

Square Dancers on Horseback



Medford Trail Riders boast of a unique hobby — some of the members square dance on horseback. Organized in 1944, the group of riders began to practice square dance formations while mounted, and soon became so proficient that they have performed at rodeos, horse shows, community festivals and other events throughout Oregon. Each year the riders learn a new routine and this year the dance is the Grapevine Swing. The women wear colorful blouses and extra full square dance skirts, the men traditional riding shirts and trousers. Pictured during a recent practice are (left to right) Mrs. Laurel Krause, Medford; Sam Keim, Eagle Point; Clarence Harrison, Central Point; Mrs. John Shama and Mrs. Kenneth Oswald, Medford, and Ray Benard, Central Point.



"Swing your partner" isn't quite as easy from horseback as it is in ordinary square dancing, but Sam Keim and Mrs. John Shama execute the step here with ease. The riders practice twice each week during the early part of the summer, have been invited to perform this year at Yoncalla, at the Phoenix festival in mid-June and at other events.



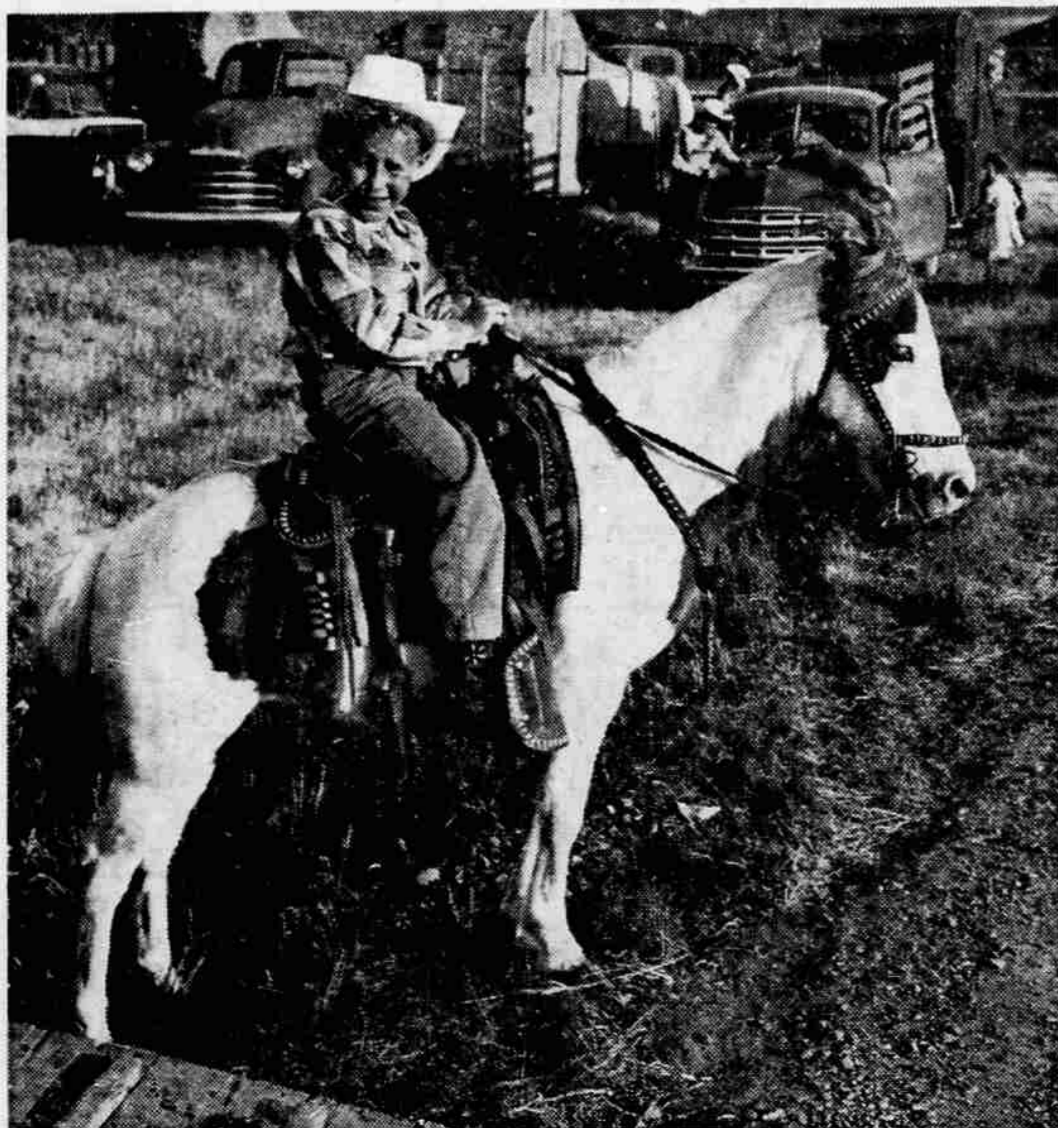
The Tom Greys of Gold Hill both ride with the square dance team, and here Mr. Grey adjusts his wife's ruffled skirt. Mr. Grey calls his horse Smokey, and Mrs. Grey's sleek black mount is Michael.



Pat Murphy (at left), caller for the Trail Riders' team, uses a powerful loud speaker in order to insure that the riders will hear his commands. Clarence Hanscom, president of the group, helps with the record player, operated by a small gasoline motor.



Flag bearers for the dance team are Miss Jean Estremado (of left) and her sister, Mrs. Robert Jacks, both Gold Hill. The Estremados all learn to ride when very young and are skillful; it is routine for them to ride after the cattle in the hills during the day, hurry home, load the horses into a big truck and drive to Central Point or Medford for team practice.



Six-year-old Kenny Foley, who has been riding since he was four, accompanies his parents, the Stanley Foleys of Gold Hill, to Trail Rider gatherings. Kenny, who rides a Shetland pony he calls Frisky, scrambled up into the big truck when it arrived at the grounds and unloaded the pony without help.



Brightly striped serapes are part of the trappings of the horses which are used as flag-bearers, and Mrs. Robert Jacks makes sure the fold is just right and the ends hanging evenly.



Women riders of the dance team, who wear the swirling dance skirts over their riding trousers, present an amusing sight when getting into the saddle. Here Clarence Harrison holds Mrs. Kenneth Oswald's horse while she mounts. The horses appear indifferent to the yards of ruffles.