



TURNING THE BARRELS

The Official Newsletter of the World Professional Chuckwagon Association

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Have you ever wondered about the connection between drivers, sponsors and the many wagon tarps on display over the years? Learn the history behind these important relationships.

**THE COUNTDOWN IS ON TO THE START
OF A BRAND-NEW RACING SEASON!**



FUNDING SUPPORT

Tammy Kristiansen, WPCA Director of Partnerships, and Brian Hebson, WPCA Director of Marketing, recently accepted a Community Initiatives Project cheque for \$12,800 from MLA Brian Malkinson (Calgary-Currie). The funds went toward the 2017 marketing/hosting project. Thank you to the Alberta government for supporting western heritage sports and the WPCA.



Official Truck of the WPCA



Welcome New Drivers for 2018

With Kelly Sutherland, Colt Cosgrave and Layne Bremner no longer on the Tour in 2018, the WPCA is pleased to welcome three new drivers to the team. Bob Van Eaton and Kelly Morin have both been on the Tour before so wagon fans should be familiar with them already. Josh Hrynyk is the only true rookie joining this season.

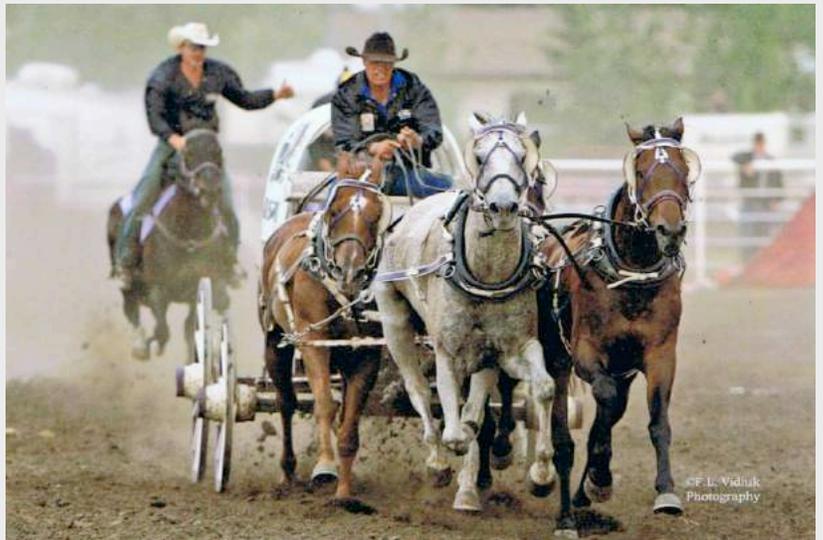
Bob Van Eaton

Bob is a 57-year-old, second-generation veteran of wagon racing. His father **Don Van Eaton** drove chuckwagons at the Calgary Stampede between 1961 and 1973. Bob started outriding and driving in 1992. He previously raced with the WPCA from 1996 to 1998, in 2000, and from 2013 to 2014. He started competing on the CPCA circuit in 2001.

Bob had a successful 2017 season on the CPCA circuit, posting 14 top-10 runs, including five that cracked the top five. He won the CPCA's Safe Drive Award for the second consecutive year, and placed inside the top 10 overall at the CPCA stops in North Battleford, Dewberry and Wainwright. In 2016, Bob was named the CPCA's Most Improved Driver.

An oilfield worker in the off-season, Bob is the father of five children—**Bobbi Jo, Coralyn, Franklin, Jaclynn** and **Jesse**—and seven grandchildren. Bob and his fiancée **Crystal Peltomaa** make their home in Lacombe, Alberta. Bob says his family members are all great supporters of his racing, and they help a lot by making wagon boxes and training new horses for him. As well, they try to get to most of the shows to cheer him on. There is always a family atmosphere around the Van Eaton barn.

In the off-season, Bob likes to ice fish and watch his grandsons play hockey. His goals for 2018 are to have a penalty-free year and qualify for the Calgary Stampede in 2019. His favourite track to race at is the Ponoka Stampede. Bob considers it his hometown show, and lots of family and friends can be found in the stands and back in the barns.



Bob Van Eaton raising a lot of dust on the track as he heads the team home.



Bob turning the barrels. His key sponsor iRecover is displayed on his tarp.

Welcome New Drivers for 2018



Left, top: Bob Van Eaton up in the wagon box.

Left, bottom: Bob and his fiancée Crystal Peltomaa.

Right: Bob's favourite barnhand Crystal.



Bob says he gets many of his horses from the Vancouver and Saskatoon tracks, and a few from other drivers. Watch for **Humble**, his favourite horse, at the races this year. He uses him on both left and right wheel as Humble is one of those horses you can count on to give you a hundred per cent every time out.

Jim Grey with the iRecover tarp is a key sponsor and has been with Bob for the last three years.

Good luck, Bob, in the 2018 racing season.

Josh Hrynyk

After embarking on a five-year outriding career with the CPCA, Josh has decided to make the move from saddle to wagon box. He will make his debut as a driver on the 2018 WPCA Pro Tour.

Josh met **Kurt** and **Chance Bensmiller** playing hockey in 2007, which led to his working for Chance as a barn hand. He then started outriding and is now ready to make the next step to the wagon box. This being his rookie season, his main goals are being clean and consistent while building outfits for the years to come.

Josh and his girlfriend **Brenna** make their home in Dewberry, Alberta. With Dewberry being such a small community, Josh says, it is fun and rewarding getting involved with things like playing hockey for the Dewberry Mustangs and participating in events such as the cutter rally, fall suppers and arena fundraising. Josh works as a lineman for ATCO Electric in the off-season, and enjoys hockey and baseball.

This move to the driver's seat is a definite highlight in his chuckwagon career. It may even rival outriding in the Calgary

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Tarp Sponsors: The Backbone of Racing

TARP SPONSORS HAVE long been an essential part of chuckwagon racing. The first Calgary Stampede races featured wagons representing six big ranches in the Calgary area that were approached by the Stampede to contribute chuckwagons and horses to the proposed race. Many thought the risks were too great and the whole idea ridiculous.

Eventually, though, the six ranches agreed to participate and the Stampede's signature event was born. Those original six were Clem Gardner/VU Ranch (driver: **Clem Gardner**), Mosquito Creek (driver: **Bill Summers**), Double Dishpan Ranch (driver: **Sid Bannerman**), Lewis & Shore (driver: **Lloyd Lewis**), Jack Morton/CX Ranch (driver: **Jack Morton**) and Sheep River (driver: **Ora Demille**).

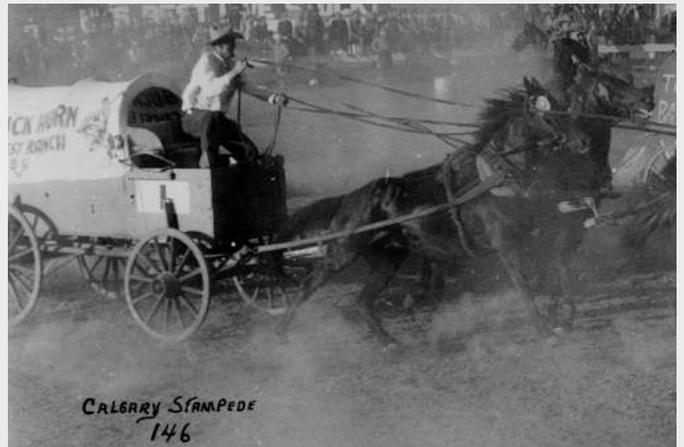


Mosquito Creek tarp.

Pre-sponsorship rules for wagon tarps required them to bear the names or brands of the individual owners or districts they represented. Later, after sponsorships began, the rules were that a chuckwagon with a sponsor was allowed to use the given name and surname of the sponsor only. In the case of a legitimate ranch, the name of that ranch could appear. Until these rules about the canvases were relaxed in 1976, wagons could be disqualified for not following them.

The first official chuckwagon races were run at the Calgary Stampede in 1923. It wasn't until 1943 when **Clifton C. Cross**, owner of the Buckhorn Guest Ranch in Pincher Creek,

first saw the value that advertising on a chuckwagon canvas could bring. He paid chuckwagon driver **Marvin Flett** to advertise the Buckhorn Ranch on his chuckwagon. It was a relationship that lasted for over a decade and was the start of chuckwagon sponsorship as we know it today.



Buckhorn Ranch tarp.

Many of the early legendary drivers had their own tarps on their wagons.



Tom Lauder wagon.

Three-time Calgary champion and patriarch of the Glass family wagon legacy **Tom Lauder** was one who featured his own tarp.

Tarp Sponsors: The Backbone of Racing

The legend of **Jim Ross** began in 1925 when he and partner **Bayse Collins** first entered the chuckwagon races at the Calgary Stampede. That year the Collins & Ross outfit, with Jim on the lines, won the Rangeland Derby championship. In



Collins & Ross tarp.

the pioneering days of chuckwagon racing, Jim quickly established himself as one of chuckwagon racing's earliest superstars. He compiled an impressive record between 1925 and 1945, winning the Calgary Stampede Rangeland Derby championship three times and placing in the top five overall six times, including a runner-up finish in 1927.



Johnnie Phelan tarp.

Four-time Calgary champion and four-time world champion **Ronnie Glass** carried the **Johnnie Phelan** tarp for many years. Johnnie supplied some of the horses and equipment while Ronnie drove the wagon.

Dick Cosgrave won the Calgary Stampede title 10 times between 1926 and 1943, running with his own tarp each time.



Dick Cosgrave wagon.

Hank Willard won Calgary a record five times from 1951 to 1955. He carried the Commodore Allan tarp three times, representing one of the bigger ranchers in the Vulcan area.



Commodore Allan tarp (top left wagon).

Tarp Sponsors: The Backbone of Racing

One of the first long-term successful partnerships between a driver and a tarp sponsor was between **Dale Flett** and Peter Bawden Drilling. They combined to win Calgary five times and the world title four times between 1957 and 1963.



Peter Bawden Drilling tarp.

Another legendary longtime partnership between a driver and a sponsor that wagon fans might recognize was between four-time world champion driver **Tommy Dorchester** and **Jack Sheckter**. The partnership involved Tommy driving the wagon while Jack, who was prominent in the Edmonton business community at the time, sponsored Tommy's chuckwagon.



Jack Sheckter tarp.

One of the longest continuous tarp sponsors was **David Crowchild**, a former chief of the Tsuu T'ina (Sarcee) Nation and community leader. He sponsored wagons for 25 years, from 1928 to 1953 (Heritage Park sponsored wagons for 24 consecutive years, and Shaw GMC for 26.) He drove his own wagon and sponsored wagons for sons **Gordon Crowchild** and **Edwin Crowchild** and for **Ralph Johnson** and **Dunc Cameron** (Dunc also drove for David). His name may be familiar—Crowchild Trail in Calgary is named after David.



David Crowchild tarp.

Lloyd Nelson was the last driver to win Calgary without a sponsored wagon, which he did in 1956. **Wendell Eresman** was the last driver to drive his own tarp, as he always bought his own tarp at the auction up to his retirement in 1985.

In 1976, **Ralph Vigen** became the first driver to win the Calgary Stampede with a commercial tarp name after they changed the rules (Northern Metallic sponsored him). That changed the picture for drivers from that point on.

Chuckwagon sponsorship was left entirely up to the drivers until 1979, when the Calgary Stampede initiated the first chuckwagon canvas auction and offered the prime advertising space on a tarp to the highest bidder. With the space being sold at public auction, this made it much easier for anyone to get the chance at getting their name on a chuckwagon at the greatest outdoor show on earth.

Tarp Sponsors: The Backbone of Racing

The winningest driver of all time, Kelly Sutherland, had nine different tarp sponsors with his 12 Calgary titles. From the early stages of his career, Kelly had the backing of **Norman Nilson** and **Archie Hackwell**.



Archie Hackwell tarp.

Six-time world champion **George Normand** won five of those titles carrying the Majestic RV World tarp, while his best friend **Buddy Bensmiller** won another when he carried on the relationship with Majestic RV following George's death at the Ponoka Stampede in 1994.



Majestic RV tarp, shown on George Normand's wagon.

Shaw GMC first got involved in 1979 at the first Calgary Stampede tarp auction when they bought the **Harvey Lear** wagon. In 1984, Shaw GMC bought **Smokey Wilson's** tarp and sponsored him up until the early 1990s, when they sponsored **Ward Willard** and **Dallas Dorchester** for one year each. Next, Shaw GMC had a 20-year relationship with **Jason Glass**, from 1993 to 2013.



Shaw GMC tarp.

Since then, Shaw GMC has sponsored **Chad Harden**, **Jordie Fike** and **John Walters**.

Drivers like to create long-term relationships with their sponsors. Currently the longest tenured partnerships are the ones that **Doug Irvine** and **Obrey Motowylo** have with their sponsors. Doug has had strong support from B&R Eckel's Transport since he started driving in 1998. Similarly, Obrey has been sponsored by H & E Oilfield Services since he started in 2004.



B&R Eckel's Transport tarp.

The many rules, regulations and relationships may have evolved over time but it's clear that tarp sponsors have had a key role in the history of wagon racing.



H & E Oilfield Services tarp.

Welcome New Drivers for 2018

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Stampede and winning Wainwright, Dewberry and the Lloydminster aggregate title in the CPCA finals.

Josh's favourite track is the Calgary Stampede because of the atmosphere. It has a great base and is well maintained. At this stage, his favourite horses are **Spike** (Right Leader) and **Diesel** (Outriding Horse). Josh says so far they have a few little sponsors to help out but no key sponsors as of yet.

Have a great run in 2018, Josh.

Kelly Morin

Kelly is a 36-year-old driver who started with the CPCA in 2006. He previously raced with the WPCA in 2014 when he was the Rookie of the Year. During Kelly's formative years on the CPCA circuit, he was the aggregate winner and qualified for his first winner-take-all championship final heat at the Colonial Days Fair in 2012.

Kelly is a second-generation driver; his father is former driver **Bruce Morin**. His brother is current driver **Curtis Morin**.

Kelly likes the outdoors and travelling with friends and family. He's single and makes his off-season home in Debden, Saskatchewan.

Best of luck in the 2018 season, Kelly.



Josh Hrynyk getting in some early training.



Josh and his girlfriend Brenna during his outrider days.

Photos in this issue supplied by Ed Wittchen, Billy Melville, Bob Van Eaton, Capturing Valuable Memories Photography, Fred Vidiuk and Josh Hrynyk.

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