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## **Rodeo veterans tabbed to bring quality to team roping, barrel racing at WWWF**

PUEBLO, Colorado – Organizers of the team roping and barrel racing at the inaugural Wild Wild West Fest scheduled held here May 13-17 knew the right persons to call on when they were looking for experts to run their events with precision. Their choice – local husband-and-wife Diane and Frank Mattarocci – have been involved in roping and racing for so long that they undoubtedly breathe the sport in their sleep.

The couple followed the usual journey of being raised around horses and getting their own from their parents when they were 11 (Frank) and around 13 (Diane). Practicing and competing in rodeo successfully started soon afterward and continued until they married and began having a family that now includes Tyler (16 years old), Clay (13) and Morgan (12). Now, they are content to live their roping lives through their three kids, traveling with them to their competitions throughout Colorado.

“Now, when I go to these events it’s more to see friends, it’s a social thing,” noted Diane, 39, who is a case manager for inpatient rehabilitation at Parkview Medical Center in Pueblo. “But I prep my kids because I want them to do good.”

Frank, 45, who operates La Tronica’s, a classic Italian restaurant in Pueblo, admitted he still gets excited whenever he comes to a competitive event, saying “I get a rush every time I go to the big arena.”

What really sets the Mattarocci couple apart is that they also have been organizing rodeo activities for more than a decade and a half at various venues in Pueblo County. That includes the Colorado State Fairgrounds’ Horseman’s Arena, where the team roping and barrel racing events will be held. That experience along with an appreciation for what constitutes well-run competitions will come in handy at the Professional Bull Riders’ Wild Wild West Fest’s team roping and barrel racing events.

“I believe it will go well this year and then just continue to grow every year,” said Frank.

Sponsored by the Pueblo Community College Foundation, the team roping and barrel racing events will be held on Friday, May 15. Here are the specifics:

### **Team Roping**

- Entries begin at 10 a.m.
- Event begins at 11 a.m.
- #15 Handicap & #12 Handicap
- \$50 a man; enter six times each roping

### **4D Barrel Race**

- Event begins at 5 p.m.
- \$30 a run

The event includes an added purse of \$4,000 and a chance to win additional prizes. Kids can join the fun in the Stick Horse Races for only \$1 a run. Admission to the entire event is free to the public.

The Mattarocci kids will compete, Tyler and Clay in team roping with different partners and Morgan in the barrel racing. They get ample practice time in the lighted arena that the family has on their 2½ acres of land that their home sits on in Pueblo County, and they have long been competing in Little Britches, Southern Colorado Horseman's Association events, junior rodeo and high school rodeo. Tyler has shown a particular affinity for bull riding.

Adding some color to the event will be appearances by Miss Rodeo Colorado, Miss Rodeo New Mexico and Miss Rodeo Virginia. They are expected to take part in the team roping and barrel racing.

Pre-entry (with a credit card) into the competitive events is available at 719.549.3314. No checks will be accepted for entries the day of the event. For more information, call 719.549.3303.

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