



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

Enjoy the Morrow County Fair and Rodeo August 17-21



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2022 Grand Marshal Darlene Hoskins was 1946 Queen of the Heppner Rodeo



1946 Queen Darlene and her horse, Lady. -Photo from the Heppner Gazette.

By Anne Hoskins Munkers
Darlene Biddle Hoskins, 1946 Heppner rodeo queen, has been selected as grand marshal for the 2022 Morrow County Fair and Rodeo.

Darlene Biddle Hoskins was born on the Connor Place close to Olex, OR in 1927. She was delivered by her grandmother as the doctor didn't get there in time. Her parents were Clarence and Lela (Salter) Biddle. Her dad was a teamster who trained horses to pull the equipment as teams. Her mother worked in the cookhouse during harvest as the crew moved from field to field.

The family moved to the mouth of Willow Creek on a small place where they had a small hay field for extra income. Her older sister, Joy, brother, Bill and Darlene attended school in Arlington. They moved to Ione next and went to school there for a time, but soon moved between Heppner and Lexington and went to school in Lexington. Her folks operated a dairy there until her dad passed away. Her mother moved the family back to Ione where Darlene's grandparents were and that's where she graduated in 1945.

Darlene was selected as queen of the Heppner Rodeo early in the spring of 1946. The princesses were Gwen Coleman (Healy), Jean Hanna (Bennett), Betty Lovgren (Way) and Betty Smethurst (Zeagler).

The court chaperones, Mrs. Clyde Nutting and Mrs. Leo Beckner, took the girls to Pendleton to select outfits. This was the first year the court wore pants instead of skirts.

In Pendleton, their first stop was the New York store. Jenny Gorfkle, one of the owners, came to wait on the court. A white shirt was selected for the queen, but there were no pants and a very scarce selection of white materials, due to a post-war shortage. Mrs. Gorfkle had two pieces of white wool, a heavy weight and a light weight. Darlene selected the lighter and the Pendleton Round-Up queen received the heavy material. After sending Darlene's pick to Nudelman's in Los Angeles, the pants were too sheer, so Mrs. Nutting proceeded to line them, an unheard-of thing then. Princesses Gwen and Betty L. wore green shirts, as they were redheads. Princesses Jean and Betty S. wore pale yellow, but all five of the girls' shirts were beautifully embroidered. The princesses wore darker pants. The next stop was at Hamley's for the court hats. Mr. Hamley came to them carrying two hat boxes containing the last white hats that had been saved for the next courts. The hat Darlene chose was made by Shuddle Bros. of Houston, Texas, sometime during the late 1930's. The war effort changed much of the production; thus, light hats were rare. The princesses wore a darker tan hat, more in the style of the 1940s. Darlene still has her outfit and hat.

Darlene had a saddle made for the summer events. She worked for anyone she could, cooking and washing dishes for five to 10 dollars a day. Joe Snyder and his partner built the saddle and Darlene still has that saddle and it's in good

condition.

She remembers traveling to rodeos and parades in Elgin, Lexington's 4th of July, John Day and Pendleton. In those days, horses were loaded into trucks, along with the tack, girls and outfits. A car would go along with the chaperones and provide extra space for girls and outfits.

Betty Lovgren and Betty Smethurst went on to school. Darlene, Gwen and Jean remained close friends their entire lives. She sincerely wishes they were here to share in this wonderful celebration. Darlene had been a princess on the court of Colleen Kilkenny (Greenup) in 1945. She remembers an event from that year too. During that year they attended a night parade in Pendleton. Colleen's father had passed away in her early teens and Colleen began tending the sheep camps. As they approached the pastimes, the old herders recognized Colleen and she turned her horse toward them, and they came out to the street. She shook hands with each of them, thus stopping the entire parade for some time. The princesses learned a lot about greeting people and promoting the rodeo from Colleen Kilkenny.

Darlene married Robert Hoskins late in the fall of 1946. They spent their early years between the ranch at Rhea Creek and the Wilber mountain property near Meacham. They herded sheep, raised pet lambs, helped move and set up the camps, loaded sheep on the trains to and from the mountains and put up hay. Their livestock business eventually included cattle too. They built a log home on the south end of the Rhea Creek place. It was similar to the cabin built on Wilbur Mt. years before. The logs for both were harvested from Wilbur Mt.



Pictured above is the 4-H dog show held Tuesday morning. Cadance Ferguson of Boardman (right) is preparing to put her dog Hemi through his paces for the judge (left). The helpers in the middle are being "posts" through which Hemi will be walked to show his figure eight maneuvering skills. -Photo by David Sykes.

The Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo is underway this week with lots of good food, exhibits, entertainment and rodeo for enjoyment at the fairgrounds in Heppner. The activities are ongoing and will culminate with the Morrow County Rodeo this Sunday.

Elks collect hides for Veterans

Daughters Anne ('54) and Mary ('56) made the family complete. Robert took Darlene and the girls as much as possible. The girls learned to ride by sitting in front of their parents while still in diapers, eventually being led on a shared horse and finally each girl was able to ride on her own horse. Anne was a princess on the 50th Anniversary Court in 1972 and Mary was a princess in '74 and queen in '75. So those years of riding lessons and chasing cattle paid off.

Robert and Darlene bought a home and acres on the Umatilla River near the mouth of Meacham Creek around 1960. Then in 1976, they purchased the Elmer and Sam Heath place on the south side of the Hoskins Ranch at Rhea Creek.

Robert passed away in 2016, but Darlene continues in the livestock business today. She still moves with the cattle to Umatilla in the spring and back again in the fall to Morrow County. She says she's had quite a life and the best decision she ever made was marrying Robert.



A volunteer collects hides donated by hunters.

The Heppner Elks Lodge Hides for Veterans program will begin collecting big game animal hides starting September 1. Successful hunters who wish to donate their animal hide will need to drop them off at the junction of Highway 207 and Willow Creek Road in Heppner. There will be two additional drop-off locations set up for rifle elk season at the Morrow County OHV Park and the Highway 395 junction near Ukiah.

Proceeds from the sale

of the hides benefit residents of the Oregon Veterans Home in The Dalles, OR. The Hides for Vets committee appreciates the support of the program from Morrow County Grain Growers and Miller & Sons Disposal. "We would not be able to carry on this tradition without their help," a spokesperson noted. Centralia Fur and Hide, Inc., a family owned business, purchases the hides each year at a fair price. They also sell amazing Native American goods they create with the leather at furandhide.com.

With the help of 12 Elks members, almost 60 volunteer hours and 1,000 miles driven while collecting hides the Hides for Veterans committee was able to raise over \$1,300 for the 2021 season. For additional information or to learn of ways to contribute to this program, please contact Donald Matthews at donaldgmatthews@gmail.com. Happy Hunting.

Chamber transitions to new leadership team

In the last few weeks, the community has voiced valid concerns about the future of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce. The Heppner Chamber recently experienced a financial shortfall due to some funding no longer available, and it ultimately redirected Chamber Director JoAnna Lamb and the chamber board to re-evaluate the chamber's position.

Due to the financial change, the chamber director position is now limited

to approximately 15 hours per week. When presented with an option for a part-time position, Lamb decided to move on from her current position. "The chamber board gives a huge thank you to JoAnna for stepping up in a position that had been vacated and keeping the chamber moving forward with limited support," chamber board president Andy Fletcher remarked. "She did Heppner and the chamber board a great service, and we are

very grateful."

To keep the important services the chamber provides to Heppner ongoing, the Heppner Community Foundation (HCF) has agreed to manage the chamber moving forward. HCF is directed by Katie Siri-Murray, who will act as lead in operations of the chamber with the support of events manager, Shelby Matthews. With a new team model,

-See CHAMBER/PAGE TWO

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