

# Best Friend of Mule Days

## The Roeser Family

Over the years, the Roeser family has not only been extremely involved in the packing industry they have been devoted to the spirit and success of Bishop Mule Days. Since 1970, Lou and Marye Roeser, and their family have participated in Mule Days each and every year!

The Roesers owned the historic pack outfit in Mammoth Lakes from 1960 to 1998 when they sold it and retired. Prior to becoming a pack station owner, Lou Roeser packed at Mammoth Pack Outfit, McGee Creek Pack Station and Rainbow Pack Station learning all the aspects of the packing trade. Their children, Lee, Kerry, Maryl and Leslie grew up at the pack station and soon were working alongside the adults. Mike and Kerry Roeser Elam have worked at both the Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit and McGee Creek Pack Station during the summers with their daughter Kiera, continuing the traditions of pack station life.

Lou and Marye built, developed and operated Sierra Meadows Equestrian and Ski Touring Center in Mammoth Lakes from 1968 to 1992, and the family all worked together in the running of the business. Lou was active in the Eastern High Sierra Packers Association serving as President, Vice President, Secretary and on the Board of Directors. He also served on NFRA.

Lee Roeser entered his first Bishop Mule Days Parade in 1971 as a sophomore in high school. The Roeser parade entries have included many pack strings, buggies, and wagons as well as supplying saddle animals for all the parade dignitaries. In fact, Lou and Lee's historic wagon and buggy collection with draft teams have hauled many dignitaries down Main Street! Lee won his first Sweepstakes trophy for Best Commercial Pack String at Bishop Mule Days in 1981, an honor he achieved for 15 years. In addition, Lou and Marye Roeser were selected Most Honored Packers in 1982.

In the arena, Lee participated in hitch contests, winning the Diamond Hitch competition in 1972 and 1973. The pack outfit entered the races, working pack string competition and packing scrambles, and the Mammoth Lakes Pack Outfit packing team won the Bishop Mule Days World Championship Buckles in 1983.

Jennifer Ketcham Roeser began competing in the Bishop Mule Days events in 1981. From 1984 to 1988, the McGee Creek Pack Station Girls' Packing Team led by Jennifer, made for some tough competition in the Arena and won the Champion Ladies Packing Team in 1986. In 1988, Jennifer and her matched string of McGee Creek mules won the working pack string competition without a bobble. John Ketcham was selected the Most Honored Packer in 1989.



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Lee and Jennifer Roeser are the owners of McGee Creek Pack Station and have served as President, Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer of the Eastern Sierra Packers Association. Lee also serves on the Mule Days Committee. Lee increased the length of his mule strings to 10 big black mules and leads the Color Guard string into the Arena at the beginning of each show. A saddle maker by trade, he constructs his own pack equipment and saddles making a very classy entry with the packs topped by American flags.

The Roesers have worked in the Arena with the packing events, supplied wagons, teams, and labor to haul the props for events. Lou ran the draft mule pulling contests for several years, and Lee drove a 6-Up Hitch of Belgians as a demonstration in the shows. The entire family assisted with the early Thursday night concerts set-up and tear-down (huge project!).

Leslie Roeser Engelhart, a western artist, married to Matt Engelhart, cattle rancher first showed her artwork at Mule Days in 1981. From 1991, she and her artist mother Marye, have had a joint Western art booth in the Doug Robinson Building with authentic mule and packing subjects. In 1995, Leslie was the Mule Days artist who designed the buckles and mugs. This year Leslie provided the mule head drawing to grace T-Shirts and other Mule Days memorabilia. The Engelharts' 3 children, Addie, Rial and Zack are competent cowboys and went on their first pack trip last summer.

The Roeser family would like to salute and honor our country's servicemen. "Because of them, we have been able to live the life we have chosen, packing in the Sierra. We would also like to salute the Mule Days Celebration and the dedicated volunteers for 35 years of honoring mules and packers over Memorial Day."