

# GANGRENE

film festival

## 10 GALLON HAT

Getting Out

LAUGHS!  
SNAKE OIL!  
TALKIES!

In Layton! Next weekend!



**PREVIEW**  
**WHAT:** Gangrene Film Festival  
**WHEN:** 8 p.m. Sept. 4, Late session, 10:30 p.m. Sept. 5  
**WHERE:** Kenley Centennial Amphitheater, 403 N. Waasatchi Drive, Layton  
**TICKETS:** \$7 (one session); \$10 (both sessions); \$25 (family, immediate family, six or fewer); one session; \$35 (family, both sessions; free to children younger than 2. At the gate or through http://tickets.dvs/sans.org



"Punch Drunk" and "Grashing the Gnash" (left) are two of the films screening at the Gangrene Film Festival at Kenley Centennial Amphitheater in Layton.

# Ready to go Gangrene?

Comedy film fest turns 10

By NANCY VAN VALKENBURG  
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Bring your sense of humor. Wear Western wear if you like. But leave your horse at home.

The Gangrene Film Festival is back at Layton's Kenley

Centennial Amphitheater a week from tonight.

"It's our 10th anniversary this year, and our theme is '10 Gallon Hat,'" said Craig Nybo, spokesman for the independent comedy film festival that he, his brother and his childhood friends produce. "We're bringing in the Rhinestone Roper as our opening act, and

he's doing a Wild West show, spinning guns, roping, throwing knives and juggling hatchets."

But he's not doing his usual horse tricks. Lucky Joe — a paint who can bow, rear, answer yes-no questions, stomp out his age (although he has been known to lie), and play dead with his legs in the air — was asked to stay home.

"It was a problem with the venue, and liability," Nybo said. "We've done things in the past

without asking permission. Sometimes it's better to ask forgiveness. But we had some live chickens onstage a few years back, just hanging out in cages when we had a millibilly theme, and we got in trouble."

So it's yes to Dan Mink, Jerome, Idaho, his own Rhinestone Roper, but no to equine sidekick Lucky Joe. Audiences will have to be content with

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VIDEO: A look at the Gangrene Film Festival

# Gangrene snags Rhinestone Roper

By NANCY VAN VALKENBURG  
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Dan Mink was in his mid-30s, and chief deputy prosecutor of Idaho's Twin Falls County, when he realized he really never wanted to be a lawyer when he grew up.

No, what Mink actually wanted to do, he decided, was to travel the nation with his own Wild West show, featuring rope tricks, knife throwing, precision stunts with a bull whip, and a comedy act with horses.

So Mink, known for building cases against murderers, kidnappers and rapists, started life anew as the Rhinestone Roper. He'll be doing his show, minus the horses, a week from tonight in Layton, as opening act for the Gangrene Film Festival.

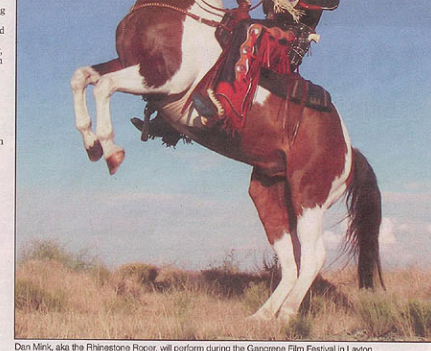
"I've been doing fairs and theaters for a long time, but this is my first film festival," said Mink, 51, in a cell phone interview through Montana, on the way from the Iowa State Fair to his next gig. Festival organizer Craig Nybo did so much bragging on his audiences, I've been excited about the festival since he called. He said his audience is there to have a good time, and it just doesn't get any better than that for my kind of show. I'm really looking forward to it."

**A showman's story**

Mink likes to think cowboy blood runs through his veins. His father was a project engineer for the Idaho Highway Department, but grew up on a cattle ranch, as did Mink's grandfathers.

"I like to think it skipped a generation," the Rhinestone Roper said, of his cowboy leanings.

Mink grew up an acting enthusiast. In college, he majored in communications, acting on the side. One of his favorite shows was "Oklahoma," for which he taught himself rope tricks. But at the end of college, he decided to get his law degree.



Dan Mink, aka the Rhinestone Roper, will perform during the Gangrene Film Festival in Layton.

"I thought the courtroom was like a theater, and it probably was true," he said. "Problem was, I had to spend all my time fighting other people, preparing other people to fight people, and picking people apart. I wanted to be a cowboy lawyer, and find a middle ground for everybody, but that's not how it worked out. Being a lawyer was not my special purpose."

Mink said his favorite shows are school assemblies, where he can talk to young people about finding their purpose in life, the kind of work that calls on their unique skills and makes them happy.

"Being a lawyer was good, but it wasn't my special purpose," Mink said. "We are all born with unique talents, different from anyone else. If you listen to your interests,

they will guide you to your special purpose. I tell kids to keep an eye out for things that interest them, to have the courage to try new things, and to stick with what makes them and the people around them happy."

**His special purpose**

Mink began to fill his days with the fun things he lived to



VIDEO: A look at the Rhinestone Roper's tricks

do on weekends. He worked with a favorite heifer, Lucky Joe. He taught himself more rope tricks, and started target practicing with bull whips and twirling guns. Mink is the 2007 World Champion Gun Spinner, and was named 2006 and 2007 Western Performer of the Year by the International Knife Thrower's Hall of Fame in Austin, Texas.

His act includes cowboy songs, lawyer jokes, throwing knives, trick shooting, cracking a bull whip to carve a paper target held in a volunteer's mouth, and horse tricks.

"Things never go wrong with his demonstrations, he said. Where the act can vary is when horses Lucky Joe (the star) and Handsome Jack (in training, with limited stage time) get mad at him, because they didn't get enough playtime.

"I usually ride them every day, but when we've got three shows a day, like in Iowa, I get too busy," Mink said. The horses will leave Mink waiting for them to complete a trick, such as shoving him from behind when his back is turned, or will repeat a favorite trick rather than moving on.

"It actually makes the show funnier when things go wrong," Mink said.

But the horses are staying home, at the request of the Davis Arts Council. So all spontaneous humor will have to come from human volunteers.

"People can have some funny reactions when they learn how close the bull whip is going to come to their faces," Mink said.

He chose to call himself the Rhinestone Roper because he's

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whirling guns, ropes, knives and hatchets. (Hey, no liability issues there.)

**The Gangrene vibe**

Gangrene is really about the independent films, of course. It's not the highbrow, artsy stuff you might see at Sundance. Gangrene is in it for the laughs.

"I like to ever watched Gangrene films, you can definitely see a common thread," said Nybo, 39, of Kaysville. "It's based on obscurity and the unexpected. That's kind of where we go with our comedy. There are other people out there who do it. It's almost like a signal. When we see a film by someone in Germany or wherever who gets the signal, those guys are our friends. You can tell a lot about people from their films."

"Not everybody is going to get this kind of comedy, but our crowds are getting bigger



"Free Jollo" is about a Mexican man who looks like a bear. The film is screening at the Gangrene Film Festival. Other films include (below, left to right) "Tu Pirata Soy Yo," "Skylight," "The Roommate," "Air Knob" and "Nemesis."

every year, and we get more compliments from our audience every year."

Nybo describes the festival's comedy style as similar to that of HBO's "Flight of the Conchords" (minus the adult

content). Films "Galaxy Quest" and "Time Bandits" also give off the same type of humor "signal," he said. (To check out Gangrene films from previous years, see Comcast cable's On Demand feature.)

**Bring a coat, stay late**

The festival started a decade ago with a screening for 20 to 30 friends gathered in a field, and grew from there. Nybo said. Last year's audience

for the single-night, outdoor screening was about 800 people.

The general audience session, suitable for all family members, is better attended than the late session, which is appropriate for age 13 and older. Besides the PG-13-type content and the later hour, late summer nights can get chilly. If you're staying for the second session, bring a jacket or blanket, advised Charlene Nelson, former executive director of the Davis Arts Council, now owner of Conscious Living, a life-coaching business.

"It can get cold, but I've seen people sitting there, wrapped in blankets, laughing anyway," Nelson said. "The festival has been really successful. Craig and the whole Gangrene group are very talented, creative people. I love seeing them in action."

Nelson said she welcomed the festival years ago because it was hard to book anything but musical acts for the amphitheater.

"We wanted to promote other aspects of the arts, and we

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# THE SCHEDULE

Early session, after the 6 p.m. opening act.

- "Mr. Smith and the Devil," by David C. Thompson, Culver City, Ala. Mr. Smith will do anything to find true love. A stranger offers to help, for a price. The cost is his soul, which Mr. Smith is happy to give if it means finding a soulmate. 6 minutes.
- "Mom, Dad, I'm Cuban," by William Rubio, Provo. Mark can't fight the feelings anymore, and he's tired of hiding it from his parents. It's time they know he's not the same person they've known him to be for so long. He's Cuban. 4 minutes.
- "The Water Artist," by Kevin T. Wilson, Los Angeles. A comedy about a spirited artist who thinks he discovers a new way to do art. 4 minutes.
- "Free Net Conference," by festival organizers Larry and Craig Nybo, of Layton and Kaysville,

respectively. An executive online conference call goes haywire with an unlikely interruption. 4 minutes.

- "The Roommate," by Olesia Shewchuk, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. Roommates Sam and Brad are opposites. In this quirky comedy, Brad's selfish ways drive Sam to the breaking point. Sam devises one plan after another to get back at Brad. 7 minutes.
- "4-Day Weekend," by festival organizer Mike Terrell, of Layton, and friend Pat Murphy, Ogden. Two friends execute their plan for the perfect weekend road trip. 5 minutes.
- "Tu Pirata Soy Yo," by Guillermo Alejandro Vazquez, Puerto Rico. A holly island teen schemes to win the heart of a one-eyed rake while her puritanical dad tries to sleep six their love ... and that includes skydiving. 5 minutes.
- "Skylight," by David Boas,

Toronto, Ontario, Canada. An animated mock documentary about the ecological plight of penguins in the Antarctic, possibly foreshadowing cataclysmic results for the rest of the world. 5 minutes.

- "Parking Garage," by Justin Lazernik, Tallahassee, Fla. Blair, struggles to remember where she parked her car. However, losing her car proves to be only the beginning of an unusual journey. 9 minutes.
- "Nemesis," by Stian Halstad, Bergen, Norway. All his life, Arne has dreamed of being a superhero. He decides to put up a wanted note for an arch-enemy, hoping that it will help him discover his true superpowers. 9 minutes.

Late session, at 10:30 p.m. (films likely would be PG-15, if rated)

- "Punch Drunk," by Benjamin Kent, London. Mr. Punch was

a national celebrity, a beloved entertainer, until he descends into a self-destructive spell of drunken melancholy, and lands in a notorious maximum-security prison. It is there that Punch searches his soul and rediscovers the man he once was. 13 minutes.

- "The Happy Man's Quest," by Kunal Suvair, Los Angeles. An unhappy king embarks on a quest for happiness after a magical wizard tells him that sloping one night in a happy man's pants will guarantee him eternal pleasure. 30 minutes.
- "Grashing the Gnash," by Matthew Pope, Lakeland, Fla. A choreographer with a talented career has discovered a dance, grashing, done mostly with the teeth, in a small Florida town. He is determined to make grashing the next big stage sensation. 10 minutes.

- "Air Knob," by Nathan Floot, Ancaster, Ontario, Canada. Two neighbors, one a quiet, would-be folk guitarist, the other a brash wannabe headbanger, vie for air-guitar supremacy in a take-no-prisoners battle in a sleepy suburban neighborhood. 7 minutes.
- "Free Jollo," by Marcos Bucay, Mexico City. Jollo is a young Mexican man whose body manifests as a giant bear. "Free Joe" pursues an adventurous journey searching for new opportunities in America, leaving behind not only his family but also his culture. Jollo Cassido explains an identity crisis when being exposed to the temptations of the American dream. 10 minutes.
- "Lunch at the Beach," Tim Donnell, Los Angeles. A man goes to the beach for a relaxing picnic lunch with some overenthusiastic sea gulls. 4 minutes.

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loved to be a conduit for talent in the community," she said.

"It's a cool mixture of films this year, with one from Puerto Rico, one from Canada, a couple, one from England, one from the Netherlands," he said. "Some of these directors

are actually coming in. The festival seems to be growing in popularity with filmmakers. And we usually put in the latest work from Gangrene Productions, to represent ourselves."

"But other than this year, there's only one local film this year, from Provo. That actually saddens me. We like to give local films a fair shake, but we didn't get films from some of our usual submitters this year."

"There's also one Ogden link: Festival organizer Mike Terrell, of Layton, made "4-Day Weekend" with the help of his friend, Ogden resident Pat Murphy."

# Roper

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"Rhinestones are glitzy and flashy, but they're not for practical use. Fancy roping isn't something you can use to work on a ranch. It's all glitz and flash."

**Career case closed**

Mink said he has no regrets

# Celtic

From 7  
watching "big guys" toss giant logs down the field."

**Kitchen piping**

Celtic entertainment includes Citrine, a 12-woman Irish-influenced vocal group from Salt Lake City, performing at 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., and Leaping Lulu, a Logan Celtic group, taking the stage at 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Ethnic foods and craft booths will also

# International entrants

Nybo said the festival is more international than ever. "It's a cool mixture of films this year, with one from Puerto Rico, one from Canada, a couple, one from England, one from the Netherlands," he said. "Some of these directors

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showman, the pay isn't bad either.

"The economy is down this year, but most years I've earned about three times what I made as a lawyer," Mink said.

"It's a hard life, and hard on the gals in your life," said Mink, divorced this year. "You spend all your time on the road, but I love it. The cowboy thing was always part of me, and I've always wanted to be a showman and spend time with my horses. I wouldn't want to live my life any other way."