

# Paying it back

Rackham travels the country to represent her title

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is part of a monthly series following the work local rodeo queens put into earning their titles.

**By Alisa Clickenger**  
For the Post Register

She's halfway through her reign as the National High School Rodeo Queen, and Hunter Rackham, of Rigby, has a lot of plans before she passes on her title. Having attended the four events covered by the National High School Rodeo Association (NHSRA), she now hopes to make her own mark on the crown by appearing at events where she feels one doesn't normally see a rodeo queen.

Rackham loves being a role model for kids, and plans on making an appearance at the Special Olympics as well as fundraising for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. She also gives lessons and does coaching for other girls interested in queening.

"I love working with kids and making a little girl or a little boy smile," says Rackham. "That's truly what makes my job fun."

Just back from West Virginia, so far Rackham has traveled to Colorado, Georgia, and Nevada. In Perry, Georgia, Rackham and three other student delegates on

the NHSRA board competed in a rodeo and promoted high school rodeoing. It was great fun for her because they were able to get to know the local participants, which isn't something they normally get to do at the national level.

The Nevada trip was the longest; two weeks attending the National Finals Rodeo, which she referred to as "the Super Bowl for rodeos." Rackham spent her time there working the NHSRA booth with the other student delegates and helping out with the Miss Rodeo America Pageant. Rackham plans on competing for that title once she earns her bachelor's degree.

It was in Las Vegas that Rackham had a pinnacle moment. Dressed in her queen regalia she was on the telephone talking to her mom, when a woman came and interrupted her and wanted to give her money. Rackham declined but the woman insisted, saying she felt like she needed to give her some money. Eventually she convinced Rackham to take it. As the anonymous lady left she said "just pay back the favor."

Rackham's mother assured her that the right opportunity to pay it back would present itself, and sure enough the last day of the event an older woman came to her booth and asked

Rackham for a photo. She said the photo was for a 6-year-old boy with Periventricular nodular heterotopia (PVNH). Inspiration struck, and after Rackham posed for the picture she gave the woman the \$100 bill as a donation to the PVNH research foundation.

Rackham is gifted with a beautiful singing voice. She has sung the National Anthem at many rodeos, including the War Bonnet Roundup to a sold-out crowd. She's always sung on horseback, never on foot. Her trusty partner is Kirby, a buckskin gelding she's had since he was 1-year-old.

"It was real exciting for us to go into Nationals and win horsemanship on this horse that I've grown up on," said Rackham.

For the remainder of her reign Rackham's focus will be on promoting rodeo and the Western way of life.

"I love rodeo. It's my passion and it's in my blood," says Rackham. "[As a society] we're moving away from ranching and rural lifestyles to urban and that's kind of scary if you think about it. It's a great but terrifying thing. I like being able to promote agriculture and the western heritage and giving back to my community by sharing our western heritage."



Jennings Photography  
Hunter Rackham has been traveling the country as part of her reign as the National High School Rodeo Queen.

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