



Turning the Barrels

WPCA Newsletter



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The Awards Issue: 2013 WPCA Tour Awards

2013 WPCA Chuckwagon Person of the Year — “Wagon Man”

The WPCA Chuckwagon Person of the Year is the WPCA’s highest honour. This year’s recipient of the bronze trophy is two-time Calgary Stampede Rangeland Derby champion driver **Luke Tournier**. UFA sponsors the award.



Champion chuckwagon driver **Luke Tournier** receives a bronze trophy recognizing him as the 2013 WPCA Chuckwagon Person of the Year.

The award was presented by **Jessica Barrie**, representing sponsor UFA.

Luke and his wife **Michele Tournier** make their home in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan.

Congratulations, Luke!

Comments offering support for Luke’s nomination included

- “He demonstrated overall leadership on behalf of the drivers.”
- “Luke made the long trip from Duck Lake several times to attend board meetings and represented them well.”
- “Luke stood firm in his support of the radio broadcast when it looked like we might not have one.”
- “He is one driver who understands that what is good for all the drivers and the WPCA is ultimately better than what is good for just himself.”
- “His passion comes through at times with his fiery personality when he has an issue that he believes strongly in.”
- “Many drivers look to Luke for leadership on their behalf.”
- “Luke was heavily involved in very different WPCA board issues the past two seasons and always had the best interests of the sport in mind, not personal agendas.”
- “He spent tireless hours conducting WPCA business during the race season as well, and got hurt driving another member’s wagon to help him out.”

2013 WPCA Tour Awards

WPCA World Champion Driver

This season saw **Rick Fraser** win his second world championship. In a tight battle with **Kirk Sutherland**, **Jerry Bremner** and **Kurt Ben-smiller** all season long, Rick finally prevailed on the final weekend. He was awarded the championship buckle and bronze sponsored by GMC; the Sierra Cup championship buckle, also sponsored by GMC; the WPCA world champion jacket sponsored by KMC Sales; and the world champion truck sponsored by High River Autoplex and RV.

When the dust settled at the season-opening Grande Prairie Stompede, Rick was off to a great start. This season he drove the Hellfire Suppression Services & Northwell Oilfield Hauling outfit along with outriders **Chanse Vigen** and **Chad Fike**. His success also saw him drive off in a new GMC Truck, a new Jayco Fifth Wheel, a \$25,000 winner's cheque and the 2013 Grande Prairie Stompede championship. This was also the fourth time in his career he had won that title.

In a sign of things to come, Rick finished a strong fourth in the rain-shortened Saskatoon tour stop. The following week he was back at it again, winning his second title of the year in Medicine Hat. It was also the second time in his career that Rick had won in Medicine Hat.

Rick slipped back a bit in Ponoka following the two weeks of time off due to the floods in High River. He had his worst finish of the season, ending up in 33rd place.

Even though Calgary doesn't count in the WPCA standings, it remains the most important stop of the year because of the money that can be made. Rick finished a strong fourth in the \$100,000 Rangeland Derby sudden death final.

When the tour resumed in Bonnyville, the standings began to tighten up a little. Rick slipped to finish in 11th place that week. They got even



World champion **Rick Fraser** with his family. From left, son **Cody**, wife **Sue**, Rick, daughters **Amy** and **Kaylee**, and grandson **Coy**.

Photo care of Paul and Carol Easton

tighter after Strathmore, as Jerry Bremner and Kirk Sutherland finished third and fourth. Despite winning day money on day one, costly penalties on day two dropped Rick to 25th place overall, and the race to the championship was back on in earnest with a half dozen drivers still in contention.

Rick maintained his season-long pace by winning Dawson Creek for the second time and his third title of the season. He captured the championship, a \$15,000 bonus cheque and a new GMC Sierra truck.

It wasn't until day three in Rocky Mountain House that Rick had established a safe lead over the other three drivers. He not only clinched his second world championship on day four but qualified for the Rocky Mountain House Battle of the Rockies final. He just missed winning his fourth title of the year, losing to **Mike Vigen** by 6/100th of a second.

Overall, it was an outstanding season for Team 23, with Rick, family, friends, outriders, barn hands and sponsors all playing an integral part of the success.

2013 WPCA Tour Awards

WPCA World Champion Outrider

This is the third time in his distinguished career **Chad Cosgrave** has been named the World Champion Outrider. Chad edged out a fast-closing **Rory Gervais** on the last days of the season.

In his 17-year career, Chad has consistently finished in the top three in the standings. He received the "Outridin' 'em all" bronze sponsored by Ferus Inc. and a buckle sponsored by Bush Ape Supervision. Chad also received the championship truck sponsored by Hitchem Oilfield Hauling and Industrial Paramedic Services.

George Normand Lifetime Builders Award

The George Normand Lifetime Builders Award is given to individuals who have dedicated a minimum of five years of service to the sport of chuckwagon racing as a competitor, sponsor, race official, or someone somehow affiliated with chuckwagon racing and the WPCA.

This year the award went to longtime supporter and former WPCA president **Wayne Overacker**. A quote from his nomination reads as follows: "Wayne Overacker put many years into this association, building it up and keeping it above water. He believes in the sport. Wayne helped many drivers along the way and even sponsored one. His track record speaks for itself."

Clean Driver Award

This year's WPCA Clean Driver Award went to **Roger Moore**. A one-second false start penalty on the second day of the season was the only blemish on Roger's 2013 campaign. He ran penalty free on 32 of 33 race days, including 31 consecutive penalty-free days and 7 consecutive penalty-free shows that made up the 2013 WPCA Pro Tour. His fifth-place overall finish in the world standings is his career best, and he will once again be in the lineup for the 2014 Calgary Stampede GMC Rangeland Derby. It's the first time that Roger has won this award. With just a one-second penalty all season long, it's one of the finest demonstrations of clean driving in WPCA history.



Dick Brown of Ferus Inc. (left) presents the championship bronze to 2013 World Champion Outrider **Chad Cosgrave**.



Wayne Overacker (left) receives the 2013 George Normand Lifetime Builder's Award from **BJ Normand**.

Photo care of Paul and Carol Easton



Roger Moore (centre) receives a cash award from Hoof and Nail reps **Tom** and **Donna Collins** for Most Improved Driver in 2013. He also won the Clean Driver Award.

Photo care of Paul and Carol Easton

2013 WPCA Tour Awards: WPCA Past Member Tribute to Norm Cuthbertson

By Billy Melville

The WPCA paid special tribute to one of the most outstanding chuckwagon men of all time, **Norm Cuthbertson**.

Norm Cuthbertson was born on November 22, 1956. Growing up in Grande Prairie, Alberta, it was only natural that Norm would be exposed to the sport of chuckwagon racing. His first hands-on experience came as a barn hand, first for **Kelly Sutherland** and then **Ward Willard**.

His career as a chuckwagon competitor began under the mentorship of **Richard Cosgrave**. In 1979 at his hometown Grande Prairie Stompede, Norm competed in his first race as an outrider for Richard Cosgrave's Handhills Ranch outfit, the first of many successes.

Over the next few years, Norm's career as an outrider blossomed. He was part of **Tom Glass**'s first Calgary Stampede Rangeland Derby championship in 1983 and Richard Cosgrave's Calgary Stampede aggregate winner in 1984.

In 1986, Norm suffered a preseason injury that kept him out of action for the entire season. But like the champion he proved himself to be, Norm bounced back in 1987 by winning both the Calgary Stampede aggregate and Calgary Stampede Rangeland Derby titles with Tom Glass, placed a career-best second in the world outrider standing and received the Rod Glass Memorial Award for being the WPCA's most improved outrider. He closed out the 1980s with major show wins in 1989 at the Ponoka Stampede outriding for **George Normand** and at the Calgary Stampede Rangeland Derby outriding for **Buddy Bensmiller**.

After an outstanding career as an outrider, Norm started as a chuckwagon driver in 1987. He was first mentored by Richard Cosgrave. His first year of competition as a driver was 1988, as a permit driver with the WPCA. He became a full driver

member in 1989, placing 13th in the world standings and qualifying for his first Calgary Stampede in 1990. He slipped to 20th place in the 1990 world standings, but in 1991, driver George Normand recognized Norm's potential and took him under his wing. Like Richard Cosgrave, George acted as a mentor to the budding star. Under George's guidance, Norm moved up to 14th in the 1991 world standings. In 1992, Norm took a big step forward, finishing fifth overall and receiving the WPCA's Most Improved Driver Award.

Norm continued to show the chuckwagon community that he was a fierce competitor and a force to be reckoned with. In 1993, in Kamloops, BC, Norm was in a position to win his first show as a chuckwagon driver when tragedy struck. On the final day of racing in 1993, a racing accident claimed the life of Norm's good friend and mentor Richard Cosgrave. Tragedy struck again less than a year later when the chuckwagon world lost another great one and Norm lost another close friend and mentor, George Normand. George succumbed to injuries he received during a spill at the 1994 Ponoka Stampede.

The day after George Normand's funeral was the start of the 1994 Calgary Stampede Rangeland Derby. History has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed. Devastated as he was, and with the memory of his two buddies constantly on his mind, Norm soldiered on and had a major personal breakthrough when he qualified for his first-ever championship final heat on chuckwagon racing's biggest stage.

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2013 WPCA Tour Awards: WPCA Past Member Tribute to Norm Cuthbertson

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Later that same year, Norm captured his first show championship in Kennewick, Washington, at the Ben Franklin County Fair. He successfully defended his title in Washington the next year, and in 1996 he not only won his first major show at the North American Chuckwagon Championship, but also married his long-time sweetheart **Judy Preece** at the Calgary Stampede on the fourth of July.

The next five years saw Norm begin to realize his potential and become a regular winner on the WPCA Pro Tour, boasting major wins at the Klondike Derby in Edmonton and Grande Prairie Stompede among others. Norm was the WPCA season leader in 1996, made back-to-back trips to the winner-take-all final for the world championship in 1995 and 1996, and made his second trip to the Rangeland Derby's winner-take-all final in 2001. In 2002, the Cuthbertsons partnered with **Rod** and **Virginia Streeper** and never looked back.

Over the next seven years, the Cuthbertson racing team would be decorated with 12 major awards and victories, and set records that still stand today. Among them, Norm is the only man to win the WPCA Tour Showcase in consecutive years (in 2002 and 2003) and the only man to win the Calgary Stampede Safety Award in consecutive years (in 2003 and 2004). His most special and remarkable achievement is winning the Richard Cosgrave Memorial Award, symbolic of the Calgary Stampede Aggregate Champion, three years in a row, from 2002 to 2004. Norm would make one last trip to the Calgary Stampede Championship final in 2007, and would run his last official race at the Calgary Stampede Rangeland Derby in 2008.

Since their retirement from chuckwagon racing, Norm and Judy Cuthbertson have operated Primera Racing Stables, a thoroughbred training



Billy Melville (left) presents **Norm Cuthbertson** with the Past Member Tribute Award.

facility just east of Strathmore, Alberta. Just like when they were racing chuckwagons, horses continue to be a big part of their lives. They continue to help out many of the current chuckwagon drivers with their horses, and still follow the chuckwagon races by attending a few shows and tuning in to the WPCA radio broadcasts.

Throughout his 30-year career, “Old Blue Eyes” or “Smokin’ Norm” as he was affectionately known, was one of the most decorated all-around chuckwagon competitors in history. His influence went far beyond his success on the racetrack. Norm was extremely dedicated to his horses and the sport of chuckwagon racing, and would do anything to try and encourage prosperity for the sport. No task seemed too big or too small, from serving for many years as a driver director on the WPCA board to spending hours operating tractors to make sure the racetrack was properly prepared for the evening’s races.

Like Richard Cosgrave and George Norman did for him, Norm has served and continues to serve as a friend and mentor to a number of younger chuckwagon drivers.

2013 WPCA Tour Awards

Rookie Driver Award

The 2013 WPCA Top Rookie Driver is Cremona, Alberta's **Chad Fike**. After winning the World Outriding Championship in 2012, Chad made the transition to full-time chuckwagon driver on the WPCA Pro Tour in 2013. In addition to becoming a first-year driver, Chad became a first-time father in 2013. He also won his first race as a professional chuckwagon driver on Father's Day at the Medicine Hat Exhibition & Stampede, beating out veteran drivers **Mark Sutherland** and **Barry Hodgson** in the process. Chad finished the year in 28th place in the world standings, had four top-10 runs and a 10th-place overall finish at the final show of the year in Rocky Mountain House, his best of the season. This is the first driver buckle of what will most likely be many for this fourth-generation chuckwagon man.



Tom and Donna Collins (left) give **Chad Fike** his Rookie Driver Award gift certificate. **Jordie Fike** (right) was also on hand for the presentation. The Collins presented the \$500 cheque from Hoof and Nail. A trophy buckle was also presented, sponsored by Olson Silver.

Photo care of Paul and Carol Easton

Rookie Outrider Award

The 2013 WPCA Top Rookie Outrider is Hughenden, Alberta's **Tyson Whitehead**.

Tyson made his debut ride on the final night of the 2013 Grande Prairie Stompede behind **Gary Gorst**. He continued to ride for Gary at the Medicine Hat Stampede. He also picked up **Logan Gorst** in Medicine Hat as well. He rode for Logan's first-ever day money run as a member of the WPCA.

He rode the demonstration run all 10 nights at the 101st Calgary Stampede, and picked up official rides at the 2013 GMC Rangeland Derby behind Gary Gorst and **Tim Haroldson**.

He maintained his ride with Gary Gorst through the Bonnyville Chuckwagon

Championship and picked up an additional ride behind **John Walters** at the Strathmore Heritage Days Stampede.

Despite a late-season injury that kept him out of action for the final show at Rocky Mountain House, and a late-season surge by **Dayton Sutherland**, Tyson finished his rookie season in 14th place in the world standings. He hung on to win the Top Rookie Outrider buckle by a close 23-point margin.

The future is bright for this young Hughenden cowboy.



Dick Brown of Ferus (left) and **Greg Gillard** (centre) of Greg Gillard Trucking present **Tyson Whitehead** with a cash award and trophy buckle for being the 2013 WPCA Rookie of the Year.

2013 WPCA Tour Awards

Rod Glass Memorial Trophy for Most Improved Outrider

Doug Thomson was recognized as the Most Improved Outrider for his performance in 2013. In just his fourth year on the tour, Doug is rapidly developing into a trusted outrider in demand by many drivers. Doug received the buckle sponsored by the Glass family and a photo donated by Paul and Carol Easton Photography.

Herman Flad Most Improved Driver Award

Following the untimely death of veteran driver **Herman Flad** in 2008, **Troy and Shannon Flad** decided to create a memorial award to Troy's father. What better way to do it than to honour a fellow driver every year.

Roger Moore finished in fifth place in 2013 after finishing 26th in 2012. As a result, he received the Most Improved Driver Award. The trophy buckle was sponsored by the Troy Flad family. The \$500 gift certificate was sponsored by Hoof and Nail. The photo was sponsored by Paul and Carol Easton Photography.

WPCA Active Supporters Award

To be nominated as an Active Supporter of the WPCA is a great honour. These nominees have shown a great interest in the sport of chuckwagon racing. Each have contributed in such a way that their involvement and dedication to the WPCA, its members and the sport did not go unnoticed. WPCA president **Arnold McKernon** gave buckles to and recognized as Active Supporters

- **Happy Trails RV** in Grande Prairie: They've hosted the wagon community for many years and have put considerable financial support into the Grande Prairie Stompede for things such as the Dash for Cash.
- **Reg Willick**: He was the main contact for the WPCA in Saskatoon and helped find sponsors, arranged meetings with key companies in the area, arranged for sponsorship of the truck and provided personnel to help in the infield. Reg also won the UFA Community Ambassador Award for the Saskatoon tour stop.



Top: Jason Glass (left) and Chad Cosgrave (right) present Doug Thomson with his buckle and photo, prizes for being named the Most Improved Outrider for 2013.



Centre: Troy Flad (left) presents Roger Moore with the 2013 Herman Flad Most Improved Driver Award. Troy and his wife Shannon Flad set up the memorial award to honour Troy's father Herman Flad. Roger received a \$500 gift certificate, a buckle and a photo.



Bottom: WPCA president Arnold McKernon presented one of two Active Supporter Awards to Reg Willick. Happy Trails RV from Grande Prairie also received the award, which is presented to a person or organization that has made major contributions to the WPCA and the sport.

2013 WPCA Recognition Awards

In addition to presenting tour awards, each year the WPCA also recognizes our tour partners who enhance our operations by what they do.

Special recognition was provided this year to tour partners GMC, Encana, Wrangler, UFA, Ferus, Kubota, Hi-Hog, Dakota Dunes, Baron's Oilfield, and Meyers Norris & Penny.

High River Presentation

The WPCA was very deeply affected by the High River flood. We were set to run races during Guy Weadick Days on June 20 when the flooding started.

Our drivers and their families and crews were fortunately all able to evacuate safely. Many of our fans and sponsors, however, were not as fortunate, and the flooding was devastating to them.

Ken Malvin designed Racing for High River t-shirts, ordered 500 of them, and sold them from the WPCA merchandise trailer in Strathmore, Dawson Creek and Rocky Mountain House. Profits were donated to the High River Relief Fund.

The Rocky Mountain House Committee bought the last of the shirts, and then took the \$1,500 raised from their mechanical bull and matched it. Ken and **Ryan Stambaugh** from the Rocky Mountain House Committee presented **Bill Long** of the High River Chuckwagon Committee executive with a commemorative t-shirt plaque.

Ken also announced next year's support for High River will continue by unveiling the design of the High River Strong hat. The hat will be sold all season long to raise funds for the ongoing recovery efforts in High River.



Ryan Stambaugh (left) and **Ken Malvin** (right) present **Bill Long** with a commemorative Racing for High River t-shirt plaque.

WPCA Special Recognition Award

Ken Malvin has taken the merchandising of WPCA apparel to new levels. He is continually ordering new styles and new items for specific markets. For example, this year he ordered hoodies and hats in Saskatchewan Roughriders colours, knowing they would be a popular item in Saskatoon.

Part of the nomination for this award reads "The WPCA merchandise trailer is a success because of the vision and the energy and the onsite work that **Ken Malvin** brings to the table. His vision in designing the Racing for High River t-shirts and subsequent donation of sales proceeds inspired others such as the Rocky Mountain House Committee to match the donations."

WPCA Judging Award

Garth Esperance is this year's winner of the WPCA Judging Award. The award is given to a member of the WPCA judging staff in recognition of their outstanding abilities and contributions to the judging team to make sure judging and racing is

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2013 WPCA Recognition Awards

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fair and efficient. The award is sponsored by Kubota and was presented by **Don McClughan**, Kubota regional sales manager for Alberta.

WPCA Media Award

This award is given to an individual, group, or company for excellence in reporting and promoting the events of the WPCA and chuckwagon racing to the public at large through various types of media. The 2013 Media Award recipient is **Ed Wittchen**.

Ed first started reporting the events of the WPCA and chuckwagon racing through a weekly column in the *Bonnyville Nouvelle* newspaper in 2008, the same year professional chuckwagon racing returned to Bonnyville. In addition to the weekly chuckwagon racing column, he wrote a special supplement for the paper dedicated entirely to WPCA chuckwagon racing and the Bonnyville Chuckwagon Championship, a project to which he continues to contribute.

This past year he pioneered a monthly WPCA newsletter, *Turning the Barrels*, to keep everyone interested in the WPCA. The newsletter offers a unique, behind-the-scenes look at WPCA past, present and future.

Code of Care Recognition

The WPCA Code of Care Committee spent considerable time last winter developing this very necessary document. The Code of Care has been adopted by the



Billy Melville (right) presents **Ed Wittchen** with his bronze WPCA Media Award, sponsored by Bill Melville Production Ltd.

Photos on pages 8 and 9 care of Paul and Carol Easton

WPCA and is mandatory for all drivers as of the 2013 season. Committee members **John Lee, Jennifer Woods, Ed Pajor, Kevin Fraser, Eddie Melville, Mark Sutherland** and **Codey McCurrach** were presented with commemorative buckles sponsored by Troyer Ventures.



Ken Malvin poses with his bronze.

Photo care of Paul and Carol Easton

WPCA Chuckwagon Committee of the Year Award

The recipient of the 2013 Top Race Committee Award, for the second consecutive year, is the Rocky Mountain Chuckwagon Association.

In just its fourth year of existence, the Battle of the Rockies is fast becoming one of the premiere stops on the WPCA Pro Tour. From the ever improving racetrack to the new grandstand, from the enhanced Broken Spoke Saloon to the live music almost every night, and the new judges

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2013 WPCA Recognition Awards

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and broadcast booth, the Rocky Mountain Chuckwagon Association is committed to improving its facility to benefit chuckwagon drivers, support staff and chuckwagon fans alike.

One of the most accommodating committees along the WPCA Pro Tour, the committee's level of enthusiasm was second to none. From the drivers and their families, outriders, support crew, broadcast team and the fans, the Rocky Mountain Chuckwagon Association members went to incredible lengths to make everyone feel welcome and made sure that time spent in Rocky Mountain House was most enjoyable.

Everyone on the committee is very show oriented, and they are always looking to improve their show by looking after all the little things. This makes the difference between a regular show and a great show. For a smaller community, the Battle of the North is a big league show.



Wondering why we haven't mentioned the equine athletes? The next issue of *Turning the Barrels* will feature full coverage of the winners of the WPCA Equine Award of Excellence. *Back row, left to right: Kelly Sutherland, Kurt Bensmiller, Rick Fraser and Jason Glass.*

Front row, left to right: Billy Melville (standing in for Mike Vigen), Peter Aiello, Eddy Melville and Kirk Sutherland.

Photo care of Paul and Carol Easton

Encana Race Against Hunger Food Driver of the Year Award

Encana sponsored the Race Against Hunger all season long with a variety of events. Drivers bagged groceries in some locations and took part in simulated wagon races using shopping carts in others. A running tally was kept of the amount of food each driver was responsible for earning for the local food banks that Encana and the WPCA supported.

At the end of the season, **Codey McCurrach** was declared the Race Against Hunger Driver of the Year. Codey was presented with a \$1,000 cheque from Encana to donate to the charity of his choice. When challenged by the offer of matching donations, Codey presented his cheque to Pace-Kids, which, when matched, became a \$3,000 donation.

Ty Tournier Memorial Award

The Ty Tournier Memorial Award goes to a female who is involved in and dedicated to the sport of chuckwagon racing, and who displays nurturing and caring of people and horses. **Kim and Leo Tournier** present the award each year in an emotional tribute in memory of their son **Ty Tournier**. The award is symbolic of Ty's legacy, "the spirit of the thoroughbred—courage and strength." The award is sponsored by long-time family friends **Steve and Lynn Fountain**.

This year's winner was **Carolyn Sinclair**, who was recognized for her tireless work with children and horses.