

WEAR WESTERN: LOOK THE PART

By Paul Wahl
Wallowa County Chieftain

The Chief Joseph Days Rodeo is a come-as-you-are event. You don't need any particular article of clothing to enter the gates; however, there is a heavy emphasis on the Western lifestyle at most events.

If you've never purchased or worn Western

clothing previously, you might be hesitant to make the investment. Start by purchasing one Western item, and see if it's for you. You will likely come back for more.

Here's a "how to" for those who wish to "Go Western" from the top down.



Courtesy photo

The "Bandito" from Charlie 1 Horse is a popular Western hat style in Wallowa County.

Hats

Western hats come in two major categories — felt and straw. Felt hats are usually relegated to colder months of the year because they do a good job of keeping heads warm; however, you likely will see a handful of folks wearing them year-round. Both types of hats are available in a wide range of styles and price points. A Stetson Diamante, for instance, will set you back \$5,000. Straw hats can be had for \$19 and up. Most Western hats are a basic hat, and each owner can add a hat band to give it a personal flair.



Courtesy photo

The Wrangler Tough Enough to Wear Pink shirt is designed for men and women who wish to share their support for breast cancer survivors.

Shirts

Western shirts have been an iconic part of cowboy apparel almost since the beginning. Not that long ago, guys had one choice in shirts — a Wrangler slim fit version with snaps rather than buttons. That meant if you were less than "slim," they never fit properly. Today there are abundant sizes, shapes and colors for men and women. Most Western shirts are slightly longer so they stay tucked in while riding or competing. Average Western shirts can be purchased in the \$20-\$30 range. A top-of-the-line Rockmount vintage shirt will set you back \$150.



Courtesy photo

Cruel Girl jeans offer styles for women, both for riding and for dress-up.

Denim jeans

Also known as "blue jeans," the style was first marketed by the Levi Straus & Co. in 1871. Although you will see Levis worn at rodeos, the bulk of Western denim jeans are manufactured by Wrangler. And like their shirts, there once was one style, the original-fit cowboy-cut style. As Wrangler began to realize not everyone wanted the snug fit of the original working jeans, it began branching out. Today, Cinch jeans for guys and Cruel Girl for gals are worn at most rodeos. They come in a plethora of style and color combinations. Wrangler MWZ (mens with zipper) cowboy cut jeans sell for around \$26; Cinch jeans will run closer to \$50 a pair.

See FASHION, Page 7