

OBITUARY

Sloane Spencer Pennington August 31, 1990 - October 27, 2024

After decades of struggles with acute enduring anorexia nervosa and numerous surgeries, Sloane Pennington's burdens have been lifted.

Sloane was born in Colorado but spent most of her growing-up years in the Applegate Valley. She was a guiding force behind opening the bakery at Pennington Farms and all the growers' markets that Pennington Farms participated in for decades.

She attended the Academy of Couture Art in Beverly Hills and worked for over a decade with the fashion designers Badgley Mischka in Beverly Hills, California, and New York City. After a good dose of city life, she returned to the valley and worked with the Pennington family farm, Red Lily Vineyards, and The Neumann Group, then



moved to Portland, where she worked with Banana Republic.

Besides Sloane's love of her family and friends, her love for art remained her passion. Her works are in many galleries, and her love shines through those pieces. While she is safely tucked in Heaven, we know her light continues to shine all around us.

Sloane is survived by her parents, Sam and Cathy Pennington; her sisters, Jaclyn Staunton and Tatum Lipin; and her brothers, Sam and Max Pennington.

A Celebration of Life is scheduled for April 16, 11 am, at Red Lily Vineyard. In lieu of flowers, donations to Options for Southern Oregon or to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) of Southern Oregon would be greatly appreciated.

Motorcycle Riders Association hosts annual women's event

BY KALYN BENAROYA

Imagine this: 200 women riding dirt bikes in the woods, learning new skills, making new friends, and conquering rugged trails. It sounds almost impossible, doesn't it? Believe it or not, this happens each spring in southern Oregon, thanks to the Motorcycle Riders Association (MRA) hosting a one-of-a-kind event called the Main Event.

At the heart of the Main Event is a partnership between MRA and Dirtastic to create an unforgettable experience for women in dirt biking. MRA, a cornerstone of the local off-highway vehicle (OHV) community, provides the venue and vital support to bring this unique event to life, ensuring both safety and an incredible experience for participants. Dirtastic, led by 12 professional female coaches from across the western United States, brings expertise to the trails, offering coaching for riders of all skill levels, from beginners to expert riders. Together, these two organizations empower women to tackle everything from beginner-friendly paths to the demanding terrain of hard enduro, one of the toughest forms of dirt biking.

The Main Event has drawn participants aged 16 to 66 from 21 states and three Canadian provinces, turning John's Peak near Jacksonville into a hub for learning, connection, and inspiration. The Main Event underscores MRA's commitment to fostering inclusion and breaking



Motorcycle Riders Association Dirtastic lessons. Photo: Chuck Steahly.

down barriers in the traditionally male-dominated world of motorsports, ensuring every woman leaves feeling confident, capable, and part of a growing community.

One thing is certain: The Main Event is more than just a gathering—it's a movement, proving that when women come together on two wheels, the impossible becomes a reality. For more information about the Main Event or to get involved, visit the Dirtastic website at dirtastic.com or reach out to the MRA at hmcbride@motorcyclersassociation.org.

MRA was created 54 years ago to promote the responsible enjoyment of off-road motorcycling and ATV riding in southwest Oregon. We are a nonprofit, family-oriented club welcoming riders of all ages and abilities, with about 750 members, mostly from the Rogue Valley. We work with the Bureau of Land Management, Rogue River National Forest, and the City of Jacksonville on

many recreation-related community service projects. Last year, the MRA was the top local National Forest volunteer organization, with about 1,400 hours donated to trail work. MRA also owns about 1,200 acres of land next to the Jacksonville Forest Park that we manage for forest health, and for both OHV and nonmotorized recreation.

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Applegate Valley farmers markets share visions of connection and resilience

BY JAIMY WILKINSON

Creating a thriving weekly market in a small rural town truly takes a village. Such a market is the result of countless hours of collaboration between farmers, artisans, community members, and market managers who share a vision of connection and resilience. Each piece of the puzzle—from growers harvesting at sunrise to the artisans crafting their wares—plays a critical role in bringing this shared vision to life.

A key ingredient in this success is building consumer confidence—ensuring that shoppers know they can rely on fresh, high-quality products, fair prices, and genuine local connections. When the community trusts and values what the market offers, this shared space becomes more than just a place to shop—it grows into a cornerstone of local life, where neighbors gather, local goods shine, and the heart of the town beats stronger each week.

As the market manager of Applegate Evening Market, I have the privilege of witnessing these connections unfold. I see the joy on folks' faces as they taste that first strawberry of the season, or the satisfaction on a farmer's face as their carefully grown produce or beef is chosen by a regular customer. Artisans proudly share the stories behind their work, and the market becomes a space for community members to connect and celebrate the incredible diversity of talent and hard work in our town. The strong volunteer crew who runs the Williams Farmers Market is a testament to dedication and the power of community-driven efforts. Their efforts not only sustain the market but also foster a deeper sense of connection and mutual support among vendors and customers alike.

But the work doesn't end with setting up booths or coordinating schedules. A thriving market demands ongoing effort to adapt and respond to the community's evolving needs. For example, we've prioritized access and equity by exploring ways to accept food assistance programs such as SNAP, Double Up Food Bucks, and Farm Direct, ensuring that everyone in our town can enjoy the bounty of local farms. We've also worked to make our markets inviting spaces for all by hosting live music, chef demonstrations,



Heather, from Slagle Creek Farm, enjoys a refreshing mocktail crafted by fellow vendor, Ballhornin, at the Applegate Evening Market.

and kids' activities that make every visit feel special.

A farmers market is not only a vital local economic hub, but also a place where stories are exchanged, traditions are preserved, and dreams weave their roots. We are a reflection of the values and aspirations of the community we serve. In a world that often feels disconnected, the market reminds us of the importance of slowing down, supporting one another, and celebrating the simple yet profound act of sharing food.

Our small but mighty markets are proof that rural communities can thrive when we work together. With every conversation, every sale, and every smile, we strengthen the bonds that make our town resilient, creative, and full of life. And that, to me, is the heart of the work we do.

Applegate Evening Market. May to October on Wednesday evenings from 5-8 pm at the Lindsay Lodge, 15100 Highway 238.

Williams Farmers Market. May to October on Monday evenings from 5-7:30 pm at the Sugarloaf Community Association, 206 Tetherow Road.

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Williams Farmers Market's dedicated volunteers host a local salsa competition, bringing the community together to celebrate homegrown flavors.



MRA group session. Photo: Chuck Steahly.