

Volume 37

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL PONY EXPRESS ASSOCIATION

April 2026

# Hooves, History, and 250 Years: The Pony Express Rekindles America's Pioneer Pride

In an age of instant messages and overnight shipping, it's easy to forget that America once relied on the thunder of hooves to carry its hopes across a vast and untamed frontier. As the nation marks 250 years of Independence, the legend of the Pony Express gallops back into public imagination, rekindling the pride in the

grit and daring that shaped the country's early spirit.

Launched in 1860, The Pony Express was a bold, short lived mail service that connected St. Joseph to Sacramento across nearly 2,000 miles of rugged terrain. Young riders – some barely in their teens – braved blizzards, bandits, and blistering heat to deliver letters in just 10 days, a remarkable feat for its time. Though it operated for only 18 months before the transcontinental telegraph

rendered it obsolete, its impact on the American imagination endured.

Today, annual reenactments along the Pony Express National Historic Trail invites a new generation to experience a taste of that frontier challenge. Riders in uniform carry a leather mochila from station to station, forging a living link to the past. Spectators gather in small towns and wide-open plains, celebrating not just a mail route, but a symbol of resilience and unity.

At 250 years, America reflects on its founding ideals – courage, innovation and determination.

The Pony Express embodies those qualities in motion. Its story reminds us that before fiber optics and flight, connection required sweat, stamina, and unwavering resolve. The echo of hooves across the prairie is more than nostalgia; it is a tribute to the pioneer spirit that continues to define the nation.

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## NPEA joins in America's 250th Anniversary

The 250th Anniversary of the United States will be celebrated on July 4, 2026. This milestone marks the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, commemorating the nation's principles of equality, liberty, and government by consent of the people it serves. This event is also referred to as the United States Semiquincentennial.

AMERICA



As the proud steward of one of America's most sacred Historical Trails, the National Pony Express Association joins the nation in celebrating the 250th Anniversary of American Independence. From Independence Hall and the Statue of Liberty to Revolutionary War battlefields, memorials to our nation's founders, and places associated with hundreds of years of American history, National Historic Trails across the

country will serve the American people through our mission to provide opportunities for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. Join us as we celebrate and commemorate the Declaration of Independence on its 250th Anniversary.

The National Pony Express Association partners with the National Park Service, the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management and is proud to be keeping an important part of our nation's great history alive by holding the annual re-ride in June of each year.

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## 2026 Re-Ride Schedule

June 15 to 25, West Bound

### Monday, June 15, 2026

St. Joseph, MO

First rider departs at

3:00 PM CDT

Missouri/Kansas Line (Elwood, KS)

3:30 PM CDT

### Tuesday, June 16

Kansas/Nebraska Line (Tri County Marker)

12:30 PM CDT

\_\_\_\_\_ Time Change CDT to MDT \_\_\_\_\_

### Thursday, June 18

Nebraska/Colorado Line (South of Big Springs, NE) 2:30 AM MDT

Colorado/Nebraska Line (Chappell, NE) 6:00 AM MDT

Nebraska/Wyoming Line (Lyman, NE) 6:00 PM MDT

### Sunday, June 21

Wyoming/UTAH Line 2:00 AM MDT

Salt Lake City, UTAH 10:30 AM MDT

\_\_\_\_\_ Time Change MDT to PDT \_\_\_\_\_

### Monday, June 22

UTAH/Nevada Line (Ibapah, UT)

5:30 AM PDT

### Wednesday, June 24

Nevada/California Line (South Lake Tahoe, CA)

5:30 PM PDT

### Thursday, June 25

Old Sacramento, CA

4:30 PM PDT

The Pony Express Gazette is the official publication of the National Pony Express Association, a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to education and the preservation of the Original Pony Express Trail

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Fred on Q-tip

## MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL PRESIDENT

I started with the Pony Express June 2007 with my first ride starting at Simpson Springs at 8 pm going west into the sunset. I rode 3 time that night with the 3rd ride in pitch black of night as the moon had set. I was in awe, thinking how alone I felt and how a rider 166 years ago felt when he was all alone. That feeling has never left me; the thrill of the ride is with me on every ride.

Since that beginning as a rider I have taken on various positions in the Pony Express Organization: Utah Division President, Insurance Coordinator, team ride co-captain, National Vice President and now National Pony Express Association President. I mention this so you know I've worn many hats in the organization, I understand the challenges you face, because I've been there and am still there.

I must give a big thanks to my predecessor Pam Simmons for what a great job she

did and an excellent example she set for me to follow.

The National Pony Express Association is all about Keeping History Alive. This year is the 166th year from when the first rider took the run. While we work on keeping history alive, we are blessed with the tools of modern technology to help us, using and developing social media, GPS tracking for the re-ride, better technology for marking our exchange points (dropping the pin) and there are so many more ways that is yet to be explored and yet to be developed that we haven't thought of yet.

We are living in exciting times where we keep history alive with the help and assistance of modern technology.

I look forward to meeting you all and working with you side by side.

Remember to ride fast and stay safe.

Fred Leslie – NPEA National President

## NEWS FROM CALIFORNIA

# Annual Fall Fun Poker Ride

by Pam Dixon-Simmons

The California Division held the third Annual Fall Fun Poker Ride at the Historic Ranch House in Rio Linda, CA this past September. This location has about five miles of easy trails that take you around hay fields, past old orchards and along a tree lined creek. This makes for a nice ride for riders and horses of all ages and levels. Like last year this year's poker ride was a success. The morning started off with a bit of a chill in the air at registration where all participants received a goody bag with treats for horse and rider as well as specialty items from local businesses that came in a reusable Pony Express bag.

Once the riders headed out the weather warmed up but the sweltering heat stayed away all day ensuring a great ride was had by all. We had reports that the trail was well marked and everyone who was there seemed to have a good time. This year we had about 40 riders who enjoyed a leisurely ride and most participants walked away with one of the over 35 prize packages. When the riders returned, they were able to sit under the trees to enjoy lunch prepared by Chef Danny who did a great job.

I would also like to thank all my volunteers who collected and made donations and showed up at my house the week before to stuff the goodie bags and create prize packages. Thank you to the volunteers who showed up early that morning to set up, brought extra tables, manned the registration table, opened and counted almost one hundred poker hands, helped with cooking and serving lunch, and stayed after to clean up. I truly appreciate all the help, encouragement and support. I could not have done this without each and every one of you.

The money raised at this fundraiser helps the California Division maintain and promote the Pony Express National Historic Trail so current and future generations may enjoy it. This includes trail maintenance, educational outreach programs to local schools as well as having an interactive booth at various events.

This year's event is scheduled for September 27, 2026, at the Historic Ranch House in Rio Linda, CA. If you are interested in participating, volunteering, donating to the event or have questions I can be reached at NPEAPam@gmail.com.



# WANTED

MEMBERS TO SEND VIDEOS LIVE FROM  
THE TRAIL DURING THE RE-RIDE.

Please contact us at:

[nationalponyexpress@gmail.com](mailto:nationalponyexpress@gmail.com)



# Exploring the Pony Express Trail

## Part 1: St. Joseph to Rock Creek

by *Orin Friesen*

I have been studying the history of the Pony Express, on and off since 1959, when I was 13 years old. Over the years, I have visited a number of Pony Express-related, historical sites along the trail between St. Joseph, MO and San Francisco, CA. But I have long held the dream of visiting ALL of the Pony Express stations. In 2019, after I had mostly retired from my careers as a radio broadcaster and cowboy singer, I decided to get started. I tell people that it took the Pony Express riders ten days to make the trip from Missouri to California, but it took me six years!

I figured that it would be more fun to do this with someone else, so I enlisted the help of my friend, Frank Goodrich. Frank loves the history of the American West as much as I do. He's president of cowboy singer Michael Martin Murphey's Murphey Western Institute. Frank offered to do the driving, while I would navigate and bring him up to date on the history of each site. Due to our other commitments, we decided to follow the Pony Express Trail in segments. We planned a three-day trip, which would take us from St. Joe to some point in Nebraska. Our starting point was a campfire and some wine at Frank's ranch near Council Grove, Kansas.

Before I get into any details of our adventure, let me tell you a little about Frank. I've never met anyone who is as friendly as Frank Goodrich. I don't think he's ever met a stranger. He proved that many times on the trip. He's the only person I know who could get into a 20-minute conversation with a random person he met on the street. At one point during our trip, a farmer was blocking the road with his combine. The farmer was going to back up a few feet and let us pass. However, before he could do that, Frank jumped out of the car and began visiting with the farmer. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, Frank came back, the farmer backed up his combine, and we moved on. Did I mention that Frank was friendly? Out in the country, people often wave at each other as they pass each other on the road. Often that wave involves just the lifting of the index finger from the steering wheel. Frank has that down to a

science. He waves at EVERYBODY, even on busy city streets. I'm guessing that the world would be a better place if everyone had Frank's attitude.

Frank also loves a latte' in the morning...no flavoring...just a regular latte', which he likes to get at a local, espresso coffee shop. That experience led to our only disaster during our road trip. At a coffee shop in Marysville, KS, the door of the historic building caught my coffee cup and knocked it completely out of my hand. I offered to clean up the mess, but the friendly women in the shop wouldn't have it. They mopped the floor and then presented me with a fresh cup of coffee. I love small Kansas towns.

One more thing about Frank...he may be the most cautious driver I've ever met. He is never in any hurry, which is probably a good thing, since he had to be patient with me as I looked for evidence of every Pony Express station that ever existed along our route. In some places there was only a corn field. We began on Sept. 25, 2019.

After a quiet night in Frank's 19th century farmhouse, hoping not to be disturbed by the ghost of "Aunt Edna," we headed out for St. Joseph, MO. Our first stop in St. Joe was the Patee House, the business home of the Pony Express. The four-story brick building looks to be in perfect shape but is now a museum. I would call this an "old school" museum. Most modern museums tend to be more focused with well designed interpretive exhibits. The Patee House Museum, on the other hand, is full of all sorts of random items, including a full-size locomotive. There is a fairly small area devoted to the Pony Express.

Next, we headed to the Pony Express Stables, which is also a museum. Photos of this beautiful brick building are often used in stories about the Pony Express. Unfortunately, this building did not exist during the time of the Pony Express. The original stables were made of wood and were destroyed in a fire in 1888. Still, this is a nice museum which is mostly dedicated to telling the story of the Pony Express. Before Frank and I headed to Kansas, we stopped by the large Pony Express statue in St. Joe.

When we started our adventure in 2019, I wasn't aware of some of the references that I discovered later. I hadn't heard about Joe Nardone and all he had done to mark the Trail. My first guide was the book, *The Pony Express: Across Nebraska from St. Joseph to Fort Laramie*, which was published in 1960. It was written by Nebraska historians, Merrill Mattes and Paul Henderson. Not long after the book was released, I had the chance to visit Mr. Henderson in his home. He was so kind to this 15-year-old farm boy who was fascinated with the Pony Express. The book indicated that the first Pony Express station in Kansas might have been at Elwood or Wathena, or both of them at different times. At one time, there was a Pony Express monument at Elwood, but it was lost in a flood in 1952. We couldn't find anything, so we headed for the town of Troy.

Troy, Kansas is an interesting little town with some nice history. There is a small Pony Express monument on the courthouse lawn. Next stop was Lewis Station, about 14 miles west of Troy. We searched all around the area where I thought the station site should be, but we found nothing. At that time, we didn't know about Joe Nardone, so he may have placed one of his stainless-steel post markers at the site, and we didn't see it. The early part of the trail in Kansas definitely needs to be revisited.

The next station on my list was Kennekuk. This is where Frank and I encountered our first Joe Nardone monument, one of those nice marble "In Search of the Pony Express" markers. It was always a pleasant surprise every time we saw one of these monuments as we traveled across the West. Fifteen miles down the trail, we looked for signs of the station called Goteschall or Kickapoo. We didn't find anything related to either of those names, but we did find a large Pony Express monument dedicated to the town of Granada, which had been established in 1855. Once again, I'm wondering if a revisit might yield a marker placed by Joe Nardone.

Frank and I continued west for another 14 miles, looking for the site of Log Chain Station, which may have also been called Locknan's or Muddy Creek. We located an old farmhouse which some sources claim that the original station is still standing as part of the hidden construc-

tion of that house. As I went back through my photos, I noticed that there is a post that is supporting a newly planted tree. I can't tell if that post is a Pony Express marker or just a standard t-post. That site certainly demands a revisit.

Finally, we came to the town of Seneca. There is a small but nice Pony Express Museum right in the middle of downtown Seneca. As I looked at the exhibits, Frank had a lengthy conversation with the curator. The actual site of Seneca Station was across the street where a later brick building now sits. There are two Pony Express monuments at the site, including one of Joe Nardone's marble markers. Continuing west, we found a large granite monument at the site of the station that was called Ash Point or Frogtown or Laramie Creek of Hickory Point. This is also where Frank and I noticed the first Joe Nardone stainless steel Pony Express station marker. Joe used the Laramie Creek name.

The next station was called Gautard's or Guittard's or Vermillion Creek. Having several names for the same station really confused me when I was studying the Pony Express Trail as a child. There is a very interesting large stone monument at the site of Guittard's as well as an interpretive sign placed by the National Park Service. Our next stop was the town of Marysville, Kansas. It was starting to get late, so Frank and I rented a hotel room and decided to wait until the next morning to check out the Pony Express sites.

I first visited the Marysville Pony Express Station in 1961. At that time, the original stone station site had been covered with stucco and had been turned into a cold storage building. There was a small museum in a wooden building behind the original station. When Frank and I visited the site in 2019, the wooden structure was gone but the original station had been restored to the way it looked in the days of the Pony Express. It's a beautiful building that has been turned into a nice Pony Express museum. There are several brass Pony Express plaques on the front of the station and three more plaques on a monument at the Marysville post office. The town of Marysville has really embraced its Pony Express history.

The last station in Kansas was called Cottonwood because it overlooked Cottonwood Creek. It was located on the ranch of a German immigrant named G.H. Hollenberg, so it is usually referred to as Hollenberg Station. This station

SEE EXPLORING PAGE 11 ►

# Spirit and Sagebrush: A Wyoming Pony Express Story

by Laura Pedelty

Wind in my hair, a good horse beneath me, and a big smile across my face – life can't get much better than this. Bunny's long-strided gallop made a satisfying bah-dup, bah-dup, bah-dup. That famous Wyoming wind blew a dust cloud around us and pulled tears from my eyes. My hair swirled around my head; I very much regretted not pulling it back before taking off. A few raindrops started to fall, but the cool shift in weather only made my horse run faster.

A few notes about me before I really get into this story, though. At the time of the Pony Express, I hadn't lived in Wyoming for a full year. I just moved from Minnesota to the Equality State last August, to start my first job out of college. When I moved, I of course brought a couple horses with me. Bunny – whom I had dubbed my “Wyoming horse” – had a black coat with three white socks. This combination mirrored Steamboat, the horse in the bucking horse logo. She was just 4 at the time, and I was proud of the fact that she was the first horse I had started on my own. Her namesake was Bunny, the black mule that Laura Ingalls Wilder owned, as my namesake is Laura! And Arrow, my faithful 20-year-old bay mustang that I had ridden since I was a little girl. They were both worth their weight in gold.

I quickly made some fellow horse-loving friends in the Great West. There's Abigael, my sister-from-another-mister. She's the kind of person who can out-talk an auctioneer and has a laugh that carries halfway across a canyon. You can usually find her with a mischievous glint in her eye, already three steps ahead of whatever joke you're about to tell. Jaden is a true born-and-bred Wyoming kid, the kind who treats a broken bone like a minor inconvenience. In our photos, you'll see him sporting a black sling. A souvenir from a bucking horse that decided to come down right on his shoulder a few weeks back. Most people would be home on the couch, but Jaden just cinched his cinch a little tighter with his good arm and kept on riding. Then there's Melissa and Andy. They're the kind of couple who have been married so long they don't need words to finish a job. They just move in a synchronized dance of swinging gates and tightening cinches. Melissa has a way of looking at you that makes you feel immediately seen

and safe, while Andy is the quiet backbone of the group, usually pestering someone with a lippy comment as his way of showing affection. They didn't just take me under their wing; they made me feel like I'd finally found the home I didn't know I was looking for.

As all wonderful friends do, mine peer pressured me. They would not let up about joining their chapter and riding in the Pony Express reride. Luckily, it didn't take too much convincing because I love to ride my horses, galloping is especially fun, and being part of a historic tradition sounded exciting.

Within our chapter, we had lots of trucks and trailers to haul all the horses to where they needed to be. Jaden, Abigael, and I were together hauling the five horses we were bringing with. We had previously made a “Pony Express” playlist and were singing with the windows down to songs like ‘Wide Open Spaces’ and ‘Should've Been a Cowboy’.

I was anxious to get started, but we had a few hours to spare before my first ride. There wasn't much debate on how to pass the time. The afternoon sun was high and hot (well hot for June in Wyoming), and we were going swimming. The Green River wasn't far away, and we soon pulled off the road.

We jumped out of the truck, kicked off our boots, and stripped down to our underwear. We suffered through a brutal combination of rushing down the brushy bank barefoot and swatting at a million starving mosquitoes. I leapt into the river as soon as I was close enough. The cool water was a relief on the bug bites and torn-up feet. Without giving it so much as a second thought, I dunked my nicely curled hair and thoughtfully done make-up under the water and swam upstream.

Climbing back up through the mud and weeds, I tried to wipe the smeared mascara from my face, though I likely only succeeded in looking like a bandit. I struggled to shimmy back into my dry jeans with damp, stubborn legs. I hurried to rebutton my red shirt and brown vest. I used a loose shirt from the truck to vigorously scrub the river water from my hair until it stood up in a wild, windswept mess. I was no longer the picturesque girl who had started the day, but as I caught my reflection in the truck's side mirror, I'd never looked more like I belonged here.

The atmosphere shifted the moment we pulled up to the exchange zone. The air was thick with the scent of leather and anticipation. I pulled Bunny out of the trailer, and the “river-rat” version of me vanished; I was a rider now. I slipped her bridle on, feeling the cool metal of the bit and the familiar grain of the leather. She looked magnificent. Her sleek black coat shimmered, contrasting sharply against the weathered Western saddle Jaden had lent me. She held her head high, nostrils flaring as she caught the scent of the other horses. She wasn't just ready; she was electric.

The next rider appeared on the horizon, a blurred silhouette against the Wyoming sky. Everything happened in a flash: the thud of the approaching hooves, the frantic energy of the hand-off, and the heavy mochila being hoisted from one horse to the next. I swung my leg over Bunny, my boots finding the stirrups with practiced instinct. I kicked her into action, and the world narrowed down to just the two of us.

Bunny watched the trailers pulling away and, refusing to be left behind, she unleashed her power. Her smooth gallop and lighting reflexes carried us through a labyrinth of sagebrush, the sweet, earthy scent of the crushed plants rose up to meet us. I leaned low over her neck, the wind whipping the last of the river dampness from my hair, and whispered into her ear, “Come on, Bunny! Show ‘em what a Wyoming horse can do!”

Before we knew it, we were pulling into the gravel lot of the Farson Mercantile, known simply as “The Merc”. The wasn't just a pitstop; it was the official halfway point for the entire 1,900-mile reride. Most of our chapter had converged there, joined by a crowd of family, friends, and even a reporter looking for a scoop on the modern-day pioneers.

In true Wyoming fashion, we celebrated the milestone with The Merc's legendary, mountain-sized ice cream cones. But as we stood there, sticky-handed and smiling for pictures, the news broke: the mail was forty-five minutes behind schedule. The relaxed “halfway high” evaporated instantly. We piled back into the truck, the sugar rush in our veins now replaced by a focused, restless energy to get the mail back on time.

We became a well-oiled, dust-covered machine. We drove and rode and drove again. We swung the heavy mochila from

one heaving horse to the next in a flurry of leather and sweat. From the truck windows, we shouted ourselves hoarse, our cheers competing with the wind. We dug for snacks in the backseat, unloaded horses, and reloaded them with the speed of a practiced pit crew. I snatched a twenty-minute nap against a vibrating window, woke up to chug a bottle of water, reapplied deodorant in a losing battle against the June heat, and climbed onto Arrow's saddle to ride even faster. Every gallop was a gamble against the clock, every transition a desperate push to reclaim those lost minutes. We sweated, we cheered, and slowly, mile by dusty mile, we started to claw back the time.

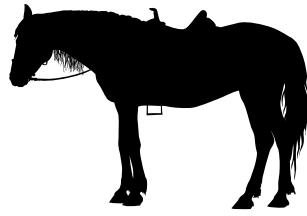
Bunny danced in place; her hooves clicked a nervous rhythm as I stood with my fingers clenched around the reins. The Wyoming sun had long since surrendered and a thick ceiling of clouds had smothered the moon and stars, leaving the world in a state of ink-black darkness. Melissa charged out of the night, the mochila was swapped, I swung into the saddle, and before my boots were even settled in the stirrups, we were gone.

The trucks and trailers surged past us, their taillights fading into glowing red embers before disappearing entirely over the rolling hills. They moved ahead to clear the path, knowing that the erratic, bouncing beams of the headlights would only blind Bunny rather than help her. As the mechanical hum of the engines died away, the world plunged into an absolute, velvety blackness. I couldn't see the sagebrush or ground beneath us, so I surrendered control to the animal who could. I wrapped my fingers tightly into her coarse mane and leaned low over her neck, feeling the powerful surge of her shoulders. I closed my eyes and let her fly, trusting her instinct to lead us through the void as we became a single shadow cutting through the night.

By the time the first lights of Atlantic City flickered through the dark, the rush of our night gallop had transformed into a simmering satisfaction. The silence of the high desert gave way to the rhythmic “clop-clop” of the hooves of the road as our entire group came together for the final stretch. I rode at the back, between Melissa and Abigael, as we trotted through the historic streets like a scene out of a Western.

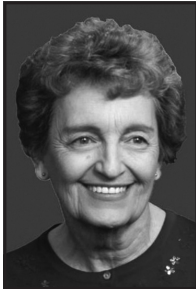
SEE SPIRIT PAGE 10 ►

# Empty Saddles



## DeLores (Dee) Miles Abernethy

DeLores (Dee) Miles Abernethy, 95, passed away due to the complications of old age. She was born in Salt Lake City to Adolphus Rennie Miles and Luella Maude Farnworth. She grew up in South Salt Lake and was a proud graduate of Granite High School. She loved being a Granite Farmer and performing in the school operetta.



Dee worked in a number of jobs, including working as an usherette at the Studio Theater during WWII. One of her favorite positions was working at KPRQ, a Top 40 music station, in Murray, Utah. She retired as an executive secretary at Deseret Mutual Benefit Association and was a proud member of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers for nearly 60 years.

Dee was the model of unconditional love, service, and humor. She loved driving fast cars, opening Christmas presents early, playing cards, drinking daily diet cokes, and laughing with friends and family. She was sassy, funny, and caring to the end.

Dee, and her husband Fred Edward Abernethy were married for 66 years. Their marriage was solemnized in the Salt Lake City Temple. When they were first married, they worked all across the U.S. following ironworker jobs and lived in a small trailer that they pulled behind their car. She finally declared it was time to settle down somewhere and they bought their first home in 1957 in Granger near their final resting place.

She partnered with Fred as he served in the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Posse and the National Pony Express Association. Dad would write comedy news articles for the Pony Express and mom would edit out most of the saltier parts. They were quite the team! They made everyone feel loved and welcomed. Laughter and story-telling were the common currency at nightly dinners and family get-togethers.

She is preceded in death by husband Fred, son Mark, and daughter Marsha. She is survived by two sons, Miles (Becky) Abernethy of Gilbert, Arizona and Gene (Danalee) Abernethy of Prescott, Arizona. At the time of her death, she had 11 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild. She has been the anchor and light to our family and will be sorely missed.

There was a service on Saturday, August 9th at the Valley View Funeral Home chapel, in West Valley City, and she will be buried at Valley View Memorial Park beside her husband, son, and daughter. There was an immediate family gathering at 12:00 and again after the interment.

## Danny Marten

Danny Marten, age 77, of Aurora, formerly of Gothenburg, passed away on Monday, December 15, 2025 at Memorial Community Care.

Danny's wishes were to be cremated. A Memorial Service was held at 10 a.m. on Monday, December 22 at Monroe Evangelical Free Church at Phillips. Mike Brill officiating with Pastor Joe Mullarkey assisting. Visitation will be from 5-7 p.m. Sunday at Higby-McQuiston Mortuary in Aurora. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the family for future designation. Condolences may be sent to the family through the mortuary website at [www.higbymortuary.com](http://www.higbymortuary.com).

Danny Lee Marten, the son of Philip John and Vera Augusta (Matzke) Marten was born at Canova, South Dakota on December 27, 1947, and passed away in Aurora, on December 15, 2025, at the age of 77.

Danny graduated from Canova High School in 1966. He received a degree in animal science from South Dakota State. Danny began his cattle career at Fall River Feedyard in Hot



Springs, South Dakota, then moved onto Farr Farms in Greeley, Colorado where he met his future wife working there as a secretary.

Danny married Kathleen Dugan on October 19, 1974 at Greeley, Colorado. Danny was a feedlot manager in Wellington, Colorado; cattle buyer for Wilson Foods in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Tama Pack in Marshalltown, Iowa, Sterling Beef in McCook and National Beef also in McCook and IBP/Tyson in Gothenburg. Shortly before retirement they moved to an acreage in Custer County, where he loved to raise horses and teach his grandkids how to ride. They moved to Aurora to be closer to family.

Danny was a member of the National Pony Express Association and served as the Nebraska Division treasurer, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and National Rifle Assoc. He enjoyed camping and traveling in their motorhome. Danny was a volunteer for Meals on Wheels. He loved to go elk hunting in the mountains on horseback.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Sheryl Yahner; brother-in-law, Jim Dugan; in-laws, John and Elva Dugan and granddaughter, Hunter Hohm.

Those left to cherish his memory are his wife Kathy of Aurora; son, Jon Marten of Defuniak Springs, Florida; daughter, Miranda (Ryan) Hohm of Aurora; 8 grandchildren, Korah (David) Carlson, Sophia, Ava, Olivia, Emma Marten, Layton, Karsten and Emmersen Hohm; 3 great-grandsons; brother-in-law, Mike (Amy) Dugan, other family members and friends.

Danny was a follower of Jesus who enjoyed his time with fellow believers in the early morning Bible studies at the Ivy. He loved his family, his Lord and had a playful infectious sense of humor and brought levity everywhere he went.

## Coy Fleming

Cowboys, cowgirls, family and friends, gathered Monday, May 19, 2025, at 10:00 am at the Prairie Winds Community Center in Bridgeport to celebrate the life of a remarkable young man, Coy William Fleming. Burial will follow at the Angora Cemetery. Please wear Hawaiian or Pink shirts in memory of Coy. Fond memories and condolences may be left at [www.bridgeportmemorialchapel.com](http://www.bridgeportmemorialchapel.com). Bridgeport Memorial Chapel is assisting the family with services.

Coy was born on July 28, 2004, in Alliance, Nebraska to Jeff and Keele (Loomis) Fleming.

Coy is survived by his mother Keele Martinez and step father Griff Martinez; Coy's brother Corbyn, aunt Linle and uncle Shawn, uncle Justin; cousins Shawn Teppert, Jr. and Natalie Teppert; grandparents Everett and Pam Loomis, Ed and Dee Fleming and Carol Martinez.

Coy was preceded in death by his father Jeff Fleming and grandpa Lee Martinez.

Coy's journey was far too brief, ending on April 28, 2025, but in his short time with us, he left an indelible mark on our hearts and lives.

Coy was a vibrant soul, full of passion and energy. From a young age, he found joy in the world around him whether it was the thrill of rodeo, the camaraderie of friends, or the love of family. He was truly a product of his environment growing up surrounded by the values of God, family, and hard work. He embraced life with open arms, approaching each day as an adventure waiting to unfold.

His love for the rodeo was evident from the beginning. Coy didn't just participate; he thrived from mutton busting as a little boy to steer wrestling and roped as a teenager, the arena was his second home. Coy cherished the time spent at Rodeo Bible Camp, where he not only honed his skills but also deepened his faith and forged lifelong friendships. Coy's love for horses was matched only by the thrill of the competition, and whether he was racing in the Rubber Check Race, Pony Express, or branding cattle, he was always in his element. Coy was not just a cowboy; he was a true ranch hand embodying the spirit of hard work and dedication. His involvement in FFA and 4-H



showcased his commitment to agriculture and community.

Coy was a proud to be an altar boy, serving his church with the same enthusiasm he brought to everything else in his life outside of the arena.

Coy was a talented athlete. He wrestled, played football and track meets with unmatched determination for the Bridgeport Bulldogs, attending football camp to perfect his skills, always pushing himself to be the best he could be. His love for sports mirrored his love for adventure; he cherished the road trips taken with friends and family, making memories that will last a lifetime.

As a fireman he loved the adrenaline rush. But due to his injury it left him impaired hoping one day things would be different.

Coy had a special connection to music, often found listening to his favorite bands and had a soft spot for classic shows like The Lone Ranger and Walker Texas Ranger. Each worn out episode reminded him of the values of courage and justice, ideals he embodied throughout his life. He was not just a friend to many, he was a brother, a son, a grandson and a mentor.

Coy had a big heart and a generous spirit, always willing to lend a hand whether it was helping a neighbor or caring for his brother, his legacy is not only in the memories we hold dear but in the lives he touched.

Coy's final wish to be an organ donor speaks volumes about his character, even in passing he wanted to give the gift of life to others, a testament to the selflessness that defined him.

Let us remember Coy not with sadness, but with gratitude for the time we shared. Let us honor him by carrying forward the values he cherished. Faith, family, friendship, hard work, and a love for life. May we find comfort in the memories we hold and the lessons he taught us.

Coy Fleming may no longer walk among us, but his spirit will forever ride alongside us, in the whispers of the wind, in the laughter of friends, and in the hearts of all who loved him.

Rest in peace, dear friend. You will be missed but not forgotten.

WE WILL SEE YOU AGAIN, "COWBOY"

## Carol Lynn Anderson

Carol Lynn Anderson, daughter of Clarence and Daisy Farver, was born November 1, 1942 in Nora, Nebraska at the Farver farm. She departed this life on February 3, 2025 at CHI Health St. Francis Hospital in Grand Island, Nebraska.

Carol Lynn was baptized on May 6th, 1948 at the Methodist Church in Nelson.

She attended the Country School in Nora where she acquired her taste for riding horses with her older brother Jack Farver, and her older sister Janet Larson. She then attended Nelson High School where she stayed with her grandmother in town through the rest of her high school career.

During her time in high school, she started to date Jerry Anderson who had just returned from Korea and was living in Oak.

They were married March 25th, 1962 in Nelson at the Methodist church. Not long after the marriage Carol purchased her first horse. This union was blessed with three children, daughter Gayle, son JD, and daughter Carrie. A second son Jamyn was added to the family by adoption when he was 3 years old.

Carol started working at the Nuckolls County Courthouse in Nelson at the welfare office. Carol moved to Deshler with Jerry when the mail route moved from Nelson to Deshler. A few years later she applied for a job as a clerk in the Deshler Post Office, working part time. She held a second job in the Thayer County Courthouse working with Paul Grupe for a few years until she started working full time at the Post Office in Deshler as a clerk. In the evenings she would drive one of the mail routes to Lincoln with her first two kids Gayle and JD riding along with her delivering the mail.

When the horse races started up at Thayer County Downs she worked as an exercise rider galloping horses and during race days was the Paddock Official verifying lip tattoos before the races. Carol also worked as a sub for the Postal Service in Nelson, Shickley, and Carleton. She later became Postmaster in Chester, working there until the Postmaster job in Deshler opened up. She worked as Postmaster in Deshler for 10 years. She took retirement from the Postal Service after 30 years of service and started to work more with her horses, living her dream of breeding, showing and racing them with much success. Carol was also a member of the National Pony Express Association Re-ride which she joined and rode with in 1962 and then again from 1990 to present day.



Carol enjoyed spending her time with her family riding, training and showing horses, as well as traveling to racetracks in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas to watch her horses run. She also spent a lot of time with Jerry at local weddings giving rides to the newlyweds in their buggy pulled by their beloved driving horse Joe, and later Penny.

Later in life Carol spent time helping raise her grandkids, working with 4-H kids, attending school events, taking care of her horses and helping with Jerry's goats and chickens. Carol grew in life surviving tornadoes, fires and floods. She was very active in the church, helping with bible studies, Awana, Bible school and church lunches. Her positive contribution to other peoples' lives was immeasurable.

Carol was preceded in death by her parents Clarence and Daisy Farver, grandson baby boy Knigge and her son Jamyn Anderson.

Left to cherish her memory are her husband Jerry Anderson of Deshler, daughter Gayle and husband John Knigge of Deshler, son JD Anderson of Deshler, daughter Carrie Anderson-Grimes of Deshler and daughter-in-law Alissa Anderson of Lincoln, grandchildren including Abigail and her husband Timothy Burnette of Canton, North Carolina, grandson Xander Anderson of Deshler, and Kaylan, Trevon and Jett Anderson of Lincoln, her sister Janet and husband Leonard Larson of Lincoln, brother Jack Farver of Hampton, Missouri, brother and sister in laws, nieces, nephews, cousins, many friends and all of her beloved animals.

A Celebration of Life was held on Saturday, February 8, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. at the Hebron Bible Church, 145 South 4th Street, Hebron, with Pastor Jeff Friesen officiating.

## Jessie JoRay Davison

Jessie JoRay Davison, 68, of Bovill, Idaho, died Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, at her home. Merchant Funeral Home of Clarkston, Washington is in charge of arrangements. Jessie was a member of the California Division of the NPEA.

## Kelleen McGarry Leslie

August 23, 1955 – September 19, 2025

Kelleen McGarry Leslie, 70, of Sandy, Utah, passed away peacefully at home on September 19, 2025 due to heart related issues that came on suddenly and unexpectedly. She was born August 23, 1955, in Salt Lake City Utah to Dorothy June Evans McGarry and Dexter Hickman McGarry.

A proud member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Kelleen served faithfully in many callings on the ward and stake level throughout her life.

She was sealed for time and all eternity to her beloved husband, Frederick Leslie, on February 8, 1979, in the Salt Lake Temple.

Her faith was her anchor, and her love for family was at the center of her life.

Kelleen loved her family deeply, especially her grandchildren, with whom she shared countless outings, meals, and special moments.

She enjoyed adventures big and small—from cheering on the Utah Utes with her sons to traveling with family and friends, horseback riding with her husband Fred, and always facing life with courage and joy.

She excelled and loved teaching her four children about life and the gospel up to the day she passed.

At age 52, Kelleen earned her bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from the University of Utah receiving the honor of delivering the valedictory speech and taught 4th grade at Midas Creek from 2007 to 2014 and then at Blackridge Elementary from 2014 to present.

She inspired countless students, earning the Sorenson Legacy Award for Excellence in Art Education and Teacher of the Year.

Through the BYU Arts Partnership, she attended the Arts Academy, hosted a BYU Arts Bridge Scholar, regularly participated in ARTS Express, and completed a week-long seminar at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Her legacy is one of faith, family, and courage. Kelleen taught by example—showing resilience, creativity, and love in every part of her life.

She leaves behind not just memories but a pattern of living: to serve faithfully, love deeply, and embrace life's adventures



with joy. She is survived by her husband Fred; children Garrett (Jen), Derrick, Trevor (Harvest), and Caitlin (Josh); nine grandchildren; sister Erin (Rod); and brother Shawn.

#### Bobbie Eaton

Bobbie Lynn Eaton was born in Evanston on September 12, 1961. She passed away on March 1, 2025, peacefully in her home with her husband by her side, in Parachute, Colorado. She had been in poor health for several years, but her spirit could light up a room when she walked in.

She loved fishing, camping and being in the mountains. She was so proud to have gotten to ride the Pony Express, in Green River. She had an endless love for animals and took pride in her personal animal grooming business Bobbies' House of Kritters. Animals weren't her only passion; she loved serving her community both in Colorado and in Wyoming. Just to list a few, her work at the youth home in Green River and as a caregiver at people care in Colorado her job at tractor supply in Glenwood Springs, Colorado and at Walmart in both Colorado and Wyoming. She loved Colorado and Wyoming so very much.

She was preceded in death by her son Jr Pharis Eaton; her parents Wynn Fillin, Jennie Keeler and husband Roger Keeler; and her sister Cindy Ek.

She is survived by her husband Richard Eaton and her babies Dexter and Duke; her daughters Misty Leigh Cannefax and her husband Jay Conard of Allen, Texas, Shamra Zancanella and husband Edward Coplin; and granddaughter Shayna Zancanella of Green River; her son Joshua Richard Eaton of Rock Springs, Kory Eaton of Casper; her sisters Wendy Cox, Sandra Austin, and Candy Rankin; and her brothers Shawn and Nick Fillin; along with several nieces and nephews and cousins.

Her celebration of life was held at 11 a.m. September 13, 2025 at the Eagles in Green River.

#### Howard Main

Howard Brian Main, 64, of North Platte, NE, passed away November 1, 2024, at his home. He was born June 27, 1960, to Francis and Wilma Erickson Main in Sioux Falls, SD.

Howard attended Ellis District #87 elementary school in Ellis, SD. He graduated in 1978 from West Central High School in Hartford, SD. He graduated from Iowa State University with an agronomy degree. Howard worked for 30 years as a soil scientist for the US Government. Soil surveys took him to Montana, New Mexico, and Nebraska. Howard enjoyed reading, writing poetry, playing guitar, writing songs, and recording music at home. He will be remembered as a lifelong fan of the Beatles and Dylan. Howard had a passion for the Old West. He studied it, lived it, and breathed it. He participated in a 17-day trail ride from Ft. Pierre to Deadwood, SD; Custer State Park buffalo roundups; Little Big Horn Battle reenactments at Hardin, MT. Howard was an extra in western movie productions in NM. He rode his horse Scout in Pony Express Re-Rides in NE. Howard was an old west history buff especially The Battle of Little Big Horn. Howard loved hunting big game in the Snowy Mountains of MT. His love of the old west led him to build a forge and a leather workshop. Howard's family would like to thank his many caregivers.

Howard had a great love for his horses and his dogs. In lieu of flowers please donate in his memory to your local animal shelter.

Howard is survived by siblings: Tom (Susan) Main, Chester, SD, Jan (Don) Ewoldt, Hartford, SD, Barb McHugh, Minneapolis, MN, Linda Main, Henderson, NV, Julie Main-Glaser, Sioux Falls, SD. Special friends, Angie Elg, Isle, MN, Mary Rita, Jeremy, and Adam Tiesman, along with numerous nieces, nephews, and neighbors.

Howard was preceded in death by his parents, sister, Donna Lueth, and nephew Michael McHugh.

A family Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

"God, give us more summer nights together, either now or sometime of your favor, take us back to them days of old Ellis, and this time, I'll listen closer, to what them stars tried to tell us." HB Main

"I'll see ya on down the line"

#### Greg Sherwood

While doing some research, I found this obituary of a former NPEA member.

Greg Sherwood, 60, died peacefully, May 26, 2008 after an almost year battle with lymphoma. He was born October 10, 1947 in Palo Alto, CA to Helen (Cavin) and Les Sherwood. He and his wife Carol had been married 38 years. Before moving to Gardnerville, he and Carol ran their own locksmith business in Los Altos, CA. After moving to Gardnerville in 1978 he worked for Coca Cola and for the past 20 years for Crystal Dairy at Lake Tahoe.

He had a love for working on cars and restored several old models over the years. He was active for many years with the Pony Express Riders and rode in several Nevada Day Parades and performed with the group at the Reno Rodeo. He loved to deer hunt annually with his buddies and most recently started a charter fishing service on the weekends at Bridgeport, CA. He truly loved all aspects of the outdoors.

Greg is survived by his wife, Carol; daughter, Debra Rose (Chris) and mother-in-law Claire Arienti, all of Gardnerville; mother, Helen and sister, Judie Elliott (Doug) all of Sparks; two grandsons, William Saring of Reno and Brian Saring of Pennsylvania; along with several nieces and nephews including Kelly Elliott (Drew Bachhuber) of Henderson, NV, Tony Elliott of Tigard, OR and Cory Elliott (Maureen McKenney) of Reno. He was preceded in death by his father, Les Sherwood and his son, Michael. The family wishes to thank the nurses at Renown 3rd floor Oncology and ICU, especially Kristen.

#### Gynette King

Gynette King, ride captain of the Douglas, WY riders, died unexpectedly on Jan. 2, 2025.

She is survived by her daughter Melissa King of Douglas WY.

Gynette was born Nov 25, 1971. She had been a Pony Express rider for about 25 years. Gynette's mother, Ann Smathers was ride captain before Gynette and Gynette's daughter, Melissa King, took over as ride captain after her mother passed away. That makes 3 generations of ride captains for the Douglas, WY group.

Gynette will be missed by her family and friends.

#### Steven A. Meyer

March 31, 1952 - January 4, 2026

Steven A. Meyer, 73, of Hebron, Neb., passed away on January 4, 2026. After a short battle with cancer, an acute infection took his life unexpectedly. He passed away at Bryan Medical Center, West in Lincoln, Neb., surrounded by his immediate family.

Steve was born on March 31, 1952, in Omaha, Neb., and raised in Deshler, Neb., by his parents Arthur and Alice Meyer. He was baptized on June 6, 1952, at Mt. Olive Church in Omaha, Neb. He attended Peace Lutheran Parochial School, was confirmed at Peace Lutheran Church on April 3, 1966, and graduated from Deshler Public High School in 1970. Steve attended the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, where he earned a Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science and Agricultural Education and was an active member in the Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity. He married Betty Easton on January 7, 1973. They resided in Lincoln, Neb., where Steve worked for University of Nebraska Research Farms - Beef and Swine. In 1977, Steve and Betty returned home to Thayer County to farm. He established SAM Farms and raised grain crops and cattle. Steve continued farming until his death.

Steve was active in the community. He served for many years on the Thayer County Fair board and Thayer County Livestock Feeders Association and was a Pony Express rider. He was also a member of The Pioneer Shrine Club - Hebron/Fairbury and Thayer County Izaak Walton League.

Steve was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend. He was a stranger to no one. He was known for his outgoing personality and his love for family, friends, farming, fishing, and football. He also enjoyed participating in golf and bowling leagues and weekly card games with friends. Steve loved an "event," or as our family calls them, a "Stevent," whether it was a day at the lake, attending his granddaughters' activities, a Husker football tailgate, a getaway with friends or a family vacation, Steve was always ready to go. Without a doubt

his life advice was to "take the trip, make the memories, and eat the food" and he did just that. His love language was people, time together, and great meal. Steve always felt fortunate that he had so many friends that became his family.

Steve is survived by his wife, Betty Easton Meyer; son, Spencer A. Meyer (KD Meyer) of Costa Mesa, Calif., daughter, Cassie Schmid (Aaron Schmid); and granddaughters Ansley and Ellie Cahill of Grand Island, Neb.; his sisters-in-law Connie Heckman of Lincoln, Neb., and Cindy Petersen of Hebron, Neb., and his stepsiblings and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Arthur Meyer of Deshler, Neb., Alice and Edgar Kirchhoff of Deshler, Neb.; and his grandparents.

Funeral Services were held Thursday, January 8th, at 2:30 pm, at the Grace Lutheran Church in Hebron, burial followed at the Hebron City Cemetery. Following the funeral service, please join us for one last "Stevent," a Celebration of Life at the Stastny Community Center in Hebron, Neb.

#### Sarah R Jares

1989 - 2026

Sarah Ruth Jares, passed away on January 19, 2026. Born on December 11, 1989, Sarah lived a life marked by love, resilience, and a deep devotion to family and tradition.

Sarah was a devoted wife to her husband, Alex, and a loving mother to their daughter, Braelyn, who was the center of her world. She is survived by her in-laws, Tammy and Doug Jares; her brother-in-law, Cory Jares, and his wife, Christina; and her beloved niece and nephew, Penelope and Preston. Family meant everything to Sarah, and she cherished the bonds she shared with each of them.

Sarah proudly rode for the National Pony Express Association, Nevada Chapter, as a member of Team Jares. Riding was more than a passion—it was a way of honoring history, embracing the land, and sharing time with those she loved. Her strength, determination, and spirit on the trail left a lasting impression on all who rode alongside her.

Sarah will be remembered for her kindness, courage, and unwavering love for her family. Her legacy lives on through the memories she created, the trails she rode, and the daughter she adored.

A Celebration of Life was held on February 14, at Hope Community Church in Reno, Nevada.

She will be deeply missed and forever remembered.

#### Edward "Ed" George Hagen II

May 4, 1943 - Oct. 7, 2025

Ed Hagen, 82, died Tuesday October 7th, 2025 at his home in El Dorado, CA, with his family surrounding him. He was born on May 4th, 1943, in Colusa, CA, a son of the late Edward George Hagen I and Chrystle Moore, born to a pioneer family, and one of four siblings. Ed graduated from El Dorado High School in 1961, and served in the United States Marine Corp. After his Marine service, he became an independent trucker with his 1953 Peterbilt truck "Queenie", and eventually opened El Dorado Ed's Wood Yard. In the mountains, he would lend a helping hand with his equipment if a fire occurred or someone was in need. He loved setting up a good prank, hunting, fishing in Fort Bragg, working his cattle ranch, enjoyed raising world champion quarter horses, driving the stagecoach with Davey Wisner on Main St, and playing his harmonica to bring joy wherever he went. He was known for delivering Christmas cards on horseback, lifetime Pony Express Member, and doing Easter Celebrations on his family ranch for over 50 years. Ed orchestrated during the energy crisis of 1981 for the local community to bring wood back to White House to Ronald Reagan where the President scheduled to split wood with him. He enjoyed community events like the dances at El Dorado Community Hall, logging days, and bar stool races. Ed built and donated El Dorado Train Depot. In his later years, started a cowboy church on his family ranch. He loved his community and was recognized as Grand Marshall in the Christmas Parade 2023 for his countless years of giving back. All of his many life accomplishments came because he never knew the word "Can't."

He is survived by his wife Sheryl Hagen, Son Edward "Eddie" George Hagen III, Daughter Mae & Mike Lacy, Daughter Melody & Joshua Courtney, Stepdaughter Angela & Christien Tinsley, Stepson Ryan and Iraida Ladner, Stepson Jared & Kelly Ladner. Late Sister Jackie Ferre, Sister Georgia Bauer, and Brother Jim & Mary Hagen. Grandchildren Rachel, Daniel, Cassidy & Vasyli, Hannah, Juliet, Chrystle, Violet, Cody, Jude, Stella, Lane, Madox, Kylee, Alec, and Mason. Great Grandchildren Colt, Lucy, and Romeo.

His Celebration of Life was held on Ed's Family Ranch on Easter Hill on Saturday November 1st, 2025.

#### Michael "Mike" J. Pacha

Michael "Mike" J. Pacha, age 88, of Marysville, Kansas, passed away peacefully on January 5, 2026, at Blue Valley Health and Rehabilitation in Blue Rapids, Kansas.

A visitation was held on Thursday, January 8, 2026, from 4 to 8 p.m. at Kinsley Mortuary.

A rosary took place at 10:00 a.m., Friday, January 9, at St. Gregory's Catholic Church. The funeral service followed at 10:30 a.m.

Burial will take place in Pecanka Cemetery, south of Bremen. Mike was born May 13, 1937, in Marysville, Kansas, the son of John and Emily (Thierstein) Pacha. He attended grade school at St. Gregory's Catholic School and graduated from Marysville High School in 1955. He continued his education at Benedictine College and Kansas State University before beginning his lifelong career as a farmer. Along with farming, Mike worked for a short time at Georgia-Pacific and Landoll, serving as one of Landoll's first welders.

On April 13, 1964, Mike was united in marriage to Dorothy (Griffin) Seng in Garnett, Kansas. Together they raised four daughters: Janet, Linda, Kelly, and Lisa.

Mike had a love for horses. He enjoyed collecting and restoring military saddles and was a member of the Pony Express Riders for 43 years. He was a lifelong member of St. Gregory's Catholic Church, served as a board member of the Marshall County Conservation District, and was a member of the Knights of Columbus.

Preceding him in death is his wife, Dorothy; parents; sister, Rosemary; brothers, Bob, Dave, and an infant brother, Tom.

Survivors include his daughters, Janet K. Seng, Chicago, IL, Linda G. Seng-Noble, St. Louis, MO, Kelly M. (Pat) Schotte, Marysville, and Lisa A. Pacha, Manhattan, KS; six grandchildren, Brandon, Jacob, Tessa, Taylor, Emily, and Hadley; four great-grandchildren, Jude, Olivia, Richter, and Rory; and brother, Rich A. Pacha, Marysville.

#### Leland Kizer

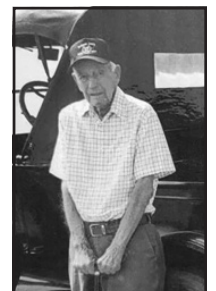
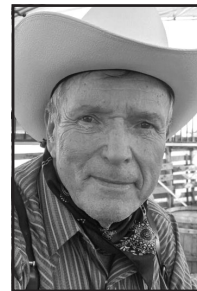
Leland DeWayne Kizer was born on August 10, 1925, in Monroe, Nebraska, to parents Omer and Marie Kizer and passed from this life on June 12, 2025, at the Sedgwick County Nursing Home.

Lee's parents moved to Julesburg when he was very young. The family then welcomed brothers Omer (Duke) and Don, and sister Marilyn. Lee's parents raised their family in Julesburg, where they remained for the rest of their lives.

Lee graduated from Julesburg High School in 1944 and was active in music and athletics throughout his school years.

He was drafted into the United States Navy in 1944 and served on the destroyer USS Wilson. His ship was involved in numerous combat operations in the Pacific theatre, namely the Battle for Okinawa. It was during that battle that his destroyer was attacked and struck by a Japanese kamikaze plane, doing severe damage to the vessel and killing several shipmates. Lee was honorably discharged from the Navy at the conclusion of World War II in 1945.

Lee returned to Julesburg and, after earning his barber's license, went to work as a barber with Charlie Sullivan in Charlie's Barber Shop. He later partnered with Chuck Stone and continued in the barber business for many years. Lee continued to cut his patrons' hair into his 90s. He also owned and maintained several business and residential properties in Julesburg.



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He married Glenna Mae Mong, who had come to Julesburg to teach school. They were married in 1955, and to that union, three children were born: Mary Ann, Kathy, and Kelly.

Lee was actively involved in the Julesburg community. He was a member of the Julesburg Volunteer Fire Department, Legion Post 105's Drum and Bugle Corps, and Rotary International. He also assisted in the promotion of youth baseball in Julesburg for many years. He served as Julesburg's mayor from 1976 to 1980.

He had many interests and hobbies and was an avid fan of all the Julesburg and Sedgwick County athletic teams and activities. He enjoyed traveling with his wife, Glenna, reading history, listening to and playing music, and dancing with Glenna. Lee and Glenna were fans of University of Colorado football and were season ticket holders for over 40 years.

He established a personal museum in the Old Ford Garage in Julesburg and enjoyed providing tours to those interested in history.

Lee was preceded in death by his parents, Omer and Marie; his brother, Duke; and his sister, Marilyn. He is survived by his brother Don; his children: Mary Ann Neumann (Jim) of Centennial, Colorado; Kathy Fourcroy (Tony) of Fort Collins, Colorado; and Kelly Kizer (Tina) of Northglenn, Colorado.

Lee was grandfather to Emily Fourcroy, Sarah Giles (Neumann) (Tom), Grant Fourcroy, Sidney Baer (Kizer) (Brady), Kale Kizer (Cassie), and Brady Kizer, and great-grandfather to Nolan Smith and Sloan Baer.

Lee will be greatly missed by friends and family.

The funeral service was held at Prairie Hills Funeral Home Chapel in Julesburg, Colorado, on Thursday, June 26, 2025, at 11:00 a.m., followed by a reception at the Hippodrome.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Gateway Medical Foundation or Fort Sedgwick Museum.

LEE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN GETTING THE COLORADO DIVISION ESTABLISHED.

#### Peggy Gae Schuler

September 7, 1944 – October 20, 2025

Peggy Gae Schuler, 81, passed away on Monday October 20, 2025.

Peggy was born September 7th, 1944 in Julesburg, Colorado, and spent the majority of her life on her family's farm south of town. Growing up on the plains, Peggy had a deep love for animals, horses, and the rural way of life that shaped her day-to-day life. As a young girl, Peggy went to country school District 11. Peggy was active in 4-H and could often be found on horseback. She also served proudly as Worthy Advisor of the Julesburg Rainbow Assembly, showing her dedication to community.

A graduate of Julesburg High School's Class of 1962, Peggy went on to attend Northeastern Junior College before returning back home to the family farm in Julesburg.

Peggy worked at Dean's Men's Store, Spears Drug, Davis Motors, ASCS Office, served on the board on the Amherst Co-op Elevator, and helped at the Carlson Ranch. When her father passed in 1977, Peggy and her older brother Gary continued their family farming operation, working countless acres together and kept the farm thriving for many years.

Peggy's love of animals was endless – she raised cattle, horses, sheep, llamas, donkeys, peacocks, and exotic prairie birds. She was also an active member of the Golden Spurs Rough Riders Drill Team, and National Pony Express, sharing her horsemanship and spirit with friends across the community.

After retiring from farming, Peggy continued her life of service by working at the nursing home in Julesburg, caring for others with kindness and humor. She later moved to Holyoke in 2020, where she made new friends and continued her favorite pastime – taking a drive in her shiny pickup truck to see what was going on around town. In 2025, Peggy moved to Windsor to be near her dear cousin Ronnie Koch.

Peggy will be remembered for her sharp wit, good sense of humor, and the way she could always brighten a room with a story or a well-timed joke.

Her beloved dog, Sammy, has found a new home – a fitting reminder that Peggy's love and care continues on through the lives she touched.

Peggy is preceded in death by her parents Milton and Mabel Schuler and her brother Gary Schuler. Peggy is survived by her sister-in-law Donna Schuler, nephew Shayne Schuler, niece Shannon Thomas, and cousins Ronnie Koch, Linda Dolezal and Jack Schuler

## NEWS FROM NEVADA

by Jim Phelan

Most horses used in our present-day reenactment of the pony express are trained and ridden with much different circumstances than the horses in the 1860's. Today's horses that are trained and used as ranch horses will closely replicate the horses of the 1860's, whereas many horses and riders of today are products of hunter, dressage, jumper or pleasure training therefore are not used to the rigors of the pony express re-ride. With that said many of our current riders are not the same as the younger and lighter orphans of the 1800s.

I feel obligated to recognize and commend our modern-day horses and riders that commit themselves to the rigors of today's reenactment of the pony express, even though, as yet, we are not being chased by Indians and robbers, we have different types of challenges such as trucks, trains, automobiles and fences.

I wish however to express my acknowledgement of the performance of our modern-day horses that will perform close to the standards of an endurance ride such as the Tevis cup (a west coast endurance contest). Riding alongside a busy highway, running through the expansive farmlands of the Midwest, open plains and the Rocky Mountains, open deserts of Utah and Nevada and finally into the west through high Sierras. In addition, horses and riders need to withstand



Jim riding on Mia at Kingbury Grade in 2024

various weather events including lightning, rain, snow, wind and extreme temperatures.

I also want to acknowledge the horse's and rider's support groups that drive the modern-day pony express way stations in the same conditions as the riders to make sure the horses and riders are where they need to be on time and ready to pick them up when finished, a tremendous amount of effort goes into every year's ride.

On a personal note, my 14.3 hand Arabian mare who served many years as my daughter's show horse throughout the western US and Canada, has been repurposed as a pony express participant in the re-ride, parades and school demonstrations. She is now 23

and still wants to move the mail on one of the most demanding parts of the ride in Nevada, climbing up the east side of the Sierras on the way to deliver the mail to California at the border at Lake Tahoe.

The whole point of this discussion is to recognize all of us who are committed to this piece of history and the different levels of sacrifice that is required to make this happen every year. Some of us are getting pretty ancient and rickety but still are unwilling to give it up, but the fact is, we need to get some of the younger people interested in continuing the race and understand that this can be as fulfilling as video games or social media.

## NEWS FROM WYOMING

### Sweetwater Riders

by Howard Schultz  
*Sweetwater Co. Ride Capt.*

On December 13th, the Sweetwater

County Pony Express Riders successfully completed their 24th annual Christmas Card Ride from Green River, Wyoming to Rock Springs, Wyoming. It was a beautiful 50 degree day, with our riders

delivering 130 pounds of mail in six saddlebags and 4 mochilas. Interestingly, this marked a historic moment for the group as it was the first time in 24 years that we rode without snow packed roads.



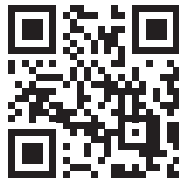


## R.P. Smith

The show is hosted by fourth generation cattleman R.P. Smith, and comes to you weekly from the Pine Crest Ranch, his home place, near Broken Bow Nebraska.

Over the past few years R.P. has been supporting his ranching habit by entertaining folks throughout the country. During his performances he shares his brand of cowboy poetry and country commentary, something that he considers a by-product of the beef industry, which has been processed by reciting for ruminates, relatives, and ranchers.

In his travels to fourteen states and Canada R.P. has had the opportunity to work with some of the top names in the world of western entertainment, he has been as a featured entertainer at some of the largest cowboy poetry gatherings in the country. R.P. has been amazed by the talented folks who are out there and that is why he is so excited about Home Grown. "Home Grown gives me a chance to run by some of my newest efforts and an opportunity to share the poetic and musical talents of some of the folks I have worked with. It is great stuff, and not something you will hear anywhere else. [rpsmith.us](http://rpsmith.us)



Please contact us at:  
[nationalponyexpress@gmail.com](mailto:nationalponyexpress@gmail.com)

### National Pony Express Convention September 10-12, 2026

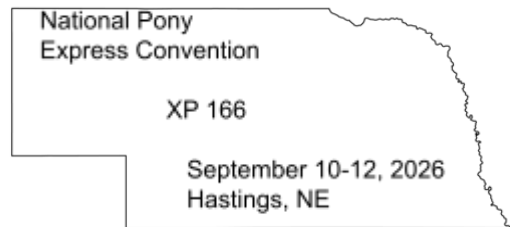
#### Registration Form

Meetings at **Prairie Loft**  
4705 DLD Rd  
Hastings, NE 68901

Happy Birthday USA

250 Years

Attendee(s) Information	
Name(s)	
Address	
City, State, Zip	
Phone	
Email	



Registration Cost/Events	# Attending	Price	Total Amount Due
Early Registration Due before Aug. 1, 2026		\$130	
Registration due before Sept. 1, 2026		\$140	
Fri Dinner Event Only		\$40	
Sat Dinner Event Only		\$50	
<b>Grand Total</b>			

Please make checks payable to NPEA Nebraska Division and mail to:

Angie Blagdon  
1310 W 6th  
North Platte NE, 69101

Hotel Information: Holiday Inn Express-Hastings, NE ; 402-463-8858  
3605 Cimarron Plaza, Hastings, NE 68901

Group reservation under Pony Express

Price for Thurs. Sept. 10, 2026 is \$139.00+taxes Fri. & Sat. Sept. 11 & 12 is \$159.00 + taxes

\*Room rates are subject to applicable state and local taxes at the time of check out.

Reservations must be made before August 10th to receive the group rate.

Closest Airport at Grand Island, NE, 30 miles north of Hastings. Code GRI

Questions please email: Scott Wolf, [swolfxp@gmail.com](mailto:swolfxp@gmail.com)



# Horse Shoe Creek Station

by Samantha Hammond

Two miles south of Glendo, Wyoming, is a small unobtrusive historical marker set alongside the two-lane road. The plaque and post are a gentle reminder that this creek and the ranch that currently occupies the area has a rich history to share.

The first outpost was built at Horse Shoe Creek, in the 1850's, and was used by thousands of immigrants moving westward. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints added to this station making it a place to support those traveling to Utah. In 1857, the entire complex was set ablaze and burned to the ground during a conflict between the U.S. military and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Overland Stage Company rebuilt Horse Shoe Creek Station due to the importance of the creek and live water. It was also employed during the entirety of the Pony Express to exchange horses and riders. A rather notorious fellow, Joseph A. Slade, was the Division Superintendent and Station Master. He was more commonly known as Jack Slade.

Jack Slade was hired by the Overland Stage Company before the advent of the Pony Express to be station master of Julesburg, Colorado. He fired the former corrupt stationmaster, Jules Benni. Benni later gunned him down when Slade was unarmed, emptying his pistol and two barrels of buckshot into Jack Slade. Slade

survived, and became the Superintendent of Division two in the Pony Express.

In 1861, Jules Benni was caught and Jack Slade cut off both his ears, before killing him. Slade then turned himself into the Army at Fort Laramie to face justice. The death of Jules Benni was ruled to be justified. Slade returned to his work for the Overland Stage Company. He kept one of Benni's ears on his pocket watch chain, in his pocket, for the remainder of his life.

Horse Shoe Creek Station was in service for years after the Pony Express. In December of 1866, a man named John "Portugee" Phillips stopped here on his desperate ride from Fort Phil Kearney to Fort Laramie. He carried news of the Fetterman Massacre when military troops were surrounded by the hostile Sioux and Cheyenne, and a dispatch of reinforcements was needed. Portugee rode the Colonel's horse, a Thoroughbred named, Dandy, over 235 miles as he avoided the Native Americans and made his way through a blizzard. He reached Fort Laramie and legend says the courageous horse died on the parade grounds.

Horse Shoe Creek Station is a memorial today, and the Pony Express route is much safer for us all, horses and humans. It still contains challenges that cannot be underestimated, but the memories of the brave, tough men and their horses remain. It is an honor to ride this trail and be a small part of the continued legacy.

## NEWS FROM UTAH

by Patsy Lange

Greetings from Utah; and glad the 2025 Re-ride went well. The day run from Simpson Springs to Murray Park was hot with temperatures 98 to 100 degrees, but I seen a lot of smiles, and didn't hear of any complaints! We schedule 2 practice rides before the Re-ride to remind the horses what is coming up, another horse running up to them and other people throwing something they are not used on top of the saddle all normal, right –NOT – also working with new horses and riders so they know what to expect. I have had good feedback that it helps.

We had several good all member dinner/meetings spring and fall; and in May we have our Swearing-In Dinner.

We are working with the NPS for Pony Express signage at Camp Floyd State Park in Fairfield, UT, which was one of the Home Stations. Also there are signs at This is the Place State Park that need to be replaced. The BLM just finished completing a 110-mile journey of the National Historic Trail in the West Desert. They were capturing current conditions for evaluating resources, values and associated setting of the landscapes, etc. The BLM is required to conduct and maintain an



Dinner meeting at Jim's Family Restaurant 10/25/25

inventory capturing existing conditions and evaluate resources, qualities values and associated settings along designated National Historic Trails. The West Desert segment retains substantial high-potential route segment not shared with other National Historic Trails. The scenery defines rugged mountain ranges, separated by expansive valleys, includes salt deserts, sagebrush basins, and juniper-wooded mountains ranging from 4,300 to 6,200 feet in elevation The natural setting remains largely unaltered since the Pony Express period. Needless to say, this part of the Trail is usually the favorite part of the Re-ride Trail! You can sit on your horse, listen to the hoof beats; let the world of today drift away; and picture yourself carrying the mail, as they did in 1860!

We are looking forward to the 2026 Re-Ride!



Dinner/meeting/silent auction at Famous Dave's BBQ 3/1/25

## Spirit

continued from page 5

Despite the delay earlier in the day, our relentless pace had paid off. We weren't just back on track, we were handing off the mochila a staggering forty-five minutes ahead of schedule. Around 1 a.m., we finally reached the next county's chapter, their horses appearing as silhouettes against the dim town lights. After the high-speed hand-off, we head straight for the Miner's Grubstake, where the owners had stayed open past their usual hours just for us. As the steam from my hot chocolate curled

into the cool night air, the sweetness felt like the perfect reward for everything we had faced: the dust, the mosquitoes, the river mud, the darkness of the night. Looking at my friends talking and laughing after a full day of riding, I realized I had moved to the Equality State to start a career, but somewhere between the riverbank and the midnight gallop, I had found a home. I wasn't just a girl from Minnesota with a horse anymore; I was a link in a chain that stretched back generations. With the horses tied to the trailer and a warm mug in my hands, I knew one thing for certain: that Wyoming wind had blown me exactly where I was meant to be.

## NEWS FROM COLORADO

by Cheryl Nein,  
Colorado Division Member

NPEA Colorado Division had another great year of equine camaraderie while sharing our Pony Express heritage in a variety of venues.

June 18th started off our pre-ride activities, starting with an evening BBQ as Julesburg's new outdoor pavilion. Entertainment followed with a Colorado cowboy husband/wife team reciting a variety of humorous western poems all of which were memorized. The evening was adjourned after swearing in riders for the early morning re-ride.

June 19th marked our annual re-ride. It is always at nighttime depending on if Nebraska riders are running ahead or behind. We received the mochila later than expected but made-up time through the determination of our eight riders, three SP support team and families shuffling trailers and mounts. We also had guest riders from Kansas who rode our first leg of miles out of Chappell. XP members, Les and Marian Yoshimoto of Lucy's Place Café treated our crew to breakfast in Sedgwick at the conclusion of this year's re-ride.

On July 27th, the Sedgwick County Fair Parade traversed main street's residential

and business district led by color guard of our Pony Express riders in full uniform presenting flags. Before and during the parade, two non-riding members meandered through attendees along the parade route passing out XP brochures and answering questions about our organization. This was great exposure and as an added bonus we may have three potential new members! At the fairgrounds exhibit hall, our offices set up a display booth of information that was educational and attractive. This was well received by the community, and we plan to have a display for years to come.

August 30th was the Sedgwick Harvest Festival Parade in the small town of Sedgwick. There was large turnout for northeast Colorado, and it provided lots of exposure for Pony Express. For this parade, we had five riders and XP pickup decorated with banners and the mochila displayed on a stand in the back.

December 4th was our final parade of the season, the annual Parade of Lights in



Julesburg. This has become a very popular event in our area. Featured at night, it is very colorful and a nice addition to the beautiful courthouse Christmas display and business lighting. This year we did not ride horseback but gathered in the back end of a festively decorated pickup light up with our banners and mochila display. This was done to prevent our horse's exposure to EVH.

December 4th was our annual Christmas Card Ride from the Ovid post office to the Julesburg post office delivering mail via mochila. Collection boxes had been decorated and information displayed at various businesses and all post offices in the county. Over 400 cards were collected. Cards were then hand stamped with Colorado and National Pony Express insignias. This service has become very popular and another avenue for promoting Pony Express.

The Colorado Division has a few proposed projects for 2026 in addition to our usual parades and fair display. A coffee shop, "The Pony Espresso", is under construction at the interstate interchange south of Julesburg. A bench will be donated for the garden area between the coffee shop and the Cobblestone Hotel, across from the CO Welcome Center. Our division will be involved in the design and placement of the bench. They Pony Express horse and rider statue at the Welcome Center will receive another waxing and accompanying plaque will have the letters painted to be easily read. We also hope to commission a metal sculpture of XP horse and rider for Pioneer Park near the museum. This project would be part of the 250th celebration of our United States, honoring our heritage.

Happy Trails!!

## Exploring

continued from page 4

is often called the "only unaltered Pony Express station at its original location." The building is now in a beautiful park and is open to the public. In recent years, a visitor center/museum has been added to the site. This place is a real gem in the state of Kansas. Hollenberg Station is near the town of Hanover, Kansas, which is north of US Highway 36. At the highway intersection is a huge brick monument commemorating Hollenberg Station.

Next, Frank and I headed north to my home state of Nebraska to look for the site of Rock House Station. We found several old Oregon Trail monuments but nothing specific to Rock House. We still weren't aware of the extensive work of Joe Nardone, so we may have missed his marker. We were looking forward to the next site, Rock Creek Station. This is the place where, in 1861, Wild Bill Hickok, an employee of the Pony Express, killed

his first man, David McCanles. The station was located on the McCanles Ranch which originally had several log structures. When I first began studying Pony Express history in 1959, nothing remained of Rock Creek Station. However, in 1980, after extensive archeological excavation, all of the ranch buildings were reconstructed, so the place looks exactly the way it did in 1860. It is now a Nebraska State Historical Park.

We were about to complete our first leg of the Pony Express Trail, but we decided to try to locate one more site, Virginia City Station. There is a large stone monument at the site with two Pony Express plaques. The wording on one of the plaques refers to the site as Virginia Station of Whiskey Run. Joe Nardone's post marker stands beside the monument. Joe calls the station Virginia City. It has also been referred to as Grayson's Station. Frank Goodrich and I had only been on the Trail two days but it was time to head home, where I vowed to do more research for the next leg.

## Rider Requirements

Official riders shall be members who are fourteen years of age or over, with a suitable horse, apparel and equipment. Persons 14-17 years of age must have a parent or guardian's consent.

- Each rider must be a member of National and of one of the State Divisions.
- Each rider must have on file a signed waiver/release of liability.
- Each rider must provide their own mount and tack.
- Must arrange transportation and be at designated location two hours prior to ride time and complete ride in allotted time.
- Must wear appropriate WESTERN ATTIRE: Blue jeans, long sleeved red western shirt, chocolate brown vest (with logo on back), yellow scarf, boots, western hat and/or safety helmet.
- **No ballcaps or tennis shoes.**

# National Pony Express Association Trails Meeting September 5, 2025 • Elko, Nevada

## Called to Order

1:07 PM PST – National President Pam Dixon-Simmons

## Introduction of Past National Presidents

Dean Atkin  
Pat Hearty  
Lyle Ladner  
David Sanner  
Melva Sanner  
Jim Swigart

## Introduction of Current Officers

Fred Leslie – 1st Vice President  
Dan Pralle – 3rd Vice President  
Lyle Ladner – Treasurer  
Amanda Svoboda – Secretary  
Mary Cone – 2nd Vice President was unable to attend

## Introduction of State Presidents & Voting Delegates

Wyoming - Howard Schultz  
Nevada – Gene Ockert, President/  
Voting Delegate, Dana Grover, Anna Martins  
California – Rich Tatman, President/  
Voting Delegate, Steve Pool, Marcia Stumpf  
Kansas – Lyle Ladner, President/Voting Delegate, Dan Pralle, Amanda Svoboda  
Utah – Patsy Lange, President/Voting Delegate, Dean Atkins, Trevor Leslie  
Nebraska – Cathy Stevens, President/  
Voting Delegate, Gordy Wilkins  
Colorado – Quackgrass Sally  
Missouri – Quackgrass Sally

## 2024 Trail Meeting Minutes

There were no corrections or additions to the 2024 minutes.

Gene Ockert/Nevada moved to accept the minutes as written.

Lyle Ladner/Kansas seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

## State Reports

### California – Rich Tatman

They left Old Sacramento right on time at 2:00. Their ride went pretty good. Had one horse that was new and going a bit sideways but the rider still made it to their exchange point on time. They had some new riders that slowed them down to about 2 ½ hours behind schedule. They were able to make up some of that time and handed the mail off to Nevada about 1 hour and 45 minutes behind schedule. Rich said there was an issue with the spot tracker this year and there were some peo-

ple who showed up to watch the rider but the rider had already left.

### Nevada – Gene Ockert

They picked up the mail late from California. The first group made up some time. They had a motorcycle cop stop traffic so they could get across the highway. Everything went really good until one of horses started bucking but finally settled down and they were able to get going again and they made up some more time. Each team continued to make up time as they went along. One of the ride captains went out to check the trail the night before and had slid off into the ditch and had to get herself out with a come along. Due to the mud along that stretch of the trail, they had to detour around it but was still able to stay on schedule. At the top of the Diamonds the two riders met and exchanged the mochila and got into Shelbourne in good time. The next section made up more time and they were able to hand off the mail to Utah about 10 to 15 minutes early.

### Utah – Patsy Lange

Had a pretty good ride this year with most everyone on time. Two of her teams did two-mile tick marks which told the riders where they were to start and where they would end and that really helped keep the riders on time. They did have to detour a little bit due to riots but other than that everything went pretty smooth this year.

### Wyoming - Howard Schultz

The riders from the Utah line to Howard's group handed the mail off to Howard's group 45 minute early. They made good time at first but then lost some lost time due to the heat. Around Atlantic City, riders were able to speed up with the cooler weather. Pam said going into Casper they were trying to out run a storm so came in a little early. The riders did a great job getting the mail into Nebraska. Melva reported that Les was not in attendance due to some health issues but was here in spirit. She will have a card for everyone to sign at the meeting tomorrow that she will deliver to Les.

### Nebraska – Cathy Stevens

The mail arrived on time to Nebraska. Their first group was short 5 riders. The next group had 36 miles to ride. This group had lost a rider earlier in the year to an automobile accident so a memorial mile was ridden in his honor. The next group rode for 31 miles. This group was short 3

riders due to a death in their family. Some other riders were unable to ride due to a tornado taking out their home the week before. The Depot Museum had opened up around 2:30 AM to provide water, coffee, and donuts to the early morning riders. Nebraska then handed off to Colorado about 1 ½ hours behind schedule. Colorado handed the mail back to Nebraska to Mary's group. Pam arrived at the Tri Trails park where she talked to the press and the public. Souvenir newspapers from Ehman Park, pamphlets and stickers were handed out. About 40 people were in attendance to watch the exchange. The next group of riders then covered the 44 miles to reach Paxton. They handed off to the group that rode from Paxton to North Platte, and they were able to make up some time in their 35 mile stretch. The next group rode 30 miles from North Platte to Brady Trial. Then the next group reached the Midway 96 Ranch Station south of Gothenburg about 30 minutes behind schedule. The Gothenburg tourism committee and the public were there to greet the riders. The Chamber provided refreshments for the riders. The next group was about 40 minutes behind schedule riding from Cozad to Overton Trail. They had some riders from Minnesota cancel out due to the heat so 4 riders from Thayer County drove up to help with the shortage. The next group rode 31 miles from Overton Trail to Ft. Kearny. At Fort Kearny, they had breakfast with Gene Hunt which was provided by the Ft Kearny PRD board. There were approximately 30 people there. The next leg of the ride was from Ft. Kearny to the Susan Hail Grave trail. Then the next group rode for 32 miles. The mail then crossed Hwy 281 to cover 43 miles to Oak. The next section was 32 miles from Oak to Hwy 53. The last section was 40 miles from Hwy 53 to the Kansas State line where they arrived late. Cathy also added that they had a memorial mile ridden in honor of Carol Anderson whose daughter led the riderless horse.

### Colorado – Pam Dixon-Simmons

Pam reported that they had some very fast riders. Gordy Wilkins followed the Colorado group to Big Springs. He clocked one young rider doing 20 mph for 2 miles with his car. One of their hand-offs he timed at 30 seconds. The longest hand-off was 1 1/2 minutes due to the horse spooking. Pam was trying to take pictures of one of the riders and she was going so fast she

couldn't get any good pictures with the horse throwing rocks and dirt due to the speed of the ride. Pam said they even had a hard time keeping up with a couple of the riders with their car.

### Kansas – Lyle Ladner

Kansas received the mail late. The first 3 groups in Kansas were able to get the mail back on time with each group picking up about an hour each. There were people waiting for the riders at the Hollenberg Station and in Marysville. The Koch group rode into Seneca right on the minute that was advertised for their town and this group did a great job. Then the heat hit in the afternoon and the riders ended up about 15 to 20 minutes late to Missouri. There were cookies and tea provided for the riders at Horton. Lyle applauded the Kansas riders. Dan Pralle added that Kansas had a riderless horse in honor of Wade Miller that was led out of Marysville.

### Missouri – Quackgrass Sally

Missouri riders made it on time and Gary was very pleased that the ride ended on time. It was a super hot evening but there was still a crowd waiting for them at the Patee house. The Patee house is the headquarters of the Pony Express and was built in 1858 and is a National Historic landmark. Pam said it was a really big crowd in St. Joseph.

Hope Walbridge from the postal service is amazing. She has been helping with the cancellations and she was there this year with her table and booth set up. She hand canceled everything with the help of another postal worker. Pam thanked everyone who unpacked the mochila.

Ron Norton added that in Rock Springs, Wyoming, another HAM radio operator, had picked him up to ride along with him. They were following Howard's group and Ron was glad he was in the pickup as his own vehicle wouldn't have made it through the route they were on. The riders were moving out and losing their hats. There was an incident with a horse where having another HAM in that area would have been beneficial so maybe next year they can make that happen.

Pam thanked everyone for all their efforts and stated that it takes all of us to get the ride done. She asked the Presidents to please go back to all of their members and let them know how much she appreciates all their efforts.

The tracker was not working the best

this year. There were a lot of breaks in the service. At one time she noticed there were lights in the body of it that are not supposed to be there. She reached out to SPOT and it is out of warranty. They said we definitely need to purchase a new one. They have a SPOT 4, which is the one we have now but they also have another one called a Tracer, but it does not come with an SOS button on it like the SPOT does. If anyone has an idea of a different kind to use, please let her know. It just has to be satellite compatible and work with the National Parks software. The accuracy of the SPOT location is pretty reliable as it has had to be tracked down in the past. Pam added that the mochila needs to be made with a pocket big enough for the SPOT device and no metal can be on the closure as that interferes with the signal. The SPOT 3 lasted a few years and the SPOT 4 we have only had a couple years. Lyle Ladner moved we purchase a new SPOT device. Rich Tatman seconded the motion. Motion carried.

#### **Trails Advocacy Week - Pat Hearty**

Pat started with how grateful and privileged he is to be able to represent our organization and carry the message of what we do to the National Trails System.

Trail week 2025 took place in January and February. The watchword in DC was “uncertainty” as they were expecting budget cuts, a hiring freeze, and a pause in spending.

The biggest issue for the Partnership was the reauthorization of the Legacy Restoration Fund. This fund provided about \$2 billion dollars for the deferred maintenance in the National Parks, Forest Service Trails, and the BLM facilities. These funds are scheduled to run out this year. They are trying to reauthorize this fund with the America the Beautiful Act. Pat has not seen any evidence of any progress on this as of yet.

There are concerns about staffing shortages in the Federal agencies and budget cuts for our public lands. These are funds that should not be cut as they fall under outdoor recreation which is also what our funding falls under. Outdoor recreation generates \$887 billion annually and supports 7.6 million American jobs. These jobs cannot be outsourced and many Americans will be affected. Michael DeCramer, Washington Trails Association, talked about the controversy and the contention and the political arguing back and forth. Then he said to remember, that in the middle of all of this, we are here to

advocate for our trails. Don't get sucked into a political debate and/or discussion.

They then met with agency heads for the National Parks Service, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Services, and some others. These meetings usually do attract the top people in the agencies to listen to them. They also set up individual meetings with congressional staff and other contacts who are very generous with their time and very gracious in listening to what they have to say.

During these meetings Pat expresses gratitude for the support and the money that comes down through the Park Service that benefits us. Pat said a lot of organizations come with complaints, sad stories, and all the things they need. But we put our feet on the ground and we walk the walk. The appropriations that are given to us have leveraged our volunteer efforts. The National Pony Express Association in 2024 put in over 56,000 volunteer hours which is valued at almost \$1.9 million. Partnership for the National Trails System total, with 25 organizations and about 17,000 volunteers, reported 1.4 million volunteer hours which is valued at almost \$47 million plus \$15 million in private donations. So, these Government appropriations are leveraged. They put in a little bit of money and they get a whole lot back.

He emphasized the demand for outdoor recreation. The public is out there wanting to play on the public lands and use the trails and so we need the support. Therefore, they requested support for the America the Beautiful Act this year.

When he leaves the offices, he always leaves a couple Pony Express Gazettes, copies of the NPEA Introduction letter, and trail and association brochures.

He also told us that state by state and as a national organization, we should give some consideration to 2026 which will be the 250th birthday of the United States of America. Hopefully, we can come up with a way to observe this milestone.

Pam thanked him for the many years he has dedicated his time to this effort and how much we appreciate his representation.

#### **Reride Exchange Location Tool – Fred and Trevor Leslie**

They started using this mapping tool this year. Every state does the same thing yet for some reason each state also does it totally different, for example like how they move the horse along the trail. Fred's group does a two mile relay, so if you have 3 horses in the trailer, the trailer

goes 6 miles down the road. That works great, except no two trucks have the same odometer, so one truck goes 6 miles and the other truck may be a half a mile short. This can make the reride rather stressful and riders get upset if they are shorted miles. One of the riders asked why can't we drop a pin? However, when you drop a pin, it is in a straight line. So, Fred and Trevor asked Fred's son Garrett if there was a way around the straight line and the fact that there is no cell service or internet in the area they were wanting to pin. Garrett knew what to do and built a website with the pins programmed in it and it worked fabulously. All the riders were happy and knew where to be. Everyone had a great time.

The Leslie's drove one vehicle the 92 miles and every 2 miles they did a ping – which is the latitude and longitude of the location. And they saved the pin on the phone. Garrett took those pins and put them into a web base program.

Before they started, they knew they had to meet 3 key challenges. 1) Simple enough for everyone to use. 2) Completely free. and 3) Work flawless on the trail for any cell service or with no cell service. There are 3 sections in Utah and this section does not have cell service in 98% of it.

It was built with Google maps. There are other mapping systems out there but everyone was familiar with Google maps so they used that. A website was created to save on your phone where you can just push a button. They wanted it easy to read so made the button large so if you are rider #12 you just click on that spot and it will take you to that location and you drive there and wait for the exchange to come in. This is compatible with some of the other mapping systems if you don't want to use Google maps. You can just copy and paste the pins into your mapping program.

They zoomed in on the area with the pins so you could download just that portion and that way you could use it offline and save it on your home screen. If you have cell service in the area you wouldn't have to download it to use it. They were also able to document in the program where the cattle guards were and on what side of the road the rider needed to use so they could go around the gates and they even programmed in the distance of the gates from each other. So, you can add anything you would need to make the rider aware of along your trail. The pins are very accurate on the map.

They made a QR code and printed it off so the riders could download the map to

get everyone used to the mapping program before the reride. This really made the reride a lot more enjoyable as you didn't have to worry about whether you were in the right spot or not. Fred said his team was very happy with it and they were even able to move along a lot faster. Patsy's team used the Google maps as well but she printed it off and notated some of the landscape around the pins and then handed it out to her riders.

If anyone has any questions, Trevor has it downloaded on his phone and he'd be glad to show you. You can also go to [garrettleslie.com/ponyexpress](http://garrettleslie.com/ponyexpress) to learn more about it. Pam added that this is really a great idea and will really be of help to new ride Captains as they come along through the years.

#### **Other Trail Projects**

Lyle Ladner – In Nemaha County, in Seneca, there is signage project going on right now and as far as he knows, the signs are being shipped. Pam said if anyone has or has identified any signage projects to let her know and she can reach out to National Parks and see what's available and within their capacity. Or if you are in the middle of a project and need help with local jurisdictions, National Parks can help with that also.

Pam shared with us her ghost story from the Green Mountain motel they stayed in in Wyoming. They have stayed there for 3 years in a row now on the reride. Last year the really nice gentleman who ran it, passed away on the property. During the night at 3:00 AM it felt like someone sat on her feet and she felt the bed move. She woke up Danny and she could see the motion detector outside going off. She checked the door and it was locked and she looked around everywhere and everything was alright. At 5:00 AM she wakes up and the door is open. She wakes Danny up and asks why he went outside and he said he hadn't. Nothing was stolen and everything was in its place. The door wasn't just only open, but also unlocked. Since this was their last year to stay there, she feels this was the past owner telling them good-bye. Howard then told her later on, that the hotel is on the list of haunted places in Wyoming.

Rich Tatman/California moved we adjourn the meeting.

Gene Ockert/Nevada seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 2:33 PM PST

# National Pony Express Association Delegate's Meeting September 6, 2025 • Elko, Nevada

## Called to Order

9:02 AM PST – National President Pam Dixon-Simmons

## Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Pam Dixon-Simmons

## Invocation

Led by Pat Hearty

## Welcoming Remarks

Gene Ockert welcomed everyone to Nevada and that it was nice to see everyone again. He also thanked Andy Boyer and his group for putting this all together as they did a great job. He thanked Pam and the officers for attending and Pam for all of her help.

## Introduction of Past National Presidents

Dean Atkin  
Pat Hearty  
Lyle Ladner  
David Sanner  
Melva Sanner  
Jim Swigart

## Introduction of Current Officers

Fred Leslie – 1st Vice President  
Dan Pralle – 3rd Vice President  
Lyle Ladner – Treasurer  
Amanda Svoboda – Secretary  
Mary Cone – 2nd Vice President was unable to attend

## Introduction of State Presidents & Voting Delegates

California – Rich Tatman, President/Voting Delegate, Steve Pool, Marcia Stumpf

Nevada – Gene Ockert, President/Voting Delegate, Dana Grover, Anna Martins

Utah – Patsy Lange, President/Voting Delegate, Dean Atkins, Trevor Leslie

Wyoming - Howard Schultz/Voting Delegate

Nebraska – Cathy Stevens, President/Voting Delegate, Gordy Wilkins

Colorado – Quackgrass Sally

Kansas – Lyle Ladner, President/Voting Delegate, Dan Pralle, Amanda Svoboda

Missouri – Quackgrass Sally

## Introduction of Guests

National Parks Representatives - Angélica Sánchez-Clark and Jill Jensen

HAM Operator – Keith Gordon

## Remembrance of Deceased Members and Moment of Silence

Dee Abernethy  
Carol Anderson  
Coy Fleming

Emma Brunghardt

Gynette King

Lee Kizer

Christina Lanckriet

Melba Leal

Howard Main

Wade Miller

Daniel Wines

## 2024 Delegate Meeting Minutes

Corrections – There were no corrections to the 2024 minutes.

Rich Tatman/California moved to accept the minutes as written.

Gene Ockert/Nevada seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

## Treasurer's Report – Lyle Ladner

We operate under the National Parks Service and we sign a 5 year agreement with them. This agreement gives us directions and tells us what we need to do to meet their standards to be eligible to apply for their funding. We apply every year for budget funding. We are working on the 2024-2025 budget right now and we have been approved for 2025-2026.

On the income part of the Income and Disbursements report, Lyle pointed out that we had a nice contribution from the Hilltop Foundation in Pahrump, NV. They did not designate it for a single purpose, but they wanted it to be used for outreach or something to improve the organization, so he deposited those funds into the flag account for new flags and repairs in Sydney. This report is done by a 3rd party CPA firm and it is just a verification of the accounting of what he does during the year. Most of the figures on this document were generated before August 13th, as he has to give them time to go over it. It is a living document so some of these figures aren't accurate today but they were accurate last Tuesday.

Our dates of our Memorandum of Understanding are March 14, 2023 thru March 14, 2028. The National Parks agreement that we are working on right at this moment is from September 19, 2024 thru October 31, 2025. The next one comes in on September 25, 2025 and expires September 30, 2026.

All of the CD's are accruing interest of 4.1% to 4.7% and they all have different maturity dates. He cashed one in on its maturity date and had it deposited into the checking account to help pay insurance and convention expenses. He might

need to cash one more in depending on expenses coming up. If he doesn't need it, he will roll it back over as a CD.

Rich Tatman/California moved to approve the Treasurer's report.

Dan Pralle/Kansas seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

## Commemorative & Personal Letter Sales – Connie Ladner

We had total letter sales of 1,004 regular commemorative letters and 202 personal letters this year. She will be sending the checks to the state presidents after the meeting. If you would like her to send the check to someone else in your state, please let her know. If anyone has questions about the financial report, she would be glad to answer them. She was able to purchase the horse stamps to be used for next year's letters before the postage price increased.

## Rich Tatman/California moved to accept the letter reports.

Quackgrass Sally/Missouri seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

## Quartermaster Account – Scott Wolf presented by Pam Dixon-Simmons

On pages 30 and 31 are the Quartermaster's reports. The first page shows the financial side and the second page shows all the items purchased by the states for the year. If your state needs patches, Bibles, or flag holders, please reach out to Scott.

Gene Ockert/Nevada moved to accept the Quartermaster's report.

Howard Schultz/Wyoming seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

## 2026 Budget – Pam Dixon-Simmons

We were asked to reduce our budget from National Parks because of all of the cutbacks. We dropped our request down to \$60,085 which is about \$4,000 less than last year's budget. We got our paperwork in early and it was approved by the Department of Interior. We lucked out and didn't have to reduce by too much. The two areas that we did reduce funding for were travel expenses for the annual meeting and state meetings or events that require the National President to attend. We are not sure what the 2026-2027 looks like yet. If you have any questions, you are welcome to talk to Pam after the meeting.

## Pony Express Gazette – Arleta Martin by Pam Dixon-Simmons

Arleta's report is on pages 37 and 38.

In a letter, Arleta thanked everyone who contributed articles and pictures for our publication. She reminded us to not send her multiple pictures, but send the picture that focuses on and best captures the event or topic you are reporting on.

Pam thanked Arleta for the many years she has put into publishing the Gazette and also thanked those who provided articles and pictures for the publication. Please continue providing her with articles and stories from your states. This publication shows everyone what we do throughout the year.

Partnership for the National Trails System & National Park Service Reports – Amanda Svoboda

Amanda went over the PNTS and NPS reports on pages 39 thru 49. Angélica from National Parks has really helped with providing information to include in the reports. The State of the Trails report has been separated into two different reports. One for Scenic Trails and one for Historical Trails. This has made it a little easier in answering the questions as some of the questions asked do not apply to both types of trails. She also included a copy of the NPS Summary of Volunteer Hours that compares NPEA to other trail organizations.

## Website Report – Mary Cone by Pam Dixon-Simmons

Mary's website report is on pages 50 thru 56. She has included a lot of information in her reports and has broken the numbers down by different categories. She does a great job keeping the website up to date. Please remember to send her what is going on in your state and she can post it on the website. Even a small event should be included. She would also appreciate pictures if you have them.

Mary has done a great job again this year with the website. During the ride, Pam, Heather from Germany, and Petra helped man the 24-hour watch. It is hard for Pam to help and also follow the ride, especially when she is in an area that doesn't have cell service. Please keep providing her information and don't forget to promote the map and events in your state.

Mary Alice Raub talked about the Pony Express hotline. She said it is being used by members and the public. She said she is willing to apply for a donation again

to Churchill County Communications so we can continue the hotline. Then we could have a member in each state update the hotline as the mail moves along. You can change the outgoing message as needed all along the trail. If we do decide to do it, she would be glad to help train others on what to do. Geno said he has used it a few times and it was useful at least for him in Nevada. Anna Martins said it was also helpful to her as a ride captain. Fred asked if we knew how many times it was used during the reride. Mary Alice had requested that information, but had not received it as of yet. Fred said he thinks it is a great idea, but he doesn't think the ride captains would have time to be the ones to call in as they are busy enough. Dan Pralle stated that since the service is free, maybe we should make it optional for each state to use instead of saying each state has to call the updates in.

Lyle Ladner/Kansas moved we extend the hotline for one year and report back next year on the usage since it is not costing the organization anything.

Rich Tatman/California seconded the motion.

Motion carried

#### **Facebook Report – Pam Dixon-Simmons**

She has been doing the Facebook page as she follows the ride along the trail, but she needs help from the states to send her information and pictures. Maybe someone from each state could send her information, especially if they are already doing their state's Facebook page already. All they need to do is at least tag the National page or she can give them access to the National page and they can post directly on it.

She didn't do as many posts this year as she doesn't have a lot of time to look at every state's page. We really need someone from each state to work with her on Facebook. Go back to your states and find a volunteer and give her their contact information.

Larry Carpenter said we need to edit the postings on Facebook as some of the posts are over a year old. He feels that viewers get the impression that they are seeing the same old stuff. Pam said the newer stuff is always at the top. She also said that Facebook has started to delete lives after a year. She said viewers do like the lives and she does try to download them. Some of the posts are reused as it gets harder year after year to come up with 3 posts a week. The goal is to post 3 times a week to keep us at the top of

everyone's feed. This year she didn't meet that goal so we dropped off of people's feed.

#### **Educational Miles – Lyle Ladner**

His report is on page 59 for you to review. He let everyone know that educational mileage reimbursement is not in next year's budget. However, he will still need to report your hours, miles, etc. just like you have always done even though you won't be reimbursed for them.

#### **Insurance - Fred Leslie**

He reported that we have never had a claim or a loss yet on the insurance. We want to make sure we use every caution we can so we are safe in everything we do to hopefully continue being claim free. You need to send him anything that is horse related. If a horse isn't there, he doesn't need to know about the event. He needs to know what you are doing and where it is being held at. He would like to have the information as soon as you know it is going to happen. We do need to sign a new insurance form every single year. A rider can carry mail starting at 14 years of age because that is what the bylaws state. The signature on the waiver means that the member will not sue their own organization. The members are covered and the organization is covered if anyone tries to sue a member. As a member, you sign the insurance form, and then, as a member, you are protected under the policy if there is negligence. For those state that want to sign the form electronically, you can do this, but you will need to figure out how to set that up for your state and figure out how you will save them. Right now, the states are responsible for keeping their members waivers. This is our second year with this company and they are really easy to work with. If you are going out to work on the trail with other members you don't need to let him know, but if you have nonmembers helping, he needs to know as they are the ones who can sue. If you have a nonmember rider or a buddy rider that isn't a member, you should have them sign a waiver so they cannot sue the organization but they will not have any coverage for themselves as a nonmember.

Break

#### **Announcement**

If anyone forgot to sign the sign in sheet yesterday, please do so today. Also be sure you sign today's sign in sheet also.

There are trail brochures, posters, postcards, Gazettes, and various other Pony Express items for anyone who would like to pick them up.

Gene told us that his son, Eddie had made the state table decorations and we are more than welcome to take them back home with us. But, if we want to send them with Cathy after the convention, she could then use them at the Nebraska convention next year.

#### **NPEA HAM Radio Report - Ron Norton**

His report is on page 62. He started out in Old Sacramento and followed the Pony for about

10 hours before going home for a while. He then went back out as another HAM's ride shadow. As the ride shadow, he reports to the HAM he is with and to Net Control, which is another HAM operator that is in charge of California. The HAMS cannot take a whole 24 hour period, so he rode with 3 different ones. After California, he rested for a day and then headed to Wyoming. Another HAM picked him up and they went to Grainger to wait for the Pony. At one point they started going across fields, so he was glad to be in the other HAM'S pickup truck as his own vehicle would not have made it across the terrain.

One of the problems he noticed was that some reporters had drones out and they were spooking the horses, so they asked them to not fly them so close to the horses.

There was a little bit of miscommunications in Nevada with the HAMS but the HAMS were able to compensate and come through again.

There were approximately 110 HAMS total. He is trying to get more HAMS to help next year. HAMS are great for public safety.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **Caldor Fire Trail Restoration Project - Jim Swigert**

Three years ago, he asked the organization for money to be set aside in case he would need it for repairs. He spent 9 days with the Growlersburg group and they were able to get the trail in pretty good shape. There were still spots that needed heavy equipment to work on them, but they were able to clear enough to get that through. He has never received a bill from the state of California for the Growlersburg help.

The bridges were all taken care of by the El Dorado National Forest who did an excellent job replacing the 5 burnt bridges.

The final thing left to do is marking the trail. They have had 300 XP diamond markers donated, so they want to buy

t-post and put the XP diamonds on them. Hopefully if there would be another fire, the metal post would survive.

There is always maintenance to be done on the trail, and he has already asked the Growlersburg group if they would be interested in helping with that in the future and since it is for the community and National Trails, they would be interested in helping again.

Steve Pool/California moved to go ahead and mark the trail using the funds originally set aside at the beginning of this project to purchase materials.

Dan Pralle/Kansas seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Melba asked if we should be reporting the hours of the nonmembers that helped. Amanda said that there is a line on one of the NPTS reports where they ask for nonmember hours, so Jim will work up those numbers.

#### **Strategic Plan – Jim Swigert**

They had a meeting last year to update and make a few changes to the plan. The plan is reviewed every 5 years. Everyone has a copy of the revised plan in their binders. They went over the goals and tasks and got rid of a few, changed the wording on some, and even added some new ones, including some to include the website. The National Park service needed something that stated what our goals and intentions of our organization is all about. This will also help the National Parks explain who we are and what we stand for when talking to other organizations about us.

Melba added that the name listed as Lead, is not solely responsible for the tasks that they are listed by. They are a point of contact to help you complete that project.

#### **HAM Radio Presentation - Keith Gordon**

He didn't realize until today, that not all the states have a HAM operator to follow them. However, in California, Utah, Wyoming, Nevada, and in part of Colorado, communications are so spotty that HAM radios are the most reliable most of the time.

Most of his talk will be focusing on Nevada as that is where he is from and where he serves as the HAM operator. He was able to use the airport in Austin as the base. At the Austin base, there are 4 to 6 radio operators. They spend 6 days there and they set up days before the rider leaves Old Sacramento or if coming from

the west, when they reach the middle of Utah. They operate 24/7 while the Pony is in Nevada. There is a total of 8 amateur type radios also in operation. They are lucky enough to have a Verizon cell tower on a mountain ridge that they can see, so they have really robust cellular telephone communication, and they have a Verizon hotspot for data stream, and now they have added Starlink.

Two days prior to the Pony getting into Nevada, they send a summit team up with a trailer to the ridge line. This ridge line looks down to the airport and you can see 100 miles east and west. The day they set up was a really nice day as normally they are trudging through snow, or at least mud. They also have to worry about thunderstorms and wind.

They also set up GADZOOKS at 8,800-foot elevation, which is a mobile antennae array. It connects the Austin base to the antenna array with downlink radios. They have antennas that are receiving signals from mountain top repeaters to the east and to the west and from the mobile operators as well.

They have a camera up by the equipment so they can see if any animals are interested in it and if they have to scare them off, they have a bull horn or they can shout at them to scare them off.

This is all in place so they can communicate with the HAMS who follow the Pony. There are some places where you just cannot follow the Pony. In those places, you have to have a vehicle that can handle the terrain, powerful amateur radios installed that can reach 80 miles, and a HAM operator who is willing to go in that type of terrain that the Pony goes into.

They follow the Pony to help with communications but mostly for the safety of the rider and the horse. They follow at a respective distance behind when out in the country. If the Pony is on the highway, they may pull up onto your flank to prevent motorist who are intent on passing from pulling in to close. They can also help with pulling vehicles out, route assistance if they know the area well enough, helping you get back on your horse or providing a first aid kit if you need one. They also carry extra fuel and water.

The reports from the vehicles beam up to GADZOOKS. From GADZOOKS those radio signals are relayed back down to the Austin base where there are several radios and computers. They are also watching the SPOT tracker and Pony Express email. If they lose internet,

they can email via radio which is not fast but it does work. Radio reports from the HAMS, who have APRS (Automatic Packet Reporting System) in their trucks, can help track where the Pony is. The APRS intervals the GPS coordinates of the broadcast of the HAM, so if they can track down where the HAM is, they will know where the Pony is.

The SPOT tracker is fantastic. If the horse and rider get separated, the horse and mochila can be located with the SPOT tracker, but you won't always know where the rider is. So, another important reason to have HAMS follow the rider is that they are always maintaining visual contact with the rider. If a rider is not showing up or is off trail, they can radio in to Austin and ask where the SPOT was last and they can give them the GPS coordinates and then they can figure out where they are in relevance of the horse and rider and talk over whether the rider is just behind, was lost but is now back on route, or does the rider maybe need help.

Another form of technology they are starting to use is called Cal Topo. It is a mapping program that works on a mobile phone or a tablet. Those who are logged into the same account can see each other's locations.

Robert Nelson is the HAM that brought him into the Pony Express. Robert used to do this by himself up on the Austin ridge. He soon realized he needed help, so he asked Keith and 8 others from Las Vegas to help him. The Cold Springs exchange to the Schellbourne exchange is where the Austin base mainly focuses on.

They are starting to catalog and map out their routes. This is helping them to clearly mark where the route is and where they need to be. They add in gate locations so they can open and close them for the riders. They mark where the exchanges are to take place, and they mark the parts of the trail where vehicles cannot follow the Pony. They are collecting these notes so current operators and future operators in Nevada will know where to be.

They have 40 to 50 people in Nevada with 110 total for the whole route.

All the information they obtain at the Austin base can be shared with Carson City. You could call Austin base and they can help keep the 800 number updated.

There are still areas where there is no radio service. They are attempting to put amateur radio repeater stations on every major mountain peak along Hwy 50 mainly for the Pony Express. The amateur radio clubs in Reno and Carson City and

other places realize that the Pony Express is a big deal and radio communication is a big deal.

They learn something every ride and they have to do better every year. They meet after the reride every year to go over what worked or didn't work or what they should do different. They are not decision makers but they are communicators who are there to support us and aid the ride captains. They realize that changes on the go are unavoidable, but they do ask that the ride captains please let the HAMS know right away if they are not needed due to a change in the route. The HAMS come from all over and they go to great personal expense and effort to do this and when they are told they are not needed at the last minute it is pretty disheartening. Also keep in mind that the follower might be brand new and they may not be able to help with the route as well as someone who has been following for a few years now.

Keith said that they are using billions of dollars' worth of automotives, satellites, and communications technology to do what a 14 year old did by themselves 165 years ago. The fact that we are keeping this alive is absolutely phenomenal so please keep it up.

#### **Olympic Mochila – Lyle Ladner**

The Olympic mochila is still being displayed in the Marysville, KS museum. They are glad to keep it on display there unless someone else would like to display it in their state. Kansas would be glad to ship it to them.

Rich Tatman/California moved to leave the mochila in Marysville and readdress the location next year.

Quackgrass Sally/Colorado seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

#### **SPOT Tracker - Pam Dixon-Simmons**

Pam announced that a motion was made yesterday at the Trails meeting to purchase a new SPOT 4 tracker. She will check with the company to see if there is any type of discount available for us to use.

#### **Domain names – Lyle Ladner**

We are paying service rights to maintain two website names. They are XP Home Station and National Pony Express.org. We have been maintaining the XP Home Station name so no one else can get access to it. Do we want to keep paying for that? Pam said that when you type in XP Home Station it does take you to

our NPEA website.

Rich Tatman/California moved we keep maintaining the XP Home Station name.

Steve Pool/California seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Break for Lunch

#### **National Parks Service/National Trails Office – Angélica Sánchez-Clark and Jill Jensen**

Angélica - The National Trail's office is headquartered in Sante Fe, New Mexico. They also have an office located in Salt Lake City, Utah and in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

They administer to 10 National Historic Trails across the country. All together that adds up to 28,000 miles across 24 states. They do not own or manage any of the land the trails are on. That is why they rely on organizations and volunteers to help them protect, develop, and promote the trails. Collaboration and partnership are the key to achieving all the good things that happen on the trails.

The current task agreement will expire October 31, 2025. This agreement was for \$66,750. The next task agreement has been executed and finalized and will start September 25, 2025. This agreement is in the amount of \$60,085. They are still waiting to see by what percentage the National Parks budget will be cut. They are hoping the cut will be a lot lower than what they originally thought it would be.

They have lost about one-third of their staff in the last six months which is a lot to bear because when they are fully staffed, they are an office of 20. Carole Wendler, Acting Superintendent and Paula Ogden-Hughes, Lead of the Interpretation Team retired in May. They have also lost several staff due to voluntary separation including their new GIS specialist. Patrick Malone, their new Superintendent, joined their office in October 2024. They are bringing on three new interns to try to supplement their capacity. These are short term positions hired through non-profits through cooperative agreements. Federal agencies are on a hiring freeze until October. After that, they will be able to hire 1 person for every 4 that they lost.

Jill – The reride is truly a special event. It highlights the National Pony Express Historic Trail and thousands of people experience the reride personally and also through the mapping system. They are proud to support and partner with us.

Every year Brian basically stays up for

10 days straight checking the map every hour to make sure it is working like it should. It is a big undertaking and very near and dear to their hearts and they are able to reach thousands every year through the mapping system. The map is near real time and every year it is a bit different with software changes. She thanked Pam, Mary, Petra, and Heather for all of their work and help with the map programming and monitoring.

The way it works is the SPOT device acquires the Pony's GPS coordinates about every 5 minutes and sends them to the web page. The web page translates the coordinates into the Pony's location and then the location is shown on the map. Then the map calculates the ETAs of the riders. This has helped the public be able to come out and watch the ride. Views keep going up every year. She thanked us for helping to promote the reride and the NPS mapping application.

One of the updates this year included the auto zoom to the current rider. If you have any ideas for potential future improvements, please let Brian know.

The Butterfield Overland National Historic Trail has been a big focus in their office over the last couple of years. Every time they go out in public to talk about this trail, the Pony Express Trail is always brought up, so it is a good crossover topic and gives them an opportunity to talk about the reride.

The R-Project Transmission Line that goes across Nebraska will impact the Oregon Trail, but she is not sure if it will impact the Pony Express Trail. They should know more by October. If you know of other Federally funded programs that might affect the trail or reride, let them know and they will look into it.

Angélica – One of the teams in their office is the Design & Development Team. This team handles the sign planning, design, and signing of the National Historic Trails. They work with different jurisdictions including state highway departments, counties, and cities. They also do a lot of Site Identification signing. They can partner with an Interpretive facility or a historical site that has public access and work with them to get a site identification sign to bring attention to their connection with the National Historic Trail. The pedestrian sign with the carsonite posts and stickers seems to be one of their most requested signs.

Signs used to mark the Pony Express Trail, where it coincides with the modern-day highway and interstate systems,

were ordered in August for California. This sign project is part of a larger Caltrans project to mark the California Trail and Pony Express Trail across the state of California.

When these are installed, it will create instant visibility for the Pony Express. The city of Seneca, KS received 4 signs and Nemaha County, KS received 17 signs. Tooele County in Utah received 11 replacement signs. One of the challenges of administering to a historic trail versus a scenic trail is getting people to realize exactly when they are on a historic trail. So, signing the trail really helps with this. If you are interested in any type of signage project, please reach out to the team and they will help come up with a signage plan and will work with you to come up with the correct signage and what you want on the signs. Part of the assistance that their office supplies, is that they pay for the signs, fabrication, and shipping. Then it is up to the jurisdiction or the members to install the signs.

Last month they had some of their staff travel to California and they met with the Oregon and California Trail Association to travel the trail and they also visited the Pony Express sites in California. After the trip, the staff met with the El Dorado National Forest Service staff to discuss opportunities for interpreting the Pony Express and to do some additional trail signage. They are interested in redoing some of the existing interpretation that's at the Old Toll Road.

In the last few years, the National Parks has had a lot more intervention with the public. They had 3 staff members attend the reride kickoff event this year. They ran the Junior Ranger program and were able to interact with the public in person. Towards the end of the reride, Angélica and Carol Clarke were in Seneca and Horton, KS and St. Joseph, MO. This year, they created a new Pony Express Reride Junior Ranger program activity. They have found that adults even like to participate in the Junior Ranger program.

Please let them know if there is anything you need and they will be glad to work with you. She thanked us for all we do to preserve and promote the Pony Express and Pony Express Trail.

#### **Corresponding Secretary – Petra Keller**

Larry retired last year and left her with some big shoes to fill. In the past, information was physically mailed out. She has worked to digitalize Larry's information. She has taken Larry's lists and has added

more contacts to it. If you an organization, business, or someone you would like for her to add to the list, please let her know.

In the past years, we have sent one physical press release out in the spring to let people know about the reride coming up. This year she sent the press release out digitally and then a couple weeks before the reride, she sent out state specific press releases. Then the night before the reride started, she sent out another one telling them to come and see us. She accompanied this release with a flyer she had created that had a QR code on it that you could scan and it would take you right to the map with the current location of the rider. This first year, she had about 400 people use this QR code. She is planning on using them again next year and would like the states to also hang them up in businesses or hand them out a couple weeks before the reride.

She also reported that there have been about 90 articles written about the Pony Express so there has been an increase on that. Something new to her was being interviewed on three different podcasts.

If your state is having an event coming up, send her all of the information about it, and she can come up with a press release specific to your state and send it out. She did that for convention and a couple other events.

Pam thanked Petra for volunteering to take over the Corresponding Secretary position and for all of her hard work. Pam suggested that you can use AI to help compose information for your events to send to Petra if you need some help writing it out.

#### **Honorary Membership – Vice Presidents**

There were no nominees presented for Honorary Membership.

#### **Ken Martin Service Award – Vice Presidents**

There were no nominees presented for the Ken Martin Service Award.

#### **2026 Reride Schedule – Pam Dixon-Simmons**

The reride will leave St. Joe, Monday June 15th, at 3:00 P.M. and arrive in Old Sacramento on Thursday, June 25th, at 4:30 P.M. The schedule was sent out ahead of time to the state Presidents and there was one correction she had to make before finalizing it. The schedule is the same schedule as the last time we ran from St. Joe to California.

As soon as you get your state's schedule out, please share it with Mary and Petra and your members so we can all start promoting the reride.

Rich Tatman/California moved we accept the 2026 Re-ride schedule.

Quackgrass Sally/Colorado seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

#### **2026 Re-ride, Pin, Vignette, & Envelope - Nebraska**

Cathy reported that it is their honor to host the 2026 NPEA convention next year. It will be held in Hastings, September 10th thru 12th. There will be a meet & great at the Holiday Inn Express Thursday night. The meetings will be held at the Prairie Loft. Friday there will be site seeing and a tour of Hastings with a BBQ and a Cowboy poet that evening. They are still firming up the details for the activities for the ladies on Saturday. There will be entertainment and a live and silent auction Saturday night.

#### **Future Delegates Meetings**

2027 Wyoming

2028 Colorado

#### **Other Business**

Pam showed us an article written about one of our members, Lyn Fellows, that was written by Author Rachele and published in the No Worries Club Journal. In the article, she talked about her experiences with her horses and she talked about the Pony Express. This was great publicity for the Pony Express as this article was read by many. If anyone ever has a member that has an article that mentions the Pony Express, share it with all of us at convention and let the media team know. Petra was able to get permission to post this article on our website so other could read it also. It is under media coverage.

Petra talked about social media and she said the three most common questions asked are how do I get involved, how can I find out more about the organization, and how can I ride. The media team invited a small group to test out a video meeting where the guests and potential new members could ask questions. Petra hosted the meeting with the help of Lyn Fellows. The media team feels it would be beneficial to try to continue these online meetings, however to do so, they will need more volunteers to help and would need to look into getting a budget in place in order to have a larger platform to host more participants. There is a desire out there for people to learn and she feels like

it is worthwhile to go forward with this.

Pam suggested forming a membership committee to help get it all together and also to help take notes and document questions during the meetings. Larry stated that we need to remember that National does not recruit members but the State divisions are where they become a member. The media team said this was not an attempt to recruit National members. They promoted information about all of the states and let the participants know who to contact in the states and how to find information on the website. Pam suggested that instead of calling the committee a membership committee, we should call it an outreach committee. Pat and Gene both suggested that maybe those who do not ride might want to help with this committee or help in some other way so they feel valued also. Some ideas included helping with social media, calling updates into the 800 number, or helping promote the organization. Pam said that right now, it is just her, Petra, and Mary who are answering all of the questions coming in through Facebook and emails. Pam suggested this committee might be able to help us find associate members who are good with computers, good with using social media, or someone who knows how to archive records.

Fred added that he is all for recruiting but we also have around 700 members in our organization and maybe we should work on getting some of them to help in some way or other. There is a lot of talent among those members and we need to try to get them involved too. Pam asked if anyone had ideas on how to get more of our members involved as we are having trouble getting our current members active. We need members to hold National

and State offices and we are always short riders.

The idea of being able to fill out the membership form and insurance form online and also being able to then pay for your membership fee online was discussed. The method of payment would have to be figured out per state. We need each state who wants to use the online forms to research how they are going to house these clickable forms, how they are going to receive them, and how they are going to sign them. The insurance company said that they are ok with us processing their forms online if a state does go that direction. Pam stated that if you have clickable forms, you need repository. This is not a National issue, it is up to each state on how they want to receive their membership and insurance forms and payment.

Gordy said that this coming year he is going to set up booths at schools in Nebraska to promote Nebraska history and the Pony Express. He is then going to challenge young riders to join. He is then hoping to have backup riders in case riders can not show up during the ride at the last minute.

It was decided not to form the national outreach committee or do any more of the online meetings. Therefore, the media team will be forwarding all questions to the respective state being asked about. If someone is asking from a state not along the trail, they will forward those questions to all 8 states. Mary, Pam, and Petra will continue to answer the National questions.

#### **Gifts of Appreciation – Pam Dixon-Simmons**

Pam thanked her officers and present-

ed them with gifts of appreciation for all of their hard work, help, and assistance during her term as President. She then called up her chairmen and presented them with appreciation gifts also. She could not have served her term without her team.

#### **Report of Nominating Committee – Dean Adkins and Melva Sanner**

Melva presented Pam with a belt buckle for serving as our National President and thanked her for all of her hard work over the last 3 years.

Dean and Melva announced that the nominating committee has selected Fred Leslie as their nominee for President.

Dean opened the floor for nominations for the office of National President. There were no further nominations from the floor.

Rich Tatman/California moved we close the nomination.

Gene Ockert/Nevada seconded the motion.

Dean announced by acclamation we welcome Fred as our next President.

#### **Presentation of Officers – Fred Leslie**

1st Vice President – Quackgrass Sally

2nd Vice President – Scott Wolf

3rd Vice President – Rich Tatman

Fred asked for a show of hands in favor of the Vice Presidents he appointed. There were no hands raised as opposed. The Vice Presidents were accepted. As of now, he does not have a Treasurer or Secretary to appoint. If anyone would like to hold one of these offices, or knows of someone who would like to hold one of these offices, please let him know.

#### **By-Laws – Fred Leslie**

He is setting up a committee consisting of four past presidents and four newer

members to go over the By-Laws to see if we need to make any additions or changes to them. The last time they were gone over was in 2004. Melva Sanner, Pam Dixon-Simmons, Pat Hearty, and Jim Swigart volunteered as past presidents. Quackgrass Sally is going to head this up and she will be contacting the committee members to let them know when the first zoom meeting will take place. If anyone else would like to volunteer, please let Fred know.

Mary Alice Raub announced that PBS is doing an episode about recreation along the Pony Express Trail in Nevada. It will air late January or early February. She wanted to let other states know about this so they could maybe contact their locate PBS stations about producing a show in their state.

#### **Announcements/Adjournment**

Gene Ockert/Nevada moved we adjourn the meeting.

Rich Tatman/California seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

Andy Boyer thanked everyone for coming and he hoped we all enjoyed our visit to Elko. He has copies of the poems that were read at Thursday's meet and greet if anyone would like a copy. Be back around 5:30 for dinner and drinks. There will be a silent auction and music for entertainment.

Amanda reminded everyone that she needs their hours, miles, and event information from October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025. This would include convention also.

Lyle needs the travel reimbursement sheets turned back into him before you leave.

# AMERICA 250TH CELEBRATIONS

As the United States approaches America 250, the nationwide commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the United States Declaration of Independence in 2026, communities across the country are reflecting on the people, events, and innovations that shaped the nation's identity. Organized in part by the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission, America 250 highlights milestones in civic development, westward expansion, and the enduring pursuit of liberty. One powerful symbol of American determination and ingenuity is the Pony Express, the short-lived but legendary mail service that operated from 1860 to 1861. By relaying messages on

horseback across nearly 2,000 miles between St. Joseph and Sacramento, the Pony Express dramatically reduced communication time between the East and West, reinforcing connections across a rapidly expanding nation. Together, America 250 and the legacy of the Pony Express underscore themes of resilience, innovation, and unity that continue to define the American story.

Come celebrate with us!

Events - <https://nationalponyexpress.org/celebrating-the-250th-birthday-of-america/>



## NEWS FROM KANSAS



Front row left to right: Arleta Martin, Jennifer Downard, Jean Miller, Doug Berkley, Kara Berkley, Annemiek Wortel, Elizabeth Berkley, Connie Heidebrecht, Sophia Bailey, Sarah Bailey  
 Second row left to right: Brian Koch, Darrin Svoboda, Amanda Svoboda, Ron Holle, Connie Ladner, Rodney Rilinger, Kylee Koch, Barry Koch, Charlie Weickert, Lindsey Koch, Melva Sanner, David Sanner  
 Third row left to right: Tyler Berkley, Jim Koch, Dan Koch, Roy Winkler, Doug Koch, Preston Koch, Colton Koch, Lee Kohake, Grant Kruse, John Wullschlegler

January 17, was a very cold, windy night in northeast Kansas. The thermometer read 6 degrees, with a wind chill of minus 8 degrees. Dan & Myra Koch hosted the Kansas Division's annual soup supper at Castle Hall in Seneca. The cold

didn't stop members and their families from attending as they hosted around 60 people.

There were five delicious soups to choose from plus sandwiches, desserts and much more.

Attendees had fun reminiscing about past rides and talking about the upcoming re-ride and the annual school rides.

A slide show was running through-out

the evening for everyone to view as it pictured those riders who rode back in 1980 up to and including some first rides taken in 2025.

## Members of the Koch Crew

### Kansas Division

Dan Koch was presented with his 45-year membership patch in June of 2025. Dan joined the NPEA in 1980, the first year the mail traveled over the entire trail. He has actually carried the mail 46 times as the mail was carried in both directions in 1985.

Doug Koch joined the NPEA in 1985 and was presented a 40-year membership patch in June of 2025. He also carried the mail twice in 1985 for a total of 41 times.

Both Dan and Doug took part in the Olympic Torch ride in 1996. Both Dan and Doug are honored to be members of the NPEA because their dad Linus

(Lenny) was a life-member of the NPEA until he passed away in 2004. Now Lenny's sons and grandchildren carry on the tradition of carrying the mail along the Pony Express National Historic Trail.

They are both involved with a letter exchange, carried by horseback between



Doug and Dan Koch

the two elementary schools in Seneca sometime in April of each year. It is between St Peter and Paul Catholic School and Nemaha Central Elementary School third graders.

It's wonderful to see them carrying on this family tradition and keeping the Spirit of the Pony Express alive!

# Membership in the OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION brings rewards



EXPLORE *the*  
BENEFITS *at*

[www.octa-trails.org](http://www.octa-trails.org)  
[www.youtube.com/@octatrails](https://www.youtube.com/@octatrails)



# Rider Out

by Kim Saner - Nevada

With flowing stride, name and tail.  
They ran with heart to deliver the mail

Across hot sand and broken trail  
Rode day and night to carry the mail

Pinto, Dun, Black and Bays  
2000 miles in 10 long days

A steady hand to guide the way.  
No time to tarry, rest or stay.

Galoping fast at breakneck speeds  
Facing danger with gun and steed

Bandits and Indians could not impede  
The rider from his sacred deed

These days are past but none can deny  
Upon grit and guts they did rely

Astride each mount a hero sat  
No doubt about it, that's a fact

Many horses and fearless men  
Delivered the mail and started again.

Lets never forget or fail to recount  
The excited cry of "Rider Out."

## Daily Alta California

San Francisco, Wednesday Morning,  
April 4, 1860

The Pony Express — The first "Pony Express" started yesterday afternoon from the office of the Alta Telegraph Company, on Montgomery Street. The saddle bags were duly lettered "Overland Pony Express," and the horse, (a wiry little animal) was dressed with miniature flags. He proceeded just before four o'clock, to the Sacramento boat, and loudly cheered by the crowd as he started. We had forgotten to say that the rider's name was James Randall — an old hand at this business — and evidently quite at home as a rider, though he got up on the wrong side in this excitement. The express matter amounted to eighty-five letters, which at \$5 per letter gave a total receipt of \$425. In nine days, the news by this express is expected to be in New York.

Submitted by Larry Carpenter — CA Div

Please contact us at:  
[nationalponyexpress@gmail.com](mailto:nationalponyexpress@gmail.com)

**The National Pony Express Association**  
a non-profit organization, is dedicated to the preservation and marking of the Pony Express National Historic Trail.



## 2026 Annual Re-Ride of the Pony Express

**Send a Letter by PONY EXPRESS!**  
**From St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, in 10 days!**

Mail will be carried by horseback by over 700 riders from Missouri, through Kansas, Nebraska Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada and into California. The letters will depart St. Joseph, Missouri on **Monday, June 15 at 3:00 p.m. CDT** and will arrive in Sacramento, California on **Thursday, June 25 at 4:30 p.m. PDT**. Envelopes then receive a special postmark and are delivered by USPS. A special historical vignette this year will commemorate Nebraska.

Visit [www.nationalponyexpress.org](http://www.nationalponyexpress.org) for additional information and to follow the ride progress map.

SEND ORDERS and one check or money order to cover purchase to:

National Pony Express Assoc.  
2458 Navajo Rd,  
Frankfort, KS 66427

For questions regarding orders - Phone (785) 799-5236

----- detach here ----- print legibly ----- detach here -----

COMMEMORATIVE LETTERS (described above) - \$5.00 EACH - **Order by May 15**

PURCHASER \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

RECIPIENT'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

If ordering more than one letter, enclose a list of additional names and addresses.

State to be credited with sale: (Circle one) CA NV UT WY NE CO KS MO or National

\*\*\*\*\*

PERSONAL LETTERS - \$10.00 EACH - **Order by May 1**

(We provide you with special stationary. You write a letter and return to us.)

PURCHASER \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

State to be credited with sale: (Circle one) CA NV UT WY NE CO KS MO or National