

WRIGHT: Crowned Miss Idaho in 2015

Continued from 1A

The week before the big night was a whirlwind of rehearsals, appearances and preliminary competitions. A peek at her Facebook page shows a photo of the long-legged Wright posing pool-side and flashing a high-wattage smile. In another, she rubs shoulders with Miss New York and Miss Vermont.

Wright, however, isn't all about glitter and glam.

She grew up on a horse ranch in southern Idaho. A Facebook video shows Wright running a combine as her black lab, Tank, rides shotgun. In a photo, she poses beside a deer she shot. For a job, the 25-year-old works as the district manager for a seed company, selling corn and soybean seeds to farmers.

"I spend a lot of time talking to 60- and 70-year-old men," Wright said, with a laugh.

She and her fiancé, country singer Jeremiah James Korfe, raise beef cattle, soybeans and corn on a small Minnesota farm, where



Contributed photo

Former BMCC volleyball player Kalie Wright competed in Monday night's Miss USA pageant.

she also operates a wedding and events venue. Also on the farm is Dude, Wright's quarter horse. The Idaho native said she entered her first beauty pageant to help finance her education. A BMCC volleyball scholarship helped pay for college in 2011, but after that year, she veered in another direction.

"I loved volleyball, but I wanted to do something more creative," said Wright, a singer/songwriter.

With no volleyball scholarship, she entered the Miss Magic Valley pageant to earn tuition to attend the College of Southern Idaho. In subsequent years, she won Miss Gate City and Miss National Sweetheart. She was crowned Miss Idaho in 2015 and competed in the Miss America pageant.

Wright, who is working toward a business and marketing degree from the Minnesota State University, won the Miss Minnesota USA title

in November.

Last night, it was finally showtime at the Miss USA pageant. Wright competed in interview, swimsuit and evening gown rounds, relying on months of practicing interview and runway skills to distinguish her from the 51 other stunningly beautiful women.

"There is a lot of mental preparation," Wright said. "It's preparation for the job of spokesperson and ambassador of Miss USA. It involves knowing a lot about yourself so you can showcase your own brand."

Wright has journeyed far since those days on the BMCC volleyball court.

"I've had a lot of growth since I was 17," Wright said. "I've had to grow up."

Wright wouldn't get the crown — this was Miss Nebraska's night. Her fiancé's Facebook post made it clear how he felt about the outcome.

"She is my world!," wrote Korfe. "They didn't see what I see! They would have been so lucky! Wedding bells ring in 2019."



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

A group of disc golfers hits the putting green at the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation Open Saturday in Hermiston.

COURSE: 'We're not a snobby community'

Continued from 1A

While casual users of the course might just play with a single disc, the PDGA-ranked players each came prepared with a backpack full of discs in various weights to be used as everything from a distance driver to a putter, factoring in wind and other variables. Alex McDannold said he has been playing in tournaments since 1999, but the sport has really taken off in recent years.

"When I first started with a club I was the 77th member, and now you go to a course and there are hundreds of people," he said.

It was his second time playing the Hermiston Desert Disc Golf course, and he said it was a "cool" course to play on. Much of the course is flat, with holes and tees interspersed with tall grass and sagebrush, but includes some ridges and trees. Sections of tall grass were mowed down to form the greens and fairways, while organizers marked off out of bounds sections and bunkers. Wilkinson said one of the fun things about mowing the course (many courses are in parks where all grass is already mowed) was that organizers could change it a little each year.

Before the first round of the tournament started, Jesse Garcia of Walla Walla was warming up with a few other players. He pointed to Kevin Mann of Kennewick

and said his goal for the day was to beat "that guy right there."

"We've been battling it out the whole year," he said.

Garcia and Mann were some of the 13 people in the pro division registered to compete in the two-day tournament, while others in the amateur division battled amongst themselves. Most of the players were men, but there were a handful of female and junior-level players registered.

Most of the players from around the region knew each other from past tournaments, and there was plenty of joking around on the course. Wilkinson said the camaraderie of the sport was one of the things she enjoyed most about it.

Organizer Matt Richmond said people don't have to be a PDGA-ranked player to use the Hermiston course — the more the merrier, and no one should be intimidated.

"Come out and play any time," he said. "If you see people playing, feel free to come up and ask questions. We're not a snobby community. We want people to learn how to play."

Scores and rankings of registered players can be found online at www.discgolfscene.com. The Hermiston Desert Disc Golf Course is free for anyone to use and can be accessed from the Oxbow Trail across 11th Street from Good Shepherd Medical Center.

HEARING: Weekly inspections have continued

Continued from 1A

"I would like to see what we can do to prevent this from happening again," said Dembrow, the committee's chair.

The state government should be wary of confined animal feeding operations, or CAFOs, that are "too big to fail" due to the large numbers of animals involved, he said.

In the case of Lost Valley Farm, the dairy's size has been used as an argument against its forced closure, since cows will continue generating milk and waste regardless of a court order.

"I think most of us will agree this is a story of failure," said Dembrow, adding that it's unclear whether it's a "failure of personalities or the whole CAFO program?"

The testimony of Alexis Taylor, director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, focused on the permitting required for dairies and how Lost Valley Farm navigated this process.

Dairies make up 206 of the 516 CAFOs inspected by the agency, which issues a civil penalty in fewer than 1 percent of the 880 inspections its employees conduct each year, Taylor said.

Lost Valley Farm is the most extensively monitored CAFO in Oregon, with groundwater from 11 wells being tested for pollutants, she said.

The ODA has acted quickly in regard to the dairy's wastewater problems — within roughly a year, the

agency has repeatedly notified the company of violations, issued a hefty civil penalty and sought a temporary restraining order that resulted in a settlement, Taylor said.

The court judgment, entered in March, provides an additional option for the agency: The dairy can be punished for contempt of court for violating the agreement, she said.

Such drastic measures are rarely necessary in regulating CAFOs, Taylor said. "It's really when an operator is unable or unwilling to be in compliance."

Weekly inspections of the Lost Valley Farm facility have continued since the settlement, but ODA is discussing further steps with attorneys from Oregon's Department of Justice, she said.

"I think we are at a point the operation is not able to comply with the permit," Taylor said.

Any regulatory action is separate from the company's bankruptcy proceedings, she said.

The dairy's owner, Greg Te Velde, has filed for bankruptcy in California, where he's asked a judge to allow for the dairy, cattle and property to be sold for more than \$100 million.

The company's largest creditor, Rabobank, instead wants the herd liquidated as soon as possible, arguing it's losing value.

Tom Byler, the director of the Oregon Water Resources Department, said the dairy

was allowed to use groundwater under an exemption for livestock watering despite being located in a restricted area.

The operation's long-term potable water needs remain unresolved, since proposed water transfers have been blocked by administrative protests, Byler said.

However, a neighboring farm is foregoing groundwater withdrawals, alleviating immediate concerns about groundwater levels in the area, he said.

When asked by Dembrow whether the stockwater exemption was "exceptional" or a "misuse" in this case, Byler said he's not sure what Oregon lawmakers envisioned when they created the exemption in the early 1900s.

There were no "mega dairies" back then, but that doesn't mean large livestock uses didn't exist, he said.

Chad Allen, president of the Oregon Dairy Farmers Association, drove to the hearing in Salem from his farm in Tillamook but was unable to testify.

Allen said he wanted legislators to understand Oregon is a "leader" in the arena of CAFO regulation and that ODA acted aggressively in reacting to problems at Lost Valley Farm.

"The system clearly works," he said.

The unforeseen circumstance of addiction played a major role in the dairy's dysfunction, which isn't likely to be a problem for

other Oregon dairy operators, Allen said.

Greg te Velde, Lost Valley's owner, was arrested last year for methamphetamine possession and patronizing a prostitute and later pleaded guilty to a lesser charge. Rabobank has argued in court papers that his erratic behavior was caused by addiction, for which he's sought drug treatment.

While the state's CAFO regulations functioned properly, the case has certainly been a gift to critics of the dairy industry, Allen said.

"I think we'll be throwing water on this for a while in terms of getting it to cool down," he said.

HAMLEY'S: Auction is June 11

Continued from 1A

and plans to sell the stock of the three companies that control the Hamley's western store, the adjoining restaurant and bar, and the chunk of property where the businesses operate at Southeast Court Avenue and Main Street. The auction is June 11 at the legal firm Tonkon Torp in Portland.

Woodfield said he knew was HIPO is taking this action, but did not know more. He would not address whether he plans to bid.

Pearce said he authorized Hamley's to make payments to HIPO starting in March, but Woodfield would not, which left the creditor with few options.

"So HIPO is just going to put the membership stocks up for sale," he said. "It's what you would expect from a secured party when you don't pay 'em."

HIPO's attorney, Bill Snyder of Boise, is paying the *East Oregonian* to publish a legal notice of the sale this week that details how to



EO file photo

A pedestrian walks past the Hamley's store on Court Avenue on recently in Pendleton.

qualify as a bidder.

Pearce also said he offered to buy out Woodfield, but Woodfield rejected or ignored the offers. Woodfield is suing Pearce for control of Hamley's and in court documents contends Pearce tendered far too low a price.

The court action has cast a pall over Hamley's good name, Pearce said, but the auction offers a way to sunnier days. He and Woodfield split anything above and beyond what HIPO recoups.

"So it may be a successful way for Mr. Woodfield to get out," he said.

The sale also could clear Hamley's of any debt, which Pearce painted as modest in light of the \$11 million investment in the businesses.

Auctions, however, are uncertain businesses, and Woodfield can show up to bid. Pearce said Hamley's employs 75-80 people and he wants to preserve those jobs and continue shepherding the company.

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