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The 2015 Equine Award of Excellence winners, presented by Peter Aiello of Import Tool.

Photo by Paul and Carol Easton



Calgary Stampede 2016 Invitations

THE CALGARY STAMPEDE has released its list of drivers invited to the 2016 Rangeland Derby. This year, there is a new format for invitations based on competitiveness, safety and professionalism. This was a departure from the previous format, which included automatic invitations to the top 16 from last year's Calgary Stampede and then went on final standings in each association to fill the remaining guaranteed spots to each association.

According to the Calgary Stampede, this format is the result of an ongoing review process that constantly looks to improve all aspects of safety and animal care. While safety on the track has long been a priority, race rankings have

traditionally been the primary consideration in driver qualifications. Competitiveness is still the key to cracking the Stampede lineup but a strong safety record is now equally important. Attention is now also being paid to a driver's professionalism with fellow competitors, sponsors, fans and media.

The 2016 demonstration drivers will be **Dustin Gorst** (WPCA) and **Dave Galloway** (CPCA).

Congratulations to all drivers selected to participate in the Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth and its featured event, the Rangeland Derby, next summer.

WPCA drivers invited for 2016

Kurt Bensmiller
Colt Cosgrave
Rae Croteau, Jr.
Troy Dorchester
Chad Fike
Jordie Fike
Darcy Flad
Rick Fraser
Jason Glass
Gary Gorst

Logan Gorst
Chad Harden
Doug Irvine
Jim Knight
Ross Knight
Layne MacGillivray
Codey McCurrach
Roger Moore
Obrey Motowylo
Evan Salmond

Kelly Sutherland
Kirk Sutherland
Mark Sutherland
Mitch Sutherland
Luke Tournier
Chanse Vigen
Mike Vigen
John Walters

CPCA drivers invited for 2016

Chance Bensmiller
Layne Bremner*
BJ Carey

Dallas Dyck
Jamie Laboucane
Ray Mitsuing

Kris Molle
Vern Nolin*

* **Layne Bremner** and **Vern Nolin** will be racing as WPCA members for the 2016 season.



Tarp Auction Process Review



*Above: Dale Impey of the Grande Prairie Committee (left) and Obrey Motowyllo.
Below: Dennis McNeill of the Strathmore Committee (left) and Rae Croteau, Jr.*



*Above: Mitch Michaud of the Bonnyville Committee (left) and Kurt Bensmiller.
Below: Rick Pauloski, Blackjack Livestock tarp sponsor, (left) and Ross Knight.*



THE END OF one season means the start of the next one. This year, that meant the WPCA's first event to kick off planning for the 2016 season was a strategic planning meeting to discuss tarp auction processes.

The meeting brought together drivers, venue committee members, tarp sponsors, and WPCA staff and board members to review previous tarp auction processes, current processes, and recommendations for next year and beyond.



We brought in an independent outside facilitator to guide us through the discussions. **Roger Nippard**, former President of the Canadian Association of School System Administrators and current Superintendent of Foundations for the Future Charter Academy, walked us through the exercise.

It was an interesting day with a variety of opinions expressed about the original auction process versus the



Tarp Auction Process Review, continued

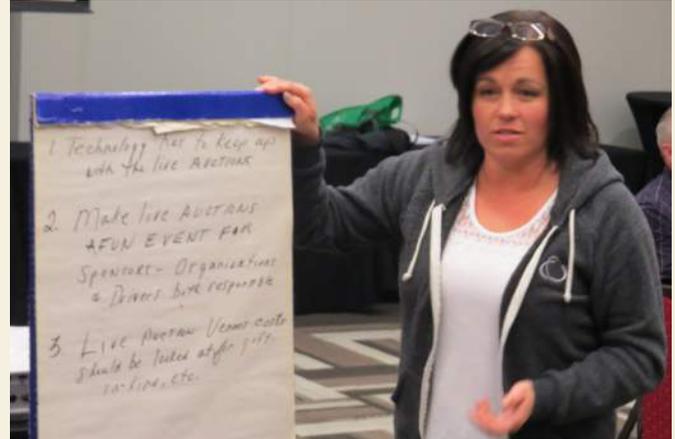


Above: Connie Patterson of the Dawson Creek Committee provides her table's suggestions.

Below: Herb McLane of the Strathmore Committee and Justin Derzaph of the Medicine Hat Committee.



newer process. The original process sees all drivers for all shows, with the exception of Calgary and Ponoka, being auctioned on one night. The newer process allows drivers to have pre-sales and a stand-alone auction for Grande Prairie and Dawson Creek. We also looked at other concepts to see if there was some combination that might be better than either of the two previous versions and that all groups could support.



Above: Joanne Nelson of the Dawson Creek Committee shares ideas.

Below: World champion Kurt Bensmiller reports on his group's ideas.



The board will review all the information gathered at the meeting. The intent is to have an announcement out by December 1 to let drivers, venue committees and tarp sponsors know what the 2016 process will look like.

Thanks to committee members from Medicine Hat, Strathmore, Bonnyville, Grande Prairie, and Dawson Creek for joining us and offering valuable input.



A Great Fundraising Effort

THE FOURTH ANNUAL Mark Sutherland Invitational Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament provided an opportunity for wagon fans to support three charities this year.

As in the past, the main charity is PaceKids Programs. This is a Calgary charity, established in 1994, that provides education and therapy programs tailored for infants and children with special needs, such as cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorder and motor disabilities, as well as their families. The programs are family focused and address a broad spectrum of needs, from individual therapy to structured programs like preschool and kindergarten. So often, children with special needs have intellect and abilities that are hidden by their difficulties to communicate or demonstrate. The right combination of support and encouragement can draw out a child's potential and build on their other abilities. PaceKids



Host Mark Sutherland and tournament winner Bo Levi Mitchell, who is also a quarterback for the Calgary Stampeders.

helps kids with special needs discover their hidden potential.

The second charity supported this year was the Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter, which is focused on ending family violence and abuse in the lives of women, children, youth and men. "Taking a Stand Against Family Violence" in the community for the past 41 years, the agency has helped more than 165,000 Calgarians build safe lives and healthy relationships. It is on the front lines to provide hope and support to some of the most vulnerable members of the community. Though the emergency shelter is the cornerstone of the organization, it is "More than a Shelter," serving more than 15,000 clients each year through a number of innovative safety, healing and prevention programs.

The third and newest charity is Will for Riding Foundation (WFRF), which offers a therapeutic riding program, the first Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association (CanTRA) program in the Calgary area. CanTRA was founded in 1980 and promotes challenge, achievement and



Left: Calgary Stampeders star Charleston Hughes (centre) with fans. Right: Retired Calgary Flames star Dana Murzyn, who knocked out "King" Kelly Sutherland.





A Great Fundraising Effort, continued



Far left: Jim Knight.

Left: Codey McCurrach.

Right: Obrey Motowylo, knocked out of play.

Below: Mitch Sutherland, knocked out of play.



empowerment for individuals with disabilities through the use of the horse. By partnering with CanTRA, WFRF ensures the highest standards of safety, knowledge and instructor competence among all therapeutic riding regulatory organizations internationally. WFRF was born in 2013. Through the support of family, friends and various organizations, WFRF just completed its pilot project where 12 special needs children, along with 30 volunteers, completed the five-week program. It was extremely successful, with lots of positive feedback from families and volunteers and heartwarming smiles from the kids. WFRF anticipates over 20 students in their next phase of lessons.

Twenty celebrity table hosts started the evening. Each time one of them was eliminated, they had to give the shirt off their back and their special edition belt buckle to the person who knocked them out. The action started quickly with **Codey McCurrach** going all in five minutes into the evening. But he had the right cards and survived to play a while longer. Shortly after that, **Kirk Sutherland** wasn't quite so successful and he became the first celebrity to be knocked out. The poker star of the evening ended up being Calgary Stampeders star quarterback **Bo Levi Mitchell**, who won the tournament.



Thanks to **Obrey Motowylo, Codey McCurrach, Jordie** and **Chad Fike, Jim Knight, Kurt Bensmiller,** and **Kirk, Mitch** and **Kelly Sutherland** for supporting **Mark Sutherland's** fundraising efforts, which have raised over \$300,000 in the last three years. The tournament had a target of another \$100,000 this year. It will take some time for the final results to be known, but thanks to having a full house it looks good.

Thanks, too, to WPCA track announcer **Gary Gross** for doing a great job as MC for the evening.



Annual Awards Night

By Billy Melville

THE WPCA 2015 season came to an official end with the Annual Awards Night held at the Grey Eagle Resort and Casino.

Jim Bottomley Chuckwagon Person of the Year

The WPCA Chuckwagon Person of the Year is the WPCA's highest honour. It is given annually to the individual who has made outstanding and significant contributions to advancing and improving the overall status and integrity of the WPCA and the sport of chuckwagon racing.

This year's winner, WPCA Vice President **John Lee**, is well known for his love of horses. He is responsible for developing and implementing the WPCA Codes of Care and for securing a traceability research project (the first of its kind in Canada for horses). John is also a 30-year volunteer with the Calgary Stampede and a successful business leader with a long career at UFA.

Tour Sponsor Recognition

The WPCA relies on its tour partners to allow for continued improvements and growth, and to bring chuckwagon racing to all the venues along the Tour. Our thanks to our 2015 partners:

- GMC
- UFA
- Grey Eagle Resort and Casino
- Ferus
- Meyers Norris Penny
- Wrangler
- Rocky Mountain Equipment
- Grove RV
- Visa Truck Rentals

Camp Carmangay

Over the years, the WPCA has contributed in different ways to many different charitable causes. This year it was

Camp Carmangay, and the support came through the WPCA merchandise trailer.

The WPCA merchandise trailer is a success because of the vision, the energy and the onsite work that **Ken Malvin** brings to the table. This year, Ken and the merchandise trailer offered support to Camp Carmangay.

Camp Carmangay is a community resource and registered non-profit organization now celebrating 14 years of providing access to disadvantaged and at-risk youth. Many of these youth will arrive from within the judicial system and have little or no options.

Through its grassroots western approach, Camp Carmangay offers a place to start. This year, Camp Carmangay hosted a series of day camps for youth ages 7 to 14. The objective is to build confidence and esteem through activities, and provide a positive environment for youth to expand their imagination. Camp Carmangay's goal is to offer a preventative program to the next generation.

Special Recognition Award

The Special Recognition Award recognizes individuals, groups, or companies who have made special and outstanding contributions to the WPCA, its members, or chuckwagon racing in general.

The recipient of this year's award, **Reg Willick**, has been involved for a long time as a canvas sponsor. He first offered support with the Canadian Pro Chuckwagon Association, and when his driver moved to the WPCA he continued to support him. Three years ago when the WPCA first went to Saskatoon, he jumped on board both personally and professionally. Over the past three years at the Saskatoon show, he continued to sponsor his driver, brought tarp sponsors to the auction and engaged potential companies to get involved in the sport.



Annual Awards Night, continued

He has contributed funds from both his business HJR Asphalt Partnership and from his own funds, writing cheques adding up to around \$30,000 over the past two years to help boost the prize purse to make the Saskatoon show a long-term stop on the WPCA Pro Tour.

WPCA Media Award

The WPCA Media 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 the various types of media.

When the WPCA switched to Classic Country AM 1060 as the hub radio station back in 2010, a lot of geographical area was given up. Country 99 FM in Bonnyville, in the Lakeland part of northeastern Alberta, picked up the

WPCA radio broadcast as well as the Chuckwagon Radio Network's coverage of the Calgary Stampede as a service to their local community. When the WPCA switched to Rural Radio on SiriusXM in 2014, once again Country 99 FM in Bonnyville continued to pick up the WPCA and Calgary Stampede radio broadcasts. In addition, during the Bonnyville show, Country 99 hosted up to four live interviews with WPCA personnel each day for the whole week.

Race Committee Award

The WPCA Race Committee Award is given to a race committee for their outstanding efforts in accommodating the WPCA, its members, and the chuckwagon fans through improvements to their overall show experience such as facilities, prize money, and organization.



Above, right: John Lee receives the Jim Bottomley Chuckwagon Person of the Year Award from UFA CEO Carol Kitchen. Photo by Paul and Carol Easton

Above, left: Tsuu Tina Nation Councillor Dean Manywounds welcomes everyone to the awards ceremony.

Left: WPCA General Manager Tom Barrow and Lori Schmaltz of Meyers Norris Penny.



Annual Awards Night, continued

The recipient for 2015 is the Grande Prairie Stompede Association. Always one of the premiere stops on the WPCA Pro Tour and with assistance from the Grande Prairie Chuckwagon Heritage Foundation, they were able to offer a \$125,000 final day.

The Grande Prairie Stompede Association is 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 Grande Prairie



Tom Barrow with the Grande Prairie Stompede Committee, winner of the Race Committee Award.

Photo by Paul and Carol Easton

Stompede Association members went to incredible lengths to make everyone feel welcome and ensured that the time spent in Grande Prairie was most enjoyable.

Ty Tournier Memorial Award

The Ty Tournier Memorial Award is given to a woman who is involved in and dedicated to the sport of chuckwagon racing and displays nurturing and caring of people and horses. The award is symbolic of **Ty Tournier's** legacy,

“The Spirit of the Thoroughbred—Courage and Strength.” Thank you to **Steve** and **Lynn Fountain**, who sponsor the Ty Tournier Memorial Award each year. This year's winner is **Jaycee Gorst**, wife of driver **Dustin Gorst**.

WPCA Active Supporter Awards

To be nominated as an Active Supporter of the World Professional Chuckwagon Association is a great honour. These nominees have shown a great interest in the sport of chuckwagon racing and each in their own way has contributed in such a way that their involvement and dedication to the WPCA, its members and the sport did not go unnoticed.

WPCA Active Supporter Award #1

Raymond Scott helped Track Specialist/Arena Director **Buddy Bensmiller** all season and stepped in for Buddy in High River when family business required Buddy to be elsewhere.

WPCA Active Supporter Award #2

The partnership with the Grey Eagle Resort and Casino (Hotel General Manager **Kevin Yates**) continues to grow their support for the WPCA. They provide a home for our annual events, board and client meetings, and planning sessions at zero cost to the WPCA.

WPCA Active Supporter Award #3

Import Tool has supported and sponsored the Equine Outfit of Excellence for 11 years. We thank them for their continued recognition of our equine athletes.

WPCA Clean Drive Award

We recognize the top-placed driver at the end of the world point standings with the least amount of penalties. The recipient this year is **Kurt Bensmiller**. A one-second late outrider penalty on opening day of the Battle of the North in Dawson Creek was the only blemish on Kurt's 2015



Annual Awards Night, continued

campaign. He ran penalty-free days on 40 of 41 WPCA race days, including 30 consecutive penalty-free runs. It's the second time that Kurt has won the Clean Drive Award, and without a single driver's penalty all season long, it's one of the finest demonstrations of clean driving in WPCA history.

WPCA Top Rookie Outrider Award

The WPCA Top Rookie Outrider Award is given to the outrider who has the most points in his first full year on the WPCA Tour. The 2015 winner is **Cole Somerville**.

The son of WCA driver Kelly Somerville, Cole learned the art of holding leaders for several years in the WCA before shifting his attention to becoming an outrider with the WPCA. He made his debut at the Grande Prairie Stompede behind **Cody Ridsdale** and **Tyson Graham**. He quickly caught the attention of other drivers on the Tour and steadily increased his mounts as the season moved on. He rode regularly behind **Troy Dorchester**, **Mike Chanse Vigen**, and **Rick Fraser** while picking up additional mounts behind **Troy Flad**, **Chad Harden** and **Barry Hodgson** among others to finish up an impressive rookie season in sixth place.

The Top Rookie Outrider Buckle is named in memory of **Greg Gillard**, who was the first outrider to receive this award back in 1981. Presenting the buckle in memory of Greg was his wife **Colleen Gillard**.

WPCA Top Rookie Driver Award

The WPCA Top Rookie Driver Award is given to the chuckwagon driver who places the highest in the world standings in his first full year on the WPCA Tour. The 2015 winner is Meadow Lake's **Dustin Gorst**. After a successful 14-year career as a full-time outrider, the former Calgary Stampede champion outrider made his WPCA debut as a driver in High River in 2014 following the retirement of former driver **Reg Johnstone**.



Jaycee Gorst (left) is presented the Ty Tournier Memorial Award by Sue Fraser.

Dustin had a successful first full season in the wagon box in 2015, as he posted nine top-10 runs throughout the summer. Dustin got stronger as the season moved on and he capped his season with a final heat appearance at the Battle of the Rockies, posting three top-five runs in the process. Overall, Dustin finished a very respectable 27th in the world standings, securing his place on the Tour for 2016.

Import Tool Corporation Equine Outfit of Excellence Award

Outrider **Eddie Melville** developed the Import Tool Corporation Equine Outfit of Excellence Award. It was designed to recognize the outstanding achievements of the true athletes of chuckwagon racing, the thoroughbred horses. The November issue of the newsletter will feature full-length stories on each of these equine champions.

Rod Glass Memorial Award for Most Improved Outrider

The Rod Glass Memorial Award for Most Improved Outrider is given to the outrider who had the greatest increase in points over the previous season. The award is named for outrider **Rod Glass**, who was taken from us in a



Annual Awards Night, continued

racing accident at the Calgary Stampede in 1971. The 2015 winner is Duck Lake's **Quaid Tournier**.

In 2015, Quaid improved five spots from the previous season and finished a career-best fifth in the world standings. Quaid helped his father **Luke Tournier** capture both the Dawson Creek Battle of the North Stampede and the Bonnyville Chuckwagon Championship. He also helped brother-in-law **Logan Gorst** qualify for the \$100,000 final heat at the Calgary Stampede.

Herman Flad Memorial Award for Most Improved Driver

The Herman Flad Memorial Award for Most Improved Driver is given to the driver who had the greatest increase in points over the previous season. The 2015 winner is **Doug Irvine**.

After a relatively quiet first half of the 2015 season where he was as low as 26th in the world standings, Doug won day money on the final day of the Calgary Stampede to help kickstart the second half of his season. He made a steady climb up the charts, with top 10 overall finishes at the Bonnyville Chuckwagon Championship and Strathmore Heritage Days. He capped off his season with a victory in the final show of the year at the Battle of the Rockies.

Overall, Doug improved 13 spots over his 2015 placing in the world standings to finish out the year in 11th place.



Ken Malwin with Alice May, Camp Carmangay Administrative Facilitator, and Paul Wagman, Camp Carmangay Co-Founder.

Photo by Paul and Carol Easton

Past Member Tribute

The WPCA Past Member Tribute Award is given to any past member of the WPCA or its predecessors in recognition of their outstanding achievements, dedication, or contributions as they relate to the WPCA and chuckwagon racing in general.

This year's tribute is to **Dave Lewis**. The November issue of *Turning the Barrels* will feature a lengthy article about the award to this great driver.

GMC Sierra Cup Series

The GMC Sierra Cup is given to the driver with the most cumulative points in the two major GMC Sierra Cup stops at Grande Prairie and Dawson Creek. The 2015 winner is **Rae Croteau, Jr.**

At the Grande Prairie Stompede, the first of the two stops that comprised the 2015 GMC Sierra Cup Series, Rae posted two top-10 runs and placed a solid seventh place in the overall aggregate standings, trailing series leader **Obrey Motowylo** by 32 points. However, at the final GMC Sierra Cup Series stop at the Battle of the North in Dawson Creek, Rae had a dominating performance with two firsts and a second in the first three days en route to being tops in the overall aggregate standings by nearly five full seconds.

2015 World Champion Outrider

The World Champion Outrider is the outrider who accumulates the most number of points over the chuckwagon season. The 2015 winner is **Chance Flad**. Chance defended his 2014 title by grabbing the lead after the first show in Grande Prairie and never looked back.



Annual Awards Night, continued

Chance turned in one of the most dominating seasons in recent memory, with show wins at seven of the nine stops on the WPCA Pro Tour.

He kicked off the season by winning the Grande Prairie Stompede with Obrey Motowylo, and followed that up with three consecutive victories in Medicine Hat with **John Walters**, High River with **Mitch Sutherland**, and the Ponoka Stampede with **Kirk Sutherland**. The second half of the season proved to be just as fruitful with victories behind **Luke Tournier** in Bonnyville and Dawson Creek before capping off the year with a win at the Battle of the Rockies with Doug Irvine.

Chance set a new mark for points in a season in 2015, earning 8,829 points to eclipses the previous mark set by five-time world champion **Dale Gray** in 2005.

2015 World Champion Chuckwagon Driver

The World Champion Chuckwagon Driver is the driver who accumulates the highest number of points over the chuckwagon season. The 2015 winner is Kurt Bensmiller.



Above: World champion driver Kurt Bensmiller.

Below: World champion outrider Chance Flad receiving his bronze from Dick Brown, CEO of Ferus. Photos by Paul and Carol Easton



Kurt's 2015 season was one of consistency as he placed in the top 10 in all nine WPCA Tour stops. He qualified for three sudden-death final heats in Grande Prairie, Ponoka and Dawson Creek.

Kurt put himself in the world title hunt right from the beginning by winning the Ralph Vigen Memorial Award for having the best aggregate time after four nights at the Grande Prairie Stompede and qualifying for the sudden-death final heat. Another top-10 finish in Saskatoon pushed Kurt to first in the standings, ahead of defending world champion Kirk Sutherland and with Obrey Motowylo a close third. These three champions played leapfrog at the top for the remainder of the first half of the season.

Kurt continued his hot hand as the wagons rolled south for the Calgary Stampede by winning his first Richard Cosgrave

Memorial Award for having the best aggregate time after eight nights. Two nights later, he put himself in very prestigious company by winning his second consecutive Calgary Stampede Rangeland Derby title. The second half of the 2015 season proved to be a battle between Kurt and 2014 champion Kirk Sutherland until the final show of the year in Rocky Mountain House, where Kurt finally overtook Kirk on night two, on his way to his first world championship.



Annual Awards Night, continued



Clockwise from top left:

1. WPCA President Ed Wittchen and Pietr Kuluga, Shaw GMC Chevrolet Buick General Manager.
2. Ed Wittchen and Randy Brydges, Xerox Director Western Market Centre.
3. Rae Croteau, Jr., receives the Sierra Cup Series buckle from Pietr Kuluga.
4. Quaid Tournier receives the Most Improved Outrider Award, presented by Chad Cosgrave.
5. Dustin Gorst receives the Rookie of the Year Award from Tom Barrow.



Photos 3, 4 and 5 by Paul and Carol Easton





Annual Awards Night, continued



Clockwise from top left:

1. Raymond Scott receives an Active Supporter Award from Tom Barrow.
2. Kevin Yates, Grey Eagle Resort General Manager, receives an Active Supporter Award from John Lee.
3. Peter Aiello from Import Tool receives an Active Supporter Award from Billy Melville.
4. Cole Somerville receives the Top Rookie Outrider Award from Colleen Gillard.
5. Dallas and Rick Fraser accept the Past Member Tribute on behalf of the Dave Lewis family.



Photos 1 through 4 by Paul and Carol Easton

