

CALIFORNIA RODEO SALINAS kids

Nathan Gomez, then 4, of Salinas, is off and running in the stickhorse race in the 2005 California Rodeo Salinas.

Rodeo is a time for young buckaroos

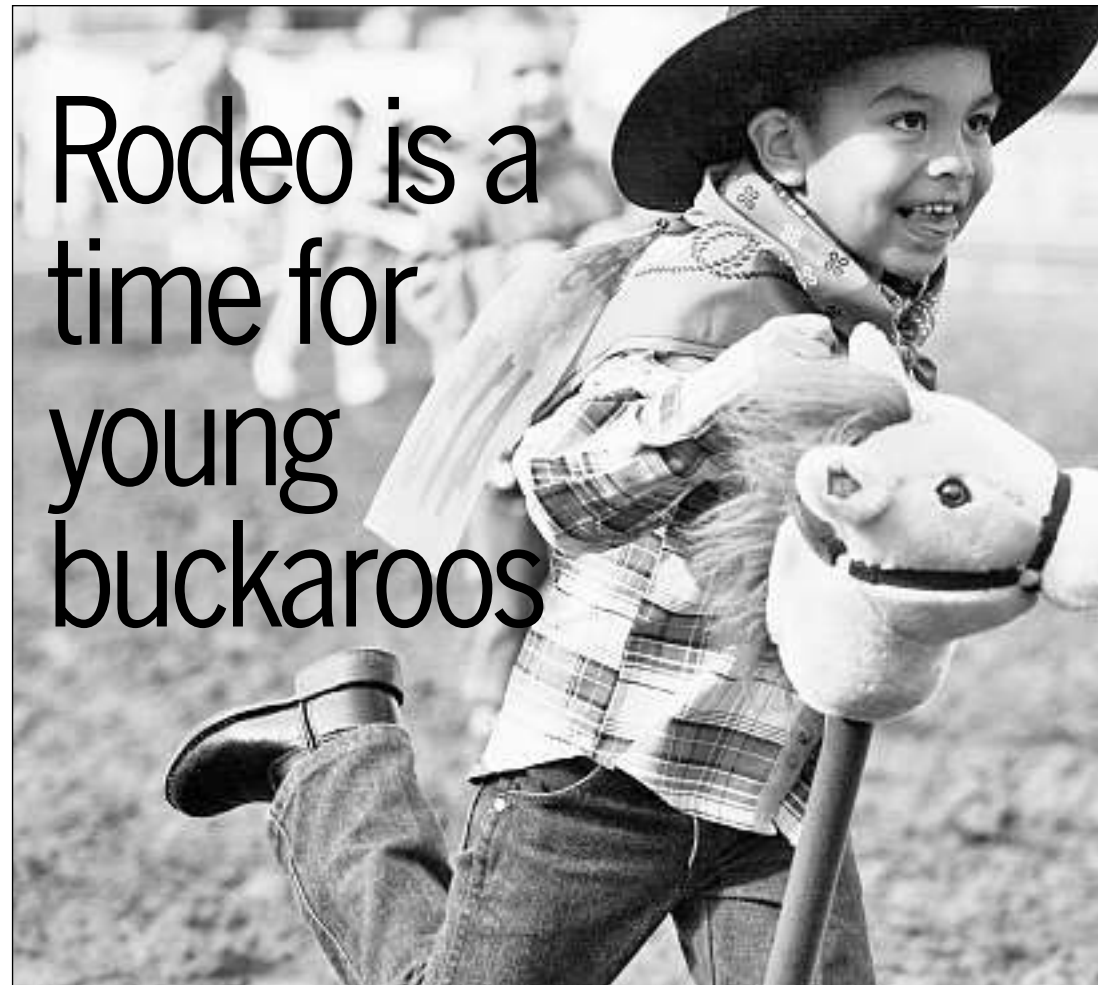


PHOTO BY SCOTT MACDONALD/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN



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PHOTO BY RICHARD GREEN/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

Mutton busting competitor Dustin Howe, then 7, of Sonora, plays around on the bleachers near the chutes before the start of Friday's go-round in 2002 California Rodeo Salinas.

Brittany Ramirez, then 5 of the Salinas Child Development Center, gets a high five from cowboy clown bullfighter Dusty Tuckness during a special carnival at the Salinas Expo Site. About 305 students from special education classes of the Monterey County Office of Education participated.

at a glance

■ **KIDDIE KAPERS PARADE:** Held in Oldtown Salinas, the parade is free to all elementary school-age children. Begins at **7 p.m. Tuesday, July 15**, at the Salinas Recreation Center, 320 Lincoln Ave., near the Steinbeck Library.

■ **KID'S CORRAL:** A Rodeo-themed carnival for all ages. Features a petting zoo, pony and carnival rides, plus event-sponsored mascots. The corral opens at **4 p.m. Thursday, July 17, 5 p.m. Friday, July 18** and **11 a.m. Saturday, July 19, and Sunday, July 20.**

■ **SPECIAL BUCKAROOS RODEO:** Begins at noon on the Rodeo Track for special needs children within the Monterey County community.

■ **STICK HORSE RACES:** Races begin at **5 p.m. Friday, July 18**, but registration runs from 4 to 4:30 at the Kid's Corral. Children must bring their stick horses and they have to be accompanied by their parents. The event will be held on the track.

KIDDIE KAPERS PICTURES

Attention Kiddie Kapers participants!

Complete the coupon and bring to The Salinas Californian located at 123 W. Alisal St. in Salinas, Tuesday, July 15, from 4-6 pm to have your picture taken. Visit us with your coupon and your photo could appear in The Salinas Californian's Kidde Kapers special section.



Picture Coupon

Child's name: _____ Age: _____

Parent's name: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Signature of a parent/guardian acts as a release and provides permission to Salinas Newspapers, Inc. to utilize child's name and/or photograph for publications and promotions of The Salinas Californian and/or any of its affiliated companies or programs without permission.

Parent/guardian signature _____ Date _____

Each child must have a completed coupon to be photographed at this special session. Original coupons only, please. No photocopies will be accepted.

The Salinas Californian

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Starting with Kiddie Kapers Parade, there's plenty for little cowboys and cowgirls to do

By JOSE SAN MATEO
The Salinas Californian

The slogan for this year's California Rodeo Salinas is "There's a little Cowboy in Everybody."

With plenty of opportunities for youngsters to saddle up this year, that applies to little cowboys and cowgirls, too.

"It's is a family event with a long-standing tradition" said Mandy Roth, the Rodeo's marketing coordinator.

Likely the biggest Big Week event for youth is the Kiddie Kapers Parade. Now in its 78th year, the parade on Tuesday, July 15, will

attract thousands of kids — dressed in homemade costumes — for a romp through Oldtown Salinas.

Jeanne Scarr, event coordinator, said about 2,000 youngsters participate, and many more thousands of spectators, many who participated when they were young, will swarm to downtown for the long-running parade

"For a lot of people, their parents have been around long enough to remember the parade," she said.

Returning to the Rodeo after a two-year hiatus is the bobble-head

doll. The toy, sponsored by Rabobank, features a cowboy perched atop a bull.

The dolls will be handed to the first 1,000 people during Tough Enough To Wear Pink Night, Thursday, July 17. Roth said the bobble heads are geared toward youth but also make great collectable items for adults.

Kids take center stage again on Friday, July 18, at the 14th annual KTOM Stick Horse Race. The event, beginning at 5 p.m., requires kids ages 3 to 8 to gallop around the track atop decorated stick hors-

es in three different heats. The first boy and girl in each heat to cross the finish line will receive the same Rodeo belt buckles that the professional riders win.

"These are the same people who make the Rodeo belt buckle," said Jennifer Litty-Antoun, co-organizer for the event. "Their pretty big. They could probably tip a child over." The Kid Corral is another Rodeo staple that begins on Thursday, July 17, and runs through Sunday. The Corral is a cowboy-themed carnival that features bounce houses, a petting zoo, and pony rides.

For kids with special needs, there is the Special Buckaroos Rodeo on Saturday, July 19. The Monterey Bay Office of Education brings in 24 special-needs children to compete as pretend Cowboys and cowgirls. Connie Rains, chairwoman of the event for 15 years, said, "They are given hats, shirts, scarves and we pair them with a pro."

Although the children who participate may be deaf, blind or in a wheelchair, they get to learn how to rope cattle and ride horses.

"For a lot of them, their heroes are cowboys and these are the things they share with people," Rains said.