

WWGA Unveils “Range Royalty” During 2003 State Ram Sale

*Art work by Noted Kaycee, WY Artist Mary Cunningham Adds to Celebration
of 75th Anniversary Sale*

For Immediate Release

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Casper, WY— Adding to the excitement and festivities of the 2003 Wyoming State Ram Sale was a very special event. Following nearly three years of planning and

discussion, the WWGA was able to bring forward what is surely to be one of the most memorable activities it has ever begun.

The WWGA has commissioned noted Wyoming artist Mary Cunningham of Kaycee, WY to develop what is planned as a series of works depicting the Wyoming sheep industry. During the WWGA's "State Ram Sale" last week, and just in time for the 75th Anniversary of the Sale, the Association unveiled the first of the series by Cunningham.

Entitled "Range Royalty", the work features the heads of three full curl Rambouillet rams. Wyoming is noted for its range sheep industry, and is in fact the largest range sheep state in the nation. The Rambouillet breed of sheep has been instrumental in developing the type of sheep which Wyoming is noted for. Bred specifically for Wyoming's harsh climate, and wonderfully adapted to be able to withstand the 140-150 degrees of variation in temperature from one season to another and the arid landscape that makes up much of Wyoming, the "western range ewe" which usually contains some Rambouillet breeding is much sought after and recognized around the world.

Portrayed along the lower part of "Range Royalty" are three scenes depicting sheep activities typical of the Wyoming industry. In one, sheep are seen trailing across the landscape, with desert-type rocks in the background reminiscent of the Red Desert country of southwestern Wyoming or the badlands between Johnson and Campbell counties. In another scene, a herder is depicted with his two most trusted companions,

his border collie dog and his sheep wagon, which is home to he and his friend for most of the year. In the final scene, ewes typical of the type that are found in Wyoming are waiting for the arrival of the "Range Royalty".

Cunningham is a noted artist who has received formal training from some of the most prestigious schools in the U.S. In addition, she has been active in the raising and breeding of sheep herself, so she "speaks from that which she knows". She and her husband Greg reside in Kaycee where they are involved in several business ventures besides her painting (see article on Cunningham following).

The WWGA has sent "Range Royalty" to a printer where a limited number of artist quality "glicée" prints are being produced. Cunningham will sign and number them, and then they will be made available to those wishing to purchase them from the WWGA on a first come, first served basis at a cost of \$150 each. The prints are 16" X 24" in size.

Plans are already underway for the second work, which should be available sometime next year. For more information, contact the WWGA in Casper, WY at 307-265-5250 or by email at wyowool@bresnan.net.

ABOUT THE ARTIST: MARY CUNNINGHAM

Mary S. Cunningham lives in Kaycee, Wyoming on the family ranch with her husband Greg and three children, Ben (17), Charlie (15) and Hannah (13). Mary experiences on a daily basis the joys and challenges of rural living. Though challenging and stressful at times, the lifestyle is a wonderful way of life. Mary and Greg feel fortunate to live and raise our children in the environment they have in Kaycee. Both she and Greg grew up on family ranches and their lives are rich with people, traditions and experiences typical of the west. It is Mary's passion to preserve the heritage and simple moments of the west and to pass it on through her art.



Maym
Mary S. Cunningham

The inspiration for her works comes from the people and places that touch her life. Each piece comes with a story that speaks of the thoughts, experiences and life we live in rural America. Whether it be the story of a loyal dog, a peaceful western landscape or someone who speaks strongly of rural values and traditions, her stories are true, authentic tales of life in the west.

The signature "Maym" found on her work is the nickname she was given by her parents, Bart & Mary Strang of Meeker, Colorado. Basically self-taught except for the influence of a wonderful high school art teacher, Mary credits her passion of art to her family. "The arts were heavily instilled into me as a child. My great grandfather, William L. Lathrop, was a successful artist and my parents encouraged each of us to explore the arts and helped us learn to gain satisfaction from putting our thoughts to canvas, paper or song. At the birth of our first child, (in 1985) I put away the paint (as a matter of

convenience) and took up the pencil. Some day I hope to go back to other mediums, but for now, I find my pencil work so rewarding.

Her parents, sisters, husband and children are her greatest supporters. Greg is her helpful critic she relies on him for detail and accuracy. Mary's work has been predominately pencil and is just getting back into color. While working in watercolor – Mary finds her drawing skills valuable creating her paintings. Her studio sets on the ranch near their house and is surrounded by big cottonwoods that line the Powder River. She sells original pencils and watercolors and has a line of glice'e prints available as well as her stationary on her website www.maym.net. Mary's thoughts and driving force behind her art can be quoted: "If I can touch the heart of someone through my art and its stories, my work has been a success."



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Captions for pictures of "Range Royalty"

Picture One: (Range Royalty- full): Three majestic full curl Rambouillet rams look down from the just released work by noted Kaycee, WY artist Mary Cunningham entitled "Range Royalty". The work is the first in a series commissioned by the Wyoming Wool Growers Association which will depict and memorialize the Wyoming sheep industry.

Picture Two: (Range Royalty- trailing5): A close up from the just released work by noted Kaycee, WY artist Mary Cunningham entitled "Range Royalty" depicting sheep trailing across the Wyoming landscape. The work is the first in a series commissioned by the Wyoming Wool Growers Association which will depict and memorialize the Wyoming sheep industry.

Picture Three: (Range Royalty- wagon1): A close up from the just released work by noted Kaycee, WY artist Mary Cunningham entitled "Range Royalty" depicting a sheep herder and his most loyal and valuable companion, his border collie herding dog, in front of his "home on the range", a Wyoming sheep wagon. "Range Royalty" is the first in a series commissioned by the Wyoming Wool Growers Association which will depict and memorialize the Wyoming sheep industry.