

HEPPNER 50¢

# G-T azette imes

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## Knowles third in National Finals Rodeo average, 10<sup>th</sup> in world



Blake Knowles of Heppner competes in steer wrestling at the National Finals Rodeo.

Blake Knowles, Heppner, is currently sitting third in the average for steer wrestling at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo (NFR) in Las Vegas. At press time he was sitting 10<sup>th</sup> in the steer wrestling world standings with earnings of \$119,515.41. Knowles, the son of Butch and Mary Knowles, previously qualified and competed in the NFR in 2009, 2011 and 2015, making 2018 his fourth qualifying year.

Rodeo runs in the family, with Blake following in his dad's footsteps. Butch, a rodeo broadcaster, was the saddle bronc riding champion in the 1987 NFR. Fellow steer wrestler and Blake's cousin from Mount Vernon, OR, Trevor Knowles, is Blake's traveling companion and has qualified for the NFR 12 times.

Blake was born in 1982 and graduated from Heppner High School. He lives with his wife Whitney and daughter Lydia on the family ranch in Heppner. He competes in the steer wrestling events astride his 10 year old mare, Fab. Since joining the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) in 2002, his reported earnings are \$693,145.

To qualify for the 2018 NFR, he won the Farm City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston; the Saddle Club Rodeo in Oakdale, CA; the La Fiesta



Blake Knowles

De Los Vaqueros in Tucson, AZ; the Wild Rogue Pro Rodeo in Central Point, OR; the Crooked River Roundup in Prineville, OR; the Kansas Biggest Rodeo in Phillipsburg, KS and was co-champion at the Fiesta Days Rodeo in Spanish Fork, UT.

His NFR total score of 24.90 has him currently sitting in third place in the average after five rounds in the steer wrestling event. He placed second in round one with 3.80 and tied for third/fourth in round four with 3.80. His time in round two was 4.40, 4.80 in round three and 8.10 in the fifth round.

The Wrangler National Finals Rodeo is the season-ending championship event for the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association and is widely acknowledged to be the world's premier rodeo. Held annually since 1959 – and since 1985, every December at the Thomas & Mack Center

in Las Vegas – the Wrangler NFR is Pro Rodeo's richest and most prestigious rodeo, and it showcases the very best cowboys, barrel racers and livestock in the world.

At the conclusion of the Wrangler NFR, the sport's world champions are determined based on total season earnings – what they win during the Wrangler NFR added to what they won during the regular season, before the Wrangler NFR.

The Wrangler NFR consists of 10 rounds – one round on each of 10 consecutive days; each contestant competes once each day. Cowboys and barrel racers earn money by placing first through sixth in any round, and pick up more money by placing first through eighth in the average (cumulative times or points earned during the 10 rounds). At the end of each Wrangler NFR, there are two champions in each event (four for team roping): the average winner, who won the Wrangler NFR by having the best cumulative time or score for that event over the 10 rounds, and the world champion, who finished the year with the most money (including what he or she earned at the Wrangler NFR). For each event, the average winner and world champion may be the same person or different people.

The Heppner Gazette-Times wants to see pictures of your trophy animals from this hunting season. Stop by to drop your picture taken, drop off photos, mail them to PO Box 337 in Heppner, email them to editor@rapidsolve.net or text cell phone photos to 541-980-6674.



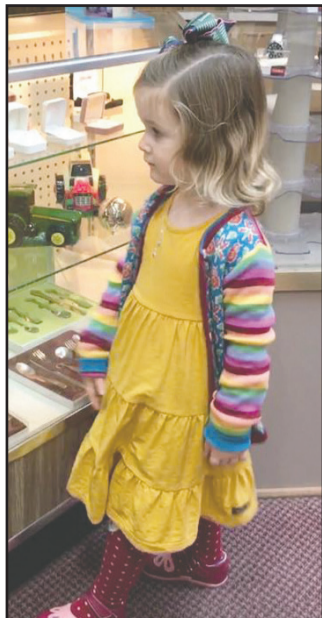
Clare Osmin, daughter of Derek Osmin (pictured), Hermiston, took this forked horn in October on the Osmin Ranch on Balm Fork. Clare is the granddaughter of Frank and Cara Osmin, Heppner. -Contributed photo



## Peterson mans the store for over 59 years



Randall Peterson helping out a new client, little Delilah, whose family recently purchased her very first necklace at Peterson's Jewelers.



A tiny, but satisfied customer.

Peterson's Jewelry, Heppner's long-standing treasure trove, was established in 1928 by John Oscar, "J.O." Peterson. And the man who has been behind the store for more than 59 years is J.O.'s son and the community's beloved jeweler, Randall Peterson.

Randall started working at the store cleaning up as a young boy. He said that during World War II, the store was selling what they called \$1 watches, which actually cost \$5 to \$10. The watches were so inexpensive that they were used until they stopped working. But after WWII, the quality of watches improved and he began repairing watches for his father when he was 12 years old. He laughs that while his friends were out playing, he was in the store fixing watches.

J.O. first established the store down the street on Main Street in Heppner near where the Bank of Eastern Oregon is now. Initially the store was established in conjunction with other businesses, an insurance office, a barbershop and later, restaurants. In the 1930s Randall remembers that the store stayed open until 9 p.m. on Saturday nights. Peterson's Jewelry moved to its current location in 1941 and in 1971, the store was doubled in size.

During the Korean War, in the 1950s, Randall was drafted into the service, not to Korea, but to Augsburg, Germany, where he was stationed during reconstruction in Europe. While in the service, he traveled not only to Germany, but to Switzerland, France, Sweden and Denmark. After two years in the service he returned to Heppner and went back to work at the store.

In 1959, Randall's father was in poor health and Randall, an only child, took over operation of the store. His father passed away the next year, in 1960. His mother, Bertha, also helped out at the store.

John Oscar, born in 1892 of Swedish ancestry, was originally from Anaconda, MN. At that time, he worked for the railroad. He then went to watchmaking school in Pennsylvania and got a job at Pomeroy, WA, where he met Randall's

mother, Bertha Lewis Peterson, who was born in Pomeroy. She passed away in 1970.

That year Marlene Bergstrom started working at the store. They had known each other in high school and both graduated from HHS. Randall lettered all four years in football at HHS. He attributes starting at center on the football team as a freshman to Tad Miller of Heppner. "Tad was center, he enlisted in the Navy and I got to take his place," said Randall, who then became tackle for the last three years of his high school football career. He also played "a little basketball and a little baseball" in high school, graduating in 1947. In addition to high school sports, he loved water skiing.

In December of 1971, he and Marlene married and she became a vital part of the store's operation. "She liked people and she knew what people liked," said Randall. "She was just a people person." They were married for 43 years before she died in 2014. "She worked right up until she passed," said Randall.

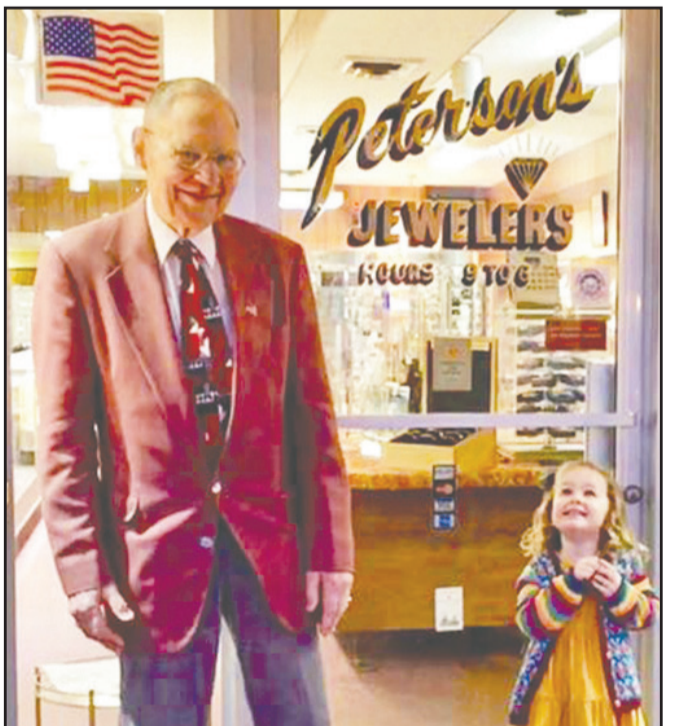
Randall and Marlene lived in Randall's childhood home on Gale St. in Heppner where he had lived since he was six years old. Randall, an accomplished carpenter, remodeled and added on to the house over the next 25 years. "Marlene always decided what she wanted," he said, with a

new kitchen at the top of the list and then insulation, new sheet rock, plumbing and electrical. "It's comfortable," says Randall, modestly. He admits to not being much of a cook, instead relying on the "can opener, microwave and oven."

While work is the top priority of Randall's life, he is active in the Odd Fellows, of which he has been a member since he was 21 years old, the Elks Club, which he joined at around 25, and the American Cancer Society. He has to pass an annual test to belong to the ACS and has attended the American Cancer Society conclave numerous times, traveling to Washington, D.C., Montreal and New Orleans, among others.

Randall says that a couple things have contributed to his long-standing success as a jeweler, those being treating his clientele well and being discrete. He says that many customers find themselves returning to Peterson's Jewelers after being mistreated at other out-of-town jewelry stores. "It makes a difference if you work with your customer," he said. He still gives customers Heppner High School sports schedules at the store.

Randall says that work is his favorite thing to do and, at 89, he has no plans to retire, enjoying both the people and the merchandise he works with.



Randall with Delilah. Delilah is the daughter of Julie Watkins, granddaughter of Barb and Gary Watkins and the great-granddaughter of Cal and Bev Sherman and Floss and the late R.G. Watkins, all of Heppner.

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