

'Go Western' at this year's Chief Joseph Days Rodeo

Howdy. The excitement is at a crescendo as the 2017 version of Chief Joseph Days Rodeo kicks off. Full of fun and pageantry, the rodeo is also a great way to learn about all things Western — capital “W.”

We have designed this year's rodeo publication as a way to help readers who may not have been born into rodeo to understand and thus better enjoy what's happening. We threw in a bit of history for context.

Many Wallowa County residents are the descendent of ranchers, where rodeo has its roots. But as our county continues to grow, the number of people who may need a bit of explanation to enjoy the events is needed.

And, I would surmise that a good brush-up wouldn't hurt for any of our readers.



Paul Wahl
editor

A wide variety of events have grown up around the actual rodeo, which runs four nights. The celebration allows local organizations to step up and participate and perhaps even make some money for their coffers.

There are two groups of “stars” in the rodeo performances:

The two-legged variety and the four-legged.

Cowboys — and cowgirls — who make a living entering rodeos travel from event to event, put down their entry fee, and pray for the best.

It's a lifestyle most of us would find much too grueling, yet these athletes thrive.

There are two sets of four-legged athletes as well — horses and bulls. Horses are used in most of the pro rodeo

events in great numbers, from barrel racing to saddle bronc riding. Watching a roping horse in action is similar to watching a dance between horse and rider.

Bulls are simply ornery snot-slinging bundles of bone and sinew. Most of the guys who string a rope around them and climb on their backs will tell you they do it for the adrenaline rush.

Bull riding is often called America's first “extreme” sport.

Don't worry too much about not understanding exactly what's happening. Rodeo announcers are terrific at keeping everyone apprised of what's happening and why.

A special thank you to all of our advertisers who make this publication possible.

With that said, enjoy the opportunity to “Go Western.” See you at the rodeo!

Paul Wahl is editor of the Wallowa County Chieftain.

Special thanks to Ellen Bishop who contributed many of the photos used in this special edition.

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