



Official Truck of the WPCA

The Official Newsletter of the World Professional Chuckwagon Association

# TURNING THE BARRELS

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A profile of driver Cody Ridsdale.

### NEW SPONSOR

The WPCA is pleased to welcome Lennox Industries as a new partner for the 2016 season. Lennox is the leader in home comfort systems, including furnaces and air conditioners.



## One for the Archives



*Ken Malvin, the man behind the WPCA merchandise trailer, poses with Lindsay Vonn after she won all three women's races at the 2015 Lake Louise Alpine Ski World Cup. This latest victory gives her 18 career wins in Lake Louise as well as her four World Cup titles and an Olympic gold medal in 2010.*

*Photo courtesy of Ken Malvin*



## Faces at the Races: Ken Malvin

ANYONE WHO ATTENDS the chuckwagon races on a regular basis will recognize the smiling face and winning personality of Ken Malvin from his excellent work with the WPCA Merchandise Trailer. We thought it would be interesting to let everyone know a little more about the man behind the scenes.

Ken is a native Calgarian, having grown up in the community of Bridgeland (aka Little Italy). As a kid, he played baseball (pitcher and second base), basketball and street hockey (he says he wasn't a good enough skater for ice hockey). Ken used to enjoy fishing with his father and grandfather in his father's boat at Chestermere Lake. He wanted to be a surgeon when he grew up but because he had his grandfather's shaky hands it was not to be.

Ken graduated from St. Francis High School and then studied at the University of Calgary and Mount Royal College. He studied sport psychology and became an athletic trainer for the hockey team at U of C and the basketball team at Mount Royal. He still tapes ankles with expertise upon request.

Ken has a colourful and varied work history. As a student, he worked as a greenskeeper at the Elks Golf Club and then as a summer student at Cominco. Ken started at The Bay in 1979 in the sporting goods department and gradually climbed up the management ladder. He became a buyer in sporting goods, then worked in the record department and finally was a floor manager. When he was a record buyer, he had the unique opportunity to meet country legend **Wilf Carter**.

He then served as a board director and the Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Softwear Athletics, which was a sports licensing company that held licenses with the NHL, MLB, CFL, Coca-Cola, Molson and others. He had **Lanny McDonald** and **Ed Olczyk** under contract and even met **Jim Davis**, who created the Garfield comics. The company



*Above: Calgary Stampede board members Roc Spence and John Third with Ken Malvin and Billy Melville.*

*Photos courtesy of Ken Malvin except where indicated*

*Right: Ken presents Kurt Bensmiller with the 2015 Clean Driver Award.*

*Photo by Paul and Carol Easton*



was eventually sold to an American company after sales reached over \$15 million. He

then started another company with a business partner for a short time. He worked on charity programs with the Alberta Children's Hospital and started a golf tournament, raising funds for them through the Rick Tabaracci Golf Classic (Tabaracci is a former Calgary Flames goalie). They raised over \$1 million in 10 years.

He created KMC Sales in 2000, which is a corporate apparel supplier to companies in Calgary. In 2006, the buyer for the Flames Entertainment Group contacted Ken to help in creating graphics and supply products and



# Faces at the Races: Ken Malvin, continued



*Ken Malvin (far right), WPCA drivers Mark Sutherland and Codey McCurrach, and Stampede royalty.*

programs for retail and for their corporate department. KMC also ran the WPCA Merchandise Trailer for the past four years. It has also run a souvenir kiosk for both the men's and ladies' events at the Lake Louise Alpine Ski World Cup for the past five years.

Of course, there is a personal side to Ken too. He has been married to **Myrnie** for 35 years. Myrnie has been working for WestJet for almost 20 years; she is Executive Assistant to the Executive Vice President of Marketing and the Executive Vice President of Operations. Myrnie was very involved with the chuckwagons (as the WestJet representative) as a sponsor at the Rangeland Derby for 11 years and with the WPCA as a tour sponsor for 10 years. They sponsored a number of WPCA drivers at the Stampede. Myrnie and Ken's daughter **Candice** just graduated from Montana Tech at the University of Montana as a Petroleum Engineer. She previously worked as a vet tech for five years. Candice is

also involved with the chucks, as she has worked with the **Rick Fraser** team for quite a few years and is best friends with Rick and Sue's daughter **Kaylee**.



*Ken's wife Myrnie (left) in the Stampede barns and Ken with their daughter Candice at Kaylee Fraser's wedding.*



## Faces at the Races: Ken Malvin, continued

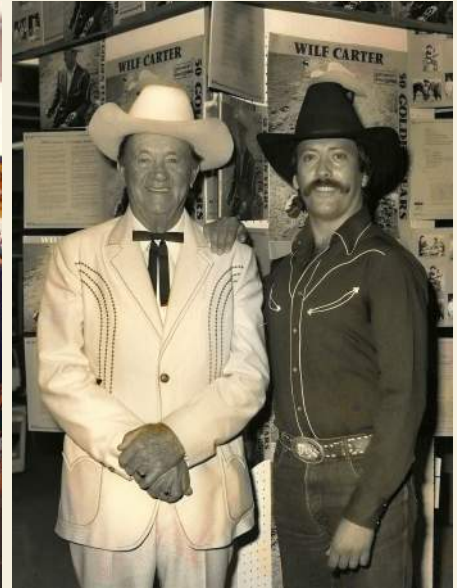
Ken and Myrnie still make Calgary their home. They live in a great neighbourhood; all the neighbours get together for functions and some meet weekly for Friday happy hour.

Ken has gone through seven eye operations (two detached retinas and then post-cataracts and lenses). The most recent was just this past year. He had a procedure in January a week before going down to watch the Superbowl. His health team had to put oil in his eyes so he could fly down for the game, and this meant he had to follow up with one more surgery in April.

Ken keeps busy outside of work and family as well. He joined Country Hills Golf Club in 1992 and took the game quite seriously, getting down to a 6 handicap. He played in a variety of Pro Ams and has had two holes in one! He became involved with the club, sitting on the Men's Member Guest Committee and then sitting on the board, where he chaired their marketing and grounds committees. He also served as President in 2004.

In 2000, he and four other individuals purchased a tarp at the Rangeland Derby and then formed a bigger group called the Mavericks Chuckwagon Racing Team. It was made up of 25 members. They survived their first year and then decided to give back to the community. They started their own golf tournament; in their first year, they raised \$14,000.

Today the tournament is held at Country Hills and is played on both courses. This year it raised \$190,000, which brings their total to over \$4 million, all going toward children's charities. Their main charities are the Flames Foundation, Between Friends, Pace Kids and the PREP Program.



*Celebrity roundup: Ken Malvin with Jim Davis, the creator of the Garfield comic strip, and country music legend Wilf Carter.*

They also do one-offs for smaller charities and have the Joe Colborne Families in Crisis Fund. One of Ken's best memories with the Mavericks was the mini chuckwagons they ran during the world junior hockey championships held in Calgary in 2011 and 2012. WPCA drivers were involved as drivers for the mini chucks, and coverage was global. They also continue to present the mini chucks with the Flames and Hitmen each year.

Ken sat as a Special Officer with the WPCA in 2006. In 2010, he took over the Merchandise Trailer after the sponsorship for it was no longer available. On taking over the Trailer, Ken put decals on it and painted the interior. The plan was to provide quality product at affordable prices.

The current operating plan is to make it self-sufficient to help reduce costs to the WPCA. Each year, Ken tries to secure sponsorship for a truck, fuel and accommodation. Ken got the Merchandise Trailer involved in some charity work by creating the Racing for High River and High River



## Faces at the Races: Ken Malvin, continued

Strong shirts and hats and raised \$10,000 for the town of High River. Ken received a WPCA Special Recognition Award for this work and is very proud of it. Last year, he raised \$4,000 for Camp Carmangay in cash and product.

Ken also puts considerable cash and product back into the sport. The Trailer and KMC sponsor the Clean Driver Award (cash, buckle and jacket) and a jacket for the world champion. The Merchandise Trailer also donates product toward auctions held at the various venues on behalf of the WPCA.

A new goal is to keep growing the online sales and to have WPCA product in select stores. Ken enjoys the challenge each year of trying to improve over the previous year's product line. He has developed great relationships with most of the venues as they provide him with great locations. Above all, he values his relationships with the fans, who come by each year and say, "Hey, Ken, what's new this year?"

Next time you are at the races, stop by and explore the many wagon-related products Ken has for sale and enjoy a conversation with this behind-the-scenes and much-appreciated wagon personality.



*Above: Ken and some of the Mavericks Chuckwagon Racing Team members with the little ones they support through their charity golf tournaments.*

*Below: Ken and more of the Mavericks doing good work in the community.*



*Left: Ken working at the merchandise booth during the Lake Louise Alpine Ski World Cup. He and KMC have been a presence at both the men's and women's events for the past five years.*





## Family Time with the Irvines

By Jimmi Lou Irvine

TWO ADULTS. THREE kids. Four provinces. Ten states. Twenty-one days. Ninety-eight hours in the truck. Over 10,000 kilometres. Six horses. It all added up to one amazing family vacation!

It is not often that our family has the opportunity to join **Doug** on his annual horse-buying trip, but this year we were all able to go. I am on a leave of absence from my job as a school principal, so we decided to head out on a one-of-a-kind adventure!

We left at the end of September with our truck and horse trailer and headed east. Our only plan was to go as far as Niagara Falls in Canada, and then head south to West Virginia. Of course, we travel a lot all summer but we never really stop between our tour locations and we are always driving separate vehicles. This was an enjoyable opportunity. We all travelled together and we stopped whenever we felt like it.

Usually Doug heads south and travels predominantly through the United States, but we wanted the kids to see Canada. Our first day was a shorter one because we wanted to stop and see Doug's dad's original home in Whitebear, Saskatchewan. We continued through the prairies, taking in the tunnels in Moose Jaw and many other attractions.

As we ventured east, a highlight was staying at the Pukaskwa National Park in Ontario. We camped on the shores of Lake Superior and hiked the Canadian Shield. The kids were excited to take a ferry ride from Manitoulin Island, and by that time Doug and I were content to see something other than the rocky Canadian Shield.

After a week of travel, we arrived at Niagara Falls, where we stayed for three days. What a joy to take in all of the sights at an off-peak time!



*Doug and Jimmi Lou Irvine with their kids on vacation at Niagara Falls.*

*Photos courtesy of Jimmi Lou Irvine*

From Niagara, we went south to the United States and headed for the racetrack. We stayed in West Virginia for a week and took in many nights of horse racing.

We also took many day trips to places like Pittsburgh and Columbus. Some of the highlights included visiting a science centre and attending a Pittsburgh Penguins hockey game.



## Family Time with the Irvines, continued

We looked at many horses, the kids learned how to read race forms, and throughout the week we narrowed down the field and picked six new horses. **Britton** even learned how to “swim” a horse in the pool from one of the trainers we visited.

En route and at the track, we encountered amazing people who were anxious to get to know more about the sport of chuckwagon racing.

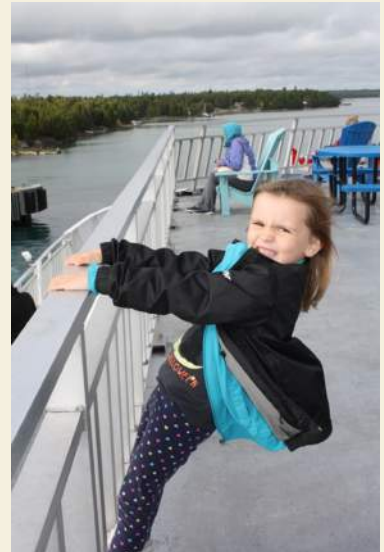
Our trip home was quick, as we had predetermined layover spots for the horses. We weren’t able to be the tourists we were on the way down.

However, in the course of three weeks, we made many memories, the kids were exposed to a million real-life lessons and we feel fortunate to have spent the time together.

As we returned home and turned the horses out, it immediately incited excitement toward spring training. We are all looking forward to seeing how the new horses can help our chuckwagon team!



*Left: Hiking the rugged landscape of the Canadian Shield overlooking majestic Lake Superior.*



*Right: Enjoying a ride on the Che Cheemaun Ferry on the way over to Manitoulin Island in Ontario.*



*Above: Meeting the mascot at Fort Williams Historic Park.*



*Right, above: The red chairs at Pukaskwa National Park.*



*Right, bottom: At the Pittsburgh-Ottawa hockey game.*



## Rising Star: Cody Ridsdale

THE RISING STAR feature is going to showcase several young drivers who are poised to make major headway in their quest to be a champion wagon driver.

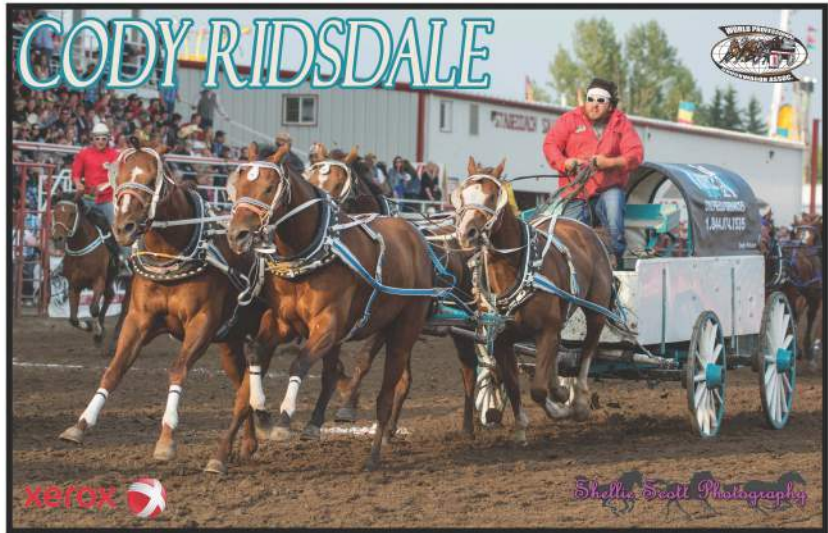
First up in the series is **Cody Ridsdale**. Cody is a second-generation chuckwagon driver. His father is former Calgary Stampede track record holder **Glen Ridsdale**.

Cody started his career at the tender age of 15 with the Western Chuckwagon Association (WCA) in 2003. He won three show championships in that first year: Rio Grande Rodeo, Manning Rodeo and the Teepee Creek Stampede. He qualified for the championship final heat at the WCA's season-ending event in Dawson Creek in 2007.

Cody was born in Paddle Prairie, Alberta, which is just south of High Level in the northwestern corner of the province. He now lives in Fairview, Alberta. Growing up, he played a lot of hockey.

Throughout his childhood, Cody watched his dad train horses and race wagons, so he has been around wagon racing his whole life. His dad was always training new horses, and Cody would often give him a hand. Cody remembers being at the Calgary Stampede when he was really young and his dad raced there. His dream is to get that same opportunity on the wagon world's biggest stage. In 2007, Cody went to the WPCA runoff and qualified for the Tour. He has been there ever since.

Cody's dad Glenn is retired from wagon racing now but his brother Wendell Ridsdale is going to start racing again next year. Cody's parents try to come see them on the Tour as much as they can.



*Cody Ridsdale in action on the track.*

*Photo by Shellie Scott Photography*

His fiancé **Katrina Berry** is an equine chiropractor and massage therapist. That's actually how they met, through her work. She keeps pretty busy with that year round, and takes a few outside horses for barrel training in the winter months. She also helps Cody with the new horses they get in the fall and drive all winter. Cody and Katrina support each other each day, all season long.

Cody's dad Glen raced competitively for 30 years. He raced in Calgary eight times and set a track record there. The family is pretty proud of that. The biggest goal for Cody has always been to race in Calgary too. He has been close the last couple of years. It was quite devastating for him when he did not make it this year, but Cody says they are working hard breaking new horses and hope to come out next year even stronger. That is their ultimate goal and they aren't going to stop until they achieve it.

Career highlights for Cody include finishing third in Rocky Mountain House in 2011. He also describes his first day





## Rising Star: Cody Ridsdale, continued



*Cody Ridsdale and his team rounding the barrel.*

*Photo by FL Vidiuck Photography*

money on the WPCA tour back in 2010 as a pretty cool feeling. Cody feels that he hasn't had as many career highlights as he would like to have had at this point but he thinks they are getting the horse power to get there now.

Cody's winning personality is making him new fans at every stop. He's great at things like getting out into schools to talk to kids or making other public appearances on behalf of the sport and the WPCA.

His favourite racetrack is Grande Prairie, as it's the closest to home and he gets a lot of friends and family coming out to support him. Being the first show of the season makes it an exciting place to be and he always seems to do pretty well there.

Cody says it is hard to pick a favourite horse. Like most drivers, he loves them all. He has a few seasoned horses that have been with him since he started on the Tour. They are

honest and do their jobs for him every single time, so they have a special place in his heart. Last year he brought 11 first-year horses down the road with him and they all worked out. He was pretty proud of that.

If he had to choose favourites, there is a young lead team that stepped up to the plate when he needed them to this year. **Baffoonery** (right lead) and **Wild** (left lead) are both five-year-olds that he broke out last winter. He doesn't usually like to hook two first-year horses together in their first race but they worked well together from day one and he didn't want to split them up. He hooked them on the third day in High River and they came in sixth. They stayed consistent and strong the rest of the year.

He uses these horses on the 1 and 2 barrels, and he doesn't think he placed lower than 14th with them all year. Cody is really looking forward to future years with these young horses as key contributors to the team.

**Curt and Debbie Kobza** with Triple K Oilfield Services have been sponsors with Cody for almost five years. Cody says they have played an important role in where he is today. They share the same goal in getting to Calgary, so he appreciates them a lot. Drivers know how important it is to find a long-term sponsor who shares the dreams, provides both financial and emotional support, and even pitches in with chores around the barns. Cody says that describes perfectly the relationship with Curt and Debbie.

Look for the distinctively painted wagon Cody uses on the race track and expect to see him among the points leaders as one of our Rising Stars.



# Rising Star: Cody Ridsdale, continued



*Clockwise from top left:*

1. Cody Ridsdale and his fiancé Katrina Berry.
2. Cody supporting the Special Needs Rodeo in Ponoka.
3. Cody's dad Glen Ridsdale in the lead during a historic moment at the 1993 Calgary Stampede, beating Jerry Bremner, George Normand and Kelly Sutherland.
4. Glen Ridsdale turning the barrels at the Stampede.
5. Cody Ridsdale with Dustin Gorst and young wagon fans on a WPCA school visit in Grande Prairie.

*Photos 3 and 4 courtesy of Billy Melville archives*

