

Rodeo royalty a family affair

By **BENNETT HALL**
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — You could say Laramie and Lavina Kiser have royal blood in their veins.

The 16-year-old Mt. Vernon twins, both juniors at Grant Union High School, were crowned queen and princess, respectively, of the 2023 Grant County Fair and Rodeo Court on Saturday, Nov. 19, during the Cowboy Christmas Coronation Dinner and Auction at the Grant County Fairgrounds.

For the Kiser family, Laramie and Lavina are the latest in a long line of Grant County rodeo royalty that stretches back five generations.

“It feels good because it

feels like we’re carrying on the tradition,” Queen Laramie said. “There’s lots of support in our family.”

She recited the royal lineage, turning occasionally to her sister to help fill the odd gap in her memory.

The twins’ older sister, Kelsei Keiser, was the Grant County rodeo queen in 2020, and their mom, Jeanna Deist Keiser, was a princess in 1993.

Their great-aunt Karen Officer Burton was queen in 1970, the year after their grandmother Pattie Officer Deist was a princess.

Going back further still, Laramie and Lavina’s great-grandmother Janice Moove Officer was a princess on the 1947 court, and great-



Bennett Hall/Blue Mountain Eagle
Laramie Kiser, left, is the queen of the 2023 Grant County Fair and Rodeo Court and her twin sister, Lavina Kiser, is the 2023 princess.

great-grandmother Betty Officer was the 1941 fair and rodeo queen.

“I think we have two grand marshals in there somewhere, but I don’t remember their

names,” Laramie added.

Even by Grant County standards, that’s quite a run.

“We have multi-generations here in Grant County (but) this is probably the longest I’ve

seen,” Fair Manager Mindy Winegar said.

Tinka Oliver, the 2023 Grant County Fair and Rodeo Parade grand marshal, was also introduced at the event, which featured a tri-tip dinner and live, silent and dessert auctions.

“Tinka has been in Grant County for well over 50 years,” Winegar said. “She has been in agriculture her whole life.”

Oliver ran the Oliver Ranch near Seneca with her late husband, J.C., and the couple were known as staunch supporters of the Grant County Fair and Rodeo, Winegar said.

The 2023 Grant County Fair will run Aug. 9-12. The ICA Prime Rodeo is scheduled for Aug. 4 and 5 at the fairgrounds, and the Grant County Junior Rodeo will take place Aug. 6.

Winegar said this year’s Cowboy Christmas Coronation

Dinner and Auction drew 165 people and raised \$16,406 to help cover travel, clothing and other expenses for the Kiser sisters as they represent the county at appearances throughout the state and the Northwest.

St. Helens Beef donated the meat for the tri-tip dinner, with other food items donated by Chester’s Market and The Outpost Pizza Pub & Grill. Toni Clark did the cooking, and the Snaffle Bit staffed the no-host bar.

Table sponsors were 1st Choice Auto Body, John Day River Veterinary Center, Blue Mountain Hospital, Long Creek Mercantile, Solutions CPAs, Loop Ranch, Grant Union Future Business Leaders of America, Frontier Equipment, Grant County Stockgrowers, Iron Triangle and Ed Staub & Sons.

Peter Wesley Van Komen

July 21, 1952 ~ November 2, 2022



It is with deep sadness we announce the loss of our father Peter Wesley Van Komen, age 70, of Ellensburg, Washington. He died unexpectedly on November 2, 2022 after suffering a major heart attack and spending a week in the ICU at Yakima Memorial Hospital. He was surrounded by family and showered in love, as he peacefully passed away into the next life.

He was known to his family and friends as Pete and was the oldest of three children. He was born on July 21st, 1952, in Soap Lake, Washington, to Lyle Van Komen and Allene “Tiny” Van Komen. Growing up, he lived in Nevada and Idaho, before moving back to Washington during his high school years. Pete attended Quincy High School and graduated with the class of 1971. He went on to earn an associate’s degree from a community college in Spokane, where he studied mechanics.

In 1983 Pete married Julie Bowman Van Komen, in Winnemucca, Nevada, and it wasn’t long before they moved to the small town of George, Washington. While working to support his young family, Pete was actively involved in the George City Council and George Jaycees, a volunteer organization responsible for acts of charity such as building a fence to increase safety at the local school. Pete was later elected mayor of George where he dedicated four years, two consecutive terms, to running the city.

Pete was known as leader, entrepreneur, and community builder. His exceptional talent for communication and negotiation eventually led him to move into sales and hay brokering. He made a name for himself in the Columbia Basin as he built out his network of farmers and ranchers across the Pacific Northwest. In 1993 he took his expertise and love for the hay business and moved his family to the Kittitas Valley. In Ellensburg he continued to grow his hay business, making new connections, developing life-long friendships, and discovering new business opportunities.

If you knew Pete, you know he was one of the hardest workers you will ever meet. Pete survived a plane crash in 1993, leaving him with a laundry-list of injuries that he carried for the rest of his life. Despite his injuries, he would not keep away from his work for too long. Even after his battle with diabetes and ultimately losing his leg and both feet, he still worked every day he could. Pete was always determined and known to be a “fighter” by his friends and family. He refused to give up, even when the odds were stacked against him. This “fighter spirit” served him well throughout his life.

Pete watched over his family and those around him, serving as a protector and provider for all of his loved ones. Pete was known to play the “sugarloaf claw machines” and often gave away his winnings. Pete would give the shirt off his back to those in need, then claim he was too warm anyways. Pete was there for anyone that needed help and wanted work, especially those that were down on their luck. He is going to be missed by his family, friends, and community. Pete truly touched the lives of so many individuals from various backgrounds and walks of life.

Pete was predeceased by his father, Lyle Van Komen, his mother, Allene “Tiny” Van Komen; and his younger brother, John Van Komen.

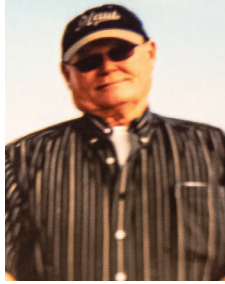
Pete is survived by his life-long partner, Julie Van Komen; his sister, Debbie Van Komen; his five children, Kaylene, Karli, Stephanie, Brian and Wesley; his 14 grandchildren, Kabrina, Terrell, Arianna, Alexia, Brycen, Tayshaun, Jayden, Kyhden, Kyler, Liliana, Kyrstin, Wyatt, Mason & Jase; and his one great-granddaughter, Lorraine.

Pete was baptized into the LDS church in the last few years of his life, and sometimes attended services at the Foursquare church in Ellensburg.

Please send any flowers or cards for the service to Brookside Funeral Home, 500 E. Mountain View Ave. Ellensburg, WA 98926 by Friday, December 2.

We would love for those who knew him to remember his life with us at 11am on Saturday, December 3rd, 2022. Services will be held at the Ellensburg LDS Church, 808 South Magnolia Street, Ellensburg, WA 98926. Casual attire is okay. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.brooksidefuneral.com. Brookside Funeral Home is caring for the family.

Paid for by the family of Pete Van Komen.



Thanksgiving feast costs 20% more

By **SIERRA DAWN McCLAIN**
Capital Press

SALEM — Hosting a Thanksgiving feast for a

party of 10 this month could cost 20% more than last year, according to a national survey from the American Farm Bureau Federation.

The survey found U.S. consumers will pay, on average, \$64.05 for a Thanksgiving meal for 10, up from last year’s average of \$53.31.

The estimates are based on a meal including turkey, stuffing, pie crusts, pumpkin pie with whipped cream, coffee with milk, dinner rolls with butter, peas, sweet potatoes, vegetables, cranberries and miscellaneous ingredients.

Prices vary by region. The cost for a classic Thanksgiving meal will be most affordable in the South, at \$58.42, followed by the Northeast at \$64.02, Midwest at \$64.26 and West at \$71.37.

Several factors have contributed to the increased meal cost, said AFBF chief economist Roger Cryan.

Inflation is a major factor. General inflation has recently run between 7% to 9%, and the latest Consumer Price Index report showed the price of food consumed at home has increased 12% over the past year.

Supply chain disruptions and the war in Ukraine have also spiked food prices.

The turkey — the centerpiece of many Thanksgiving dinners — will gobble up much of the holiday budget this year for reasons beyond inflation. The Farm Bureau estimates a 16-pound bird will cost \$28.96 this year, or \$1.81 per pound, up 21% from last year.

The higher cost can be attributed to “a slightly smaller flock this year, increased feed costs and lighter processing weights,” said Cryan.

The overall flock is smaller because highly pathogenic avian influenza this year killed more than 6 million turkeys, according to USDA.

By August, turkey production was down 9.4% from a year earlier and processing

weights fell below normal levels as growers marketed younger birds.

Although the Farm Bureau’s price-check survey Oct. 18-31 found the going price for a 16-pound turkey to be \$28.96, that was before most grocery stores started featuring whole frozen turkeys at lower prices, so economists say shoppers should be able to find cheaper birds now.

Though consumers face steeper costs, economists say higher food prices don’t always translate into higher farm profits.

According to USDA’s latest Agricultural Prices report, compared to September 2021, farmers this September received higher prices for grain, dairy, poultry and many vegetables. However, farmers simultaneously faced rising input costs, paying year-over-year 20% more for feed, 30% more for fertilizer, 45% more for chemicals, 28% more for fuels and 15% more for machinery.

“Farmers are working hard to meet growing demands for food — both here in the U.S. and globally — while facing rising prices for fuel, fertilizer and other inputs,” said Cryan.

Farmers also generally receive a small slice of each food dollar.

For every dollar Americans spent on Thanksgiving meals last November, farmers and ranchers earned about 11.5 cents, the National Farmers Union calculated, and nearly every year, the farmer’s share of the food dollar shrinks.

About a decade ago, according to USDA, American farmers received 17.6 cents of every \$1 consumers spent on food. This year, a USDA statement said “just 14 cents of the food dollar go to producers on average.”

Rheanna Cheyenne Cartner

August 7, 1998 ~ November 11, 2022

Rheanna Cheyenne Cartner, 24, both of John Day and Seneca’s Beloved went to the Lord on November 11, 2022. A celebration of Rheanna’s life will be held at a later date (date, time and place) to be announced.

From an early age, Rheanna’s strong personality showed. Before age one she was walking. You could say jump, and she would. She was smart. By age two-and-a-half her cousin Lanea taught her to tie her own shoes. By age three she was sewing, painting, and running the school classroom.

When Rheanna started playing volleyball she found the absolute love of her life; she was a good player. As a sophomore in high school she was already on the varsity volleyball team. By senior year she was captain of the volleyball team. Her team went to state a number of years in a row, placing second and third. One year the bus was rear-ended and even though everyone was all shook up, they still played and placed. Rheanna also enjoyed and participated in track and basketball. She had beauty and personality and was a princess on Senior Prom court.

Rheanna started working at a Seneca restaurant at age 16. She was always a hard worker and later became assistant manager at the 123 Store in John Day. She also worked at Old West Federal Credit Union and loved the challenges of the job, her coworkers and serving the public.

Rheanna traveled twice to Europe, seeing Germany, Pompeii, Switzerland, Rome, and Paris. She loved these trips so much. She also went to Washington DC, and at some time she dipped her toes in the Caribbean. She loved adventure!

Rheanna lost her father when she was two years old. Her brother Jeremy, who was 18 years older than Rheanna, moved back home to help the family. They fought at times as siblings do, but they really loved each other. Rheanna has two half-siblings on her father’s side; Dustin and Tess Cartner.

Rick Saul came into her life when she was five. He helped raise her. Rick taught her to hunt and to drive. He was the person she called when she needed help. He was her rock and was always involved in her life.

Her aunt, Pam Francis, was always there for her as well. Everyone in Seneca had a place in their heart for her. She was Renee Nelson’s baby doll. She also had a large extended family, Katie Saul, Wayne Saul, and Jeremy’s children Kyla and Carissa Parker. Rheanna was proud to be a great aunt. Her cousin Pam’s children Lanea and Kevin were also in her life.

There was so much good in Rheanna. So many things she loved, so many people that she loved, and who loved her. Little things, like loving deviled eggs. Bigger things like loving the beach and watching the ocean. She loved every little thing about Christmas including passing out the presents. She also liked to cook and hang out with friends. She especially loved her two close friends Keila and Emma Kate.

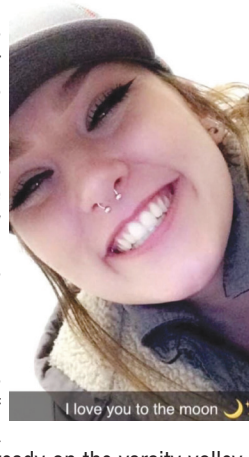
Rheanna, like her grandma Patty, loved, loved, loved jewelry and bling. Her aged 1950s vanity was full of her jewelry and her makeup. She loved all animals, especially her dogs Kenai, Pitch and Flippy. She loved octopuses, snakes and quail, marbles and rocks.

Rheanna was fearless and funny, loving, honest, and wild. She was occasionally mean. She had piercings and tattoos and loved with her whole heart.

Rheanna is survived by her mother, Tammy Cartner, father Rick Saul; siblings, Jeremy, Katie, Wayne, Tess, Dustin, Billie Holiday; aunts Pamela, Jodi, Cindy, Cody, Shawna; uncles Curtis, Jerry, Dale, Bill, Duke, Randy, George; godparent Barb Northington; honorary godparents Steve and Shannon Harvey; special friends Nancy, Suzie, the Holiday family and many, many more.

For all the loves in her life, from birth until now, you will always be loved by her and forever in her heart. Rest in eternal peace, our beautiful love. We will all miss you.

Those who would like to make a memorial donation in memory of Rheanna may do so to help defray funeral services either on the Go Fund Me page or through Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services, PO Box 543, Halfway, Oregon 97834. Online condolences may be shared at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com. Paid for by the family of Rheanna Cartner.



ANNIVERSARY

Les and Sharon Martin

Les and Sharon Martin of Mt. Vernon celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on Nov. 15, just days after the birth of their second great-grandchild, Ethan James Martin, to Joshua and Kayla Martin of Tigard.



CORRECTIONS

The Blue Mountain Eagle strives to ensure accuracy. If you see an error in one of our stories, please contact us at editor@bmeagle.com or 541-575-0710.

Last Week’s Temps

John Day	HI/LO
Wednesday	47/22
Thursday.....	38/18
Friday	39/17
Saturday	42/18
Sunday.....	45/23
Monday.....	45/28
Tuesday	43/29

24/7 FORECAST

AUTOMATED: 541-575-1122

ROAD CONDITIONS: 511; TRIPCHECK.COM

NOAA WEATHER RADIO FOR JOHN DAY

162.500 MHz

WEATHER FORECAST FOR THE WEEK OF NOV. 23-29

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Cloudy	Partly cloudy	Snow showers	AM snow showers	Partly cloudy
42	48	44	38	37	32	33
26	27	29	27	25	20	22