

2007 Fables of the West Press Release...

01/22/2007

Get ready to ride with the biggest little cowboys on the Old West trail. If you're coming to the fair in 2007, you're sure to get a 'kick' from the Fables Of The West gang and their trusty steeds, as they head out on the 'Trail Of Tales' Tour.

Now if the Fables name doesn't ring a dinner bell, you might better remember them as 'Wild West Express', the cowboy comedy team (often referred to as 'the little cowboys on the little horses') that in just six years time, performed at over 318 fairs and events (in their entirety) from Alaska to Florida to Texas to their home state of California.

So what's up with the new name?

Ken McMeans, the 'Fables' big cheese (founder and senior cast member, as well), says that the name change came about because of the trademark and copyright restrictions on 'Wild West Express'. "We get upwards of ten thousand hits a day on our website. We've wanted to get going with the merchandising thing for quite some time, but I was afraid we would run into issues where others would stake claim to ownership of the name." As it turns out, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of businesses across the US using the name Wild West Express.

Ken said he originally was not thrilled about making the change, after spending so much time and effort branding their act with that title. Naysayers predicted that it would confuse entertainment buyers and potentially cost them their spot at the top of the fair circuit entertainment heap. . Ken said he was apprehensive at first, as were the other senior cast members (who at one point thought he had lost his mind). Fortunately, the industry responded well to the Fables of The West heading and Ken says booking for 2007 is already exceeding previous years.

And just what is it these 'Fables' cowboys do (besides make stuff up)? Well if you've been to a fair in the US in the last five years, you've most likely run across their path. "Its high energy and interactive, and we try to involve fair guests by literally making them the main focus of the show". The group is actually labeled as a 'strolling grounds act'- never really having a specific show time nor needing (or wanting) to be on a stage ("too far away from the crowd," says Ken). "I guess I should give some credit to the horses we ride ('faux' Muppet-like miniatures), though they seem to sometimes steal our thunder."

The show is always 100% G-rated, family entertainment. Even when the gang performs at a casino or an adult only type venue, they still stick to their guns and keep it clean.

The cast has been pared down to just a handful of cowboys, a far cry from the 20 plus cast members (eight teams) that they had on the road in 2004. After experiencing the 'growing too fast' business syndrome, Ken and Eric Holmquist (Events Coordinator/Cast Manager) decided things would be much less stressful with a few less 'little' cowboys on the trail. "We have an absolute type of performer we look for, and there's just not that many that we've been able to find that can do this the way Eric, Bob (Ken's brother), Steve Rothblum (as Rattlesnake Jake) and I do. Most fall by the wayside as they find out how hard we actually work. And then on top of that, to get riders that are both rough and edgy, and still lovable (and funny), well that's a trick."

Along with the four veteran cast members, Fables of the West will also have 4 year member Terry Horton and a couple of cowboys that have performed on and off each year with Wild West Express, Scott Olynek, and Francisco Sanchez, backing them when needed.

Ken's now 10 year old daughter, Jessica, will also be performing with the act on a few select fairs in the summertime, as she has done since she was six years old.

To round out their numbers, Ken is bringing back husband and wife performing team Charles Heffernan and Barbara Kozicki, who Ken and Eric met in 2006 while working at the Calgary Stampede. "Barb and Charles did a few key events with us in 2006, and were the best, first-time riders we'd ever had. They actually blew me away with their knack for character development and their immediate improv ability. They will be with us again in August, September, and October 2007, which is very fortunate considering they live in Alberta, Canada and have successful acting and performing careers there."

So... will fairgoers see the same commitment to quality entertainment that they've seen with Wild West Express over the past few years? Ken says not only will the premise and caliber remain the same; they have a few new surprises up their short sleeves, to go along with the new Fables name. "We hope to reign for many years as the 'Outlaw Kings Of Old West Foolishness', it's a way of life for us," Ken explained. "But we do have some new bits, gags, and diversions planned- if only for own sanity, we try to keep it fresh."

Ken points out that every show is different and fresh, because, after all, the majority of it is improv. "We mostly make it up on the spot as we go along."

Which makes the new name all the more appropriate, just like a 'fable', only this one is riding a little horse... straight out of the Old West.

The 2007 'Trail Of Tales' Tour starring Fables of the West, begins in Cloverdale, California on February 17, 2007...

Visit the cowboys online at <http://www.wildwestexpress.net>