

HEPPNER

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Lady Elks busy with upcoming holiday events



Lady Elks officers: (l-r) Andrea Mortimore, Linda Kenny, Lori Straley, Jeannette Townsend

The ladies of the Heppner Elks Lodge #358 will sponsor a dinner to aid the Neighborhood Center Friday, Dec. 13, from 6-8 p.m. The dinner will

"cost" one new toy. The menu will be pasta with meat sauce or clam sauce, salad and garlic bread.

Each member and guest are

Santa Claus opens regional office



Santa Claus has opened an additional toy workshop in the Heppner City Park to handle increasing market demands in this area. Elves and associated staff persons are seldom seen due to the pressures of the season's workload, but can occasionally be glimpsed in the vicinity of the Democrat Gulch Schoolhouse, which is serving as their temporary headquarters.

A special mailbox has been provided in the park (guarded by a zealous snowman) to facilitate delivery of letters of Santa. Any letters mailed at this site will be delivered to Santa on a daily basis through Friday, Dec. 20, and a highly-placed source in the Claus or-

ganization has promised that every letter will be answered. Visitors to Santa's Toy Workshop in the city park are encouraged though the shop itself will, of course, remain off-limits for Christmas security reasons. If the elves and other staff seem distracted and uncommunicative, visitors are asked to understand the pressure of the looming deadline under which they are working.

Logistical assistance for the arrival of the Claus staff was provided by volunteers associated with the Morrow County Museum and Oregon Trail Library, Heppner branch, their families and friends. All necessary materials were donated.

asked to bring the toy unwrapped and present it at the cash register. The toys will be wrapped by the Ladies and labeled according to appropriate age group and gender. The wrapped toys will be turned over the Neighborhood Center Board member, Jeannette Townsend. The toys will be distributed to the needy children in the area.

In preparation for the upcoming 100th annual celebration at the lodge, the Ladies are sponsoring a Coleman gas barbecue raffle. The barbecue is on display at the lodge. Tickets cost whatever amount is printed on the ticket with numbers 358 and 100 free. The drawing will be held when all 500 tickets are sold or no later than Wednesday, Jan. 15. Proceeds will be used in decorating the lodge "in grand style" for the celebration said a spokesperson. Pettyjohn's Hardware provided the barbecue at a discount to help the Ladies afford this fund raiser.

All members should have received their annual invitation either by card or newsletter by now. They are reminded to RSVP for the dinner by mail or phone by Jan. 15. Members may call the lodge at 676-9181 during business hours, Wednesday-Saturday, 4 p.m.-closing, in order to RSVP. Invitations have been sent via newsletter to all out-of-town members, all Oregon lodges, lodges throughout the country and the Grand Lodge. "Don't delay your RSVP as you wish dinner," said the spokesperson. It is not necessary to RSVP for the Ladies Tea, dancing or Sunday brunch.

The Ladies will hold an organizational meeting for the annual on Thursday, Jan. 16 at 7 p.m. Any member or member spouse is invited to attend.

Santa plows into lone

Santa will visit Lone Saturday, Dec. 14 from 3-5 p.m. at the Office Tavern. That jolly ol' man will be arriving in the true holiday spirit of a farming community on his John Deere tractor. Mr. Claus will arrive at 3:30 p.m., ready to hear Christmas lists. Polaroid photos with Santa will be available for \$1.

Carrie Greib will read a holiday classic before Santa's arrival. Everyone is invited to get into the Christmas spirit with Santa, holiday stories, cookies and punch.

Santa's visit to Lone is presented by the Morrow County Arts Council and sponsored by Wheatland Insurance, Lone Repair and Auto Parts, and Santa's anonymous helpers.

Love of horses shapes life of Heppner woman

By April Hilton-Sykes

Three words pretty much describe Katherine Dale of Heppner.

Okay--after horses, horses, horses--the three words have to be hard work, determination and sacrifice. Dale loves horses and has overcome some formidable obstacles on the path to realizing her goals. And horses almost always figure into her life.

Dale, now 43, was born in Casper, Wyoming. Her dad was a geologist with Gulf Oil, so the family traveled around a bit, living in Denver, Colorado, Brisbane, Australia, and Texas.

In 1975, Dale got a job on a cattle ranch, working on the hay crew, running the swather and cooking. A cow hand she worked with told her that she should learn dressage, which, Dale says, is a systematic sequence of training horses which develops the body at the same time it develops the mind, much like gymnastics.

Dale then set her sights on attending the Potomac Horse Center, near Washington, D.C., a prestigious school which trained students for the British Horse Society exam. The school's discipline was three-day eventing, which included dressage, jumping and cross country, with an emphasis on dressage.

So, Dale worked on the ranch and then with the Forest Service at Elk City, Idaho, to save money to be able to enroll. Unfortunately, by the time she raised enough money to pay for the school, they had raised the tuition. So, it was back to work again. It took her three years to raise enough money to be able to attend--as a working student.

The big day finally came and she was scheduled for an entrance exam at the school. "I had trained hunter-jumpers in Texas," said Dale, "but dressage is a whole different thing. So, I flunked the entrance test." Determined to enter the school, Dale told them that they would have to physically remove her from the premises if they really wanted her to leave. Accepted temporarily, she put in an extra hour of training a day, in addition to her regular work. Hard work paid off, and she was retested, this time earning the top scores in her group.

The Potomac Horse Center, an exclusive 2,000-acre facility, employed six instructors, some of whom were members of the U.S. Equestrian team, for 12 students and around 250 others per week from the general public. As a working student (there were also non-working students), Dale typically got up at 4 a.m., mucked stalls for eight horses and fed and watered them at 6:30 a.m. before her own breakfast. After breakfast, the center put up a list of horses the working students had to have saddled and bridled. (Many of the horses at the center belonged to judges and international diplomats.) Then they had a stable management lecture, a practical (hands-on), such as braiding or grooming, riding theory, a riding lesson, a teaching lecture on how to teach riding and a teaching practical. Part of the practical included how to project your voice in a large arena. Tack was meticulously cleaned each day. The students were critiqued and given demerits. "If you got 20 demerits, you were out," said Dale.

After eight months of working and training, Dale underwent a grueling examination. She was tested daily for two weeks by examiners from England. Students who scored below 90 points on any day on any test flunked the course. "A lot of people dropped out," said Dale. "But if you go into it



Dale with Michy

with the right attitude, when you finish, you know you're capable of working with the very best." Dale passed the course and became a British Horse Society Assistant Instructor. She later qualified for the Senior Instructor certificate.

She then moved back to Elk City, but became dissatisfied with the situation there. "People around there didn't have a very good attitude about horses," she said. So, when she saw a notice in the magazine, "Equus", about a seminar in Seattle, the "Equine Athlete", she was determined to attend. "It was really neat to see people so involved in horses," said Dale. Deciding to move to the Seattle area, she wrote to over 200 stables looking for work--and got one offer. "Even a big stable hires only one or two people," she said. She was hired at a stable in Issaquah, where she did the barn work, because they already had an instructor and trainer.

From there, Dale got a job at a barn in Renton, WA. When she started, she had three students, but after three years, she had built up the program to 90 students a week. The owners, however, put back little into the operation, not even providing "the most routine health care" for their horses. "I got \$5 a lesson and they got \$20. They took money out, but didn't put anything back in," she said. Fed up, she quit and borrowed enough money from her mother to buy five acres and built a 10-stall barn with a big covered arena. And she took her students with her.

Unfortunately, Dale discovered that having school horses was a quick way to go broke. She sold the school horses, took in boarders and continued training and teaching.

Dale then started to work at Longacres Race Track in Seattle. Her job at the track was working at the test barn, collecting urine and blood from horses to test for drugs. She got up at 3 a.m., fed the horses in her barn, fed the horses in the quarterhorse barn, spent the day training and teaching, did chores at a breeding farm on the way to the track and then returned to Longacres. "If I had the last race, I would be home between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. You just can't make a horse pee," she laughs. "Some horses would stop the walker to pee, but some were really shy. You'd stick out a 'wand' to collect the urine and then they would stop. They sometimes wouldn't go again for two to three hours. Some were trained to go on a whistle."

She also managed a quarterhorse breeding farm about two miles from her house.

Although the work was hard, Dale doesn't have too many complaints. "It's a good healthy lifestyle--lots of hard work, no insomnia. It's real rewarding."

Once in a while, Dale would get a two-day vacation when the owner of the quarterhorses shipped them out for breeding at the fabulously ornate Lazy E Ranch outside Oklahoma City and sent Dale to check on them. At the Lazy E, the largest privately-owned indoor arena in the nation, Dale stayed in the guest house and had carte blanche at the resort.

"I was like a kid in a fairyland," she said.

While in the Seattle area, Dale had heard about equine massage and wanted to learn more about it, but the seminar cost \$3,000 in addition to living expenses. The instructor called her and said there was enough interest to put on a seminar in California and asked if she'd be interested. "I said okay," said Dale, "but I had no idea how I was going to pay for it." Ironically, at the same time, a friend tried to talk her into betting on a horse at the track. She didn't, but he placed a \$100 bet for her. The horse won and the friend gave her the \$4,000 in winnings.

Dale used the money to pay for the course and lodging. She then returned to the track where she used massage therapy on the race horses. The therapy, sales Dale, made a dramatic difference in horses who weren't expected to race again or were not racing to their potential. Her job at the track lasted until the facilities were sold and consequently shut down for a period of time.

Frustrated, Dale sold out after 10 years. "People just don't realize," she said. "You charge \$20-\$50 for a lesson, but they don't consider that you've spent years and years working below minimum wage. They don't realize it's a day-in-day-out job. I advise students to go to college or trade school so they can get into a good paying position. So then you can enjoy your horses."

She then took another chance and moved to Republic, WA, where she bought a 60-acre farm to pursue breeding thoroughbreds and Selle Francais. She had an opportunity to buy a Selle Francais stallion for \$20,000. But then while walking in a

pasture, Dale fell, severely dislocating her elbow. Doctors told her she would never regain the use of her pulled tendons and she was forced to turn the stallion down. Six months later, he was syndicated to the East Coast for \$100,000. "He will probably be in the Olympics in the year 2000," she said. "But, you cry at the time and then go on." Because of her injury Dale wasn't able to make the payments on her land and the stable owner foreclosed.

Dale then returned to school via computer. She took basic courses the first year and then moved to Spokane to continue college. She piled on 25 credits a quarter toward an associate degree in library science, in addition to



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