

Cowboy poet, storyteller to give two performances

Cowboy poet and storyteller Jon Bowerman will amuse and delight visitors to the Morrow County Fair in Heppner on Wednesday, August 18. Two performances have been scheduled, at 2:30 p.m. on the stage in the picnic area and at 7 p.m. at the rodeo arena.

Bowerman is well known for his antics on stage where he may turn the podium into an unrideable rodeo bull, a cow with calving problems or a pickup truck with no brakes. Now he has trained his horses to do the same thing in the arena.

From his bridleless rendition of Johnny Cash's "Ragged Old Flag" where he carries Old Glory in one hand and a remote microphone in the other, through his seemingly endless supply of

funny stories, poems and comedy routines, the horses add a special flavor to the fair. After the show he is always willing to take time to show horse owners how easy it is to teach tricks like lying down, bowing or riding without the bridle.

Bowerman has worked with internationally-known clinic instructors John Lyons, Ray Hunt and Tom Dorrance, to develop a system of natural communication between horse and rider that he and his wife teach on their ranch. He also worked on ranches in a dozen states, "riding outlaw horses that most people wouldn't walk in the corral with to taking care of cows that didn't want to be taken care of," and spent several years on the professional rodeo circuit.

"I was lucky in rodeo," he says. "I broke my neck before I starved to death." While recovering from that accident he began writing cowboy poetry. By the time he was invited to the First Annual Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada, he had already penned more than a hundred poems, most of them humorous, about stampeding cattle, runaways, buckoffs and what it's like to share a rainsoaked bedroll with critters that creep and crawl in the night.

The exposure he received in Elko, combined with television appearances in the U.S., Germany and Australia, created a demand that has kept him on the road almost constantly for the past half dozen years.



People who were bored by the poetry they studied in school will be in for a pleasant surprise. "Cascade Horseman Magazine" wrote, "Anyone who ever looked on poetry as a placid and dignified art form hasn't seen or heard Jon Bowerman in action." Whether on stage or in the arena with one of his trick horses, Bowerman frequently goes into the audience to recruit help loading a sick calf on a half broke horse or to ask a lady to help translate the menu of a fancy French restaurant. It isn't what is commonly referred to as a reading, it's a performance.

Although action and audience participation have become trademarks of a Jon Bowerman show, he is perhaps best known for providing entertainment that is suitable for the whole family. "I won't tell a story on stage that

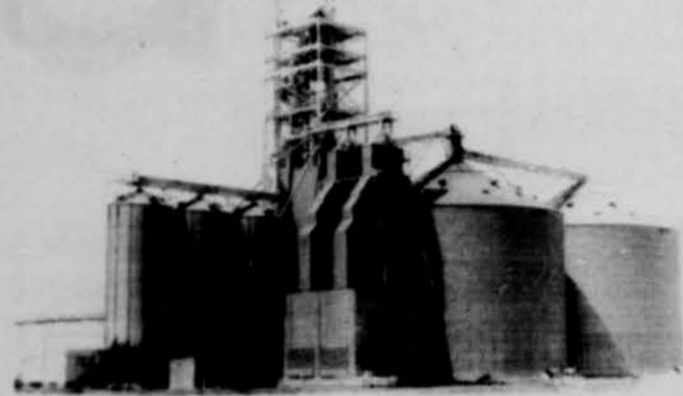
I wouldn't feel comfortable telling in church," he relates. "I don't believe a story has to be dirty or profane to be funny."

At the fair he will do one show on horseback in the arena and another on stage. Check the fair calendar for performance times.

Bowerman is the author of two books of cowboy verse, more than five hundred feature stories and articles in magazines ranging from "Western Horseman" to "Water Digest" and writes a monthly column for the "Capital Press" poking fun at government, taxes and "people we elect to sit around and do nothing but give themselves raises." Bowerman has recorded three cassettes of his poetry through American Music Company. Books and tapes will be available for sale at the fair.

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Saddle making keeps Anstotegui busy



Photo by Joyce Hughes
 Lee Anstotegui fits leather peice around a saddle he's making for Dan Brosnan.

In keeping with the heritage of his Basque ancestors, Lee Anstotegui has kept a close association with livestock and horses throughout his life.

Concentrating on saddle making for the past three years, he has built 27 new saddles with more orders on the wall. And for the first time, Anstotegui's professional handiwork is displayed in the Morrow County Amateur Calf Roping championship saddle that has been sponsored by the Kinzua Mill Corporation for the past 33 years.

Born in Jordan Valley, Anstotegui spent his school years in California. But cowboy life drew him back to the Burns and Lakeview areas. Anstotegui is also an experienced farrier. He says he used to shoe horses for Bing Crosby.

Lee and his wife, Barbara,

were married in Reno in 1957. The couple have three children, Doug, Pendleton, Darwin, Alaska and Kara, a senior this year at Heppner.

The family moved to Pendleton in 1962 where he spent his time as a farrier and a trainer of horses. In the slack season, he says he spent alot of time with Doug Severe as they worked making new saddles.

In 1976, the Anstotegui's purchased Green Feed and Seed store in Heppner. Lee continued to build saddles, make chaps and do tack repair while operating the store. Since they sold the store to the Proctors three years ago Lee has concentrated on turning out new saddles. However, he spends as much time in a saddle as he does building them while helping with the cattle on the Jim Ward Ranch.

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