

Larry and Mary Bunch are Avenal royalty

By Joe Santino
Progress Staff

Larry and Mary Bunch were selected to represent Avenal as King and Queen during the 2007 Kings County Homecoming.

Larry has lived in Avenal since 1951 having moved here from Exeter with his parents at the age of 10. He attended Avenal Elementary School and many longtime residents can remember Larry serving as their paperboy.

Larry graduated from Coalinga High School and attended Coalinga College (now West Hills Community College) where he earned his Associate's degree.

Following graduation, Larry was drafted into the Army and served with the 318th USASA (Army Security Agency) where he was stationed on the Czechoslovakian border.

After serving overseas, Larry moved back to Avenal and soon started a new career as a letter carrier with Avenal Post Office where he worked until retiring in January of this year.

In the early 1980's, Larry served as a part-time EMT in Avenal where he met his future wife Mary. The two were wed in 1982 and in 1983, they welcomed the birth of their first child, Matthew, and at that point Mary decided to be a stay-at-home mom. A daughter, Heather, completed their family in 1984.

Mary Bunch was born and raised in Kings County and in 1981, she moved to Avenal as an EMT for the Avenal Hospital District.

In 1988, Mary began to volunteer in her children's classroom at Avenal Elementary School and later became an office assistant for the Reef-Sunset Unified School District. She currently serves as Executive Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent of the district.

Throughout the 1980's, Mary was an active member of the Avenal Chapter of the Junior Women's Club and helped plan many community

events. She served the club as both a member and an officer until the club was disbanded in the early 1990's.

In her 26 years of living in Avenal, Mary has been a visible community member and volunteer all over town. Whether as a classroom parent, a chaperone on a school field trip, the organizer of a Halloween carnival, volunteering with children's programs at church or school or attending Old Timer's Day events, Mary has made Avenal her home.

Larry went to work for the Avenal Post Office in 1965 as a letter carrier and later became a clerk - a position he would hold until his retirement after 42 years. He was one of the few at the post office who spoke Spanish, and as he always put it, "enough to get by."

Larry was a member of the Masonic Lodge.

Larry and Mary have always been involved in their children's education and both Matthew and Heather have graduated from universities.

In 2002, Larry was elected to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees for Reef-Sunset Unified School District. Larry has been an active community member in Avenal and is often seen at local events.

Although Larry retired from both the post office and school board earlier this year, he intends to remain an active member of the community.

The couple plans to travel and camp. Mary is looking forward to a trip to the Azores sometime in the near future.

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