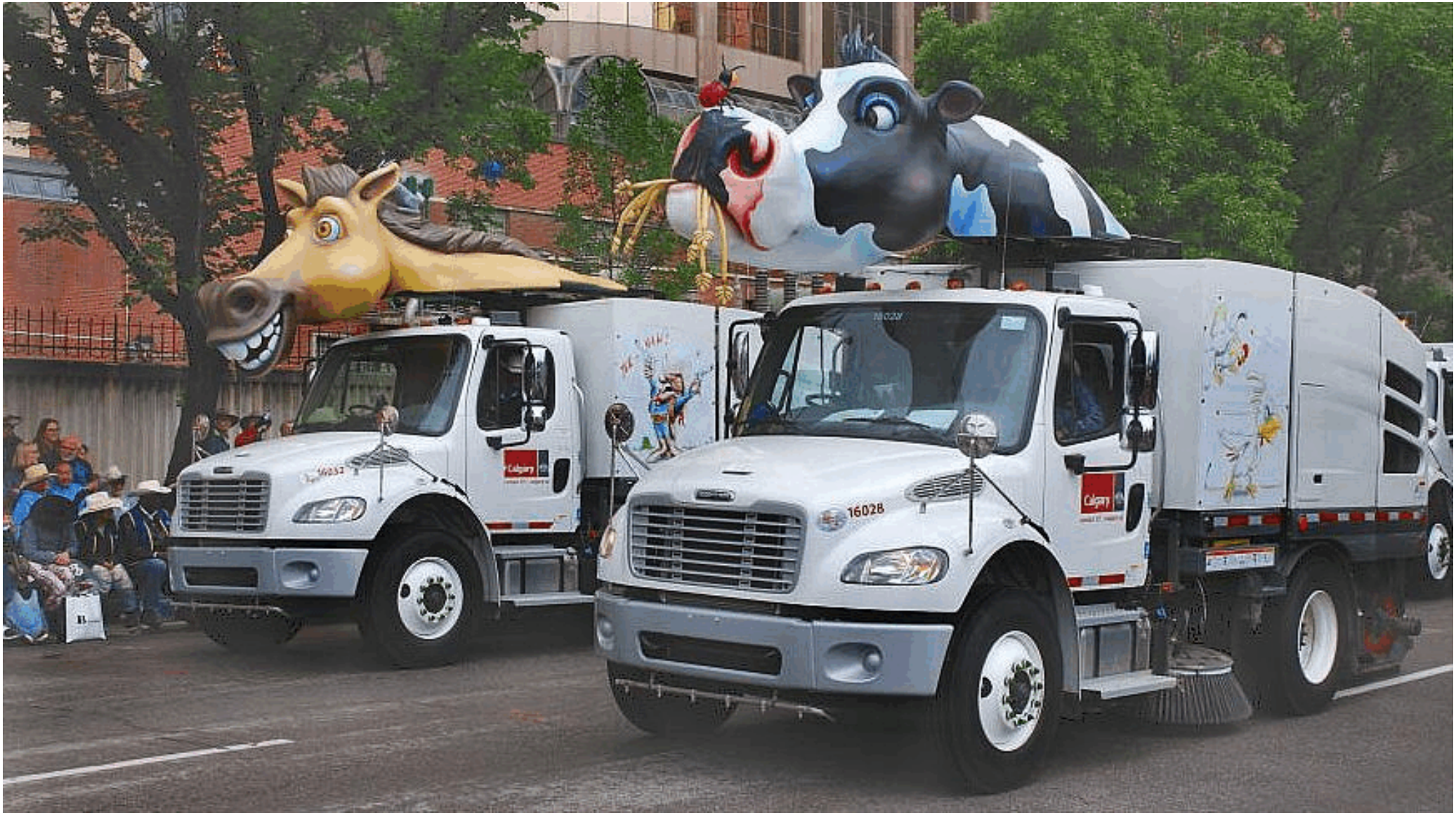
OPUNTIA 448



Stampede Parade Day 2019

Opuntia is published by Dale Speirs, Calgary, Alberta. It is posted on www.efanzines.com and www.fanac.org. My e-mail address is: opuntia57@hotmail.com When sending me an emailed letter of comment, please include your name and town in the message.

LET THE SHOW BEGIN

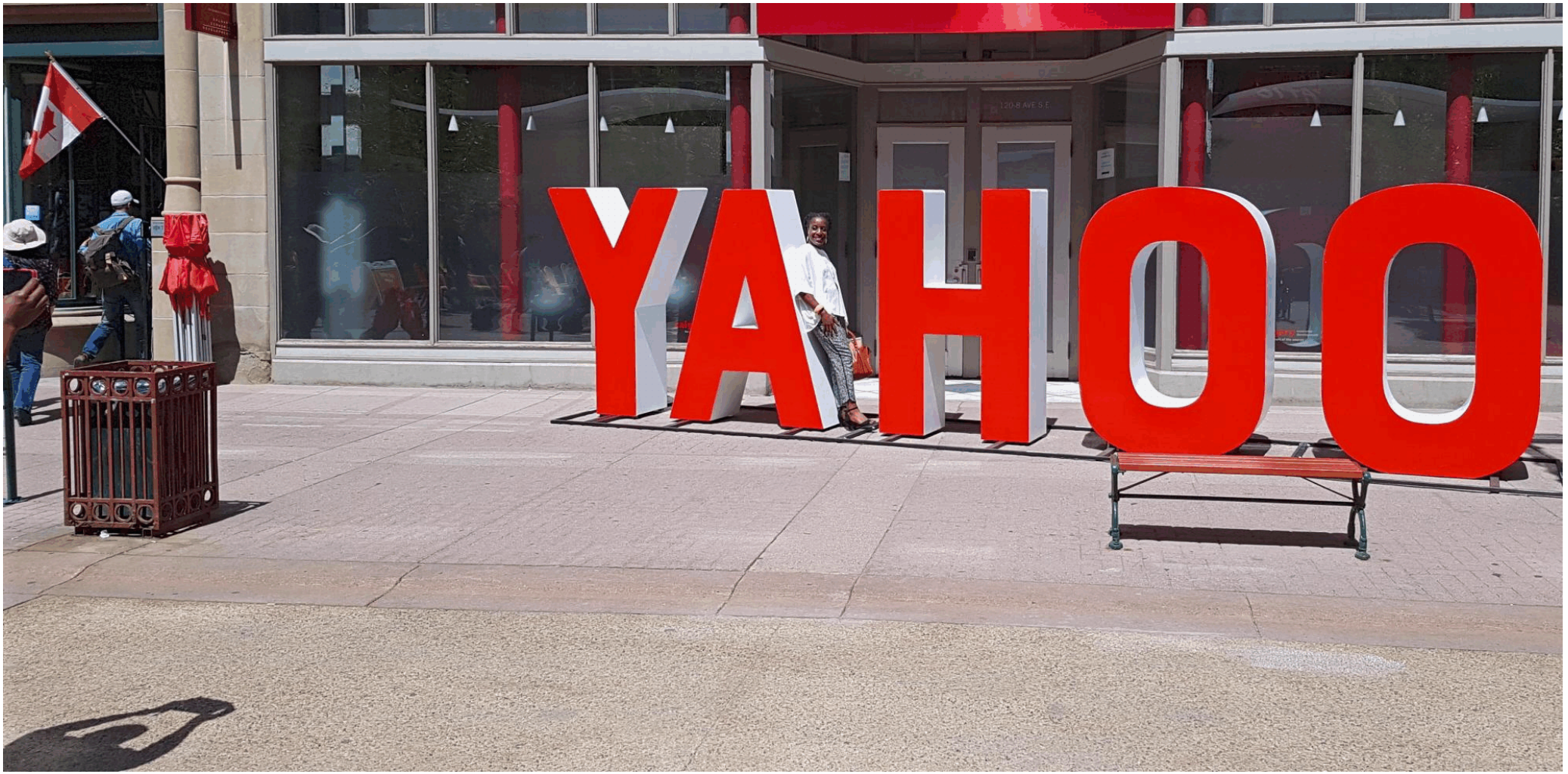
photos by Dale Speirs

Ten days. 1.3 million paid attendance. Second largest parade in North America after the Rose Bowl. The entire city celebrating everywhere, not just at the rodeo grounds.

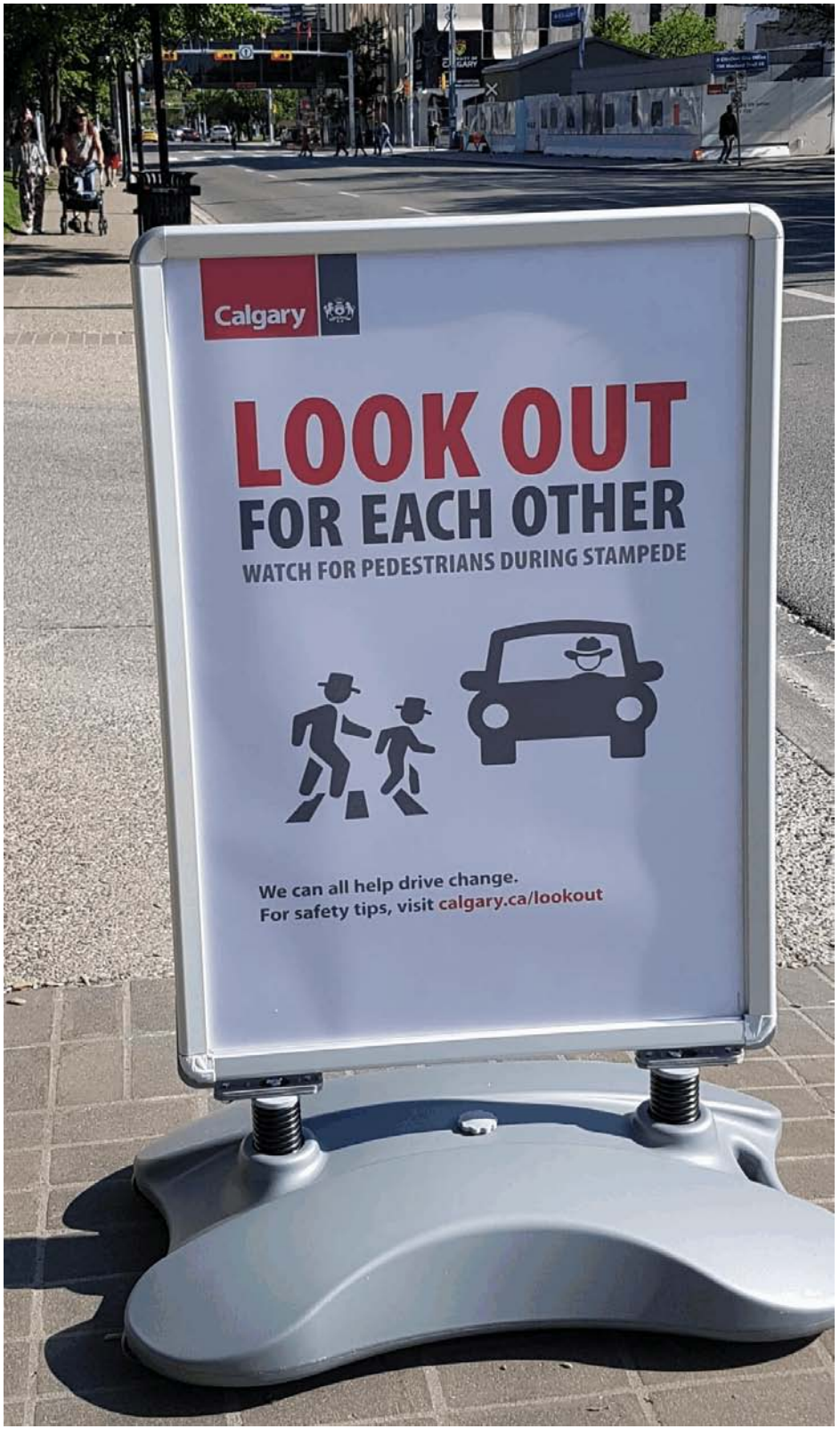
In Calgary, the word "Yahoo!" was in use long before those Website nerds hijacked it. This year the City set up several of these giant Yahoos around town. This one was on the Stephen Avenue pedestrian mall downtown, which has almost as much activity going on as the rodeo grounds.

The woman posing on the sign gives the scale of the letters. Notice in the lower left corner the shadow of her boyfriend taking a photo.

About the cover: An essential part of any parade with lots of horses are the street sweepers. Roads Dept. has a good sense of humour about this, as indeed they must when following behind a few hundred horses.



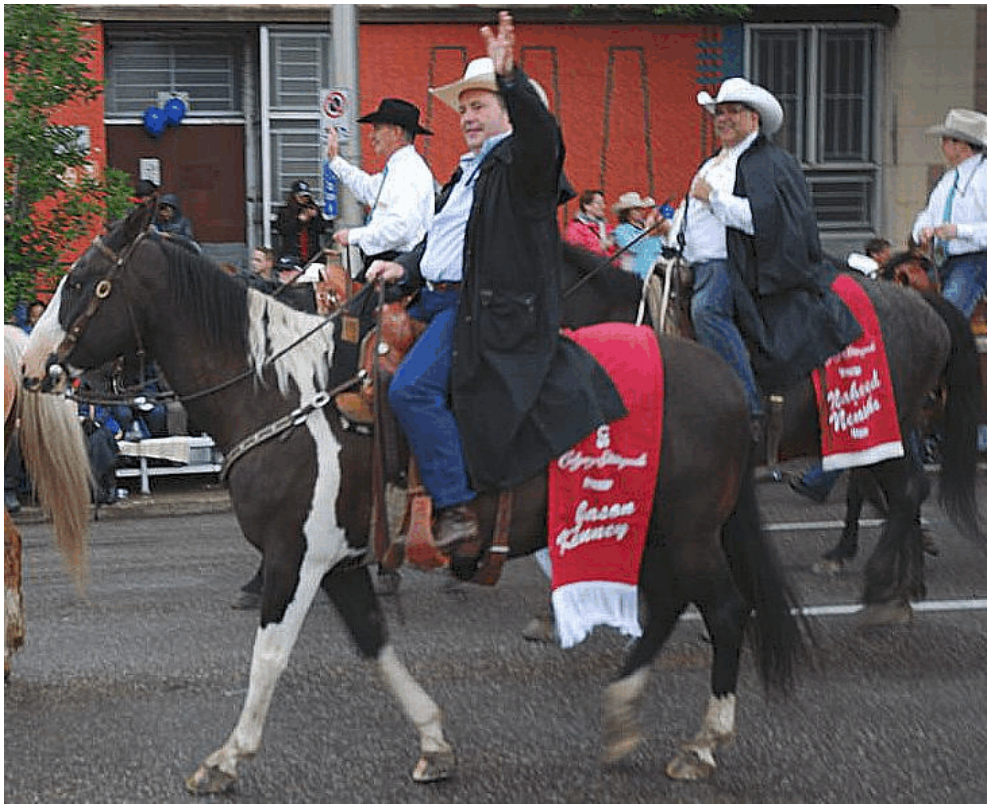
Your humble editor, arrayed in all his glory for yeehawing, pardon me, yahooing.

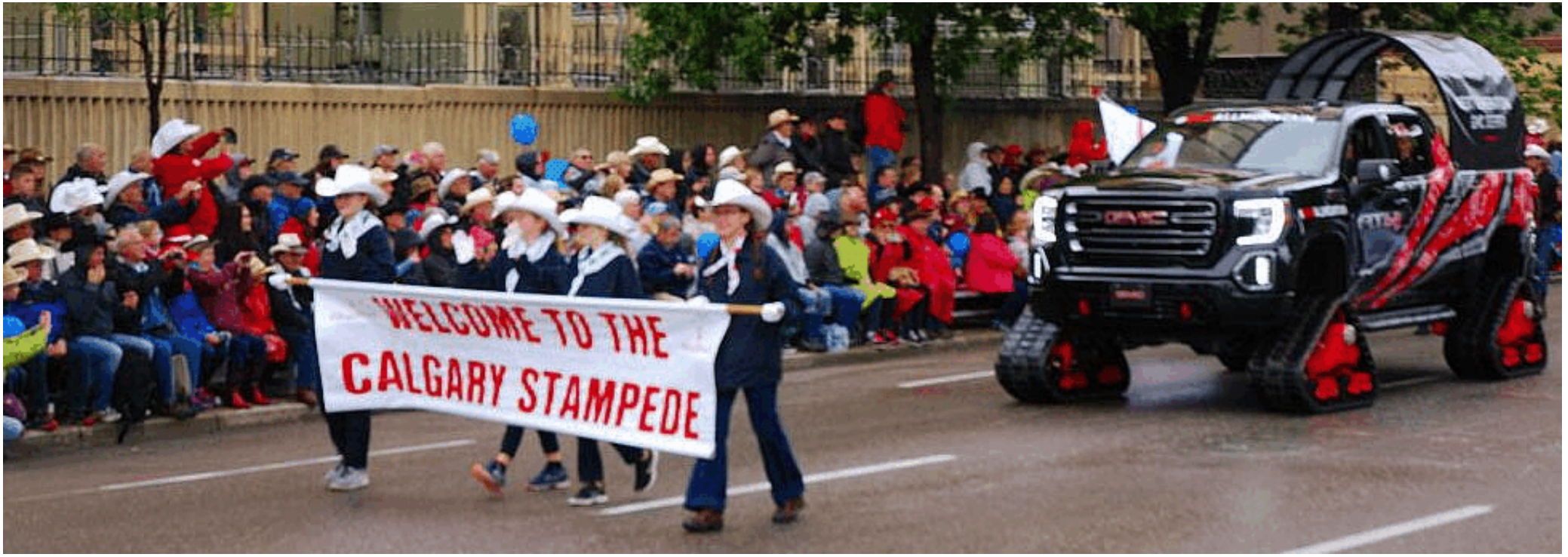


I Love A Parade. 2019-07-05

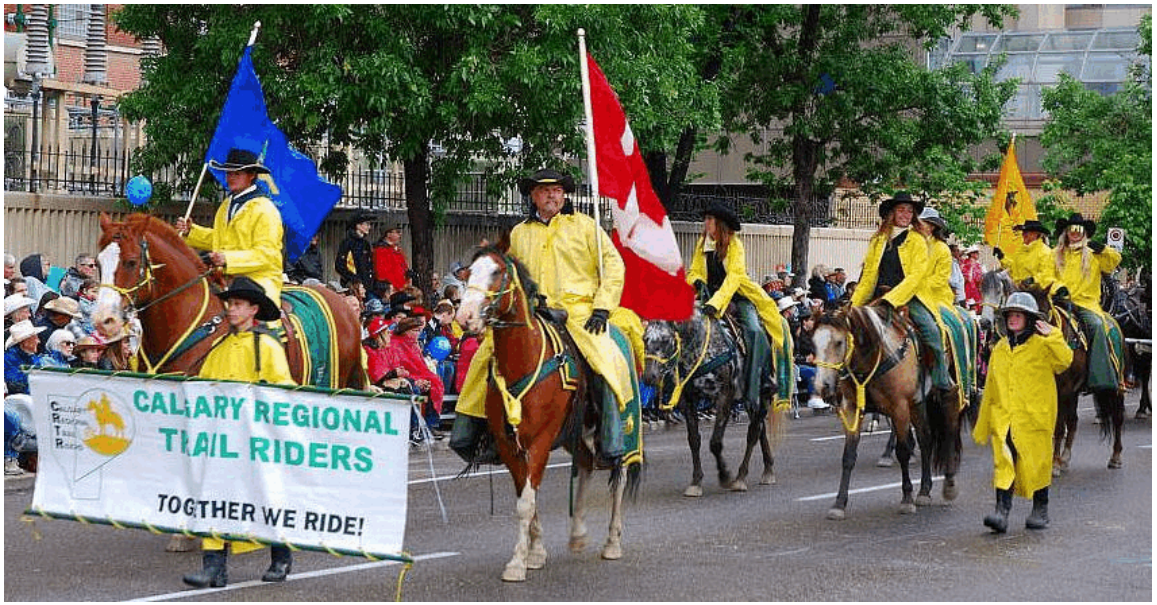
The Calgary Stampede rodeo begins each year on the Friday after Canada Day with the big parade, watched by about 300,000 spectators.

At right are Alberta Premier Jason Kenney and, behind him, Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi. The mayor has gained a lot of weight in office, and is often referred to as His Circumference The Mayor. He is quite barrel-shaped now. Nenshi has been riding in Stampede parades for years, but if he keeps gaining weight like this, then next year his mount should be a draft horse.

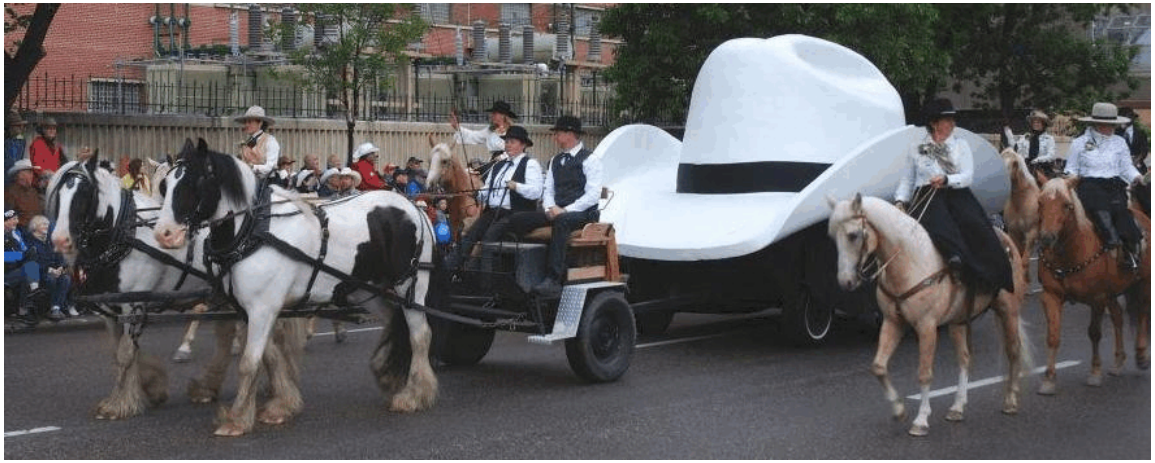




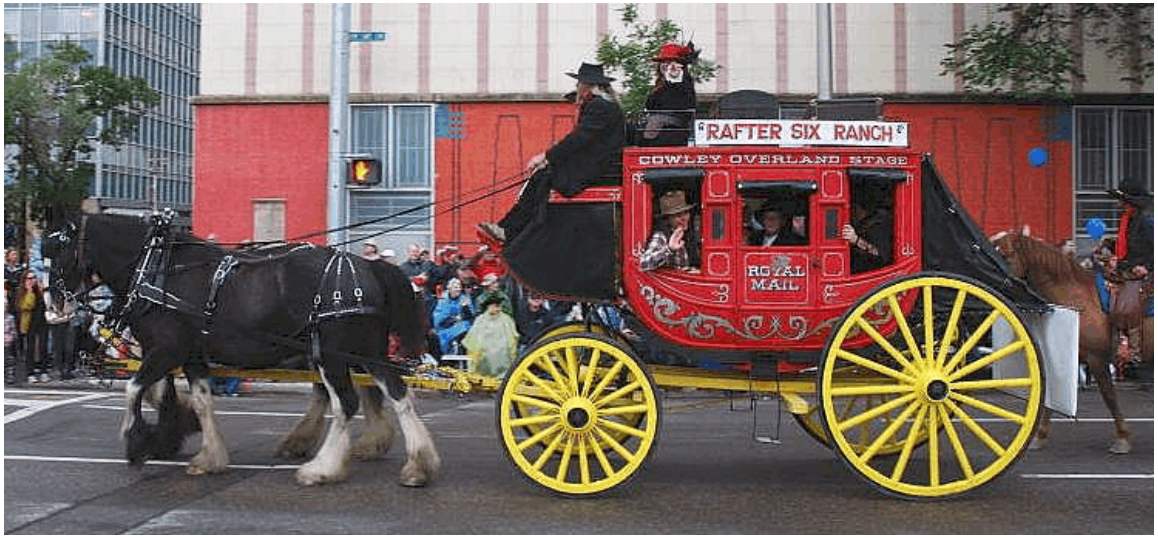
I think the YMCA / YWCA had the cleverest slogan.

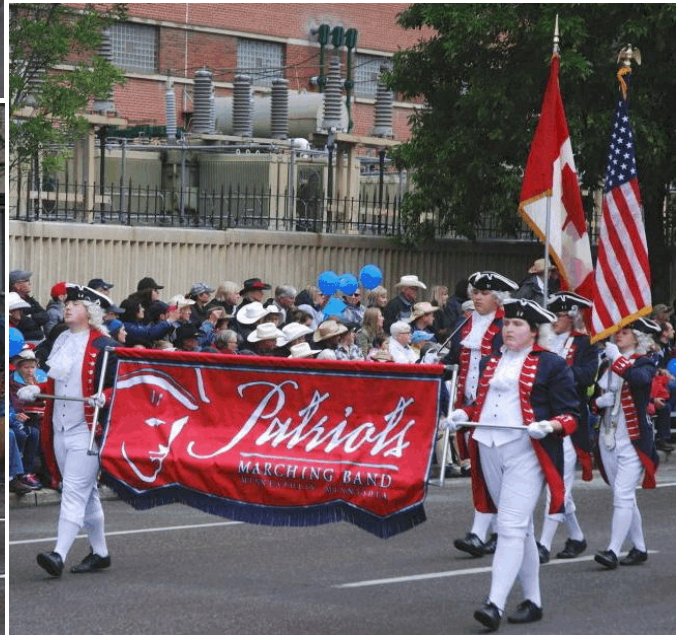

CALGARY REGIONAL
TRAIL RIDERS
TOGETHER WE RIDE!


THE CALGARY STAMPEDE WELCOMES
THE WORLD ASSOCIATION OF MARCHING SHOW BANDS
2019 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS - JULY 5-9, 2019, CALGARY

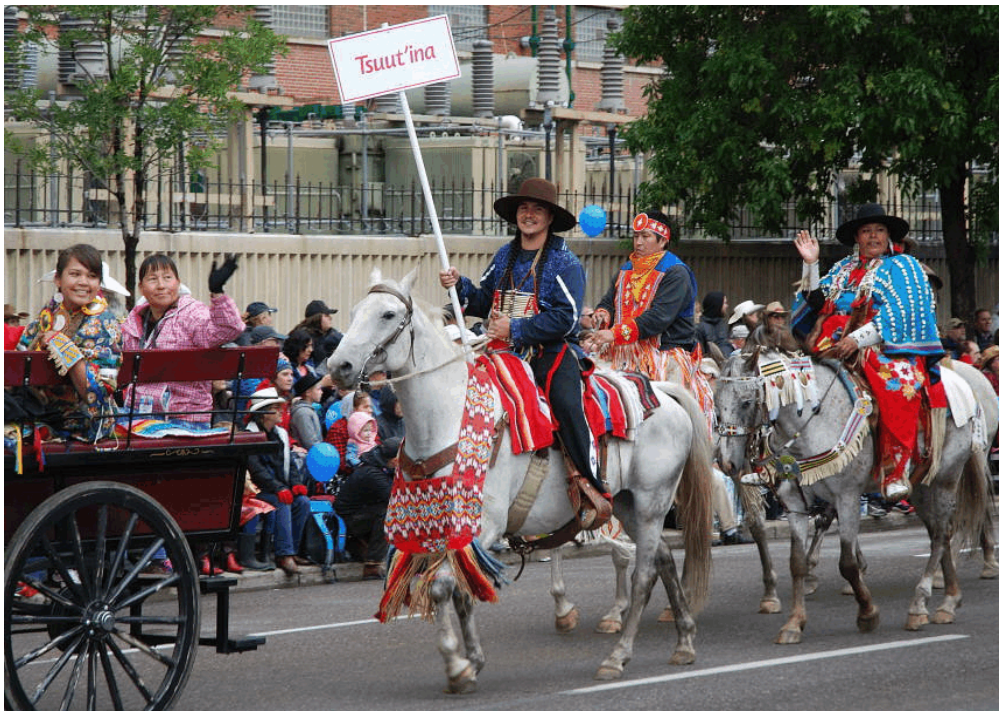


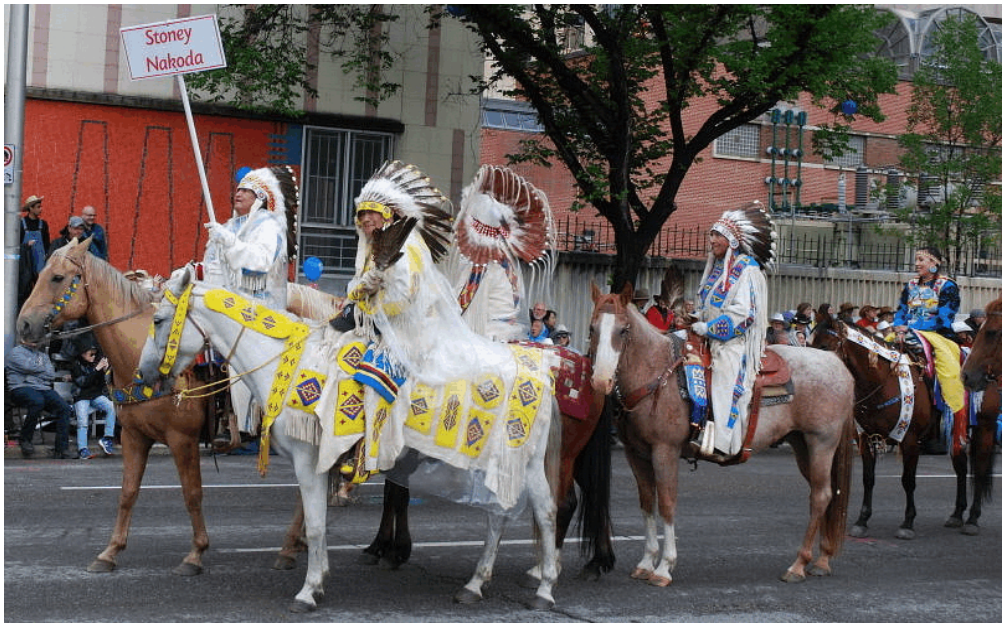

Musikverein
Rühle 1958 e.V.


RAFTER SIX RANCH
COWLEY OVERLAND STAGE
ROYAL MAIL

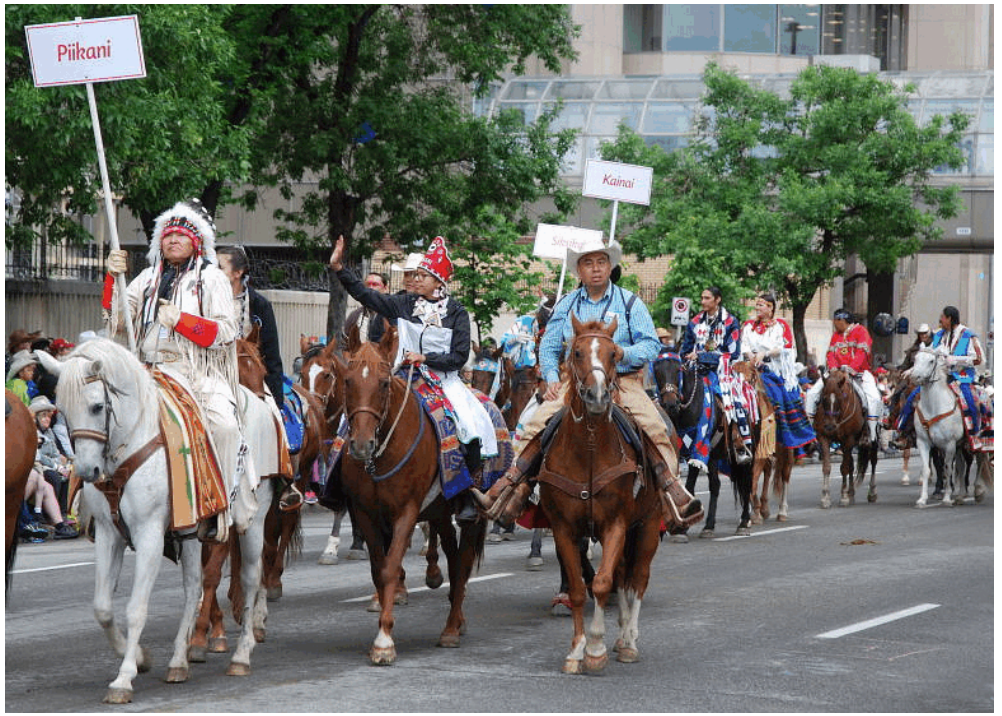

Patriots
MARCHING BAND

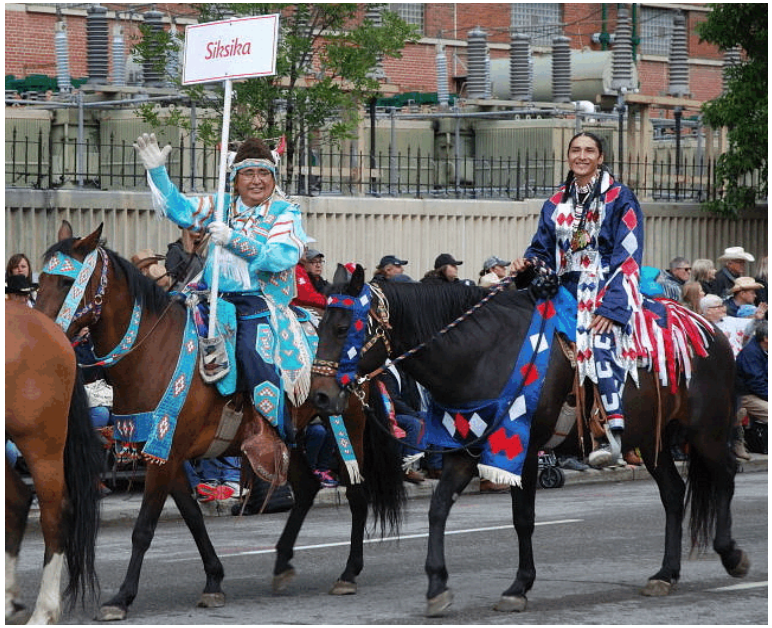
Southern Alberta is the Treaty #7 area of Canadian aboriginal homelands. The southwest boundary of Calgary is contiguous with the Tsuut'ina (Dene). The Nakoda (Sioux) are upstream on the Bow River about 50 km. The Blackfoot Confederacy covers the prairies south of the Trans-Canada Highway and has three tribes, Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai.

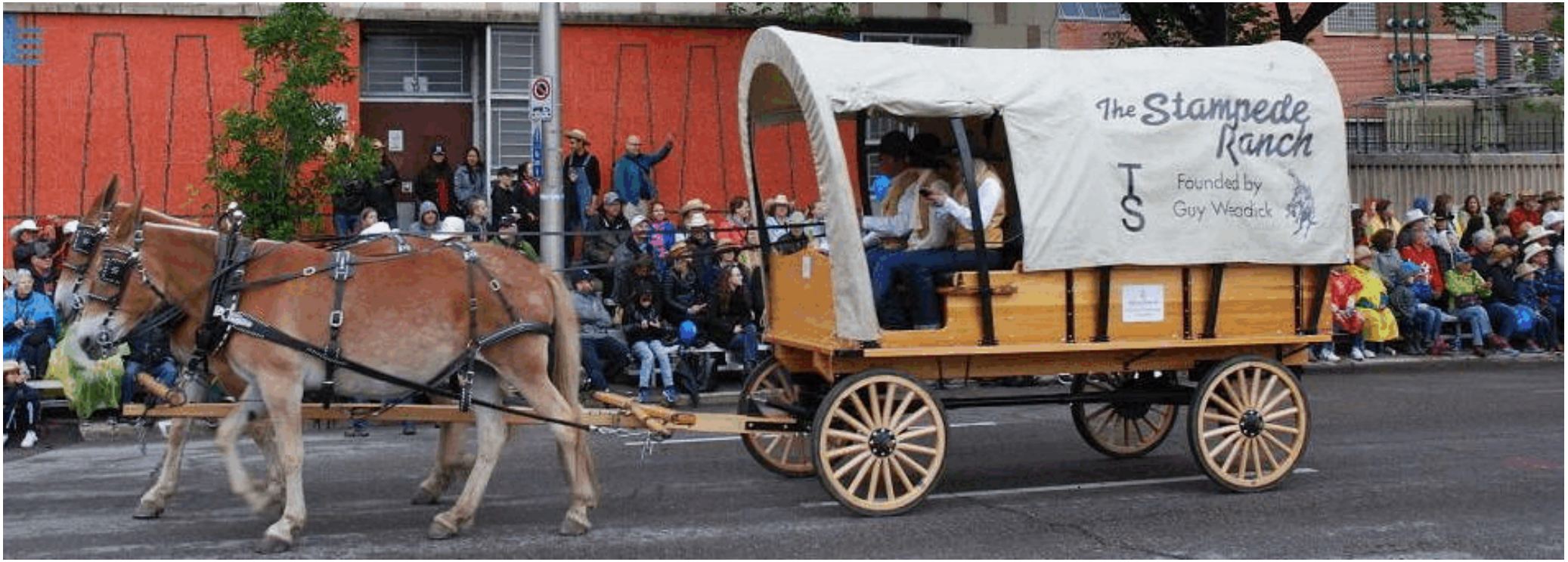


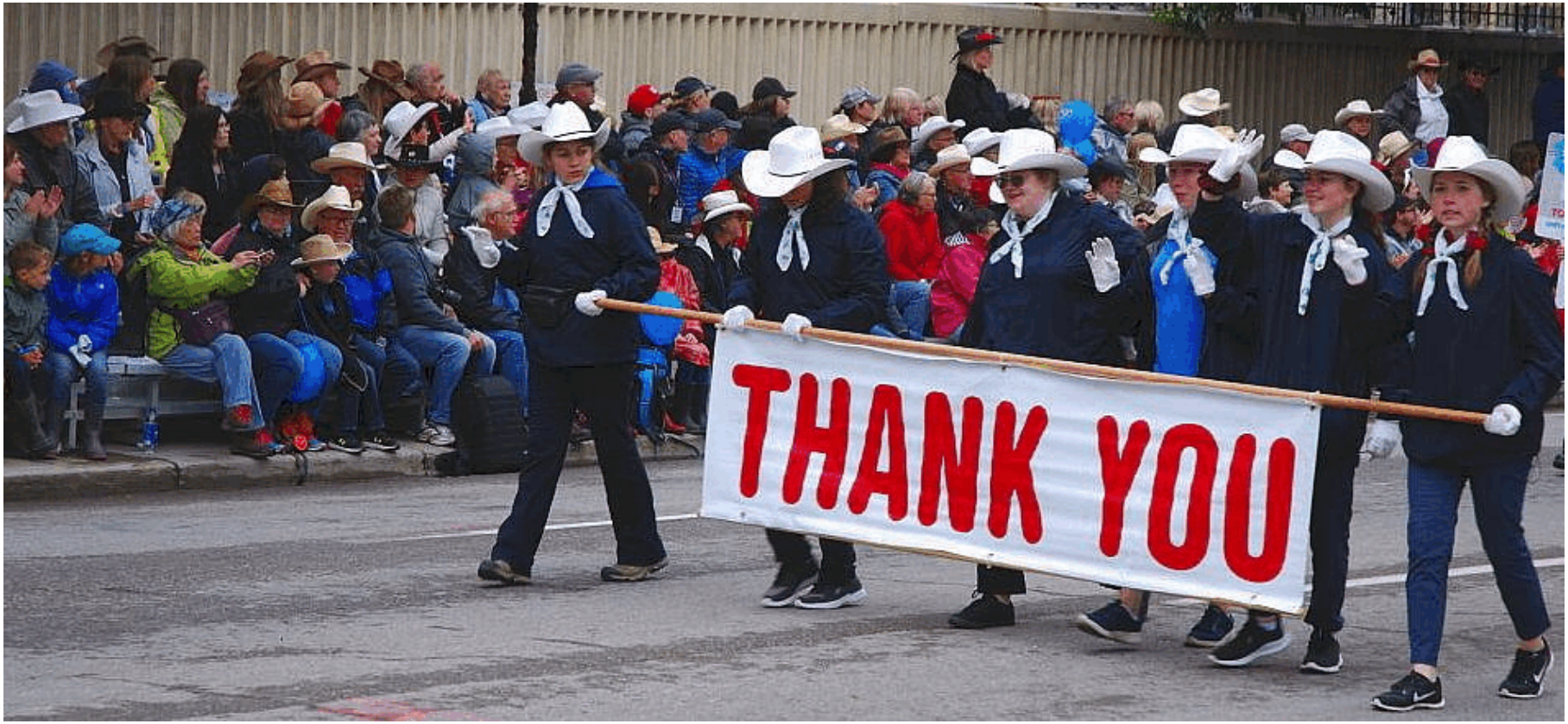


Every year since the Stampede rodeo began in 1912, all the Treaty #7 tribes have convened at the grounds and set up a village called Elbow River Camp to show off their cultures. The rodeo grounds are bounded on the south and east by the Elbow River, so called in all the tribal languages because it is a meandering river that makes numerous right-angle bends as it flows through Calgary.

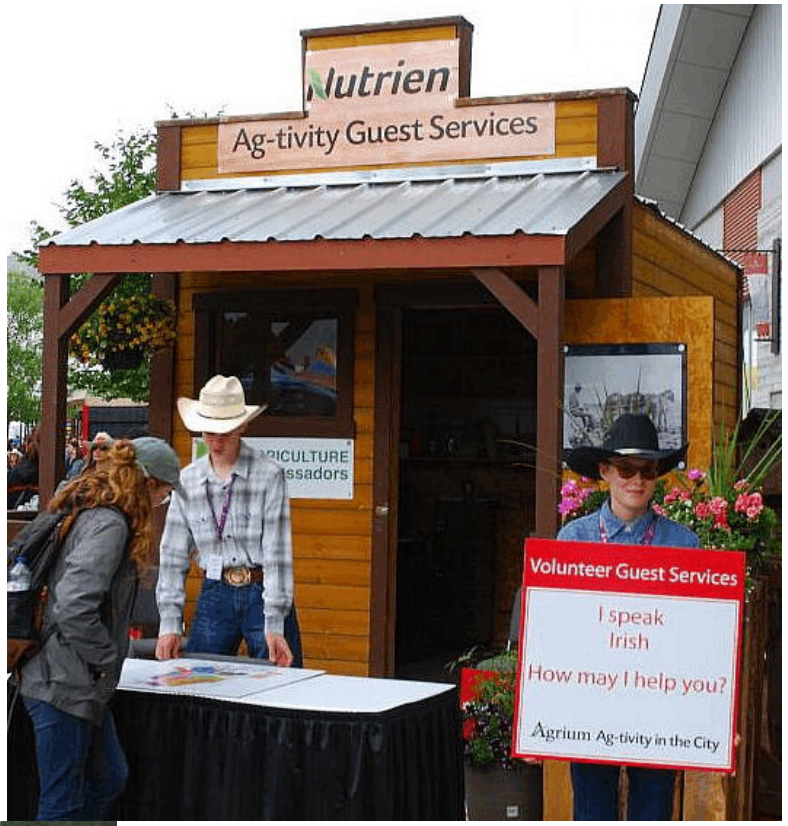


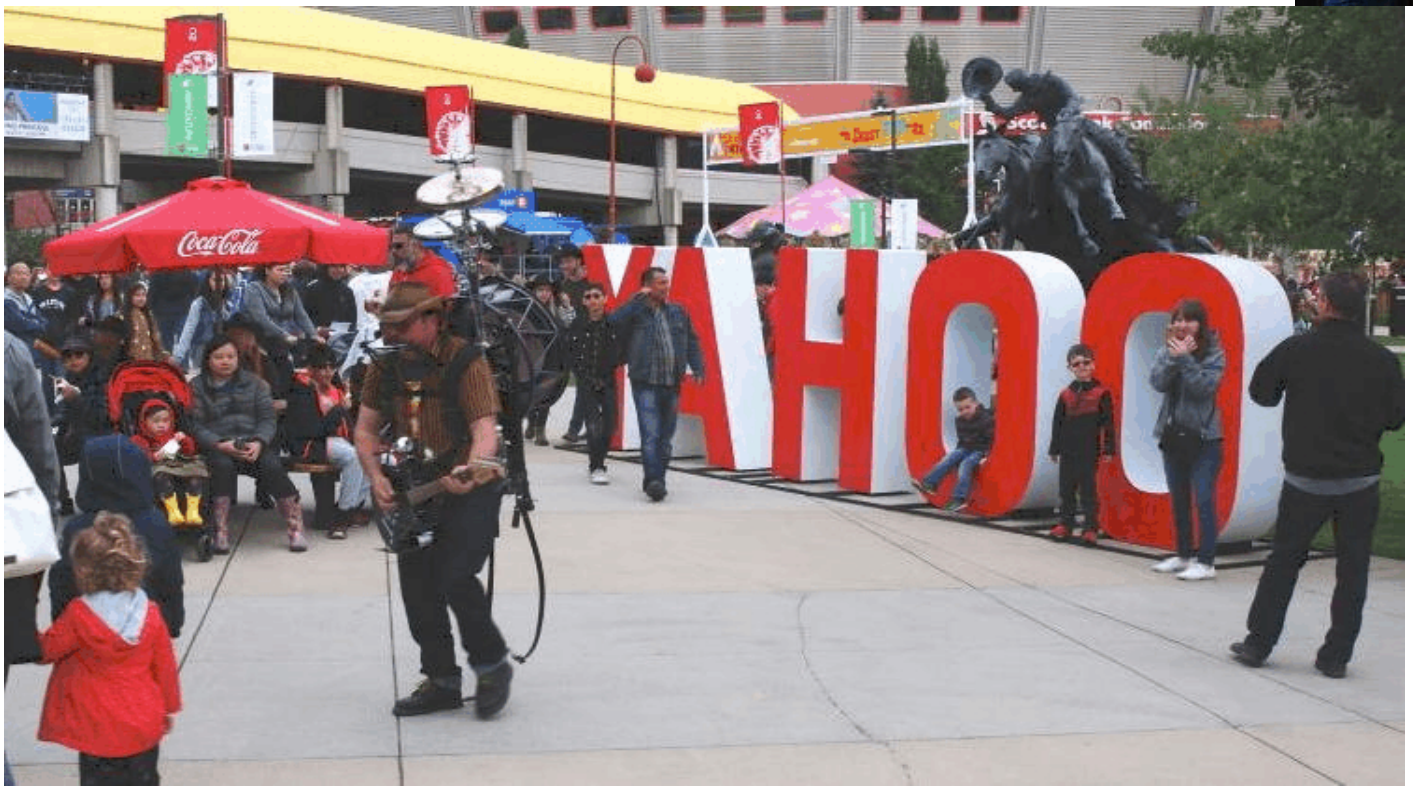



The Stampede Ranch
TS
Founded by
Guy Weadick


THANK YOU

And So To The Rodeo Grounds.

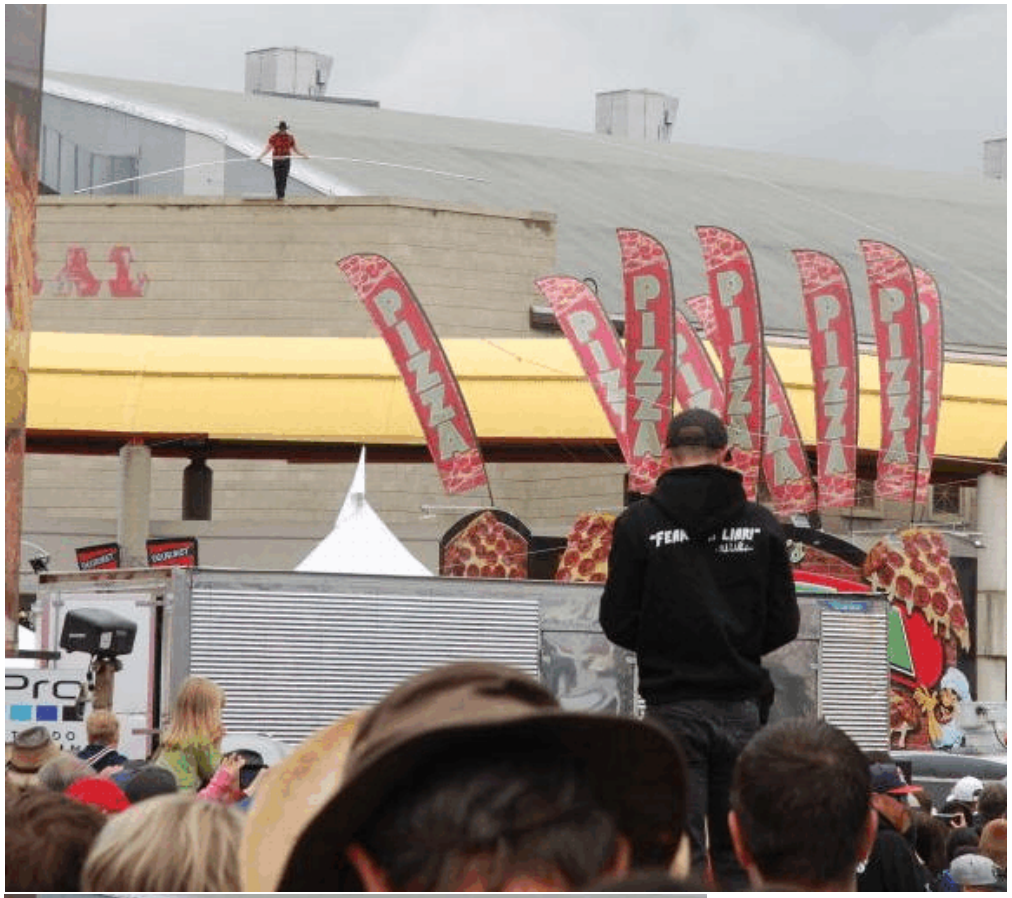


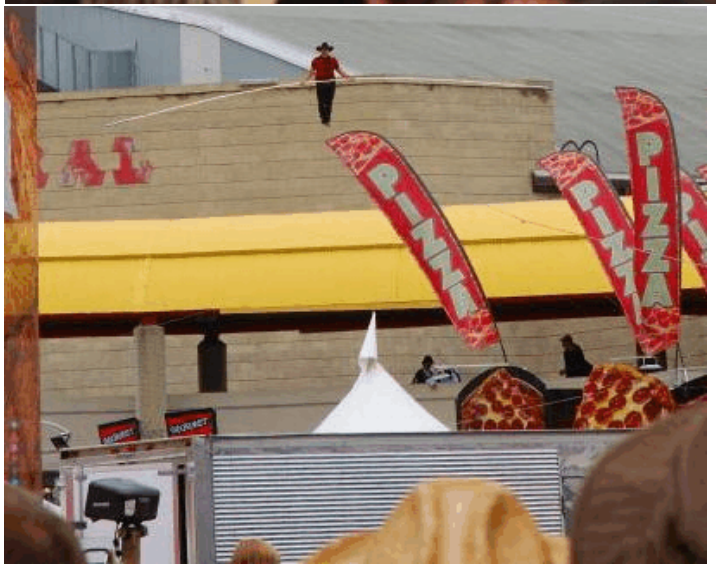


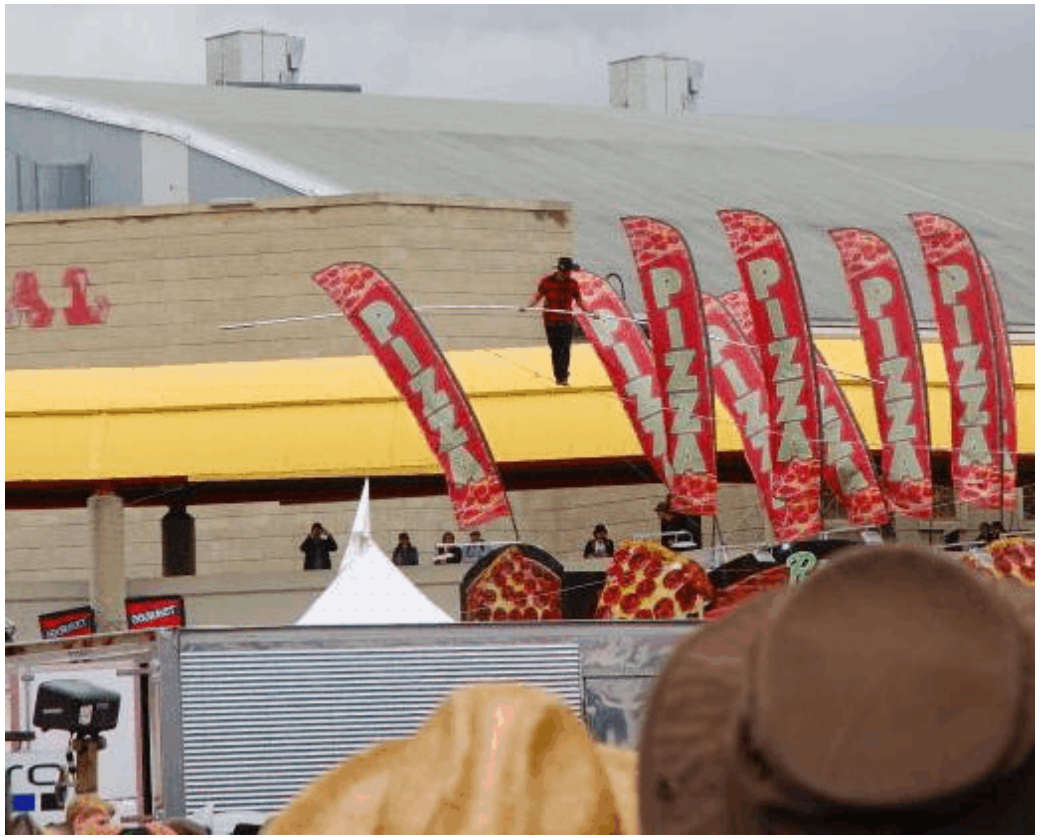
Above: I asked the lad if he actually knew Gaelic or was just speaking with an accent. He admitted the latter.

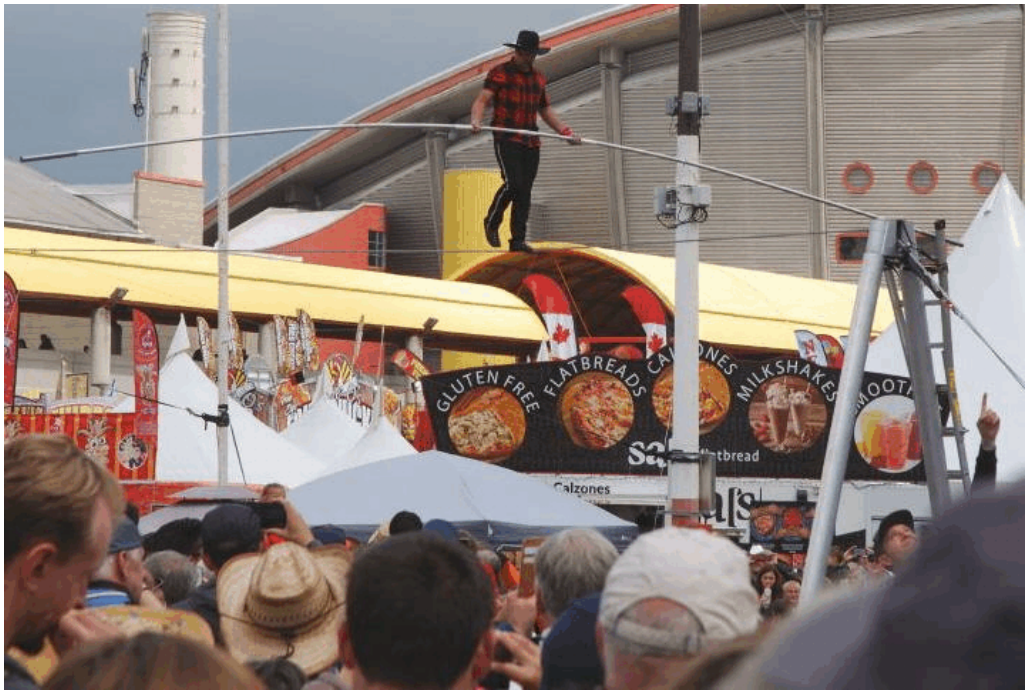
At left: The one-man band is an annual tradition at the Stampede. I think he'll die there on the job. When I took this photo, he was singing that traditional cowpoke song: "*Spiderman, Spiderman, does whatever a spider can*"

Nic Wallenda, of the famous acrobat family, walked a tightrope across the midway, including working his way through a forest of pizza banners. He started from the roof of the Stampede Corral hockey arena.



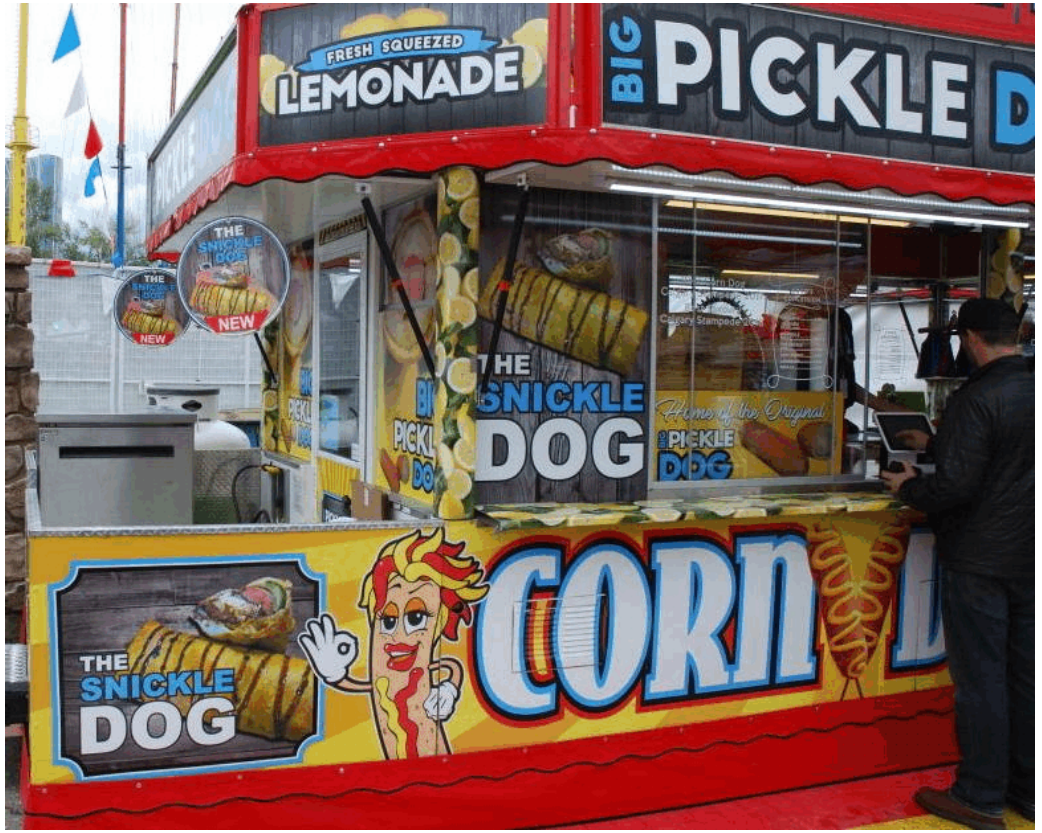






Foods I did NOT try.

Squid on a stick might appeal to expatriate Newfies but the concessionaire wasn't doing much business.



I'm a teetotaller, so the butterbeer wasn't an issue.

More Stampeding in the next issue of this zine.

MISCELLANEOUS SCIENCE FICTION REVIEWS
by Dale Speirs

The Servant Problem.

"The Automatic Maid-Of-All-Work" by M.L. Campbell appeared in the 1893 July issue of THE CANADIAN MAGAZINE OF POLITICS, SCIENCE, ART AND LITERATURE, available as a free download from www.gutenberg.org

Narrated by Fanny Matheson, it was about her husband John, an inventor, who tried to alleviate the difficulty in keeping servants by building an electrical automaton that would do the work for no pay. Its face was covered with a series of numbered buttons, each of which represented a group of tasks for a given time of day. As an example, at 06h00 it would start the fireplace and sweep up the floors, and at 08h00 it would prepare breakfast. John remarked, rather ominously: "*There may be some adjustment necessary.*"

To say the least, there was. Anyone who slept in when the automatic maid came to make the beds would be folded up into the sheets. It also washed the breakfast dishes without scraping out the leftover food or recognizing what the sugar bowl represented. It was programmed to move the furniture aside when cleaning the floors, which it did, including things that were not meant to be moved, such as the kitchen stove.

Woe to anyone who got in its path as it did the chores, including visitors who rang the doorbell expecting a courteous welcome. Needless to say, it was the height of stupidity to give it an axe to split firewood for the stove. After running out of wood to chop, it went chopping and sent everyone running.

The axe head flew off from the rapid movements of its arm, a fortunate thing because it then tried to use the handle on a cow. That didn't work, and the automatic maid finished her first and only day on the job. The next morning the Mathesons hired a new maid, a real woman.

"Ely's Automatic Housemaid" by Elizabeth W. Bellamy was published in the 1899 December issue of THE BLACK CAT magazine, available at www.gutenberg.org The inventor was Harrison Ely, who wanted to solve the servant problem with his automaton. The narrator was an old classmate who was having difficulty getting a good cook, so he was definitely in the market. He ordered two devices, a housemaid and a cook. Programming them took a bit of work but then we all remember what it was like when we got our first computers or smartphones. One problem occurred when the cook wanted to sweep the kitchen floor at the same time the housemaid was using the broom. It was a struggle to the death for possession of said implement.

Said struggle was carried on across the house, causing considerable damage to property as the two automatons contended for the broom. What finally stopped the fight was the clock ticking over to 08h00, at which point the automatons concluded their programmed cycle. And so back to the factory for adjustments.

That was four mouths ago. The Domestic Fairies have not yet been returned from Harrison's laboratory, but I am confidently looking for the familiar oblong packing case, and expect any day to see in the papers the prospectus of the syndicate which Ely informs me is being promoted to manufacture bis automatic housemaid.

Gaia.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote a Professor Challenger story "When The World Screamed" which posited that Earth was a living organism. Challenger decided to make it pay attention to us fleas running about its skin by drilling a very deep well indeed.

Charles E. Fritch recycled this idea in "The Big Leap" (1955 February, WORLDS OF IF), written before humans had gotten high enough to be able to look back on Earth in its entirety and see it as a blue ball hanging in space. The story is about the first space flight, American of course because they knew they would not have any competition. The astronaut looked back at Earth, which opened an eye and looked at him. He then looked at the Moon, which did likewise. Mother and child.

Cyborg Dystopias.

MODERAN (2018) is a collection of 57 stories by David R. Bunch (1920-2000), who deserves more attention by posterity. Most of his stories were published in science fiction magazines in the 1960s and 1970s. They document the history of a bizarre future that was New Wave before New Wave existed, and cyberpunk as it should have been written.

Bunch's work was not appreciated at the time by most science fiction fans, who wanted space opera and action adventure instead of dystopia.

The basic premise of the Moderan world began with "Thinking Back (Our God Is A Helping God)" which explained how a toxic environment developed on Earth after humans became cyborgs, then robots. Machines do not need fresh food or clean air.

That disengaged them from the land, which was then paved over with plastic. It disengaged them from society, since they were immortal and had no need of families. From there, the next steps were paranoia, fear, and war with tactical nukes against each other.

"No Cracks Or Sagging" went into more detail about how and why all the world's soil was tamped down rock-hard by machines, covered with plastic, and speckled across the land with individual strongholds. The narrator of the series, eventually to be known as Stronghold 10, appeared and began his saga on the road to cyborgism.

The Moderans were invincible and immortal, until nanomachines evolved from the interstices of their world. "When The Metal Eaters Came" summed up in its title the next stage of Earth.

The stories built on each other as the new metal humans created their society and subjugated the earth without mercy. A book that is different from the usual run of science fiction even today. Well recommended.

Fantasy.

KILL THE FARM BOY (2018) by Delilah S. Dawson and Kevin Hearne was a title on the library shelf I could not walk past. This novel parodies countless fantasy novels where a young farm boy or girl goes on a quest that will ultimately lead to a rightful place on the throne of the empire. Never a democratic republic with free elections, always entitlement to rule because wish fulfillment is the major reason people read these books.

In this novel, Worstley was the farm boy in question, fed up with having to constantly shovel manure out of pens and corrals. I know how he felt, which is why I became a city slicker. A pixie flew into the barnyard and told him that he was the Chosen One. She also gave one of his goats the ability to speak.

On that basis, the plot lurched into motion, parodying everything in fantasy novels that could be parodied. Not a difficult task, but voluminous (this is a doorstop book), given that fantasy trilogies average about ten books, depending on sales and movie rights.

As Worstley meandered about, he collected assorted plot coupons and a variety of oddball companions. The novel cheerfully trashed every fantasy cliché it could get its hands on. A wonderful birthday or Christmas gift for anyone you know who obsesses over iron thrones.

Aliens.

"Mind Worms" by Moses Schere (1948 Spring, PLANET STORIES, available as a free pdf from www.archive.org) has two narrative threads. One is about an ambassador waiting to go down onto Old Venus, the Carboniferous swamp one, to make first contact with the Venusians. The Earthlings had been groveling and kowtowing for fifty years trying to establish diplomatic relations.

The other thread is a story an old spaceman told the ambassador about a trip he took into distant space where his ship encountered giant worms existing in the vacuum. They defied attempts at communication and arrayed themselves around the spaceship to show how superior they were. When the ship fired up its nuclear engines to change course, the worms began disporting themselves in its exhaust to demonstrate how invulnerable they were to space radiation.

Except they weren't invulnerable to the types of radioisotopes spewed out by the engines. After a few minutes they died, and drifted off. A lesson for the ambassador not to kowtow to the unknown, and to recognize that others are not necessarily as invulnerable as their reputation might suggest.

SERIES DETECTIVES: PART 4
by Dale Speirs

[Parts 1 to 3 appeared in OPUNTIA #402, 406, and 425.]

Dozens of series exist on old-time radio about private detectives. Most of these were multimedia characters, usually born in print as novels and short stories, then movies, and finally, for that last extra dollar of royalties, on old-time radio. Some later made it into television. These and hundreds of other OTR shows are available as free mp3s at www.otrrlibrary.org

Bulldog Drummond.

Capt. Bulldog Drummond was based on the novels of H.C. McNeile, and aired as a radio series from 1941 to 1954. He was veddy British, a police detective who came across the Atlantic and for some reason worked freelance in America dealing with random crimes.

Drummond in any of his appearances was only ever a B-grade detective. Although supposedly a police official, he functioned more like a private eye. The radio episodes are workmanlike and worth listening to once.

"Death Uses Disappearing Ink" was a 1948 episode, no writer credited. Drummond and his sidekick Denny were on a train when they encountered a damsel in distress in their compartment. She told them she had to get to Mexico City to find her brother and told them an elaborate story. The truth, difficult to find, was something else.

She had perjured herself on the witness stand and sent an innocent man to Death Row. The gangster who had done the deed then paid her off with a cheque for $10,000 and they went their separate ways. The next morning she found the cheque was blank, for he had written it in disappearing ink. Now she was out for revenge and renumeration.

It was never that simple and the plot zigzagged about. As per standard procedure, Drummond was slugged unconscious during the episode but quickly recovered without any problems. We know better today, but back then every detective was concussed weekly, sometimes twice in an episode, with nothing worse than a brief headache.

Toward the end of the to-ing and fro-ing across the countryside, Drummond found the blank cheque. What the gun moll and the gangster who double-crossed her didn't know was that disappearing ink can be brought back to visibility, either by heating it over a flame or, in this case, dipping it in lemon juice. Drummond had enough evidence to make a telephone call and have to execution stayed, and to put the woman away for perjury.

Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar.

YOURS TRULY, JOHNNY DOLLAR was an old-time radio series that aired from 1949 to 1962, and was the last old-time radio survivor. The majority of the episodes were weekly half-hours, but in late 1955 and most of 1956 it became a 15-minute show five days a week. These were five-part serials of a single adventure.

Johnny Dollar was an insurance investigator with an action-packed expense account. He was famous for padding his expenses. Each line item would be read out loud and served as a bridge to the next scene. Fascinating to today's listeners, as he would fly cross-country first-class for $100, stay in a luxury hotel for $25 a night, or have a steak dinner for $2.

Dollar had a bad habit of interrupting people before they could explain something and rushing to conclusions before all the facts were in. Many of the episodes were idiot plots where he was the idiot and got himself into trouble because he didn't wait for someone to tell him the whole story. One wonders how a real insurance investigator could work like that.

"The Fathom Five Matter" was a 1956 story in five parts. William Markey had drowned, and the insurance company that hired Dollar was suspicious about the $75,000 claim. The first item on his expense account was $143.21 for travel from Hartford, Connecticut, to Miami Beach, Florida. These days that would be the taxi fares to and from the airports. Other expenses mentioned later in the show included ten cents for a payphone call.

Markey supposedly drowned when his fishing cruiser Fathom Five caught fire and sank off the Miami coast. His young wife Edna was the beneficiary of his $75,000 life insurance policy. Their companion, a young man named Haines, was the only witness to the supposed accident. Dollar interviewed Edna and Haines but the dialogues were space fillers that produced no useful information.

The boat was raised, which raised suspicions in turn. The cabin was burned but the hull was intact, excepting that the seacocks had been opened to make it sink faster. No body was found.

The prosecutor hypothesized at length that Haines was the murderer. Dollar then hypothesized at length that the case was insurance fraud because the Markeys were broke. Markey was still alive, he believed, which explained why Edna was not mourning. No one had proof either way as to what happened.

Dollar borrowed a photo of Markey, showed it around town, and got an identification. This proved to him that it was fraud. He figured Haines was a gullible young man who had been set up to take the rap.

Then a big twist, as the Coast Guard pulled a body out of the ocean, which was identified as Markey from his fingerprints. The big problem was that Markey was only dead about 18 hours, not the five days since the sinking. The autopsy threw out another twist, as while Markey had drowned, it was in fresh water, not seawater.

The final installment moved with a rush. After everyone recapitulated what had happened in the first four installments, it was time for action. Dollar and the police found Haines looting Markey's hideout, a gunfight followed, and Haines was shot dead. Edna later showed up at Dollar's hotel room but he only lectured her on her fate. She had committed premeditated murder and worse yet, wouldn't get any insurance money.

The five-part series was good listening. If you doze off or are distracted while listening to it, not to worry, as every so often all the characters would stop and explain the story so far.

"The Kirby Will Matter" was a 1957 episode after the series had reverted back to a half-hour. Dollar was called out by an insurance investigator to look into the death of Mike Kirby, a fishing guide on Lake Mohave in Nevada. He had been a wealthy businessman before he retired and apparently worked as a guide just to keep busy and socialize. The details of his death suggested murder disguised as an accident.

Kirby's heirs were greedy nephews and nieces who couldn't wait for the estate to be probated. None of them were likeable and all were suspects. Three arrived at the lake as soon as they could, while the fourth one seemed to be dilatory for some reason. Much to-ing and fro-ing around the lake followed, with assorted alarums and gunshots. Suspicion was thrown about like rock salt on an icy road.

The reading of the will was drawn out. Kirby had spent all his money before he died, and left nothing to his heirs because there was nothing. They were miffed. Especially the fourth one, who hadn't known her uncle had only his fishing income and had killed him for what she thought would be sizeable loot.

Michael Shayne.

From 1944 to 1953, the old-time radio series MICHAEL SHAYNE blustered its way across the airwaves. Based on the novels and short stories by Brett Halliday, the series was private detective melodrama, overplayed and betraying its roots in pulp fiction. Shayne was regularly slugged unconscious once and often twice per episode, which probably explained his idiotic behaviour and over-reactions.

"The Case Of The Mail Order Murders", written by Bob Ryf, was a 1948 episode that began with Shayne visiting a new client named Kinsella, who wanted him as a bodyguard. Kinsella had received a threatening letter with his and three other names who were to die because of their sins. Kinsella said he didn't know why he was targeted or who the others are. So he said.

Shayne checked in with the police about the other names. He learned that one of them had been knifed to death the previous evening. As he went about his investigation, he kept running into the same organ grinder near the places of the named ones. Suspicious indeed, but the organ grinder claimed that he just happened to be strolling about.

The death toll continued to rise. Shayne found connections between the names and despite Kinsella's quavering managed to force a confrontation with all the interested parties at a street corner. The police also attended the homecoming.

The killings were traced back to the murder of a millionaire several years ago, unsolved until now. The group of names had agreed to split the loot stolen from him, but honour among thieves and all that. One of the murderers wanted to clean house. A clichéd plot.

"The Borrowed Heirloom" was another 1948 episode written by Bob Ryf. Shayne was hired by Clarence Drake, hospitalized from an accident, to retrieve an empty jewel case from his country house. Out there, Shayne met Drake's wife Lidia, a roomer named George who called her darling, and a sour old housekeeper.

On his way home with the case, Shayne was mugged and the case stolen. As he staggered back to consciousness, a second mugger attacked him. All this before he had even left the estate. He shook himself free and drove away, only to be run off the road and knocked unconscious again.

Back at the hospital, where Shayne should have been the patient instead of Drake, he was told by his client that he had been used as bait to flush out potential thieves. The jewelry was still hidden in his bedroom, so Shayne went back to the house.

He confronted the occupants one by one. Some more alarums followed but eventually the jewels were found by George, who had been doing some second-story work. Lidia came out on top with a handgun but not for long.

The twist ending was that Drake had stolen the jewels years before and had no title to them. He checked himself out of the hospital and showed up at the house for the denouement and gunplay.

The narration was, as usual, by Shayne at the top of his voice. The other actors did their parts okay but Shayne, played by Jeff Chandler, made amateur dramatics look good.

Ellery Queen.

Ellery Queen was the pseudonym of cousins Frederic Dannay and Manfred Lee, who used that name as their detective's name, both a father and son. The series began in 1929 with novels and short stories. From 1939 to 1948, it aired as a radio series written by Manfred Lee and Anthony Boucher. It was not a straightforward exposition of a plot. Each episode had a celebrity guest who tried to deduce the ending. About five minutes before the end, the show stopped and the guest was quizzed as to who the culprit might be.

"The Armchair Detective" aired in 1946 and was a self-referential episode set in the radio studio where the series was prepared. The acting was terrible, with false bonhomie among the cast, chuckling with forced laughter over flat jokes. The acting got worse as the episode progressed, overdone and harsh.

In this episode, the guest was poisoned while having a snack at the microphone, just as the fictional murderer for that episode's plot was to be named. The dead man's wife was initially blamed. Ellery Queen took the transcription disk of the episode home and replayed it for clues. He found one that led to the deceased's secretary.

A note seemed to identify her, but it was soon exposed as a forgery. The culprit really was the obvious suspect. All the performers were guilty of over-acting, but that was not and still is not a felony offence. Pity.

"One Diamond" was a 1948 episode. Ellery Queen was invited to the palatial Gallos estate. Before he could accept, he was wounded by a gunshot, an apparent attempt to dissuade him from visiting Gallos.

Nonetheless Queen made it out there, but upon arrival was turned away by Gallos, who refused to explain why. He did keep three other guests, all from the diamond trade. A family treasure, a 162-caret diamond, was up for sale. Gallos was up to trickery in the sale but so were the others. Gallos was called to the grave and Queen was called back to the manor to investigate.

The search was on for the diamond, buried on the estate. There was a map, which said 10 south from a tree and then 10 west, without specifying the units. The killer got there first but didn't find the diamond because he went 11 yards and then 11 yards before digging. Queen went 10 and 10 yards and found it. He correctly surmised that the murderer was using metres. Since there was only one person there from continental Europe, the guilty man was quickly fingered. A neat use of the metric system.

Boston Blackie.

The old-time radio series BOSTON BLACKIE aired from 1944 to 1950. There were also movies and books. Not a detective, private or police, but always barging into crimes, Boston Blackie, real name Horatio Black, was a former jewel thief. He was now a somewhat honest citizen, although his source of income was never specified. He lived well in a nice apartment, squired a girlfriend named Mary Wesley about town, and always had time to interfere in the casebook of Police Inspector Faraday.

In the early part of the series, Faraday was constantly trying to run Blackie in for murder. He leaped to unsupported conclusions so often that one wonders how he made it past the rank of foot patrolman. It didn't help that Blackie kept turning up like a bad penny and razzing Faraday about his incompetence.

This act grew old quickly, so in the later part of the series Faraday no longer automatically tried to arrest Blackie but grudgingly accepted his help. There was a lot of verbal sniping between them but they had moderated into friends. Faraday always had the best lines when the two were at it.

One of the funnier parts of the series was the organist, who provided the segue and incidental music. He was outright berserk at times, and frequently used the organ to provide punctuation marks to the dialogue.

"Disappearing Airplane" was a 1946 episode, no writer credited. Thanks to Blackie, Faraday was able to arrest gangster John Barnes on a murder rap and could prove motive and opportunity. What he needed was the gun used in the murder, which had been registered in Barnes' name. The ballistics test of the gun would send Barnes up the river to sit in Old Sparky.

Blackie headed up to Boston and stole the gun from Barnes' apartment before his henchmen could get to it and dispose of it. They did see Blackie mailing a small package to Faraday via airmail, so the chase was on. The henchmen figured out which airplane was carrying the mails, not a difficult task because in those days the post office posted tables of such data so that customers could optimize the speed of their airmail.

The aircraft carried 21 passengers. The henchmen stole a copy of the passenger list, then telephoned the airline in separate calls with disguised voices to cancel their flights, after which they called the passengers and told them the flight had been cancelled. One of the henchmen, who had flying experience, then booked that flight under the name Boston Blackie, and so it departed with only one passenger plus airmails and freight.

In mid-air, the henchman killed the stewardess and flight crew, then set the plane controls on autopilot to take it out over the ocean. He parachuted to waiting comrades, and the plane crashed into the ocean, carrying with it the package with Barnes' gun. A rather elaborate scheme for gangsters, even if the boss was living in fear of the electric chair and wanted action pronto.

After all that, there was a twist. Blackie had mailed his own gun, keeping Barnes' gun for himself and carrying it on a train trip back to New York City. Old Sparky was going to claim another lawful victim. A clever story plotwise, although overacted as usual.

"The Murdered Show Dog Owner" was another 1946 episode. Lots of barking continuously in the background. I kid you not, as sometimes the sound man drowned out the organ player, which took courage and volume.

A show dog owner was murdered. The question was if she was done in by a jealous competitor or the trustee of her inheritance fund. A running gag was that every time a certain suspect's name was spoken, all the dogs within hearing began ferociously barking and growling.

The J'accuse! meeting set up by Blackie did in fact use some of the dogs to expose the murderer, an embezzler who had been in danger of being discovered. It was reminiscent of the 1933 Philo Vance movie THE KENNEL MURDER CASE, reviewed in issue #423 of this zine. More barking and growling before the killer confessed.

You might want to keep your finger on the volume control, as all that constant barking could give you a headache. The characters had to shout most of their lines to be heard over the racket. Not recommended for cat owners.

"John Frawley While In Africa" was a strangely-titled 1949 episode, no writer credit given. The man of the title had been in Africa for seven years and had never bothered to communicate with anyone back home as long as his family trust fund cheques kept arriving. John's brother Edward, the stay-at-home brother, had him declared legally dead.

That brought John back home in a hurry. Edward denied him as his brother, so John went to Blackie for help. Someone was killing the few people left who could still identify John, such as a nanny and the old butler. John and Blackie then tried Kay Morton, an ex-fiancée he had dumped just before leaving for Africa. She denied it was him for obvious reasons of revenge.

Inspector Faraday was busy cleaning up all the bodies. By this time in the series, Faraday and Blackie were grudging friends and helped each other. There were several twists in the plot. The two men set up a trap that brought Edward and John together for a confrontation that turned into a gun battle.

John was revealed to actually be an imposter. He had killed the real John in Africa and come to New York City to clear out those who knew him and Edward as well, and gain the family fortune. Identity theft, we call it today, but it was no new thing even seventy years ago. The imposter was taken alive but wounded after the gunfight. Blackie worried the man might die, but Faraday had the best line: "*No, he'll live to die in the chair.*"

Richard Diamond, Private Detective.

This old-time radio series ran from 1949 to 1953 and was a showcase for Dick Powell, long popular as a crooner and movie star. In the character of Richard Diamond, he quipped his way through each case. Each episode ended with him serenading his rich girlfriend Helen Asher with a romantic ballad. The character was created by Blake Edwards, better remembered for his Pink Panther movies.

"Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars In Jewels" was a 1950 episode, no writer credit given. Diamond was hired by an insurance company to recover a dowager's jewels, stolen three months before. The thief had been caught and was being extradited from Cuba.

Diamond's assignment was to find the jewels, wherever they had been hidden. Things got complicated in the middle of the episode. Diamond almost got the jewels from a gang that had stolen them, but while trading quips with the thieves, he was slugged unconscious.

Pause for digression. It was standard procedure in most OTR detective shows that the hero would be rendered unconscious at least once per episode. With such a cranial damage rate, the detectives should have been in nursing homes by the end of the first season, reduced to drooling morons by all those concussions.

Meanwhile, back at the episode, Diamond woke up after his latest head injury and carried on. After telephoning the insurance adjustor and reporting what happened, he was told to forget the whole thing and go home. He wasn't that brain damaged, so he began trailing the adjustor for better results.

He got them, and wound up in a three-way gun and knife fight between the gangsters, the adjustor, and himself. The adjustor and the gang squabbled about the cut of the jewels. There is no honour among thieves, nor did they settle disputes with an arbitration committee, so the ending was inevitable.

Since Diamond was the star of the series, the winner was a dead cert. From there, back to New York City where he serenaded Asher.

Another 1950 episode was "The Pete Rocco Case", again no writer credited. It began with Danny Rocco walking into Diamond's office and telling him that his brother Pete had broken out of prison and was looking for revenge. Diamond had played a major part in sending Pete up the river for life on a murder rap.

Danny took Diamond home to meet Mama Rocco. She told Diamond that she had trained her boys to be pickpockets. She was ever so disappointed at Pete failing her by being convicted of murder. She hired Diamond to find Pete and send him back into prison where he'd be secure. A mother worries, you know.

Pete had murdered a bookie for a $50,000 roll and hid the money before he was caught. Now he, the police, Diamond, and assorted ne'er-do-wells were all hoping to find the cash. Pete kidnapped Diamond for the revenge part, but instead of killing him immediately, went out to get the cash. Diamond got free, not necessarily in a single bound, and brought in the police.

Once again the hunt resumed. Danny betrayed Pete, who exited the story with six pieces of lead in him. Danny then tried to kill Diamond, but Mama shot her son dead because she deplored his violent way of life. "*Sometimes you've just got to be stern.*", she said. Like the saying goes, spare the rod and spoil the child.

"The Marilyn Connors Case" was a 1951 episode for which the word 'interrelated' was invented. It began with the woman of that name approaching Diamond and hiring him for protection. Her husband Joe was being released on parole that afternoon and she feared him. The reason she chose Diamond was that ten years ago he had sent Joe up the river.

Marilyn worked for club owner Martin Cope as a singer. She had an affair with Cope, but spurned the attentions of her accompanist Bernie, with whom she feuded constantly about his playing and her singing. Diamond also knew Cope and the two were unfriendly to each other. Joe had been partners with Cope and felt that he had been framed for the crimes.

Cope's attorney tried to smooth out all the feuds, but that was a superhuman task with no solution. Everyone was waiting for Joe, but he never got a

speaking part. He was found shot dead in Marilyn's apartment. The ballistics matched Cope's gun, but Joe was dead three hours before Cope left the club.

Diamond resolved the point by telling all and sundry they would have to take a paraffin test to see if anyone had fired a gun. At that point, Bernie admitted he had borrowed Cope's gun without him knowing it, rushed over and killed Joe, then restored the gun to Cope's desk.

Bernie was rather cheerful in making his confession, despite warnings not to from the attorney. He hated everybody, so he tried to frame them all with one grand gesture. That solved that case without the fuss of a long trial.

Nick Carter, Master Detective.

Nick Carter was one of the oldest private detective series, beginning in print in 1886 before Sherlock Holmes, and as NICK CARTER, MASTER DETECTIVE on radio from 1943 to 1953. Nick Carter employed his girlfriend Patsy Bowen as an assistant, who accompanied him to crime scenes. Her main role was to scream and have the plot explained to her in the epilogue.

"The Barefoot Banker" was a 1947 episode written by Jim Parsons. It began with Arthur Colby, a distinguished Wall Street banker, coming to Carter for help. He had been suffering from blackout incidents during which he did strange things without any memory of them afterwards. The culminating incident was when he left his bank at the end of the day, took his shoes off, and walked barefoot down Park Avenue.

Colby told Carter that during one incident he had bought a butcher knife and in another had withdrawn $20,000 in cash and now couldn't find it. Carter at first suspected that Colby was trying to set up an insanity defense before murdering his wife.

Carter visited the Colby home and talked to the wife and her lazy brother who sponged off her. She mentioned that Arthur was seeing a psychiatrist named Dr Miles Henderson. From there, a visit to the doctor, who told Carter that he feared Colby might commit murder. After returning to his office, Carter telephoned the local medical society and learned that Henderson was a fake.

Richard was a suspect because Arthur was understandably fed up with him living off them. Suspicion having therefore been distributed all around, the murder victim was surprisingly Henderson. After the body had been hauled away, Carter searched Henderson's office and found $20,000 cash in a file cabinet. The defunct was not a doctor, and the only patient he had was Arthur.

Henderson had thought up the $20,000 incident on his own and never told the wife. She was upset at the thought of him getting his hands on the cash (call it $200,000 in today's depreciated currency), since she wanted complete control of all the money. He got himself killed by her as a result. She used the knife Arthur had bought.

Bowen went snooping on her own at the Colby mansion, and was caught by the wife. Mrs Colby had hired Henderson, a professional hypnotist, to set up the blackouts at each session. She wanted her husband put into an institution so she could take control of his empire and really live lavishly. Bowen was rescued in the nick of time (pardon the expression) by Carter.

The story worked well in pointing suspicion to each character in turn, then bringing in a twist killing. The police? What of them?

The Saint.

Leslie Charteris made his reputation with his series about The Saint, real name Simon Templar, a Robin Hood character who first appeared in print in 1928 and lasted into the 1990s. Besides about 100 novels and short stories, The Saint appeared in movies, on stage, radio, and television.

The best portrayal was done by that gentlemanly actor Vincent Price on the radio series, which aired from 1945 to 1951. His cultured voice and snappy lines were the epitome of the character. (This and other OTR shows are available as free mp3s from www.otrrlibrary.org.)

"Greed Causes Murder" was a 1947 episode written by Michael Cramoy. Simon Templar crossed paths with a man named Collins, who had difficulty with a multitude of low lifes and strangers suddenly wanting to buy his old car. One of the riff-raff was Fancy Dan Turner, so Templar went after him.

Collins was tortured to death, and several of the competing riff-raff shot dead. Templar learned that the car had previously been owned by an embezzler who had hidden $400,000 inside it. The embezzler died in prison two weeks prior, and had revealed where the money was to a friend. That set off the rush.

Templar quipped his way through the bloodshed, secure in the knowledge that he was a continuing character. The twist was that the car was a clue to where the cash was, not the actual repository. There was a fight to the death on top of an elevator where the money had been hidden. Snappy dialogue, terminated by a scream and death rattle.

"The Connelly Silver Mine" was a 1949 episode written by Michael Cramoy. Templar was flying in a private plane when it had to make an unscheduled stop in the middle of nowhere out west. Because repairs would take several hours, Templar went into town for dinner.

Templar being The Saint, it wasn't long before he came across a damsel in distress. She had just inherited an abandoned silver mine from her father which everyone agreed was worthless. Despite that, she was being pressured by sharp-practice men to let them have title to the mine.

The predictable alarums and excursions followed, with Templar quipping every other sentence. The twist ending was that the woman didn't know what she had inherited. The silver was indeed gone and all that was left was cinnabar.

She thought it was nearly worthless, only good for red pigment in paint, assuming there was a demand. What the bad guys realized, and soon Templar, was that cinnabar is a source ore for mercury, which does indeed have respectable value.

Her fortune assured, and the villains stymied, Templar flew off into the sunset to another adventure. The plot was prosaic save perhaps for the twist ending, but Vincent Price had the knack of pepping up even a mediocre script with his wisecracks.

"Fake Amnesia Killer" was a 1949 episode that gave away the ending in its title. Templar was out and about on the town when he was accosted by a young woman claiming amnesia. He phoned the police to check their missing persons list and learned the woman was Dorothy Moore, wanted for murder.

Templar barged into the investigation. Moore was the heiress to the dead man, a millionaire who was shot in his mansion where she was the only other occupant of the room. She fled the house but not before the butler saw her leave the room a few seconds after the gunshot. Another heir later succumbed to murder, narrowing down the line of succession.

The Saint set up a J'accuse! meeting in the house and proved Moore was faking the amnesia. He used a sneaky setup that demonstrated her memory loss was more convenient than real. She pulled a gun and prepared to make her escape when the butler standing behind her smashed a bottle of Canada Dry over her head, rendering her unconscious for real.

Let George Do It.

LET GEORGE DO IT was an old-time radio series that ran from 1946 to 1954. (This and hundreds of other OTR shows are available as free mp3s at www.otrrlibrary.org) George Valentine was a private detective who ran a classified ad in the newspapers which was quoted by him in the opening of the show: *Personal notice: Danger's my stock in trade. If the job's too tough for you to handle, you've got a job for me. Write full details.*

The episode would usually open with the voice of someone writing the letter out loud, appealing for help. Sometimes Valentine would do the opening narration. The cases were not necessarily criminal investigations. The client might need him to courier a package or do some other strange, seemingly innocuous task. His secretary/girlfriend was Claire Brooks, whom everyone called Brooksie. She often accompanied him out into the field on a case.

"The Man Under The Elm Trees" was a 1949 episode written by Jackson Gillis. The opening letter was from a man who lived with his widowed sister Mrs Packler in her boarding house. According to his information, her husband had died in a hunting accident. While crawling through a barbed wire fence, his shotgun had gone off. The insurance company had paid off $40,000 on his life insurance policy (call it $400,000 in today's depreciated currency).

Not long after, a visitor named Rick Stevenson arrived to stay at the house, and the brother was worried he was trying to get at her wealth. Valentine asked the brother to be honest and admit he wanted to inherit the wealth someday. A bit of hemming and hawing from him, and he quickly changed the subject.

Valentine and Brooksie supposedly were staying at the house for a quiet vacation so they could be incognito in their investigation. It was glossed over about their relationship and whether or not they had separate beds, the broadcast networks of the 1940s being what they were.

Stevenson appeared to be an insurance investigator incognito. Another character was Skinny Adams, the village idiot, or more correctly the boarding house idiot. He claimed to have seen something by the elm trees, about where the ill-fated fence was, but wouldn't say specifically what it was. Someone took his remarks seriously, and sabotaged a few things to try and kill him.

No one was as they seemed, which kept Valentine in a constant state of confusion. The ending was sorted out, with Mrs Packler as the culprit, and a couple of other twists. She had been flushed out from what would have been a perfect crime but for Skinny's claim to have seen something. In truth, the man couldn't see a flag while standing at the pole. He just wanted someone to pay attention to him. That proved dangerous but he managed to survive.

"The Ugly Duckling" was a 1950 episode written by David Victor and Jackson Gillis. It began with the death of a composer Edmund Salter, who was not mourned. He was a cold and indifferent man who abused his wife Mary while carrying on extramarital affairs. He hadn't been well lately, and was taking several types of medication.

Valentine was asked by a friend of the Salters to investigate. Mary was openly happy about Edmund's death. Shortly after, another heir suffered poisoning from his medications but survived. Valentine winkled out the truth of the long and loveless marriage. Edmund had been unfaithful to Mary several times. All the women wanted to keep his affairs quiet to avoid embarrassment.

Poking around the house, Valentine found a music manuscript called the Secret Sonata. He couldn't play it but the friend did, which brought Mary running and obviously upset. The sonata had been written by Mary, not Edmund, and she was hoping to pass it off as his work since no one would take her seriously.

Philip Marlowe.

THE ADVENTURES OF PHILIP MARLOWE was an old-time radio series based on the novels of Raymond Chandler. It aired from 1947 to 1951. This was a hard-boiled detective series with little humour. Chandler's only part was to cash his royalty cheques.

At the beginning of each episode, Marlowe would bark out in a harsh voice: "*Get this and get it straight. Crime is a sucker's road, and those who travel it end up in the gutter, the prison, or an early grave.*"

"Where There's A Will" was aired in 1948. No writers were credited, although all the actors and production staff were. A common thing in old-time radio before the advent of stronger union contracts. Then and now, the writer was considered the least important person on a show in Hollywood.

Be that as it may, this episode began with three heirs hiring Marlowe to locate $300,000 in bonds their dear Auntie left them. She never liked them, so she wrote a twisted will that required them to go on a treasure hunt for the bonds. Each heir was to get one-third of a map at the reading of the will. They then had 24 hours to find the bonds or forfeit them to charity.

Auntie knew they didn't get along, being by various turns greedy, shiftless, and reckless spendthrifts. It was her opportunity to get the last laugh from beyond the grave. For of 1% of the bonds, the heirs hired Marlowe to take charge of the map sections and find the bonds.

Marlowe identified the location of the treasure on a private island owned by Auntie. He was jumped by an unknown man with a scarred face, who got two-thirds of the map. From there followed the usual alarums and excursions. The heirs were at each other's throats and the scarface man wasn't happy either.

Everyone converged at the island for the final mayhem, heavily leavened with duplicity, double-crosses, and much pointing of guns. There was a rather neat twist to conclude. One of the heirs decided that since the others had unsuccessfully tried to kill him, no one would get the bonds.

He burned the map while the other heirs looked on in horror and Marlowe looked on in regret at not getting his 1%. Since the bonds were obviously going to charity, he wondered if he could deduct his 1% on his tax return. A brisk episode with several twists along the way. Worth listening to.

"The Promise To Pay", written by Mel Dinelli, Gene Levitt, and Robert Mitchell, was a 1949 episode. Marlowe's client was a rising young executive Garfield Randall, who was being considered as the next chairman of Continental Land and Trust. The decision was to be made within a few days.

Randall had been foolish enough to gamble at a speakeasy and leave a $20,000 marker, which his ex-girlfriend had possession. Needless to say, the directors of the bank would not appoint him if word got out. Randall hired Marlowe to get the note back from her, but she didn't survive to the first commercial break.

Marlowe found the body but not the note. As blackmail material, the marker was priceless. Several other underworld characters were also searching for the note. The episode was narrated by Marlowe in noir style but the script was a standard MacGuffin chase. There were assorted alarums and excursions thrown in whenever things seemed dull.

Much action at the casino where the marker was issued, then over to Randall's house where double crosses and twists finished the plot, plus a very improbable deus ex machina.

"The Restless Day" was a 1949 episode, no writers credited. Marlowe was recovering after the night before, and was hoping to catch up on his sleep on a Sunday, the day of rest. He got none, as he was rousted out by Benjamin Rollins, an inventor and businessman.

Rollins was supposed to be dead, having been killed when his yacht blew up and sank, supposedly from a leaky fuel line. He told Marlowe there was nothing wrong with the fuel line. It was a bomb. Rollins had been on the yacht but left early unnoticed because he had to make an urgent business trip. He wanted to Marlowe to investigate while everyone thought he was dead, as it would be easier to catch the murderer.

He named three suspects, his business partner Walter Pitman, the company manager Arthur Slater, and his own wife Lucille. Their marriage had been in trouble, and she would inherit a fortune. Marlowe began his investigation by interviewing Lucille, an interview suddenly terminated when someone began shooting at her.

More alarums followed, with plenty of excursions back and forth across the city. There were clues but no resolution, and no one was telling the truth about anything. The final confrontation took place at a seaside cliff where Slater lured Lucille. He had stolen an invention of her husband's, sold the rights to Pitman, and didn't want her to find out.

Marlowe arrived in time to save Lucille. Thereupon followed a 5-minute denouement as he explained away all the loose threads and cleaned up the sloppy writing of the script. Ben and Lucille reconciled after he came forward to reveal he was still alive. A happy ending, especially for the scriptwriter, who managed to type his way out of trouble.

"The Monkey's Uncle" was a 1950 episode written by Gene Levitt and Robert Mitchell. Marlowe got a frantic telephone call from a Scotsman named MacDuff who was worried about his chimpanzee Cornelius, who played a butler in a vaudeville stage act.

Setting aside all the "Lead on" jokes and the fact that vaudeville was dead, the actors using the chimp didn't want to give it up. They were Lord Ashley Duke and Lady Ashley, as fake as anything else in Hollywood and no more ennobled than Marlowe. They were unhappy about their manager, who had made bad investments with their money. She wasn't destined to live past the first act.

The episode was mostly slapstick cooled off at intervals by brief bursts of crime noir, as indeed the novels were. A chimpanzee hunt began. Instead of a bad guy slugging Marlowe unconscious it was Cornelius who did the deed. Almost everyone kept referring to the chimp as a monkey, but that was the ignorance of the scriptwriters since chimpanzees are apes.

Lord Ashley killed his manager and set up her death to blame both MacDuff and Cornelius. After a few more alarums, including Marlowe being sapped unconscious again, this time by Lord Ashley, the case was wrapped up. The police were stymied in trying to interrogate Cornelius.

"The Uneasy Head" was a 1950 episode written by Gene Levitt and Robert Mitchell. It began with Marlowe waiting in a bar to meet an informant Sammy Archer, a second-story man. The guy never showed and someone slipped a mickey into Marlowe's drink. When he woke up, he went on the warpath.

First he visited Archer's apartment, where he found out why the appointment was never kept. Someone stabbed him to death. Archer had been involved, with a partner named Christie Roche, in the theft of a tiara from a rich widow named Bessie Dunsmuir. She lived in Palm Springs, so Marlowe drove from Hollywood to see her. Dunsmuir mentioned in passing that she was having trouble with her late husband's estate, which should be noted by the alert listener.

Marlowe figured as long as he was out that way he should look around. That got him into trouble with a gunman, who in turn was slugged unconscious by Roche, who wanted to tie up loose ends, including Marlowe. He didn't get the chance due to a variety of excursions. Real excursions, such as a car ride where Roche didn't intend Marlowe to return from.

Everyone was looking for the tiara. For no apparent reason, Marlowe had a scene with another informant who spoke with Hollywood's idea of a French accent, enough to leave any francophone helpless with laughter. Marlowe then met up with the gunman, who said he was an insurance investigator.

Back to the Dunsmuir manor again, this excursion getting the widow's confession that the tiara theft was indeed an insurance fraud. She needed the money because the estate was in financial difficulty. She had sold the tiara diamond by diamond years ago after having a copy made. When that money ran out, she had the copy stolen by Archer and Roche for the insurance as if were genuine.

Roche got his just desserts when Dunsmuir killed him. She in turn confessed all to Marlowe and prepared herself to meet justice. A weak ending, and it is easy to see why Chandler complained.

Another 1950 episode written by Gene Levitt and Robert Mitchell was "The Anniversary Gift". Hired by a millionaire to retrieve a platinum watch that belonged to his recently deceased wife. Marlowe managed to pick up the trail of the watch. It turned out to have an interesting history, somewhere tied to the murder of a beachcomber who was a blackmailer.

Further investigation revealed his client had been convicted 25 years ago for embezzlement. Even further investigation revealed the local Deppity Dawg had some connection. Marlowe retrieved the watch, then retrieved the full story.

The dead woman had killed the blackmailer. Rather than expose the truth and blacken her reputation, Marlowe let the case fade away. True justice is not always served in the courts.

"Cloak Of Kamehameha" was a 1950 episode written by Gene Levitt and Robert Mitchell. The opening narration was drowned out by the intro music. I could barely hear Marlowe outlining the setup over the blare of trumpets. Must have been an apprentice sound engineer on duty that day.

Marlowe was hired by Horace Schindler to go to Hawaii and buy a cloak of feathers worn by an Hawaiian king in the late 1700s. He was to get it from Nannette Collier, who didn't know its true worth. Schindler was going to flip the cloak to a collector and double his money. He couldn't do the deal himself because he was too well known to the wrong kind of people.

Marlowe missed his plane because of a slow driver. He later learned the driver had been paid to be late to the airport. Rebooking for the next flight, the airline clerk told Marlowe that someone using his name had taken his place. Arriving in Hawaii, the story was repeated, as the imposter had taken his hotel reservation, then went off to dupe Collier. Identity theft is no new thing.

There was some justice though. The fake Philip Marlowe got a knife in his back before he could get the cloak. Many alarums later, the real and still living Marlowe found the corrupt art dealer who had set up the case. The rest was driving back and forth across the island, rescuing the damsel in distress, and tying up the loose threads in the closing dialogue.

Richard Rogue.

ROGUE'S GALLERY aired from 1945 to 1951. The gimmick of this old-time radio series was that every time private detective Richard Rogue was knocked unconscious, during his blackout his subconscious alter ego Eugor (spell it backwards and see) would give him a vital clue about the case he had overlooked when conscious. Like all those other detective shows where the hero was slugged once per episode, the concussions should have made him a gibbering fool by the end of the first season.

"The Impossible Murder" was a 1946 episode written by Ray Buffum. Rogue and his girlfriend Betty Callahan were attending a penthouse party given by Judge Colin Baker, who had just sent up another man for a long stretch. Baker called Rogue aside for a private chat, showing him a threatening note he had found in his apartment during the party. The note said the judge was going to die today on the anniversary of his mortal sin.

Baker offered Rogue $500 to guard him for the next 24 hours. Rogue accepted on the condition that he first be allowed to take Callahan home, after which he would return. In the meantime, the judge locked himself into his apartment. He had a private key-operated elevator, to which he gave Rogue the key and admonished him to hurry on back.

After Rogue escorted Callahan back to her place, he walked back to his car. As he was getting in, someone slugged him unconscious from behind, then chloroformed him, leaving him outside city limits. There followed an extended conversation with Eugor, who cackled madly but didn't really say much substantial.

The police found Rogue lying by the road and after hearing his story took him over to Baker's penthouse. They were too late. Baker was dead from cyanide gas.

Google not yet having been invented, Rogue went to the public library to search through old newspapers on the anniversary dates. Five years ago, the judge had sentenced a man to death for murder. A few hours after the execution, the real murderer was found and it was established that the executed man was, as he screamed in the gas chamber, innocent.

Back at the apartment tower, the building had been sealed off. Rogue went climbing up a service shaft to the central air conditioning unit for Baker's penthouse and found the murderer lying there waiting to get away. He had pumped cyanide gas into the air conditioner after the party guests had all gone home.

The man said it was his brother who had been the innocent man, then threw himself off the penthouse to his death. He had followed Rogue and rendered him unconscious in order to allow time for the air conditioner to purge the gas and freshen the air. He wanted the judge to die the same way his brother did.

The plot was a bit elaborate, although not excessively so. Compare to many detective episodes that relied on improbable timing and complicated means to an end, as opposed to just shooting a man with a silenced pistol.

"The Anson Leeds Will" was a 1946 episode written by Ray Buffum. Surprisingly, in this episode Eugor didn't show up because no one slugged Rogue. The story began with Anson Leeds dying. The old man didn't get a speaking part, which saved money on actors.

The executor was suspicious about the will. Anson's adopted daughter Pamela got $50,000, only a token part of the estate, while his nephew Peter Moore, his sister's son, got the bulk of the estate. Reasonable small amounts, $5,000 each, were given to his nurse and the gardener, both of whom had been with him for years. The two of them had witnessed the will.

Moore and his mother lived in Iowa, and seldom saw Anson, whereas Pamela lived with her father and helped nurse him. Moore took the train as soon as he heard the news. His mother said she was too distraught to travel.

Rogue was asked to investigate the will. He told the executor to get the will to a handwriting expert immediately. In the meantime, he went off to the mansion and talked to the nurse, who said she was indeed a witness. After talking with Pamela, he then went out to the gardner's cottage. The man had just been axed to death, thereby saving additional money on actors.

Found by the body were Pamela's wristwatch and a plane ticket from Iowa. These clues were so blatantly and obviously planted by the murderer that they had the effect of clearing the Pamela and Peter. While the police cleaned up the mess, Rogue found a clue that led him to a hotel where Moore's mother had been staying, she having flown in from Iowa.

There were actually two murderers. The nurse and Moore's mother agreed that an adopted child shouldn't inherit an estate, so the nurse faked a will by tracing both Anson's and the gardener's signatures. The duplicate copies of the will had identical signatures of those two, which was impossible because no one signs their name exactly the same twice.

The nurse killed Anson and the mother silenced the gardener, who didn't know he had been made a witness. With all of that out of the way, the J'accuse! meeting went well, but no one was happy the case was solved. The nurse committed suicide but Peter had to face watching his mother go to the electric chair.

Ironically, in the epilogue, Pamela and Peter were married, thus merging the claims to the estate. That was a touch too soppy. The episode was about average but was worth listening to once.

Sam Spade.

THE ADVENTURES OF SAM SPADE, DETECTIVE was an old-time radio series that aired from 1946 to 1951. It was based on Dashiell Hammett's character. Some of the episodes were based on the printed stories but most were original. The original star who played Spade was Howard Duff, who played him loud and proud.

The series crashed and burned not because of declining audiences but because Hammett and Duff were named in the Red Scare. No sponsor would touch the show thereafter. The network gutted the show and substituted a new leading man whose boyish voice and demeanor made the character of Spade pathetic.

Each Duff episode began with Spade barging back into his office and dictating a letter to a police lieutenant explaining his latest escapade. His secretary was Effie Perrine, a squeaky young thing in love with him, though unrequited.

"The Lazarus Affair", written by Robert Tallman and Gil Doud, was a 1948 episode. Timothy R. Lazarus was the client, who had faked his death, changed his face with plastic surgery, and vamoosed to Mexico while his wife waited out the seven years for presumption of death and the $100,000 payout (about $1 million in today's currency). In the meantime he lived off the $20,000 he had embezzled from his employer.

Now he wanted to return to decent society but no one would believe he was still alive. Spade looked into the possibility of old dental records and X-rays that would match Lazarus, but they seemed to have disappeared and the people who knew anything about them murdered.

Many excursions later, and the usual slugged-unconscious that all radio detectives got once a week, Spade got closer to the characters involved. The fraud was blown out of the water, and the culprits, both murderer and the Lazaruses, were served with justice.

Before Dragnet.

The most famous radio and television police procedural was DRAGNET, created by Jack Webb. It was briskly paced, narrated by the lead character who was played by Webb, and in a minimalist style with lots of snappy dialogue.

The show did not come out of nowhere. Webb put in a lengthy apprenticeship with several previous attempts in old-time radio series whose lead characters eventually evolved into Sgt Joe Friday of the LAPD. The chronology can be confusing, as some of the series overlapped each other, and Webb came and went from them.

The first predecessor was PAT NOVAK, FOR HIRE, set on the San Francisco waterfront, aired 1946 to 1949. In this series, everyone had snappy lines but all were antagonistic to each other. The dialogues were said with suppressed or open anger in constant verbal sniping. Novak and the police were open enemies. Webb left the series for a 1947 summer show but playing the same type.

Because the Novak series was still airing, Webb re-titled his show JOHNNY MODERO, PIER 23, also set on the San Francisco waterfront. Modero was a boat operator who was continually embroiled in trouble. To complicate the chronology, Webb returned as Novak in 1949 for a brief run just before DRAGNET premiered.

Next was JEFF REGAN, INVESTIGATOR from 1948 to 1950. It was another private eye played by Webb in exactly the same style, although he only stayed for the first year. Jeff Regan (pronounced "ree-gun") was a private investigator who worked for a man named Lyon. Regan was often referred to as the Lyon's Eye because the boss seldom left his office, much like Nero Wolfe.

Webb left REGAN midway and was replaced. His reason for leaving was DRAGNET, the show that propelled him not to stardom, for he already was one, but to greatness beyond that. DRAGNET aired on radio from 1949 to 1957 and set a standard for realism that is still in place but seldom reached since.

In the summer of 1951, Webb did a brief fill-in series called PETE KELLY'S BLUES, about a jazz musician frequently roped into acting as an amateur detective. Kelly was none too careful about choosing his friends, who had a high mortality rate. Webb was a jazz musician on the side, and each episode had a couple of instrumental jazz songs in between the gunshots and fistfights.

All of these series were played by Webb in the same identical style. He never changed, excepting that some of the noir harshness was alleviated over time. Before DRAGNET, his shows were mostly an opportunity for sarcastic wisecracks. Sgt Joe Friday went in for snappy dialogue as well, but was more mindful of the fact that he was a public servant.

"Dixie Gilian" was a 1946 episode of PAT NOVAK, FOR HIRE, written by Richard Breen. Novak was hired by a lady named Lee Underwood. *She sauntered in, swaying from side to side like 118 pounds of warm smoke.* For $300 she wanted him to visit a man named Dixie Gilian and wave a gun at him while telling him to get out of town. She supplied the gun and showed him that it was empty. Granted that $300 was worth a lot more in 1946 than today, but Novak had to be really greedy or gullible to take the job.

He went to the address where Gilian was supposed to be. *It was so quiet you could hear a worm with whooping cough.* There he confronted a man. A shot was fired, not from Novak's gun, and the man fell dead. Police Inspector

Hellman stepped into the room a few seconds later, having received a telephone tip-off, and Novak was arrested.

Since Hellman claimed to have seen Novak do the killing, it subsequently proved embarrassing to him when the ballistics test on the bullet did not match Novak's gun. Said Novak: *You're not that good, Hellman. You couldn't hit a moth with a searchlight.* Nor was the man Gilian, but rather Underwood's husband Adrian. An obvious frame-up.

The real Gilian, who was smuggling a microfilm whose contents were never specified, was on the loose. He was just as busy as Novak, killing off anyone connected to the case. The death toll climbed and culminated in a fight to the death on a ferry in the San Francisco Bay. All in a day's work for $300.

"Fleet Lady" was a 1949 episode, no writer credited, after Webb returned for a second time to PAT NOVAK, FOR HIRE. Horse jockey Jackie Gregg hired Novak to find his missing horse Fleet Lady, which was supposed to race the next day. Novak visited the stables and talked to the horse owner Sibyl Thornton. *She had the kind of walk that made you flip the calendar to find out how far away spring was.*

As they conversed, shots were heard. A dead horse was found in Fleet Lady's stall and so was Gregg's body. *The place was full of doors, so whoever shot the horse got out as easy as a rumour at a church picnic.*

Novak figured someone was trying to fix the race Fleet Lady was in by substituting a ringer. She was a middle-of-the-pack runner, but by substituting a different horse that could actually win, the long odds would pay off as a fortune. The dead horse turned out to be the ringer. Fleet Lady ran the race and finished well back.

It was a double-cross. A gambler who had set up the ringer hadn't known about the switch, or non-switch rather, and lost $100,000 on the race. He confronted Thornton in the stables but before he could kill her she used a horse to kick him to death. *He should have learned you can't beat the horses.*

She didn't have long to celebrate, as she was taken in for murdering Gregg, who had learned of the deception. A grim ending, although Novak got to keep his $200 fee from Gregg.

"Fatal Auction" was a 1947 episode of JOHNNY MODERO, PIER 23, written by Herb Margolis and Lou Markheim. Supposedly Modero just rented boats and did odd jobs, but it sounded and played exactly like a private detective series. The plots were bizarre but the main emphasis of the script was on sarcastic one-liners. No simile in this show ever walked down the mean streets of San Francisco without being mangled.

Modero was wasting time at a public auction when a woman, Claire Underwood, offered him $50 if he would bid on her behalf for a locked suitcase, contents unknown. At her instruction, he bid it up to $1,000. She gave him the money and while he was claiming the lot, she vanished. (I'm guessing that Webb's writers used Underwood typewriters because that name kept turning up in his series.)

The underbidder later showed up at Pier 23 and took the suitcase after rendering Modero unconscious in the traditional manner. There were subsequent contretemps with a police officer who decided Modero was guilty. *He sticks to you like a mustard plaster on a throw rug.*

More trouble followed with Underwood and her former accomplice, who were both chasing the suitcase. It had contained a saxophone, whose original owner used it to smuggle drugs into San Francisco from his road trips to Mexico.

Through a twist in the plot, it wound up in the possession of an innocent musician who played his last set while inhaling enough residue powder to give him an overdose. *He was dead before he had a chance to see if Gabriel paid union scale.*

Honour among thieves being what it is, Modero basically had to do little but step back and let them kill each other off. The loose threads were explained in the closing narration. Having run out of one-liners, it was time to cue the orchestra for the closing music.

"The Man Who Liked The Mountains" was a 1948 episode of JEFF REGAN, INVESTIGATOR, written by E. Jack Neuman. It had a harsher tone than PAT NOVAK or DRAGNET. Regan and Lyon argued bitterly every time they talked, viciously, not just debating how to proceed in the case. The one-liners were few and not as clever.

A woman hired Lyon to find her husband, who had been missing three days. Regan was assigned to the case. He was frustrated because everyone who knew the man was vague or indifferent about him. The wife admitted she only wanted him found so she could serve divorce papers.

The trail led to the missing man's mountain hideaway. Entering the cabin, Regan found a stranger, not the husband, dead in front of the fireplace, his head bashed in with a piece of kindling. The killer came back and tried to frame Regan. After many alarums and much gunfire, the dead and guilty were sorted out, most of them into the former category. The husband didn't make it. He had been involved in an underworld deal gone badly wrong. Crime didn't pay.

"Cain And Able And The Santa Maria" was a 1948 episode written by E. Jack Neuman. Jeff Regan was assigned to a case concerning a stolen piece of jewelry, an antique silver replica of Columbus' ship the Santa Maria, small enough to be worn.

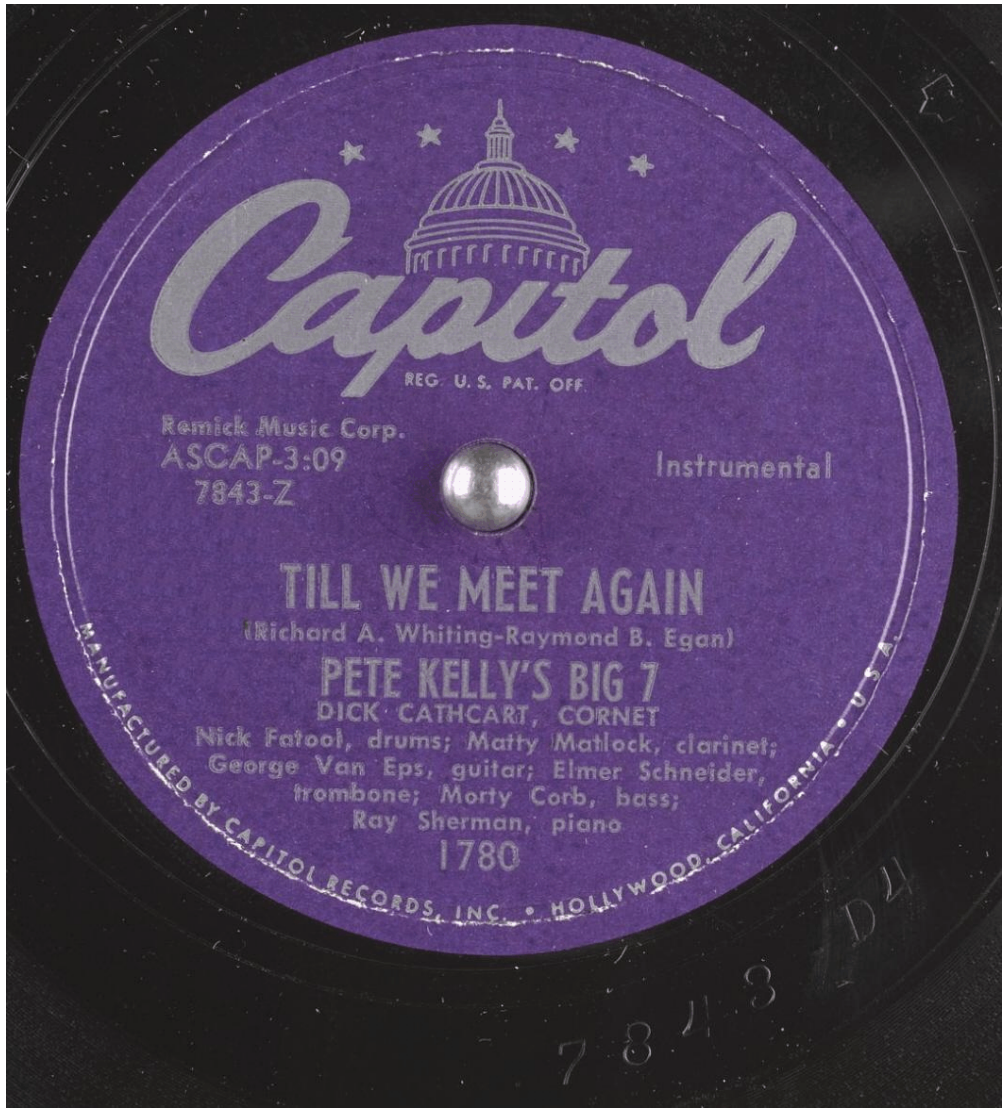
It belonged to the Roderick family which along with the other two ships had been in the care of brothers Able and Cain. They were both waiting about for the patriarch of the family to die, but Grandfather was stubbornly still alive. The family had seen better days and their house, as Regan noted, was *kind of used up, like a Derby winner with a broken leg*.

Able's wife Jenny was carrying on with Cain. They had been out for the night and on the way home were held up by a gunman who stole the Santa Maria. Able wanted Regan to recover the jewelry before Grandfather found out about it, a prospect to be avoided.

Able was willing to pay a ransom. *He looked about as happy as a Saint Bernard with a stomach ache.* Regan managed to track down the thief and arrange a ransom drop at a remote location. It was a set-up; at the appointed time a car drove by and the occupants opened fire. Regan saw it coming so he and Able escaped in time.

Back to the thief's place to talk to him but he was past talking with. Someone had silenced him with a handgun. More alarums and excursions, and the discovery of the obvious plot by Jenny and Cain to stage the robbery as part of an insurance scam. Cain had killed the thief, who had been working for them, but then Jenny killed him to narrow down the distribution of the loot. Jenny made her escape. In the epilogue she was picked up a few months later in Florida where she was working as a hat check girl. That was that.

PETE KELLY'S BLUES was mostly an excuse for Jack Webb to play the cornet in the character of Pete Kelly. The band, called Pete Kelly's Big 7, got two numbers in each episode. It was an actual band, led by Dick Cathcart, and toured under that name long after the radio series ended. During commercial breaks, the announcer plugged their LP records to listeners. So you see, the Monkees were no new thing.



The series was set in Kansas City during the 1920s, where Kelly played in a speakeasy considered neutral territory by mobsters on both sides of the river. *It was the Switzerland of Kansas City.* There were some one-liners but not as many as in the other variants of Webb's shows. Kelly pretended he was a tough guy but his heart wasn't in it. He was always a sucker for a sob story, and that premise was behind each episode.

"Dr Jonathan Budd" was a 1951 episode written by Jo Eisinger. Budd was a jazz fan who was a regular at the nightclub, always appearing with a capo known as The Dutchman, and a few of his torpedoes. He was a personal surgeon to the mob, fixing up gunshot and stabbing wounds.

One night he came in alone, and told Kelly he had run afoul of the Dutchman and probably would not long survive. Budd was too depressed to run for it. *Nothing that a thousand miles wouldn't cure.* Kelly tried to find him shelter but was ultimately unsuccessful. He asked a friend for help, a bootlegger who had gone broke. *Nobody could figure how a bootlegger could go broke in 1922.*

There was no happy ending for this or any other episode of this series. Not to be listened to when you are feeling down on a rainy Sunday afternoon.

SEEN IN THE LITERATURE

Bock, L., and U. Burkhardt (2019) **Contrail cirrus radiative forcing for future air traffic.** ATMOSPHERIC CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS 19:8163-8174

Authors' abstract: *The climate impact of air traffic is to a large degree caused by changes in cirrus cloudiness resulting from the formation of contrails. Contrail cirrus radiative forcing is expected to increase significantly over time due to the large projected increases in air traffic.*

We use ECHAM5-CCMod, an atmospheric climate model with an online contrail cirrus parameterization including a microphysical two-moment scheme, to investigate the climate impact of contrail cirrus for the year 2050. We take into account the predicted increase in air traffic volume, changes in propulsion efficiency and emissions, in particular soot emissions, and the modification of the contrail cirrus climate impact due to anthropogenic climate change.

Global contrail cirrus radiative forcing increases by a factor of 3 from 2006 to 2050, reaching 160 or even 180 mW per square metre, which is the result of the increase in air traffic volume and a slight shift in air traffic towards higher altitudes. Large increases in contrail cirrus radiative forcing are expected over all of the main air traffic areas, but relative increases are largest over main air traffic areas over eastern Asia.

The projected upward shift in air traffic attenuates contrail cirrus radiative forcing increases in the mid latitudes but reinforces it in the tropical areas. Climate change has an insignificant impact on global contrail cirrus radiative forcing, while regional changes are significant.

Of the emission reductions it is the soot number emission reductions by 50% that lead to a significant decrease in contrail cirrus optical depth and coverage, leading to a decrease in radiative forcing by approximately 15%. The strong increase in contrail cirrus radiative forcing due to the projected increase in air traffic volume cannot be compensated for by the decrease in initial ice crystal numbers due to reduced soot emissions and improvements in propulsion efficiency.

Bryan, P.C., and B.R. Clark (2019) **#NotMyGhostbusters: Adaptation, response, and fan entitlement in 2016's Ghostbusters.** JOURNAL OF AMERICAN CULTURE 42:147-158

Authors' abstract: *Canon authenticity of original texts has long been the subject of debate. Fans often debate changes and adaptations to their favorite properties: shifting the setting to a new time period, the subtraction (or addition) of new characters, even which stories best embody the essence of the characters. Claims are staked, evidence is debated, and arguments break out around kitchen tables and across e-mail listservs.*

Such debates can range across generations, such as the ongoing arguments over the best captain on Star Trek or whether the star of Mr. Mom (Michael Keaton) should play Batman circa 1988.

Recently, however, the tone of these debates has become even more polarizing, spiraling from personal differences in opinion toward something more vitriolic, particularly when they involve updates to beloved film properties such as Ghostbusters. These updates, no matter how faithful, frequently spark knee-jerk rallying cries ranging from how unnecessary the update is to the idea that any changes could ruin a fan's childhood memories.

Because fans increasingly claim ownership over their favored properties, they frequently stake a militant response in defense of their preferred views on those properties. While fans have always argued about their favorite properties, today the Internet frequently serves as an echo chamber in which pressure can build, mixing nostalgia and distrust into a toxic combination that is increasingly vented into the public sphere via spaces like Twitter and YouTube.

Hendricks, L., et al (2019) **Uncovering modern paint forgeries by radiocarbon dating.** PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES USA 116:13210-13214

Authors' abstract: *Can radiocarbon (^{14}C) dating uncover modern forgeries? Radiocarbon dating has the potential to answer the question of when an artwork was created, by providing a time frame of the material used. In this study we show that with two microsamples (<500 μg), from both the canvas and the paint layer itself, a modern forgery could be identified.*

The canvas dating is consistent with the purported attribution to the 19th century; however, the ^{14}C age gained on the paint contradicts this as it offers clear evidence for a post-1950 creation. Thus the additional dating of the paint reveals the forger's scheme where the repainting of an appropriately aged canvas was used to convey the illusion of authenticity.

Radiocarbon dating is an attractive alternative, as it delivers absolute ages with a definite time frame for the materials used. The method, however, is invasive and in its early days required sampling tens of grams of material. With the advent of accelerator mass spectrometry and further development of gas ion sources, a reduction of sample size down to microgram amounts of carbon became possible, opening the possibility to date individual paint layers in artworks.

Here we discuss two microsamples taken from an artwork carrying the date of 1866: a canvas fiber and a paint chip (<200 μg), each delivering a different radiocarbon response.

This discrepancy uncovers the specific strategy of the forger: Dating of the organic binder delivers clear evidence of a post-1950 creation on reused canvas. This microscale ^{14}C analysis technique is a powerful method to reveal technically complex forgery cases with hard facts at a minimal sampling impact.