

HEPPNER

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Top names headline Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo

Four current world leaders and numerous past world champions will vie for the 77th annual Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo this weekend, Aug. 20-22.

The rodeo kicks off with mutton bustin at 6:30 p.m. Friday, with the main performance at 7:30 p.m. There will also be slack for all timed events following the performance on Friday. A second show will be on Saturday beginning with mutton bustin' at 12:45 p.m.

The Morrow County Rodeo, for residents of Morrow County and graduates of Morrow County high schools, will get underway with slack beginning at 10 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 22, followed by the main event at 1:15 p.m. Tickets may be purchased at the gate. Adult prices are \$8 each with tickets for children 7-12 at \$5. Children six and under are admitted free.

Headlining the list of entries are the current leader in the all around and calf roping titles, Fred Whitfield of Hookley, Texas, (\$121,549 earned). Whitfield will face tough competition with Blair Burke of Durant, Oklahoma, currently ranked second and 1998 World Champion Cody Ohl of Stephenville, Texas, ranked third in the world standings with \$81,885 won.

Several other top 10 cowboys will also compete, including former World Champion Herbert Theriot of Poplarville, Mississippi, who will also compete in the steer wrestling.

Steer wrestlers will face tough competition with the top five current world leaders-Lee Graves, Calgary Alberta ranked number one; four-time World Champion Ote Berry of Checotah, Oklahoma, ranked second; Jason Lahr, of Emporia, Kansas, ranked third; Tommy Cook, of Heber, Utah, ranked fourth; and Chad Hagan, Leesville, Louisiana, ranked fifth. 1998 World Champion Brad Gleason will also be competing. Each of these contestants has won over \$36,000 this year alone in steer wrestling.

Other current world leaders entered are team ropers, Daniel Green of Oakdale, California, and Allen Bach of Turlock, California. They are part of a loaded team roping field which includes second place ropers Speed Williams of Jacksonville, Florida, and Rich Skelton of Llano, Texas. These individuals have net between \$40,000 - \$60,000 in income from their skill at team roping.

Other top ten team ropers entered are former World



Cody Ohl



Melissa Hubier



Clint Corey



Brad Goodrich

Champion Bobby Hurley on Ceres, California, who will be roping with Monty Joe Petska, of Carlsbad, New Mexico, currently ranked number 11.

Defending Oregon Trail champion Katie McCain of Condon is ranked 19th in the

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Bobbie Rankin sparkles as Morrow County Fair and Oregon Tail Pro Rodeo Queen



Queen Bobbie and her official mount

By Merlyn Robinson

Like her crown, Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo Queen Bobbie Rankin is a jewel who sparkles. A dazzling smile and an outgoing personality are part of her charms. Goal-oriented, her summers have been dedicated to promoting the local fair and rodeo.

"Ever since I was little I've wanted to be on the court," says Queen Bobbie, the daughter of Tim and Kathy Rankin. At that time she says her parents laughed about what they thought was a passing fancy. Little did they realize then that they would devote five years to court participation for their daughters who have been pennant bearers and court royalty. This year the Rankins have traveled more than 7,500 miles trailering horses to other rodeos and parades.

A cooperative spirit and family support is what makes it all possible, Bobbie says. This year the court families spent weekends at the Prineville, Sisters and Joseph rodeos in addition to one-day travels to many other events. A hectic schedule has included some fun times like dances, swim parties and shopping. They have shared many laughs. One time her princesses giggled and Bobbie tried to keep from smiling after realizing that her teeth were stained from dark food coloring in the cake decorations at a royal luncheon.

Besides keeping pace with their daughters' needs, the court mothers have shared chaperon duties by arranging schedules, attending meetings, crafting decorations and also sewing court garments. Ready for all occasions and all types of weather, this court's wardrobe includes their official outfits, chaps, ultrasuede skirts for luncheons, work outfits and jackets, all in coordinating colors of navy blue, gray and white.

Queen Bobbie is a 1999 Heppner High School graduate where she was an honors student. She was active in FFA, on the golf team for four years, and a member of OSSOM, the Outdoor Club and the Wild Horse Club besides participating in class activities and fund raisers. At graduation, Bobbie received scholarships from both the Heppner Elks and the Masonic Lodges and the American Legion. From babysitting to work experience at Gardner's Men's Wear, her summers have included employment in the YCC Forest Service program, the state highway litter patrol and training horses at the SunShadow Ranch.

When it comes to horsemanship, Queen Bobbie is

a natural. While court activities have been her focus, this summer she has been schooling horses for others besides training several of her own young colts. Her expertise is obvious, judging by the successful training of her court mount, Whiskey, a six-year-old sorrel Quarterhorse gelding that she raised from a colt. On this horse, Bobbie has captured many championship honors in 4-H and open horse shows. Capping eight years of participation in the 4-H horse program, Bobbie won the high point senior award, champion senior showmanship and champion in hunt seat over fences and trail at this year's show. Other placings included reserve grand champion showmanship and reserve champion awards in English, colt equitation and dressage. If it has anything to do with horses, Bobbie is always ready to participate, whether it's horse shows, trail riding, team penning, playday events or barrel racing on this well-rounded horse, that she says "can be stubborn at times."

This will be Bobbie's eighth year in the 4-H sheep as she juggles time for sheep showing amid all her queen commitments. Her expertise at sheep and horse showing are an advantage as she participates in the round robin contest where all species of animals are shown. It's the pig that is often "very uncooperative" that can pose a problem, she says.

Queen Bobbie, a Morrow County native, has lived all her life at the Rankin family home in the Blue Mountains, 30 miles from Heppner. Her family moved here from the Willamette Valley when Bobbie's older sister, Jennifer, was a baby. Nestled among the evergreens, it is an idyllic place for a family who loves horses and animals even though they it requires many miles to travel for extracurricular activities and employment.

Bobbie's father, Tim, is employed by the Morrow County Road Department. In spite of triple by-pass heart surgery earlier this year, he was soon up and ready to take his court daughters down the road again. But for a time he was forbidden to drive vehicles. Bobbie, who at age 16 began driving their pickup with a horse trailer, took over the wheel. Bobbie's mother, Kathy, does a balancing act as "court mom" plus working at the Heppner Ranger District, where she has fought fires and worked in the woods all day.

Bobbie's older sister Jennifer, a former court pennant bearer, now lives in Oregon City and is student body president at Clackamas Community College.

QUEEN BOBBIE RANKIN

Eyes: Blue
Hair: Blonde
Age: 18 years old
1999 HHS graduate
Parents:
Tim and Kathy Rankin
Activities: FFA, high school golf, OSSOM, Outdoor Club, honor student, 4-H horse shows, sheep, 1999 4-H High Point award, riding and training horses.



Queen Bobbie Rankin

Sharing the spotlight this year is Bobbie's younger sister, Princess Tracy, along with Princess Nonnee Walters and Princess Brooke Boyer. Other supporters include Bobbie's grandparents Bob and Marcy Logan of Beavercreek, who will be on hand for the festivities. Her paternal grandparents are the late John and Betty Rankin.

Following a busy week of fair and rodeo activities, this court also plans to attend Pendleton Round-Up parades and the Walla Walla Frontier Days. Stressing the importance of promoting hometown events, Queen Bobbie says she encourages other girls to try out for future courts. "It's lots of fun and it's an honor to represent this county and promote our own fair and rodeo," she says.

As to the future, Bobbie's "can do" attitude will prevail. She will be attending Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton this fall. She plans to take marketing and management courses for credits that can be transferred to a four-year university. While she may have to sacrifice time with her horses to pursue her education, it's an outstanding young people like Bobbie who are shining examples in this modern society.

Grade school open for registration

Heppner Elementary School will be open from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday for registration of new students. School begins on Monday, August 30.

Ione School registration set

Students new to the Ione Schools may pre-register any time Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday, the week prior to the start of school.

School begins Monday, August 30. School hours are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. for kindergarten through second grade students; and 8 a.m. to 3:32 p.m. for third grade and up. Afternoon buses run at 3:35 p.m.

MCGG will be closed Saturday
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