

Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo Queen Maggie has it all



Queen Maggie Collins

2012 Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo Queen Maggie Collins has it all—beauty, brains, talent, poise, personality, athletic ability and work ethic. But the 16-year-old queen has one more advantage, the most important one of all—her Christian faith.

Maggie, the daughter of Tim and Jeannie Collins of Heppner, told the Gazette-Times that the best experience she has had as fair and rodeo queen was attending a queen's Bible camp this summer where she was baptized.

"I was saved," exclaimed Maggie. "It was amazing."

"This was why God put the idea into my mind to become rodeo queen," she said. Maggie said that al-



Queen Maggie plays her violin at the 2012 Town & Country awards

though she had been baptized as a young child, she was too young and had not been saved. Wise beyond her years, she lamented that so many of the rodeo royalty she has met aren't able to see beyond the superficial "pretty dresses and glitz."

The queens' bible camp, held in Coulee, WA, the end of June was hosted by Jamie Rauch, the sister of Chris Rauch from the Heppner/Lexington area.

Maggie said that another favorite experience was representing Morrow County at Chief Joseph Days in Joseph, OR.

"The parade was huge and everyone was so excited and enthusiastic. I yelled 'Good morning Joseph,' and the whole block yelled back. The little kids were so friendly. I went through four autographed picture tablets."

Besides her parents, Queen Maggie credits friends Rita and Hal Bergstrom and Roger and Rena Henry, who, she says, go to all of the parades, for supporting her in her endeavors. "It would not be possible without them," she says, adding that she is humbled by all the support people in Morrow County have given her.

In fact, her horse, Penny, belongs to the Bergstrom's daughter, Emily. Penny, an 18-year-old quarter horse/Morgan cross that stands 14.3 hands high, is a veteran of parades, rodeos and even "bagpipes." A liver-colored chestnut with a white stripe down her face, Penny "loves children, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and pineapple."

"Penny is a very lovable and dependable horse," says Maggie's mom Jeannie.

"She and Maggie have bonded and growl at each other when Maggie has to give Penny a bath when getting ready for their court appearances. There is an unmistakable bond that they have with each other that not just anyone can have with an animal. They trust each other to keep one another safe while having fun doing their jobs. It is really quite phenomenal the bond that they share."

Jeannie expresses a lot of gratitude to the Bergstroms for "allowing Maggie to borrow this beautiful horse."

Besides her parents, Jeannie, a language arts teacher at Heppner High School, and Tim, who is a range management specialist with the Heppner Ranger District, Maggie's family also includes younger brothers Patrick, 14, and Roy, eight. Maggie, her dad and brothers all share a love of music, singing and playing the fiddle, mandolin and guitar. She played the fiddle at the 2003 state fair contest, at the coronation of Miss Rodeo Oregon Shelby Ross, at a dinner for Miss High School Rodeo Oregon Lillian Sandford, also of the Heppner/Ione/Lexington area, and even at her own coronation this March at the Morrow County Fairgrounds in Heppner along with her dad.

Maggie, who will be a senior at Heppner High School this fall, is also involved in 4-H, FFA, having recently received her State Farmer's Degree, was the 2011 Morrow County Fair senior horse grand champion showman, is on the honor roll and is a member of the National Honor Society. In addition to that staggering schedule, she adds sports to the mix, playing basketball and softball. She was a member of the Heppner High School softball team, who took the state championship

this year. She also likes working with her 4-H pig, teaches fiddle lessons and plays fiddle with the Blue Mountain Fiddlers.

Did we forget to mention that she also excels at sewing? She made her own parade outfit this year with the help of Emily Bergstrom. The green lame western shirt with gold trim and a decorative yoke is paired with a pair of blue designer jeans. Her outfits are accented with two different boots, a pair of square-toed black riding boots and a pair of tan dress boots featuring decorative cuts of crosses and roses. Her working outfit usually consists of a pair of decorative blue jeans, her tan boots and an emerald-green t-shirt with a paisley applique. Not surprisingly, like all the good guys in the old westerns, Maggie wears a white hat, although hers features a sparkling crown.

Like many previous royalty, Maggie has been a rodeo flag bearer several times and has ridden horses most of her life. Her escapades as Morrow County royalty include meeting Miss Rodeo America, Miss Rodeo Oregon and Misses Rodeo Washington and Idaho.

Queen Maggie has designated a special event at this year's Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo. She has designated the Friday, August 17, Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo as "Tough Enough to Wear Pink" night, in support of breast cancer research and for all those whose lives are affected

by breast cancer. She encourages everyone to come out and wear pink to show their support. She is in the process of making pink arm bands for rodeo and fair board members and stock contractors—just in case they don't have pink shirts.

In addition to her sparkly presence, Maggie's reign as queen this year can be celebrated for another reason. She is the first queen to represent the county in five years. The Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Rodeo Court has gone without a queen and court for all these years, apparently due to high costs and lack of interest. With Maggie, proud county residents can say, "We're baack!"



Maggie Collins and her horse Penny