traditions," said Debra Shippentower, a community engagement specialist with Yellowhawk.

The cultural aspect of the event is a safe haven for some, said Yellowhawk's Becky Greear, the director of behavioral health.

"There's a saying — 'culture is prevention,'" said Greear. "Having traditional events with drumming, singing, games, is a protective factor for tribal youth."

Greear added that having the dance in a central location, on a busy night of Round-Up, speaks volumes.

"It's powerful, breaking down the stigma of substance abuse recovery and bringing it out of the darkness," she said.

She estimated that in the last few years, between 100 and 120 people have attended.

"It gets bigger every year," she said.

The event includes a blessing and a meal, as well as various games and dancing.

Greear said there are about 50 to 75 tribal members in recovery, some of whom attend the dance. Others steer clear of Round-Up entirely, she said. But the Sobriety Dance draws nontribal people from the Pendleton recovery community, as well as others from out of town who seek a support system.

Greear is not a tribal member, but she is 30 years in recovery. She finds the environment of the Sobriety Dance supportive.

"It's so counter to what I've seen a lot of during Round-Up," she said. "A lot of drinking of a lot of alcohol, and sometimes a lot of problems that result from that. In my professional world, we deal with the side effects of those problems, so I enjoy seeing people be able to come out and celebrate the opposite."

She said it's important to be able to show people that they can have fun and even dance without alcohol or drugs.

"There was a time in my life when I definitely couldn't," she said.

Picard-Squiemphen remembers the moment she decided to get clean, and the struggle to stay sober.

When her son was an infant, she noticed he was

turning purple. She rushed him to the hospital, and he was later diagnosed with apnea. On one visit, she said she remembers doctors telling her she smelled like marijuana.

"They said it seems like he's giving you a sign that he's holding his breath because he doesn't like the smell," she said. "So I walked away, and never looked back."

Her son is now a healthy, 6-foot-3 firefighter with four kids, and Picard never again felt the urge to use marijuana though she continued to drink recreationally.

In 1996 her husband died in a car accident, and the trauma pushed her to start drinking more. After a bad experience at Round-Up, she decided to cut back. But the defining moment, she said, was when her little grandson asked her why she drank.

"I didn't have an answer," she said. "(My husband

now) and I stopped, and never turned around once. The sobriety dance is our celebration that we made the right decision."

Picard-Squiemphen said she no longer attends the rodeo, and that she misses seeing friends during that time. But she and her family always look forward to the dance.

"My grandkids love it, they love any kind of dancing," she said.

Shippentower said the coalition tries to provide events every season, especially events like Round-Up and New Year's that are centered around alcohol.

"When you're trying to be sober, it feels like there's hardly anything that's not tied to alcohol," Shippentower said. "I think any time is difficult for you."

Jackie Thompson is a Pendleton native who has been coming to the dance since its first year. She is 26 years sober.

"Any kind of sobriety event, I try to attend," she said. "It's just another reason to be sober another year. I don't need to drink to have fun and this is a reason why."

She said one of the most exciting things about the dance is seeing newly sober people realize they have a support system.

"Last year there was a guy who was an hour sober, and he said he really wanted to break his sobriety, but he didn't want to leave because he was having fun with us. That was cool," she said.

The event is open to anyone interested in coming, whether a tribal member or not. Dinner is served at 7 p.m. and the dance begins at 8.

Contact Jayati Ramakrishnan at 541-564-4534 or jramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com