



Turning the Barrels



ROCKY MOUNTAIN EQUIPMENT

The Official Newsletter of the World Professional Chuckwagon Association

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New Sponsorship Agreement Developed With Rocky Mountain Equipment

The WPCA is pleased to announce its exclusive 2014 WPCA Title Sponsorship Agreement with Rocky Mountain Equipment. The 2014 WPCA Tour will be named “2014 WPCA Pro Tour, presented by Rocky Mountain Equipment.”

Case IH Agriculture, Case Construction, New Holland Agriculture and other partners of Rocky Mountain Equipment are included in this milestone agreement.

This important partnership was developed over three months and several meetings. It’s a one-year agreement for the 2014 season, and both parties have agreed to review the partnership after the season and before November 1 to discuss a long-term agreement.

“This partnership has the potential to become the model for all current and future partnership agreements,” says **Ed Wittchen**, the officer representing the WPCA during negotiations. “The collaboration both partners are planning will enable us to create an active, growing presence in every tour venue location and the adjacent Rocky Mountain Equipment territory. Rocky Mountain Equipment intends to build a positive relationship with our tour partner committees, which will make everyone happy.”

Benefits to Rocky Mountain Equipment include having access to drivers and outriders to attend Rocky Mountain Equipment dealer events at each race venue. They also have the opportunity for



Key players in the negotiations were (left to right) **Tammy Kristiansen**, WPCA office manager, **Ed Wittchen**, WPCA officer, **Denice Hansen**, consultant, and **Laird Munro**, director of marketing and communications for Rocky Mountain Dealerships Inc. **Billy Melville** also played a key role in providing WPCA historical background to discussions.

highly visible placement of Rocky Mountain Equipment products at each race venue. This will be subject to availability of space and the agreement of our tour venue partners.

The WPCA will arrange for placement of promotional materials at each race venue, including posters, banners and other displays, in support of Rocky Mountain Equipment.

An additional benefit to the WPCA tour

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Siksika Charity Hockey Game



Left: Former Calgary Flames and NHL All-Star **Theo Fleury** and driver **Mark Sutherland** at the official faceoff.



Right: **Billy Melville** and **Chance Flad** in action on the ice.

The western sports community continues to help out our fans affected by the devastating June floods.

Shawn Calf Robe proved to be a great ambassador for the WPCA by organizing a charity hockey game between the Chuckwagon & Rodeo Boyz and the Siksika Old-timers and Rez Boys. The exciting matchup took place on January 25.

The Chuckwagon & Rodeo team included goalies **Dennis Halstead** (champion rodeo clown) and **Coleman Waddell** (former outrider). On defence, the team featured **Billy Melville** and **Chance Flad**. The forwards included **Mark** and **Dayton Sutherland**, **Shawn Calf Robe** and former outrider **Randy Armstrong**. **Doug Thomson** was behind the bench as coach.

The Siksika team featured former Calgary Flame and NHL All-Star **Theo Fleury** and guest coach **Kelly Sutherland**.

There were many game highlights, including

- Theo Fleury showing what made him a perennial All-Star by picking the top corner from 15 feet away
- occasional bursts of speed from Shawn Calf Robe, Billy Melville, Mark Sutherland and Chance Flad (Dayton Sutherland was clearly the fastest skater on this team)

- the father-son combination of Mark and Dayton Sutherland leading the team with two goals apiece
- coming back from a 5-0 deficit to tie the game at 7, only to lose by a final score of 16-8

Seen and noted in the crowd were former driver **Cam Shaurette**, WPCA judge **Stuart Taylor**, longtime supporter **Art Gingras** (he's worked with some of the great drivers like **Orville Strandquist** and **Ronnie Glass**), **Joanne Melville**, and **Dina** and **Debbie Sutherland**.

The event raised \$6,000 to help the Siksika Nation with flood relief programs.



Theo Fleury, **Kelly Sutherland** and **Mark Sutherland** signing photos and posters for fans.

Photo by Stuart Taylor

The All-time Greats, Part Two: WPCA Drivers' Favourite Horses

What started out as a casual conversation with **Eddie Melville** about horses he remembered over the years turned into the beginnings of a series of interesting stories about drivers' favourite horses. In this issue, I talk with some more drivers to hear about their favourites.

Luke Tournier says his favourite horse was **Smoothy**, a right leader who was always so consistent and could also work other positions when needed. He also has a soft spot for a team of his wheel horses **Iron** and **Steel** because they started the hardest of any outfit he has ever owned and worked together as a team so well.

Luke says if he could have one team for one race, his first choice would be his own 2007 outfit because they were so dominant at the Calgary Stampede. In an incredible display of dominance that week, his outfit had four first-place runs, two seconds and two thirds.

When you can perform like that on the biggest stage in chuckwagon racing, you can see that was a special outfit. It consisted of legendary left leader **Port**, right leader **Smoothy**, left wheeler **Max** and right wheeler **Jag**.

Port, Smoothy and Jag have all been Equine Award of Excellence winners, which clearly shows why Luke and others feel the way they do about them being one of the best outfits of all time.



Above: A montage devoted to **Chad Harden's Crafty**.

Below: Chad Harden's 2009 Calgary Stampede champion outfit, featuring **Barney, Fred, Crafty** and **Jimmy**.



As for the 2014 season, Luke says the horse to watch on his outfit this year would be the legendary **Port** on left leader. He always gives a consistent effort. Luke is confident this 17-year-old superstar still has some great races in him, and he'll be stealing some rails off the short barrels and teaching the new horses on the outfit.

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The All-time Greats, Part Two: WPCA Drivers' Favourite Horses, continued

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Chad Harden says his favourite horse was **Meaver**, a solid horse with the biggest heart and born to run. If Chad could drive one outfit one time for one big race, it would be his 2009 Calgary Stampede Champion team with **Barney**, **Fred**, **Crafty** and **Jimmy**.

Jerry Bremner has fond memories of **Johnny**, the horse he says established his career. Jerry is known for being able to move horses around when they get a bit stale in one position. As a result, says Eddie Melville, Jerry has more horses with points in the Equine Award of Excellence competition than most drivers every year.

This year Jerry says fans should watch for **Redman**. After a few races last year, Jerry moved him to a new position in Rocky Mountain House on the last day of the season. He won day money with that outfit. He expects Redman to raise his performance level this year.

Jerry put a lot of thought into his years on the track when selecting his personal all-time favourite outfit. He was loyal to his own favourite and says he would put Johnny on as his right leader to go along with **Kelly Sutherland's Ralph** as left leader. His choice for wheelers would be **Dallas Dorchester's Con** as right wheeler and **Hugh Sinclair's Aloha** as left wheeler.

As lead outrider he would have his own horse **Storm**, and on the stove outrider he would want **Joe King's Painter**.



Luke Tournier's Smoothy.

All photos for this feature by Paul and Carol Easton

Jerry says it's hard to pick just six horses out of all the great ones he has seen on the circuit, but these ones stood out the most.

Layne MacGillivray responds to what outfit would he like to drive just once in a big race with a quick "Luke Tournier's 2005 Calgary Stampede Championship outfit." He says his personal favourite horse was **Code** by a close margin. It's quite personal when these drivers talk about their horses. Layne was noticeably emotional when talking about this big-hearted competitor who was also the friendliest horse in the barn.

This year, Layne feels that **Silver Ruler** is going to make a big difference on his top outfit. He's been a good wheeler in the past, but he has the right attitude and aptitude to be an outstanding leader now.

The Stories of the Wagons, Part Two: The History Behind the Designs

This is part two of the story of the wagon designs and some of the history behind them. There are too many to put in one issue so this will be a three- or four-part story.

It is no surprise to anyone who knows the Gorst family to find out that **Gary Gorst's** wagon design has a family theme to it. The large eagle on his wagon was chosen by **Dustin** and **Janice**. **Travis McCallum**, who designed the original wagon box, added the two small eagles. The large eagle represents Gary and the two small eagles represent Logan and Dustin following him.

Logan Gorst says there is nothing magic about the design on his wagon. He knew he needed a unique design. He searched the internet thoroughly, found his design and thought the horse resembled a thoroughbred. It seemed fitting as a wagon design.

Mitch Sutherland says he was looking for something different but that his design has no special meaning. He simply came across the picture on the internet and worked the background into it.

Early in his career, **Rae Croteau** had some very good mentors in his grandfather **Ray** and father **Bert**. In fact, it was Ray who gave Rae the distinctive rainbow wagon, a tradition in the Croteau family since the late 1970s. In his first few races, Rae used a plain wagon. Since it quickly became obvious chuckwagon racing was what Rae wanted to do, his grandfather told him maybe he better start using his wagon. The original colour scheme came about when Ray's daughters asked if they could paint the wagon. He let them, and they came up with a rainbow and a family tradition.

Don't all good ideas start over a coffee? That is the story of the wagon design for **Chanse Vigen's** wagon. Chanse and sponsor **Phil Troyer** worked together on the design. The truck portion is taken from some of the graphics that Troyer Ventures uses. It only seemed fitting that they then added



Gary Gorst's wagon.



Logan Gorst's wagon.



Mitch Sutherland's wagon.

the horse element to it as well. The hardest part was finding five different pictures of white thoroughbred horses. The first draft from the designers had brown Arabians. Chanse said that wouldn't fly. The purple wagon colour and computer-generated rope

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The Stories of the Wagons, Part Two: The History Behind the Designs, continued



Rae Croteau's famous rainbow wagon, inherited from his grandfather Ray Croteau.

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design showcase the modern aspects of the sport and the bright future that it has.

H & E Oilfield Services was sponsoring **Obrey Motowylo** at the time he got a new wagon. Their colours were black, white and yellow. Obrey searched a car decaling website and found a horse that he liked. A decal shop modified it to fit on the wagon box. This coming year will be nine years with the same design.

Darcy Flad is a third-generation farmer and rancher, and keeping our western heritage alive was what inspired the design of his wagon. Darcy's dad **Herman Flad**'s cattle brand was xy-. That's Darcy's brand now, and it's in tribute to his dad. "My wagon design represents who I am and what I love to do."

Doug Irvine used to have a gun with a bullet shooting out and a big cloud of smoke on his wagon. His sister painted it by hand for him. When B & R Eckel's started sponsoring him, they wanted to paint the wagon their colours. They painted it white and put their blue stripes on it. It's been like that for the past 12 years. They are such great sponsors that if they want to sponsor Doug



Chanse Vigen's wagon.



Obrey Motowylo's wagon.

for another dozen years, the wagon's design will probably remain the same.

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The Stories of the Wagons, Part Two: The History Behind the Designs, continued

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Tim Haroldson said when they started wagon racing, he didn't have a design on his wagon. He eventually came up with the diamond motif, as it was something he liked and it was unique. Over the years, he has had different colours but kept the same design.

Jerry Bremner has had the same sawtooth design on his wagon since 1993, when a former sponsor's wife designed it for that year's Calgary Stampede. He actually has different versions of the wagon, using different colours to match those of various sponsors.

John Walters says the story for his wagon revolves around western heritage. The guns were a big part of our western heritage. If wasn't for the guns, he adds, we would not have what we have today, a free country thanks to our forefathers whose guns won the wars to give us this freedom.

"The cards symbolize life," he explains. "When you are brought into this world, you are dealt a hand and throughout your life your cards are replaced, within that hand, every day. I have to make decisions of which ones to hold—good choices—and which ones to throw away—bad choices. You never know what that last uncovered card holds in store for you."



John Walters' wagon.



Wagons raced by Darcy Flad, Doug Irvine, Tim Haroldson and Jerry Bremner.



The Story of Black Jack Livestock Company: Four Guys Who Love Wagon Racing

Facetiously but proudly displayed in their hosting tent, the guys who make up the Black Jack Livestock Company tell their story.

Our origin dates back 150 years to the great Texas cattle drives. Members were former cattle drovers on the conventional cattle drives who were dismissed by their trail bosses for unruly behaviour—often without pay. This forced these renegades to adapt a technique of stampeding other herds at night and rounding up the strays to sell. Buyers often paid a premium price, knowing if they didn't, Black Jack Livestock Company members would just disrupt regular business anyway. The name comes from their reputation as savvy card players—feared in gambling halls and saloons everywhere.

Today's members are a kinder, gentler lot. They can often be found handing out five dollar gaming chips to cowboys down on their luck. Some elements of the original Black Jack Livestock Company can still be seen in modern-day members—unconventional behaviour, the bohemian lifestyle and a penchant for playing games of chance.

When interviewed, the key players in the BJLC admitted they were stretching the truth about their historical roots because the truth is they are basically wagon fans and didn't think they would get any respect if they called themselves Four Guys from Calgary Who Like Wagon Racing. However, they do like to mention that they actually do have some livestock as they claim a dog, a bunny and sometimes a cat.

The founders of the Black Jack Livestock Company are **Rick Pauloski, Ken Fraser, Scott Smith** and **Rob Rathwell**. Two other key members are **Bing Rundquist** and **Olaf (the Belgian cowboy)**.

Their story is they were sitting around the table talking about their passion as fans of chuckwagon racing. They decided they would create a budget

and check out the WPCA Tarp Auction with the intent of trying to buy one of the last 10 drivers for one of the shows near Calgary.

Ken Fraser tells a story about how fairly early in the evening he left their table for a trip to the washroom, knowing it would be a while before they got to the drivers they were going to bid on. Imagine his surprise when he came back and discovered they had bought the tarp for **Luke Tournier** for Strathmore for \$3,500.

They still had money in the budget and Rick was determined they should get one of the other drivers as well. They ended up buying **Cliff Cunningham** for \$3,500 for High River. Rick was a little stressed at that point because now they had to find more people to help sponsor to cover the costs.

That first show in High River was an eye-opener for them. They had new, embroidered shirts and, in their words, "We were chuckwagon big shots." They didn't have a sponsor tent and their entertaining budget consisted of a cooler of beer, chips and pretzels. At that point, they knew they wanted to and had to get better organized.

Six weeks later, they set up in Strathmore with Luke Tournier. By now they had two hosting tents and a barbecue. Unfortunately, that was the year of the big wind and rain storm in Strathmore. Their tents became scrap and they had to start over again. Still, their comment was that their first year was a great experience and here they are, five years later, still having a ball.

Over the years, their quality hospitality

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The Story of Black Jack Livestock Company: Four Guys Who Love Wagon Racing, continued



The Black Jack Livestock tarp on **Ross Knight's** wagon.

Photo by Shellie Scott Photography

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gained them a reputation for being an outstanding hosting group. Guests include drivers, outriders, chuckwagon families, sponsors, WPCA officials, local politicians and even Stampede royalty like Miss Rodeo Canada or the Strathmore Stampede Queen.

In year two, they had a new tent, barbecues, more coolers and a rented U-Haul trailer. They designed a new tarp and were successful in buying Luke again and also got **Shane Cartier**. Again they were on a steep learning curve for getting better at what they did.

For year three, they upgraded the trailer and got a number of new volunteers involved. One of them, a landscaper, donated the trailer to them. That year, they bought Cliff Cunningham's wagon for both Strathmore and Rocky Mountain House. Their objective was still to just have fun, both as fans and sponsors.

They all have real jobs during the day, just like everyone else. They tell their drivers, "We will

give you the shirts off our backs." They literally do that, as they supply all of their drivers with shirts with their logo.

They had one of their most interesting experiences that year. Cliff and **Wendy Cunningham** would bring food to them. The guys thought it was their job to feed the driver, but the Cunninghams said no, they like to look after their sponsors.

Year four saw them partnering up with **Evan Salmund**.

They thought **Adrienne** was working too hard so they hired a couple of 4-H girls to be barn hands for them as part of the partnership. It worked so well that they hired them for the rest of the season.

This year, they only had enough volunteers and budget to do one show. They partnered up with **Ross Knight** for Strathmore. They hired the mothers of the 4-H girls from last year to become the crew. The women did a lot of the cooking, cleaning and chores, which let the guys look after hosting.

The Black Jack Livestock Company clearly gets what the WPCA is about: celebrating our western heritage. Let this be an enticement to other people who have entertained the thought "Wouldn't it be neat to be a wagon sponsor?"

Why not round up some friends (as many as it takes to purchase a tarp and wagon), live out that dream and have the type of experiences that these guys have been having for five years?

Calgary Stampede Rangeland Derby Champion Advertiser Reception

The Calgary Stampede hosted an event to honour 2013 champion sponsor Shaw GMC, to honour the Equine Award of Excellence Winners, and to let current and potential sponsors meet and mingle with drivers from the WPCA and CPCA. The January 23 evening gala took place at the Lazy S in the Calgary Stampede Grandstand.



Jim Bottomley, Kirk Sutherland, Barry Hodgson and Billy Melville.



Gary Gorst and a fan.

After the drivers were introduced to the crowd, there was an opportunity for sponsors to talk to individual drivers (and in some instances their wives) and WPCA officials.

WPCA drivers on hand for this fun event included **Jerry Bremner, Jordie Fike, Darcy Flad, Gary**

Gorst, Logan Gorst, Chad Harden, Barry Hodgson, Doug Irvine, Layne MacGillivray, Obrey Motowylo, Kirk Sutherland, Mark Sutherland and Luke Tournier.

Rocky Mountain Equipment, continued

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venues is that Rocky Mountain Equipment is offering to provide equipment to the venues to use during race events at no charge.

Rocky Mountain Equipment has sponsored individual drivers at various events in the past few years, but they wanted an enhanced corporate presence at all tour venues. The value they see in this agreement is that their target audience is rural and farm people, and that is a match with the WPCA. The core of its fan base in the stands at every venue are heavily populated with these folks.

These collaborative efforts will see Rocky Mountain Equipment hosting events at their stores at every venue where WPCA drivers and outriders will be available to meet with fans. As well, local dealers will have access to behind-the-scenes barn tours for their customers who want to experience true chuckwagon culture.

The WPCA benefits by having Rocky Mountain

Equipment promote the WPCA and various race events on their corporate website. As well, Rocky Mountain Equipment will provide advertising space in the applicable equipment magazines produced by Rocky Mountain Equipment.

Cross-promotional opportunities will be developed to produce and/or place WPCA promotional materials in Rocky Mountain Equipment dealerships in proximity to the event venues.

The real work begins now. Rocky Mountain Equipment staff and **Tammy Kristiansen**, WPCA's office manager, have to plan and coordinate all the events to be held during the 2014 season to make sure it's successful for everyone involved. Special recognition and thanks go to **Denice Hansen**, independent consultant, who was critical to developing the dialogue and subsequent agreement.