

The Pony Express

Newsletter of the Ellensburg Rodeo Hall of Fame Association

EMAIL Erhof97@gmail.com/www.erhof.com

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Howdy Pardners! It's membership renewal time for all sustaining members. Please send in your tax deductible renewal (fill out the form on the enclosed brochure) and enlist a friend to join the Ellensburg Rodeo Hall of Fame Association (ERHOF)! In the meantime, here's your tri-annual Ellensburg Rodeo Hall of Fame *Pony Express* newsletter. Only sustaining and lifetime ERHOF members receive *The Pony Express* and we are grateful for your continuing support.

ERHOF and the Virus: What an unprecedented time this is for all of us. We miss our friends and family as we stay healthy. Keeping in line with the public health recommendations and mandates, we have postponed our annual Whiskey Tasting. Our induction banquet and art auction are cancelled, but we hope to organize some kind of August ERHOF induction gathering. This will be connected to the Ellensburg Rodeo's Labor Day Weekend plans, so stay tuned as we await further developments. We look forward to a time when we can all come together and celebrate our beloved Ellensburg Rodeo.

Our New Western Culture and Art Center Home: Despite setbacks, we are close to opening our new museum! The old Downtown Pharmacy has been transformed into a beautiful new museum space, and we will soon have an ERHOF exhibit coinciding with Ellensburg's "Phase III" gallery openings. As you know, ERHOF joined the Clymer Museum and Western Art Association to form the Western Culture and Art Alliance. The three non-profits now share the Western Culture and Art Center in the historic Ramsay Building, 416 N. Pearl, in downtown Ellensburg.

Slim Pickens and Mabel Strickland are the 2020 Inductees to the Ellensburg Rodeo Hall of Fame! As ERHOF members, you are the first to hear this great news. Mabel Strickland(1897-1976) was an acclaimed cowgirl who competed in Ellensburg in 1926 and 1928-30 in roping, bronc riding, and track racing events; she won the 1930 Ellensburg Rodeo women's relay race. A native of Walla Walla, Strickland was Pendleton Roundup Queen and also performed as a trick rider. She and her husband Hugh (an Idaho bronc rider, bulldogger, and roper) traveled the rodeo road together. Californian Slim Pickens (1919-1983) was a famed post-World War II rodeo clown who worked in Ellensburg from 1947-50 and returned for the 1955 rodeo. Known for his arena antics and his white mule "Judy," Pickens also donned full Spanish matador attire to fight the bulls and protect thrown bull riders. Pickens made good friends in Ellensburg and developed a devoted following among Northwest rodeo fans.

Interestingly, Strickland and Pickens both went on to Hollywood movie careers. Mabel utilized her skills on horseback to work a stunt woman and appear in several 1930s Westerns. Pickens became a talented character actor and appeared in dozens of mid-twentieth century feature movies. Both Strickland and Pickens are inductees to the

National Cowboy Hall of Fame; Strickland is also a National Cowgirl Halls of Fame inductee. ERHOF plans *Ellensburg Daily Record* feature articles and aims to stage a late summer induction event for these two rodeo greats.

ERHOF and the ProRodeo Hall of Fame: In another bright spot on the summer horizon, we congratulate the Ellensburg Rodeo Board on the induction of the Ellensburg Rodeo into the ProRodeo Hall of Fame on August 1. What a well-deserved honor for our community and rodeo! ERHOF is proud that the rodeo board has asked us to help the PRCA create an induction exhibit and video for this occasion. Stay tuned for further news about this historic induction in the *Ellensburg Daily Record* and ERHOF's Facebook page and other publications.

The 100th Anniversary of the Ellensburg Rodeo: The Ellensburg Rodeo Board has designated 2023 for our 100th birthday party, and ERHOF is working with them in preparing for the celebration. The big news is that Washington State University Press has agreed to publish an updated version of John Ludtka's *The Tradition Lives*. John, a deceased ERHOF Inductee and former editor of the *Ellensburg Daily Record*, wrote *The Tradition Lives* as a 75th anniversary history of the Ellensburg Rodeo in 1997. John's original writing will remain unchanged, and ERHOF will work with Megan Meeks, designer Andrea Paris, and rodeo board members Dan Morgan, Jeff Leichleiter, and Jerry Doolin to write and design the new 100-year anniversary book. This group will consult and interview local experts and old-timers, select new images (the photographs in John's 1997 book were not digitalized), and compose a history of the past 25 years. Washington State Regional Archivist (and former ERHOF board member) Brigid Clift will provide updated Ellensburg Rodeo statistics. Stay tuned for updates on Centennial activities!

Jami Truax and John Brotherton are new Ellensburg Rodeo Hall of Fame board members, replacing retiring Joe Powell and Keith Winter. Jami and husband Mitch run Kittitas Valley Outfitters from their Schnebly Road ranch and are accomplished riders and guides with a longtime interest in rodeo and western traditions. John was born and raised in Ellensburg and works at Fitterer's Furniture as an interior designer. As a teenager John rode with the Kittitas County Junior Sheriff's Posse, and for the past three years he has been a contributing artist to ERHOF's art auction fundraiser. Jami will join the Membership and Communications committees and John will serve as a curator on our Museum Committee. ERHOF thanks Joe Powell (recently retired from CWU's English Department) and Keith Winter for their valuable service and for their willingness to continue to serve ERHOF as volunteers.

Don't Forget Our Website, Facebook Page, and Instagram: Our website provides historic photographs, biographical essays of ERHOF inductees, a virtual museum tour, ERHOF membership info, important links, and much, much more c/o www.erhof.com. We are on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BootsOfFame> and you can email Erhof97@gmail.com. And thanks to new board member Jami Truax you can give us a follow on Instagram [@ellensburgrodeohalloffame](https://www.instagram.com/ellensburgrodeohalloffame). Stay up to date with our latest happenings and inductees!
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