

Miss Teen Rodeo Kansas Newsletter

May 5, 2009

What an honor it is to hold such a title as Miss Teen Rodeo Kansas 2009. It seems like it was yesterday that I was standing in the dirt of the Dodge City Roundup Arena getting crowned as Alyson's (Miss Teen Rodeo Kansas 2008) successor. Now here I stand, five months and five days into my reign, and I still cannot believe I won.

Although my reign didn't officially begin until January 1, 2009, so many other things happened prior to this date. First, I must speak about the actual pageant. Many people, if not most, do not realize how much a rodeo pageant actually encompasses.

The first day, we all arrived at the DCCC dorms for check-in, being this was our "home" for the next couple days. At the Miss Rodeo and Miss Teen Rodeo Kansas pageant, contestants all stay in the dorms throughout the pageant, separate from friends and family. I really enjoyed this because it allowed me to get to know my fellow contestants better, and I thought it was fun to have all of us traveling around together in the van. We were also very blessed to have our "dorm mom," Dana Hansen, to look after us. She was great about making sure we were all awake at our desired time in the morning and ready to leave at the appropriate times! We each got our own room, but because the dorms were suite style, we each shared with another girl. I had the pleasure of sharing with Ann Kralick, Ell-Kan Rodeo Queen 2008, who came as visiting royalty and was extremely kind to me—a great dorm partner and friend of mine!

Also on that first day, we visited the Dodge City Days festival to compete in the (jumbo sized) tricycle races. This was really fun! I couldn't help laughing while trying to make the little pedals move faster than my feet would allow! At one point, rounding a cone during the race, I had my tricycle on two wheels!



We then returned to the dorms for our personal interviews, where we were able to speak more with our wonderful judges Kay Tilton, Kathey Waclawczyk, and Abbie Grossnicklaus. Both Kay and Kathey came up from all the way down in San Antonio, Texas, and all three were such a pleasure to be around throughout the entire pageant.

That evening, we headed to Spare Tyme Bowl to break out our spares and strikes, which was another great time! We bowled every way you could think—left-handed, up-side-down, through everyone's legs—which all made it more enjoyable (and interesting) to watch.

After bowling, it was time to go to the rodeo! There we were able to sell raffle tickets and mingle with the crowd, not to mention watch some of the greatest rodeo action in the state of Kansas! Being major fans of the Etbauer family, my mom and I were really excited to see both Billy and Trell competing and Danny picking up. Billy was the first go leader with an 86!

The next morning was horsemanship, the most anticipated event for me. Harry Vold, 11-time PRCA Stock Contractor of the Year, provided the horses for us, which were



labeled 1-3. We drew for which horse we would ride for the horsemanship pattern and then drew again for the queen's run and flag run. I, being the shortest girl of all the contestants, happened to draw the tallest horse! 😊

Despite his high spirits, I thought the pattern turned out very well. After our pattern, the judges asked a few questions on our knowledge of horses. Although my second horse and I had a little stumble in my queen's run, we both managed to pick back up and finish the run out smoothly! Harry has some great horses, and it was a pleasure and honor to ride them.

Speech followed the horsemanship competition, in which all contestants were asked to give a speech on rodeo and Kansas. I gave mine specifically on the Dodge City Round-up. After our speech, we were asked an impromptu question on rodeo knowledge.

Again that evening, after a delicious dinner at Casey's Cowtown, it was rodeo time! We sold raffle tickets once more this night, and also had the pleasure of being introduced to the crowd out in the arena. Once more we also got to catch some of the rodeo action, where Trell stopped the clock in 4.7 in the steer wrestling. A good friend of mine Jeston Mead, who just graduated high school in 2008, also led the bull riding with an 87 until J.W. Harris scored an 89 in one of the final rides of the night.



The next day, Saturday, was the final day of the pageant! We began the day with our rodeo knowledge quiz and group interviews, and then at noon, we competed in the fashion show, where we modeled a western jeans outfit and a western dress outfit. After we modeled, we were asked questions on current events. Then at the end of the show, we got to perform the line dance we had learned and been working on in our free time at the dorms!

After the fashion show, we went to the mall in Dodge City to participate in a "media" interview, where MRK secretary Thresa Reynolds asked us fun questions, through which we were able to show off our senses of humor and personalities.

Then the pageant was over! It was time to head back to the dorms to move out and then to my mom's hotel room to prepare for that night's coronation. After we were each introduced to the crowd and walked out into the arena, they began to announce the awards won. Then there's that pause—every announcer does it before saying who won the title. I cannot say that I wasn't nervous, but I would describe my emotions more as anxious—eager to see if God's plan for me included serving the state of Kansas for the next 365 days as a representative for not only our sport, heritage, and state, but for all of the amazing people who are involved in such a way of living. Did I want the title of Miss Teen Rodeo Kansas? Well, yes. But more importantly, I wanted the opportunity to further promote rodeo, introduce people to and teach them about our way of life, assist with whatever is needed, and be a role model for young children across the country.



When my name was announced, I can't describe in words how it felt, but I hope throughout this year I can prove to everyone how truly thankful I am to have been crowned that night.

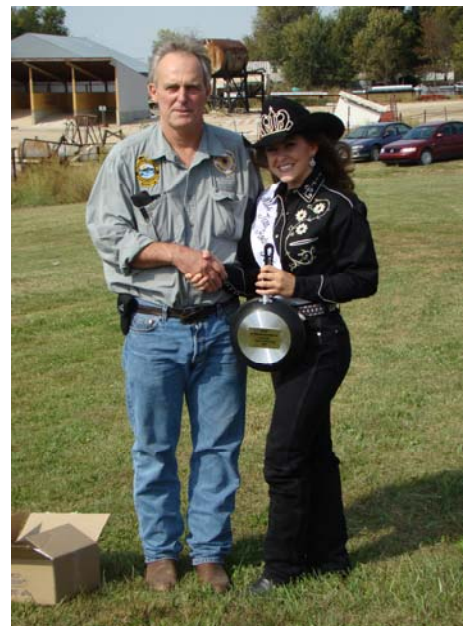
After Dodge City, I later headed off to Fort Collins, CO, with Amy Wilson, Miss Rodeo America 2008. Amy was so kind as to take me along with her to the Miss Rodeo America Premier Rodeo Pageant Seminar, a rodeo queen clinic that most of the queens who will be competing for Miss Rodeo America attend prior to heading off to Vegas. This was an amazing experience, and I am so thankful for Amy's generosity in allowing me to tag along. She did an excellent job serving the PRCA as Miss Rodeo America, and I feel truly blessed to have her as a friend.

Then on September 27-28, 2008, I assisted with Kristi Koch's rodeo queen clinic held in Hays. It's wonderful that we have past royalty who are willing to assist our upcoming generation in becoming the best rodeo representatives and ambassadors that they can be, and I had a great time working with the girls!

Next was the ever-infamous Kansas Fur Harvesters Association Convention during the first weekend of October! I had a great time here, and it was nice to see Jenna (Miss Rodeo Kansas 2008), Alyson, and Meredith (Miss Rodeo Kansas 2009) all again. KFHA is a very generous sponsor of Miss Rodeo Kansas, who they annually give a fur coat to. This year they kindly gave me a teddy bear made from raccoon fur!

My favorite event of the day was definitely the skillet toss, which I happened to place second in! The rules were simple. Stand behind the designated line, and toss the skillet with whatever technique you prefer. Along with the skillet toss they also had a trap-setting contest, but I didn't figure I'd be too handy with that. 😊 At the end of the night, all of the rodeo royalty assisted with the live auction and also modeled off beautiful fur attire, which was made by Debbie, the same lady who makes the fur coat given to Miss Rodeo Kansas and the teddy bear that was given to me.

Jenna held her send-off party on October 18, which was her last fundraiser and get-together to prepare her for the Miss Rodeo America Pageant. I enjoyed going to support Jenna and had a great time; it was nice to see everyone again, as always!



On January 17-18 of the new year, I, along with Shelia (MRK National Director), Thresa, Denna (MRK board member), and my mom, drove to Denver for Denver Market. I had an absolutely amazing time there, where I was able to meet with countless company and business representatives, many who generously donated items to my auction for my benefit dinner and auction to be held later in the month, including the following:

Michael Dvorak and Roper Apparel and Footwear; Nash and Al Zuni Global Jewelry; R.C. Crisp and Wrangler Knives; Pete Rogers, Guy Rogers, and Proctor Sherwin with



Rogers-Whitley; Loren Krug and Justin Boots; Mike Fuller and Tony Lama Boots; Lyle Guffey, “The Hat Nanny;” Nathan Patterson and Double H Boots; Truman Schear and Saddle Barn Inc.; Accessories Plus Co. Also a big thanks to those who donated items for me to wear and promote, including Greg Hensley with Dan Post Boots, who donated two pair of boots to me, and Daniel Osweiler with Chamber’s Belts, who donated three belts!

I had never been somewhere like market, where there are so many stores and representatives that you would never be able to see *everything*! Not only did I get to meet all those wonderful and generous people, but I also came across many professional cowboys. It was

nice to see them!

Without a doubt, I owe my most sincere appreciation to one of the most helpful, generous, and kind people I will ever meet. Walking into the Jack Daniels booth to speak with those individuals representing Rogers-Whitley, we met a man by the name of Chris Schweir, who I will never forget. Initially, we just introduced ourselves, and he gave us some pointers on places to visit. Then throughout the day, we kept running into him, and he would ask how the fundraising and donations were going. It’s not very often that you meet someone, and only a few hours later, they are willing to assist you with such things.

Chris ended up allowing me to tag along with him and meet many business representatives from such places as Dan Post Boots, Tony Lama Boots, Justin Boots, and many more. In such a large place as Denver, it’s hard to feel like you’re at home, but Chris helped me to do just that. It makes a world of difference when you have connections to the places you’re visiting—very similar to walking into the local co-op, where the owner has known you since you could walk and you were bouncing around in the front seat of the wheat truck—when you can talk small-talk first, then get down to business.

I found a great friend in Chris, someone who I hope to see again sometime. He didn’t have to go out of his way in Denver for me, but he did, and I cannot express my appreciation enough. People like Chris remind me of why I love this rodeo and western industry so much; I will never find kinder people. Thank you so much, Chris, for everything.

Finally, on January 31, 2009, I held my crowning ceremony in Hays. My family and I had never planned such a large event, and I admit it took *a lot* of time and hard work to prepare for, but it was definitely worth it all. Having always been on the other side of the fence—being the one invited to the coronations—I never imagined how much is put into such an event! Nevertheless, when the night came around, I had a great time with the hundreds of people who showed up to support me. I have never had so many people in one place and in that one place for me. I wish I could have been able to individually thank every person who walked in the door, but that was virtually impossible that night! I’d like to once more especially thank everyone who helped me prepare for and

organize that night and those individuals who showed up to support me. I owe all of the visiting royalty, showed in the picture, a *huge* “thank you” for all of their help during the live auction. They are all great young ladies and wonderful friends of mine, and I look forward to seeing them all soon!



Also, all the donations I received are *greatly* appreciated, and I cannot thank all those donors enough. Please take the time to check out the sponsors link on the website www.missrodeokansas.com, or read further to the end of the newsletter, to see all my gracious sponsors.

Then in February, my mom and I headed to Manhattan for the Miss Rodeo K-State pageant. My mom had the honor of being a judge, and she always has fun with that. One of my longtime friends, Jenae Skelton, was Miss Rodeo K-State 2008, so I felt it was really important for me to go there not only to represent my title, but also to support her with the pageant that she had worked so hard to put together. For the K-State pageant, there is no coordinator; the queen puts the entire event together by herself, purchasing prizes, recruiting contestants, and reserving facilities. I know Jenae put a lot of time into the contest, and she did a wonderful job! There were three contestants, all of whom I had never met before, so it was great to see some new faces! My mom and I both had a great time in Manhattan, and during the break between horsemanship and personal interviews, we went out to look for a dress for my Snoball dance. Unfortunately, we came up empty-handed and didn't end up finding one until three days before the dance! Congratulations to Meagan Wright, who won Miss Rodeo K-State 2009! She will do a fantastic job.

Also in February was the Kansas Sports, Boat, and Travel Show in Wichita. At this event, Kansas Fur Harvesters Association (KFHA) sets up a booth, and I had the opportunity to join W.R. Brecheisen and his wife Pauline at their booth for the Sunday afternoon. I always enjoy learning more about fur harvesting and wildlife from the members of KFHA, and as always, W.R. and Pauline taught me many new things. I must say I am much better at identifying furs than I have ever been! I always learn something new with them, and I really appreciated them asking me to join them at the show.

A couple highlights of the boat show included a huge python that was right around the corner from us and the sea lions! My mom and I were able to watch the sea lions do all sorts of tricks, from clapping to dancing and handstands to playing basketball! That was a really cool part of the day.

With the first weekend of March came Meredith's (MRK 09) coronation in Kansas City! Also with this weekend came the realization that my mom and I *must* invest in a GPS! We used Yahoo! Maps to locate our hotel, which we found with no problem. We then used Yahoo! Maps again to find our way to the American Royal, which is where the event was held, from our hotel, which was around 25 minutes away. We made it *there* with only one phone call, and that was only to figure out which parking lot we were supposed to park in and which door we were supposed to walk in. ☺



Meredith, her family and friends, and the MRK board did a fantastic job of putting her night together, and she had some very talented entertainment. She, herself, is an extremely talented vocalist; I could've listened to her sing all night! Meredith paired up with Rusty Rierson, another talented artist, to sing a couple songs, my favorite being "Whiskey Lullaby." Then the Outlaw Junkies provided the music while everyone enjoyed some social time and dancing. They are a great band and were very enjoyable to listen to!

When the night was over, all the "good-byes" were said, and the rain had finally subsided, we hit the road again to return to our hotel. GPS, anyone? Being we took I-70 E to *get to the American Royal*, in her tired stupor, my mom figured I-70 E would get us *back to our hotel!* I, behind the wheel, questioned this, but you don't get much time to ponder on which road to take when you're flying through all the roads of such a populated city.

Turns out, we both finally decided we'd rather get to the hotel in Kansas than dig deeper into Missouri, and that we must be going in the wrong direction, so we pulled off on an exit ramp just as another downpour came. Let's just say after about 25 minutes, we had managed to get completely lost. It was raining hard, past midnight, and we were in a place where they have no streetlights and way too many dead ends! I don't really know how, but we finally found I-70 W and found our way back to shelter!

As I look at the calendar today, I realize I'm already almost halfway through my reign. Time flies so fast, and with everything going on in life, it's sometimes hard to take in every moment and cherish what we have. Life, of all things, is something I'll never take for granted, and with that I'd like you to heed the advice of my all-time favorite cowboy vocalist, the great Chris Ledoux. "Sit tall in the saddle, hold your head up high. Keep your eyes fixed where the trail meets the sky. And live like you ain't afraid to die. And don't be scared, just enjoy the ride."

God bless you all!

Kara Hackney
Miss Teen Rodeo Kansas 2009

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