

## 2013 Pioneer Queen and Grand Marshal

### Queen Irene Kelly

Queen Irene Kelly was born in Bird City, Kansas on June 22, 1927 to Clarence and Nellie Potter. She is the oldest of five children – with two sisters, Elaine and Arlene, and two brothers, Bing and Jimmy.

She moved to Oregon in 1940 in search of work. Irene started working as a waitress at George's Café in Milton-Freewater when she was 15 years old. Under George's guidance, she then went into cooking...and cooking...and cooking!

In 1945, Irene's uncle, Orville Potter, was in the service and brought home a fellow serviceman for dinner. The good looking serviceman, Melvin Kelly, and Irene were married two years later and raised seven children: Lisa Kelly, Mike Kelly, Terry Cross, Charlotte Prewiett, Phyllis Shell, and twin sons Larry and Jerry Kelly.

For over 50 years Irene cooked, waitressed, cleaned and did whatever else that needed to be done. She spent many years in the Little League concession stand while Milvin coached the kids. She has belonged to as many as 13 clubs at one time or another, including the M-F Elks Lodge, the Rebekah Lodge, Pioneer Posse, Royal Neighbors, Eastern Star and the Blue Mountain Senior club; just to name a few.

Irene has worked with the Senior Center for the past 12 years helping with both lunches and dinners. She has also catered many weddings and retirement parties. She loves to play bingo and bunko and is famous for her chicken dinners.

Family dinners have always been and always will be a specialty. It is an important time for family to stay close and family is extremely important to her. She enjoys going to see her grandchildren and great grandchildren in all of their school activities, sports, band and choir.

Irene was honored with a 2008 Golden Pioneer Award at Milton-Freewater's Citizens of the Year Banquet and has received numerous other awards and recognitions for her service to the community.



## Grand Marshal Sam Pambrun



Grand Marshal Sam Pambrun grew up in Athena and attended McEwen High School, graduation in 1964. He attended college in Oregon and entered the teaching profession.

Pambrun enjoys researching, local historic events, people and trails. He particularly enjoys finding obscure documents and stories and comparing them with local legends.

A good yarn, even one unsupported by facts, told by a skilled story teller, is a thing of joy," commented Pambrun.

His interest in history was nurtured by his 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Florence "Fog Horn" Gilliland; she started me on my journey to study my family's history," he explains.

Pambrun's great grandfather Andrew Dominique Pambrun, came to Oregon at the end of his family's 200-year westward pilgrimage from Nova Scotia to Quebec to the Prairies of Alberta to New Caledonia to Oregon. The Pambruns immigrated to North America

from the Pyrenees Mountains of France and were Hudson's Bay Company employees.

Andrew eventually sold land he owned in the Walla Walla Valley and moved to allotted land on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. His allotment was a gift from the Tribes for his service as the Cayuse Interpreter during the Walla Walla Treaty of 1855. He could speak, read, and write English, French and Latin and speak and understand Cayuse and most Sahapatin languages. Andrew settled on 160 acres on Spring Hollow Creek there miles due south of Athena, Oregon.

When Andrew attended the first Pioneer Picking in Weston, he was 71 years old and retired.

Andrew's son, Sam, farmed 160 acres and added another 2400, but lost most of it in the Great Depression. Following the Depression, Sam's son Cecil farmed the original 160 until he retired in 1970. Cecil was the Pioneer Picnic Grand Marshal in 1993.

The 2013 Pioneer Picnic Grand Marshal, Sam Pambrun, is the nephew of Cecil.

The Pioneer Picnic used to sponsor foot races. Sam's uncle, Alfred, entered the foot races from 1913 to 1918 and told him he always won the five dollar gold piece. However, Pambrun remembers, "I raced at Weston four or five years during the late 1950s, and early 1960s but never beat Charles Loveland or Louis Hunter. I think I usually got a quarter; third place behind Charlie and Louie.

Pambrun thanked Mary Lou Andrews and the Umatilla County Pioneer Association for honoring him as this year's Grand Marshal and noted, "As well as the distinction you have

provided me, you have also caused me to look at my family's history through a very different lens, that of an emigrant."

*Thank you to Melanie Hall and Valley Herald Newspaper for the biographies!*