

## Enjoy a May Weekend at the Stonyford Rodeo

by Roy Stewart

A sleepy, backwater community for most of the year, Stonyford will come alive on May 4-6, 2018, when an estimated five thousand people crowd into town to view the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Stonyford Rodeo. "But I'm not a rodeo fan," you say, "What does Stonyford have for me?" Fishing, camping, dirt bike riding, hiking in the great outdoors. Stonyford is an eastern gateway to the million-plus acre Mendocino Forest, whose Fouts Springs community offers dirt-bike outings, and whose Letts Lake features swimming and fishing for bass and trout. Letts Lake is a pristine mountain lake of about 35 acres whose average depth is about six feet. It is seventeen miles above Stonyford, go to <http://bobbeltrami.com/lettslake.htm> to read details about the place.



Jessie Flores rides to a 1<sup>st</sup> Place finish at the 2017 Stonyford Rodeo  
Photo by Roy Stewart

If you love rodeo, this is the place for you. The Stonyford Rodeo will be celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> year as an annual event—its 43<sup>rd</sup> as a professional, PRCA event. The first rodeo was held at a local ranch in 1943; in 1944-1948, the event was held in a vacant town lot; in 1949 it was first held on the present acreage, where it continues until the present day. In 1964 the rodeo became a member of the Western Fairs Association, then the California Cowboys Association in 1970. It became a professional rodeo in 1976, when it joined with the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA), Inc. It is a lively affair and draws rodeo riders—both professional and amateur—from all around America. This year, it features J. J. Harrison as Barrelman and Clown, and John Payne—aka The One Arm Bandit & Company—as its specialty act. Don Jesser will announce, as he has for the past 24 years. The stock contractor is the Bridwell Pro Rodeo Company (formerly Growney Bros), out of Red Bluff, California.

Unfortunately, there are no close-by motels—the nearest are 30-40 miles away in Willows, Williams, or Colusa—but the camping is great. There is a large campground behind the arena. Here you will find a congenial group of rodeo-loving campers, many of whom come to this great rodeo every year. There are two lakeside campgrounds nearby, the closest being two miles south of the rodeo grounds, and the other eight miles east—both are along different parts of the large East Park Reservoir. Refer to the rodeo's website, [www.stonycreekhorsemen.org](http://www.stonycreekhorsemen.org), for more information.

Tickets are available now at the Horsemen website: [www.stonycreekhorsemen.org](http://www.stonycreekhorsemen.org). Or, you can get them at any of these area locations: Stonyford General Store, Stonyford; Carl's Feed, Willows; Boot Barn, Chico, Anderson & Yuba City; Bucke's Feed & Grain, Orland; Marie's Lakeshore Feed, Clearlake; Rainbow Ag, Lakeport; Ace Hardware, Arbuckle; and Hust Bros., Colusa (formerly, Colusa Motor Sales). Pre-rodeo tickets purchased online or from any of the businesses listed above are \$10 for adults and \$6 for children 7-12 years and older— children 6 years and under are free. Tickets purchased at the gate are \$15 and \$7. May 2<sup>nd</sup> is the last day that you can get presale tickets. So get'em early and save money!

Also, don't forget to pick up a copy of the new, 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary book, *75 Years and Counting, A History of the Stony Creek Horsemen's Association, Inc., and its Rodeos and Parades*. The book costs \$25 and is available for mail-order purchase (\$4 s/h) by emailing [admin@stonycreekhorsemen.org](mailto:admin@stonycreekhorsemen.org), or at any of the following locations: Stonyford General Store, in Stonyford; Susan's Country Cuts, in Elk Creek; Willows Hardware, Ace Hardware, or the Burnham Veterinary Clinic, in Willows. They will also be available for purchase at the rodeo.