

MULE CROSSING: *Bishop Mule Days*

By Meredith Hodges

There is a lot more to the Bishop Mule Days World Championships than one might expect. Bishop Mule Days is not just a Memorial Day Weekend event--it's a cultural experience! Located in the scenic Eastern High Sierras, the city of Bishop hosts not only the largest mule and donkey show in the world, but encourages artists and craftsmen from all over the world to come together for nearly a week in celebration of the



human values we all hold dear: friendship, respect, happiness, appreciation, and love of the wondrous gifts of life! The mule has been the catalyst for bringing all these fine people together in an exhilarating celebration of life's best efforts.

Over 600 mules competed in more than 100 different events, including packing scrambles, English and Western classes and games, mule shoeing, and comedy and specialty acts; and as mules have progressed in their unique abilities, the art of Dressage has been added to the agenda. Lucky Three Sundowner of the Lucky Three Ranch in Loveland, Colorado, was invited to exhibit his grace and ability toward dance in an exhibition during the Sunday afternoon performance. He was the highest level Dressage mule to perform at Bishop this year. Lucky Three Mae Bea C.T. preceded the exhibition by winning the Mule Jumping class with no faults!

Many of the English, Western, and Driving classes are held Thursday and Friday before the main weekend, then On Saturday morning the show opens with the world's largest non-motorized parade, comprised of hundreds of mules and horses in pack strings, hauling loads and riders on a two-mile trek down Bishop's Main Street. Thousands of fans line the streets with cameras and videos to capture this once in a lifetime extraordinary parade! Each year, Bob Talmadge exhibits his latest creation in hoof-pusher vehicles; this year, a shocking pink golf cart, complete with canopy, pushed by "Old Man Rivers" rolled down the street carrying "The Farmer," Bob Talmadge, and "The Farmer's Daughter," Dena Hodges.

During the Saturday and Sunday performances, Bobby Tanner and friends reenacted the old 20-mule team hitch exhibition with mules that had only been hitched together since the preceding Monday afternoon! Such skill and mulemanship is a sight to see... for sure!

Another skillful performance was demonstrated by the Bishop Mule Days Drill Team comprised of exhibitors who practiced only once before each performance over the weekend under the strict and skillful command of Niti Vick, fondly known as “Sarge.” Pack scrambles, chariot races and comedy packing kept the audience in suspense and stitches with their wild and crazy antics, announced by rodeo announcer Bob Tallman, adding still more fun and excitement to the weekend events. Other highlights included the Country Western dances on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights, preceded on Thursday night by hit songwriter Michael Martin Murphy, who captured the audiences with hit tunes from past, present, and future recording albums. Western artists, craftsmen, and salesmen displayed their wares throughout the weekend with a wide variety of items and art from past to present day. Bishop merchants store windows were painted in celebration of “Mules” and mule memorabilia could be found everywhere!

The mule and donkey exhibitors did a remarkable job in showing all the things that Longears are capable of doing! We truly have a lot of very gifted and talented people in our industry and everyone there played an important role in the success of the entire show; they are all to be congratulated for their efforts! We proudly honor this year’s World Champions:

WORLD CHAMPION WESTERN PERFORMANCE MULE:

1. Dolly Barton Vince Silverman Norco, Ca.
2. Kitty’s Maybelline Pat Mitchell Sun Valley, Ca.

WORLD CHAMPION COW WORKING MULE:

1. Clementine Walter Nunn Brookshire, Tx.
2. Judy Tucker Slender Arcadia, Ca.

WORLD CHAMPION ENGLISH PERFORMANCE MULE:

1. Empress Josephine Lou Moore Templeton, Ca.
2. Dolly Barton Vince Silverman Norco, Ca.

WORLD CHAMPION GYMKHANA MULE:

1. Miss Kitty T Von Twitchell Marysville, Ca.
2. Booger’s Chiquita Jerry Villanes Coffeerville, Ks.

WORLD CHAMPION RUNNING MULE:

1. Loretta Lynn Mayfield & Long Phoenix, Arizona
2. Cajun Queen Neil Stewart Las Vegas, Nev.

WORLD CHAMPION GREEN MULE ENGLISH:

1. Sissy Bars Bill Krol Phoenix, Ar.
2. Asstounding Betay Paullada Tarzana, Ca.

WORLD CHAMPION GREEN MULE WESTERN:

1. Lisa B. Jiggs Danielle Tallon Bakersfield, Ca.
2. Trissy’s Juliette Pat Mitchell Sun Valley, Ca.

WORLD CHAMPION FUN MULE:

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| 1. Ima Kisha | Ben Strickland | Aguanga, Ca. |
| 2. K.T.'s Elvira | Tom Stokes | Nampa, Id. |

WORLD CHAMPION PACKER:

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| 1. Jim Brumfield | Bishop, Ca. |
| 2. John Kaede | Bishop, Ca. |

WORLD CHAMPION MULE SHOER:

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| 1. Mark Paine | Bishop, Ca. |
| 2. Porter Green | Yucapa, Ca. |

WORLD CHAMPION PACK TEAM:

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| 1. Rock Creek Pack Station | Bishop, Ca. |
| 2. San Joaquin Back Country Women | Clovis, Ca. |

WORLD CHAMPION DRIVER:

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| 1. George Lane | Lancaster, Ca. |
| 2. Ruth Jacobsen | Cayucos, Ca. |

WORLD CHAMPION JACK:

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| 1. Rooster | Geraldine Hickman | San Diego, Ca. |
| 2. Sunrise Rio | Kathy Dusart | Colfax, Ca. |

HARD LUCK MULE SKINNER:

Rick Meyerhoff Mammoth lakes

WORLD CHAMPION TEAMSTER:

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|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Jim Buckman | Wickenburg, Ar. |
| 2. Al Baptista | Turlock, Ca. |

Each year, thousands of mule lovers, spectators, and exhibitors flock together in Bishop to renew the values and friendships upon which our entire industry is based. Each contributes his own special talents to this unique and unusual affair. Mule fever runs rampant and each year this culture of friends and acquaintances grows. Thank you all for your part in this gala event and a special thanks to the city of Bishop for their warm reception of such a grand and overwhelming show. A special thanks to Carl Lind and the other Mule Days committee members who have made this all possible: Bobby Tanner, Emily Braffet, Roger Rogers, Denton Sonke, Bob Tanner, Danny Wells, Sam Dean, Ross Corner, Robert Collins, Sue Hill, Martha Miklaucic, Candy Nitschke, Newt Elsdon, Esther Atkinson, Jack Gustafson, Randy Van Tassell, Chris Van Tassell, Ned Londo, Kathy Dugas, Margaret Strong, and Bob Rowe. It takes an enormous amount of courage, consideration, and hard work to put on an event such as this, and these folks have really done an extraordinary job! Thank you for not only a job well done, but a job done with kindness, consideration, and dedication! We salute you! You have made our World

Championship at Bishop more than just a show... you have made it a wonderfully rewarding and fulfilling cultural life experience!

For more information about Meredith Hodges and her comprehensive correspondence training Program, *Training Mules and Donkeys*, please visit **www.LuckyThreeRanch.com** or call **1-800-816-7566**. Also, find Meredith Hodges and Lucky Three Ranch on Facebook and Twitter. And don't forget to check out her children's website at **JasperTheMule.com**

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