

# Rodeo's wild and woolly tradition part of cowboys' everyday skills

By John Ortmann

Rodeo in Nebraska goes back a long way. Although Prescott, Ariz. claims the first organized rodeo, some historians say North Platte hosted the first one in 1882.

The city fathers wanted an event to mark Independence Day and hired Buffalo Bill Cody to produce it for them. The resulting Fourth of July blowout attracted more than 1,000 cowboys eager to demonstrate their work-day skills and allowed Cody to launch a new career as a wild-west show promoter.

Animal science professor R. B. Warran, University of Nebraska Rodeo Association advisor, said early rodeos featured mainly bucking and roping events. These events pitted man against animal and grew out of cowboy's daily activities.

Riding skills, developed during the breaking of wild horses for work, were displayed in saddle and bareback bronc riding events, Warren said. Bull riding, although not an essential cowboy skill, was developed later as an additional test of riding ability.

The various roping events, including calf roping and one- and two-man steer roping, grew out of the skills required to "doctor" or otherwise handle cattle on the open range where the corrals and chutes used today were not available.

Warren said steer wrestling, formerly called bulldogging, has the most romantic history of all rodeo events. It was developed in the 1890s by black cowboy Bill Pickett, who used his arms to turn the steer's head back and then sank his teeth into the animal's upper limb to complete the throw.

Today teeth are not allowed; the cowboy launches himself from the back of a running horse onto the long,

sharp horns of a running steer. While the left hand grasps the steer's muzzle between the eyes and the nostrils, the right hand grips the tip of the right horn and uses this natural lever to twist the steer to the ground. All four legs must point in the same direction for the cowboy to receive a time.

Professional cowboys began to organize in the 1930s, when they formed the Cowboy Turtle Association, so named because the turtle is slow but sure, Warren said. The Turtles, a sort of labor union, was formed to protect cowboys from shady promoters who staged rodeos in Eastern cities and then disappeared without distributing prize money.

In 1945 the Rodeo Cowboys' Association, now known as the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, was formed. More organized than the CTA, the association sets rules and standards for rodeos and events, including rules against the mistreatment of animals.

College rodeo in Nebraska had its beginning in 1947 when UNL cowboys began to compete against each other, Warren said. In the early 1960s the competition grew to include other Nebraska colleges and in 1967 the UNRA joined the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association.

This year's UNL rodeo, April 7 through 9 at the State Fairgrounds Coliseum, is expected to draw 300 contestants from the eight-state NIRA Great Plains Region.

The four performances will be called by North Platte resident Hadley Barrett, formerly an announcer at the PRC National Finals Rodeo held every year in Oklahoma City.

The rodeo clown will be Gordon bullfighter Miles Hare, who was chosen to clown the 1977 National Finals and is now one of the top-ranked clowns in the country.

# More pediatrician cooperation necessary for aphasia detection, treatment—speaker

By Pat Gentzler

Aphasia, the inability to communicate through speaking and writing, would be detected earlier and treated sooner if pediatricians would cooperate, said John Eisensen, a speech and communication authority.

Eisensen, a researcher from San Francisco State University spoke to a group of Scottish Rite Masons and reporters Thursday at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education.

The UNL Barkley Memorial Center on East Campus, which specializes in speech problems, is financed by the Scottish Rite Masons.

Although aphasia usually is found in children, it also can occur in adults, often after a stroke, he explained.

Some children, he said, who are not deaf, retarded, brain damaged, or emotionally disturbed just never develop speech on their own. Eisensen said this aphasia is a form of brain damage. He refers to these children as "brain different".

In one-third of the aphasia cases, there is evidence of brain damage in the left hemisphere of the brain, where communication takes place. But, Eisensen said, his theory is that all of the cases are caused by some sort of neurological disorder.

Psychologists are easier to convince of this than neurologists are, he said. "And that's their problem."

Treatment and diagnosis is based on "What do normal children do?" Eisensen said.

If a child is slow to begin communicating, it could be for a number of reasons, he said.

Parents should check motor milestones, such as rolling over and sitting up to check for retardation.

"Without question they (aphasic children) can learn to speak . . . otherwise we wouldn't all be here," Eisensen said.

The percentage of children afflicted with aphasia is from 1 to 3 percent, he said. Many of these cases are misdiagnosed, he added.

Therapy should begin before the age of 3, he said. Eisensen also discussed reading problems among children. He said ten to 20 percent of the school-age children have reading problems.

Fourth grade students reading on the first grade level usually, "don't understand language as well as you think," he said. "They can read it aloud, but they don't understand."

Eisensen reported the findings of a recent survey he conducted, which stated that despite the changes in education methods over the past 50 years, the percentage of children with reading problems has stayed the same.

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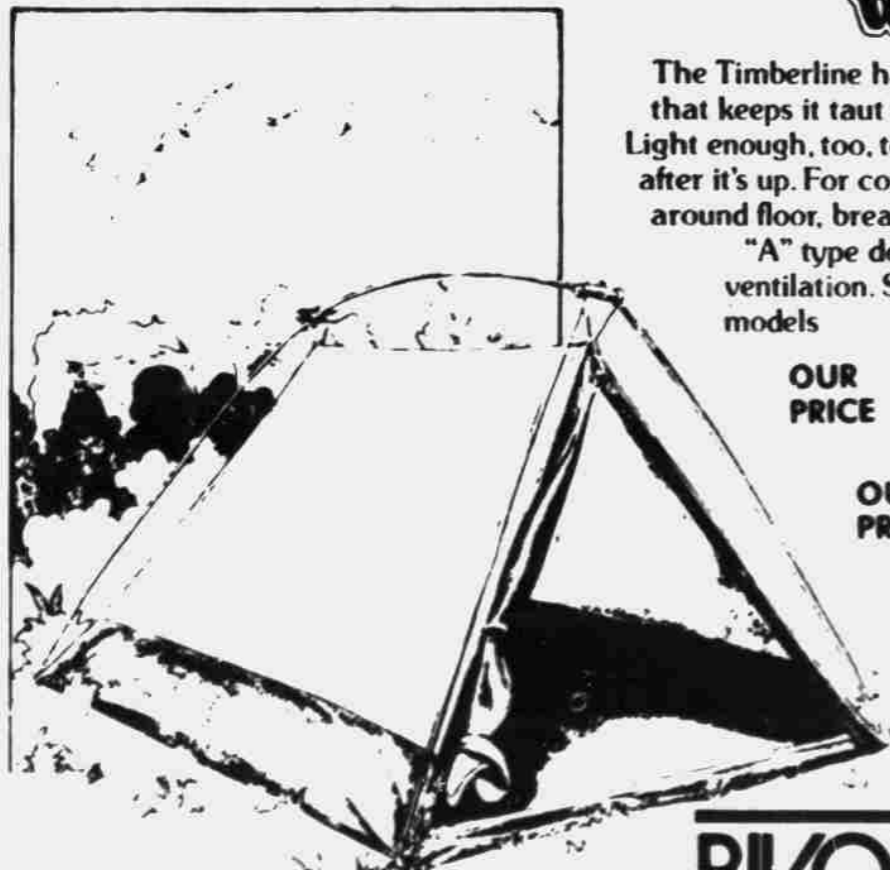
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