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WHAT'S INSIDE

COMMUNITY
EVENTS
Page 2

LEGALS
Page 2

CLASSIFIEDS
Page 3

PUZZLE FUN
Page 4

VanCamp takes the reins as new saddle club queen



By ANN SCHWARTZ
Kristi VanCamp, a horsewoman from Aitkin, Minnesota, who competes in barrel races, pole weaving and keyhole, and many other speed events, faced off challengers to capture the title of Queen of the Western Saddle Clubs Association, a prestigious honor.

Starting out 30 years ago as Princess for the local Bit N Bridle Saddle Club in Aitkin, Kristi (Patnode) VanCamp continues her dream of living her life centered on faith, family and horses.

Kristi and daughter Auli travel all over to horse shows, rodeos and competitions. The family, with husband Gabe, has a camper for their horse

travels. Daughter Zoey, a teen, is pursuing other interests now.

Kristi will preside as queen and add public speaking, judging, special programs, award presentations and more during her Saddle Club Association reign. They are on the road a lot with their family and up to four competition horses. Their horse trailer has living quarters in the front, and they have a generator so they can camp anywhere.

An athletic horsewoman at age 40

As part of her horsewoman skills, she competes with her horse Dassi, a muscular and fast quarter-horse. "I rescued Dassi from a kill pen just before she loaded a trailer to head to slaughter when she was three years old," explains Kristi. "I have done almost all of her training since she started and it was challenging but so fun to grow with her as a team. Competing with her during the Queens Contest was a true honor and very sentimental for me. I've put

so much time and love into Dassi over the past eight years and to be able to do the riding portion on her and do so well made my heart so happy! Even though the crown was placed on my hat, she is a huge part of that title! She has helped me grow as a person and as a rider – there is no way this would have been possible without her."

What do you like best about being Saddle Club Association Queen?

"I love connecting with people—especially youth—and sharing my passion for horses. Nothing brings me more joy than inspiring others to let their light shine and follow what sets their soul on fire. I'm passionate about all aspects of horse life—from caring for horses to growing as a horsewoman. Most of all, I love helping young riders discover their confidence and joy in the saddle, just as I did," VanCamp says about her new role.

What am I learning as I participate in my program?

"I realized how fortunate we are in Minnesota to have an organization like WSCA. We offer so many opportunities for all ages and disciplines, and it's pretty special



to be part of an association that provides many ways to stay involved with our horses year-round. We are truly lucky to have such an active and supportive horse community!"

Kristi shares her coronation experience:

I was crowned on September 21, 2025, at the WSCA Champ Show royalty coronation in Cannon Falls, MN. The competition season started in July when I wrote a short essay about myself and why I was running for WSCA Queen. It continued in August when I went to an all-day event where we had two written tests – on Equine and WSCA knowledge – plus a live interview with six judges. That evening we had a

banquet and each contestant gave a speech about "what does WSCA mean to you and how have you been involved in WSCA and your saddle club?" and also had to answer an impromptu question.

Grit meets the horseshoes

"The horsemanship contest continued at the 2025 Champ Show in Cannon Falls on September 17, 2025. We were judged on our riding ability and horsemanship by performing an intricate riding pattern with our horses and doing a salute Queens Ride. We followed by competing in our own styles of riding to try and win at Ms. Games or Ms. Horsemanship. My horse and I did extremely well in the riding portion of the pattern

Continued on Page 2

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By a Staff Writer

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ANSWERS ACROSS

1. Alma

5. Seed

9. Abet

13. Reel

14. Then

15. Osaka

16. Gales of Laughter

19. Unesco

20. Ply

21. ESE

22. Spe

23. Ali

24. Rat

27. Ads

28. Alan

29. Awe

30. Ovals

33. Sling

34. Zip

35. Time

36. Paled

37. Hone

38. Hop

39. Loran

40. Verge

41. Ell

42. Sway

43. Sir

44. Ray

45. Den

46. Its

47. Bic

50. Ill

51. Iodide

53. Hansel and Gretel

59. Idols

60. Guam

61. Meal

62. Tote

63. Etna

64. Oslo

ANSWERS DOWN

1. Argue

2. Leans

3. Melee

4. Ales

5. Stoops

6. EHF

7. Eel

8. DNA

9. Ashy

10. Bat

11. Eke

12. Tar

15. Ogling

17. Scads

18. Upland

23. Alien

24. Razor

25. Awing

26. Tepee

27. Ale

28. Allay

30. Other

31. Viola

32. Amply

33. Saran

36. Powell

37. Her

39. LSDLES

40. Visor

43. Stigma

47. Bites

48. Ideal

49. Cello

50. Isle

52. Demo

53. Hit

54. Ado

55. Not

56. Age

57. Nut

58. Dan

Crossword Puzzle on Page 4

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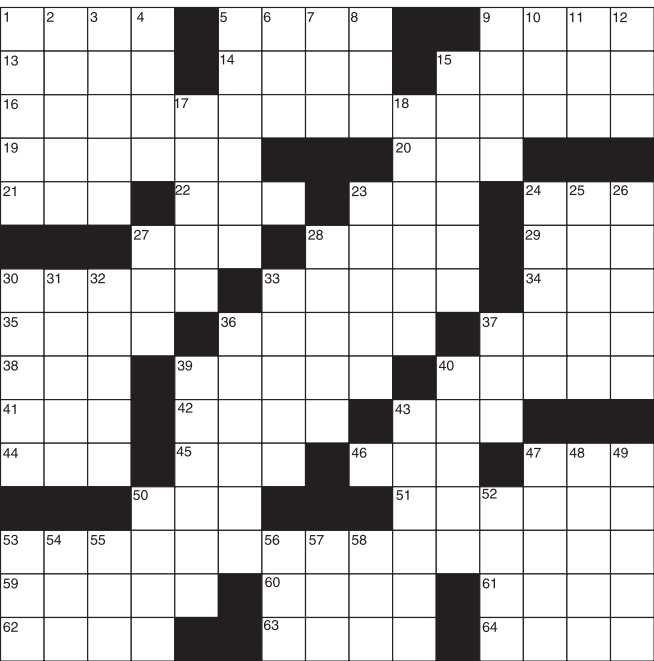
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CROSSWORD



- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. ___ mater, one's school
 - 5. Origin
 - 9. Assist
 - 13. Winder
 - 14. At a specific prior time
 - 15. Japanese city
 - 16. Sounds from a comedy

- 19. U.N. group
- 20. Travel a route regularly
- 21. Compass pt.
- 22. Copy
- 23. Caliph
- 24. Tell on
- 27. Promotions
- 28. ___ Ladd, actor
- 29. Reverence
- 30. Conics
- 33. Supporter
- 34. A quantity of no importance
- 35. Age
- 36. In a way, discolored
- 37. Make perfect
- 38. An informal dance
- 39. Navigational device
- 40. Strip of unpaved land that borders a road
- 41. The letter L
- 42. Persuade
- 43. Title of respect
- 44. Beam out
- 45. A hiding place
- 46. Belonging to a thing
- 47. Pen brand
- 50. Sick
- 51. Salt or ester of hydriodic acid
- 53. German opera
- 59. Instruments
- 60. U.S. island territory
- 61. Portion of food served and eaten at one time
- 62. Carryall
- 63. Used in laboratories
- 64. Capital of Norway

- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Dispute
 - 2. Tends
 - 3. Disturbance
 - 4. Brews
 - 5. Crouches
 - 6. Extremely high frequency
 - 7. Soft-finned fish
 - 8. Gil and Horatio's proof
 - 9. With fireplace residue
 - 10. Used for hitting the ball
 - 11. Supplement with difficulty
 - 12. Mariner
 - 15. A way of looking
 - 17. Piles
 - 18. Highland
 - 23. Foreign person
 - 24. Used in shaving
 - 25. Causing wonder
 - 26. Wigwam
 - 27. Brew
 - 28. Quench
 - 30. Used when something not already mentioned
 - 31. Slightly larger than a violin, tuned a fifth lower
 - 32. Ample
 - 33. Wrap
 - 36. Anagram of lowelp
 - 37. Of she
 - 39. Anagram of seldsl
 - 40. Shades the eyes
 - 43. A skin lesion that is a diagnostic sign of some disease
 - 47. Pungencies
 - 48. Someone worthy of imitation
 - 49. Member of violin family
 - 50. A small island
 - 52. Showing
 - 53. Rack up points
 - 54. Rapid bustling movement
 - 55. Denial
 - 56. The length of time something (or someone) has existed
 - 57. Crank
 - 58. One of twelve sons of Jacob

Answers can be found on page 3



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