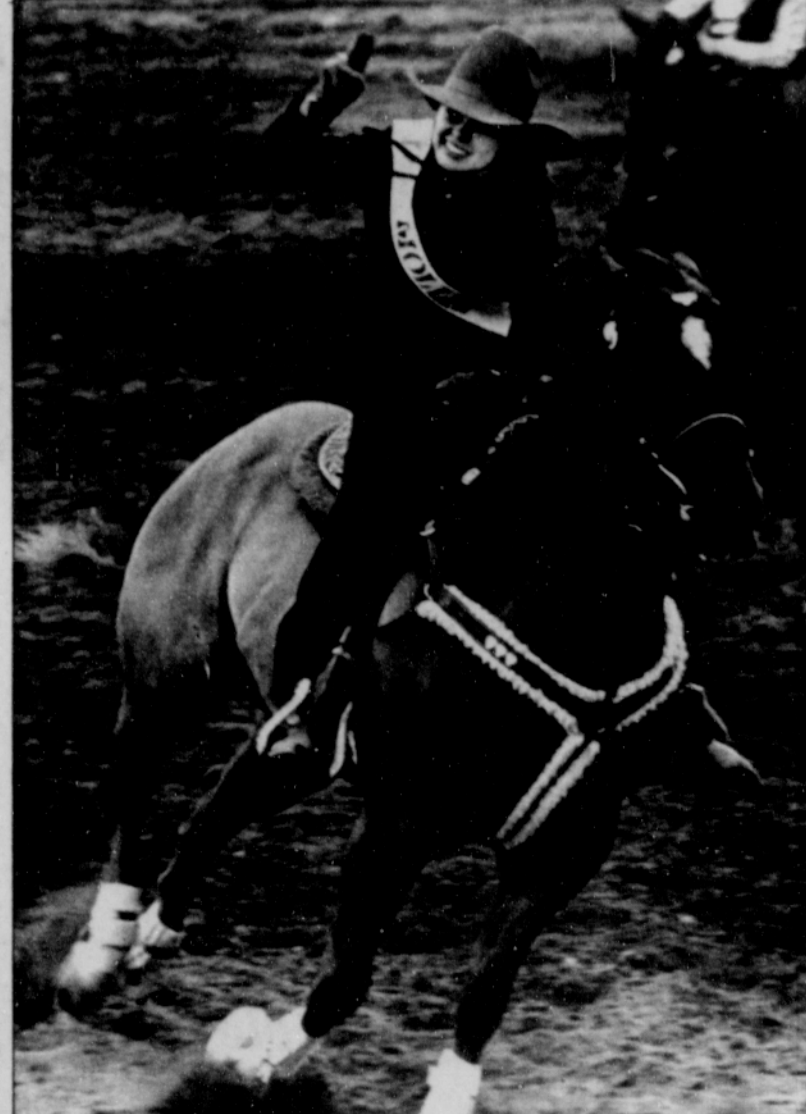
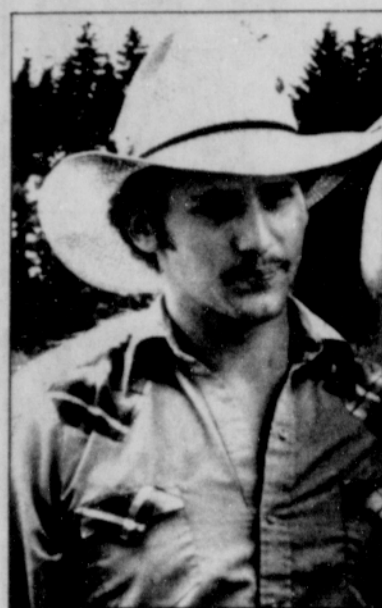


The Sandy Post

Sports and Recreation



Top right: Todd Kasch missed his throw Saturday in team roping but was happy just to be competing at the State Finals Rodeo. Top center: Ernie Smith. Bottom center: Louie Norton. Above: OHSRA queen Mollie Smith makes a grand entry, which is one of the things on which candidates were judged.

Mollie Smith is crowned OHSRA queen

by SCOTT NEWTON

Each year a ruby is placed on the Oregon High School Rodeo Association's crown to mark the hometown of the queen.

Sandy will soon be represented on the jeweled map as Mollie Smith was crowned at the State Finals Rodeo in Redmond Sunday after a season of being on her best behavior.

Candidates are judged on personality, grand entries at rodeos, horsemanship, personal interviews, and a test on the rules of rodeoing.

Smith was also judged on a speech she gave on the history of Sandy and Clackamas County last week at York's Big O restaurant.

But tests, speeches and horsemanship are only a part of the contest. Candidates are observed all season long, with attitude and sportsmanship coming into play.

And on that account, Smith comes off like one would expect of the winner of the OHSRA's queen contest.

"I just want to say thanks to my club for supporting me," Smith said. "They were a big help in getting me through the nervous part of Sunday."

She'll represent Oregon at the National Finals Rodeo in Douglas,

Wyo., which will be July 15-23 if one counts the queen's contest.

"I'm going to try to make the state of Oregon proud of me," Smith said.

Smith and 7-year-old Okie, a gelding quarter horse, also finished 16th overall in the pole bending competition. She was 10th on her first go and eighth on her second go. She didn't qualify for the finals Sunday.

As a queen candidate, she qualifies for the National Finals in pole bending.

Others who competed locally included Louie Norton, who made the finals Sunday in bull riding and finished eighth. Only the top four qualify for nationals.

Todd Kasch, who will be a senior at Sandy High School next year and is a member of the Sandy Rodeo Club, finished eighth Friday in the first go but had some back luck Saturday and failed to make the finals.

Two other members of the Sandy club, Sandy Mero of West Linn and Pollyanna Hansen of Beavercreek, competed but didn't qualify for the final go.

Art Foss, president of the adult state officers and directors, felt the State Finals were a "rippin' success."

He estimated that about 240 young people competed in high school rodeo this spring, and of that probably 130 competed at state.

He said the crowd Sunday was double last year's, with about 2800 in attendance.

"We've got room for more," he added. "The people who were there are going to be good advertisement for us."

"We're sending a good bunch to nationals," he said. "We've got a chance to win some national titles."

Foss is quick to point out that rodeo doesn't receive a cent of tax payer money. Funds are raised by the youngsters and their parents, with the help of businesses.

Foss felt Smith did well in the queen's competition, and added that it wasn't "no runaway. She had tough competition."

"I wasn't a judge or anything," Foss said. "When Mollie went through (her speech at York's Big O), I knew she had it. I had her pick."

"I told ol' Ernie that. I wanted to bet him a drink on it, but of course he wouldn't."

"I think she did awful well. I think

we've got a top queen."

Ernie, of course, is Mollie's father and the advisor to the Sandy Rodeo Club.

He's logged over 20,000 miles on his vehicles since fall, taking the guys to rough stock practices in Corvallis, the girls to practice arenas, and attending association meetings.

Ernie, who lives in the Boring area, is a self-described "country boy."

Asked if it has all been worth it, Ernie said. "Even if she wouldn't have got it, it's been worth it."

"I'm just sitting her stretching my buttons I'm so proud of her, but I'd be proud of her win, lose or draw."

"I'm proud of all these kids. They're all worth the time and effort and expense you put out."

"One of the greatest things this teaches you is how to lose. And after you lose so much, you're going to start winning."

"That's the greatest thing about rodeo. It teaches 'em how to win in life."

One of those he considers a winner is Todd Kasch. "He really accomplished a lot," Ernie said. "That boy has a lot to be proud of."

Kasch began rodeoing late this year, and qualified for the State

Finals in four rodeos, while it took some others the full nine-rodeo season.

"I felt I was lucky to be there," Kasch said.

He and his partner, Paul Hulesbusch of Scappoose, finished eighth out of 20 teams the first go.

Saturday Kasch got a figure eight in the loop when he left the box and was unsuccessful at roping the steer the first try, though they finally got a time. They didn't qualify for the final go Sunday.

Though he had a late start on the season, Kasch has drawn some good partners this year and then competed up to the required level. He's won two buckles, something some cowboys don't accomplish in four years of rodeoing, Ernie said.

He hopes to compete some this summer if he can work it in between cutting hay and his job at the Multnomah at the Alpine Slide. He'll be a senior next year.

Louie Norton, a member of the Timber Valley Rodeo Club, also plans to keep rodeoing. Earlier this week he was hired as a ranch hand in the Estacada area, and the 1983 SUHS graduate will be going into the Army in the fall.

If he's good enough, they'll sponsor him. "At least that's what they tell me," he said.

Norton got bucked off his first go, but had a good ride Saturday night on Igor. "I was spurring and everything," he said.

In the finals Sunday he made his ride, and placed eighth.

"After that first day I got mad," he said. "I was real happy with my ride Saturday night. It was probably the best ride I had all year."

Though disappointed with eighth place, he said, "I'm more than satisfied. I never thought I'd make the final go."

Ernie Smith said without help from the Lions Club, the Sandy VFW, Tri-County Electric, Sandy Arco, Bruce Cook Insurance and others, "these kids wouldn't be where they are today. It means a lot."

As for Mollie Smith, her new hand-made western saddle won't be put on display. "I won it and I'm going to use it with pride," she said.

Despite the saddle, the crown, the new buckle and the upcoming trip to Wyoming, the honor student's days since the rodeo have begun much like her neighbor's. Mollie's been picking berries this week.



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