

ORMIE KING

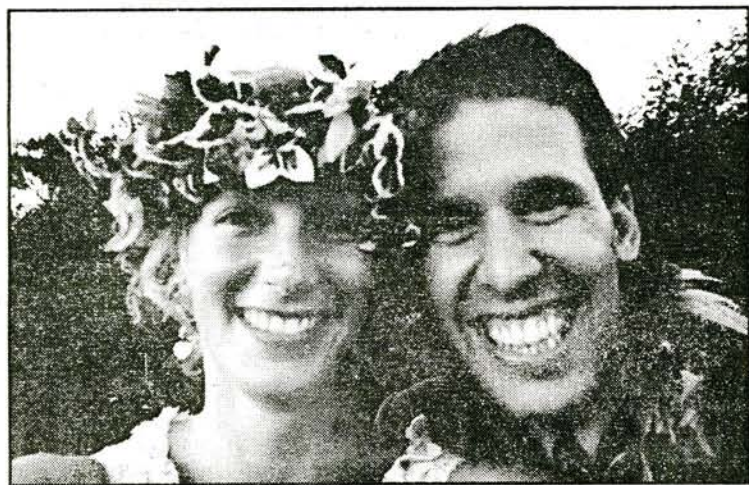


Photo courtesy of Jesse Kline

JESSE KLINE and husband Greg Munno. Munno is Madison County bureau chief for The Post-Standard.

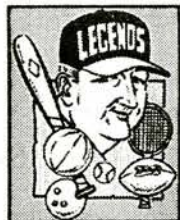
Kline a free spirit

By Ormie King

Contributing writer

When we talk about legends of Auburn ask anyone who knows Jesse Kline and they will quickly tell you that Jesse is most certainly considered a legend by all that know her.

Here is what one of her closest friends, Kelly Landers Diego, has to say about Jesse, "She is



the most brilliant and creative person I have ever met and she inspires me, not only as a beautiful person from within as well as her out-

ward beauty, but also for her dedication to her community of Auburn and the life she brings to our fair city."

Jesse Kline was born on April 25, 1969, in Cortland. Her mom, an Auburn native, is Linda O'Brien, and her dad is Steve Kline who is a Schenectady native. Jesse is their only child and they moved here from Cortland when Jesse was 4 years old. Both her parents are remarried. Linda remarried Toronto-native Tony Graburn in the mid 1980s and Steve married my former neighbor Terry Kenny five years ago. Both of them are extremely dedicated professionals that work with aged populations. Steve works for the Cayuga County Office for the Aging and Terry is the director of Hospice of the Finger Lakes. Steve, like myself, was an aspiring softball pitcher

some moons ago and we would throw to each other at the YMCA trying to get our "soup bones" warmed up each spring. Terry and the Kenny clan have been our great neighbors since we moved up on Standart Avenue some 43 years ago.

Dave Tobin, a close friend (and Post-Standard employee), had this to say about Jesse, "Jesse has a great free spirit that is contagious and a sense of style that is all her own. She can take the worst of Graceland, Miami Beach and Vatican City and make it beautiful!"

Both of Steve Kline's parents have passed away and he does not have any siblings, but Linda has five. Jesse's maternal grandparents are Pearl (Tarby) O'Brien and Paul O'Brien who live on Barker Avenue. Pearl was the first woman we ever put in the Auburn Softball Hall of Fame. Besides softball, Pearl was a great bowler and basketball player. Their children are Denny O'Brien in Croton-on-the-Hudson, Vince O'Brien in Florida, Sandy Brennan in Canandaigua, and Lori Falzone in Rochester.

Jesse began her schooling at Casey Park and her favorite teacher happens to be my sister-in-law, Maureen Kenna Wetherby. Here is what Maureen had to say about her former student, "I taught Jesse at Casey Park and she was an intelligent and creative student, full of zest. I can still see her twirling and dancing in the Block Center. I also remember her sensitivity and kind-

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ORMIE KING'S LEGENDS

Kline proud of Auburn community

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not the road she wanted to take. As many other artistic people thought in the late '80s, graphic design was the way to be creative and make good money. But even then it was very competitive. Jesse realized her real talent did not lie in such a restrictive mode of expression. Her general love of art turned her attention to art history. Dr. Daniel Reiff, her advisor, was a brilliant historian that really challenged Jesse academically. She worked under him while at Fredonia, and then changed her major to art history. During her senior year she did an internship at a gallery in Dunkirk, the town next to Fredonia. That was when she focused her professional plans on doing museum work. She realized her art history background could be utilized working in that field, plus she could be social and work within the community, for her enrichment and the enrichment of others.

Jesse earned a double master's at Virginia Commonwealth University in 1995 and after that moved back into the house she grew up in on 151 Van Anden St., humorously coined the "Hotel-No-Tell" with all the com-

Today's Trivia

Today's trivia question is: Jesse Kline has a nickname. The first person to identify it will win a free ride in Jesse Kline's kaleidoscope car.

Trivia Answer

In regards to the trivia question, "What was Dick King's nickname?," Jerry Nolan, Bob "Spike" Kelly, Al Bouley and Jerry Wetherby all gave the correct reply of "Thunderhead."

ings and goings it has hosted. A little over two years ago, Jesse married her soulmate, The Post-Standard's Madison County bureau chief Greg Munno, in July of 1999 at Hoopes Park. We were invited to the reception held later at the YMCA Camp and it was a howl as everyone showed up in tacky clothes and the "real Elvis" entertained everyone all night long. An added bonus was awarded when many of the invitees stayed overnight in pup tents. They both said they have had an absolute ball since getting married and as Greg stated, "Being married to Jesse is like

being a New York Yankee fan, there is always something to look forward to." Jesse said they both love to travel and they have visited dozens of places and look forward to their trip to Amsterdam for Greg's 30th birthday. Aside from traveling, throwing theme parties is their forte. Their annual Valentine's Day cross-dress party is their favorite where girls dress like guys and guys dress like girls — it is the recipe for an unforgettable time and don't worry folks, they won't name names.

In addition to parties, redecorating their home is also a full-time endeavor. They have worked with many local artists such as Alan Alger, Amy Chamberlain and Heather Bruno-Sears to achieve a rainbow/kaleidoscope effect, with murals on the ceiling, in the archways and hallways. There are probably 20 different colors going on in there. Jesse says in her next career she wants to "dress up" interiors. She would encourage people not to buy all new stuff, and she would simply rearrange what they had and paint the walls, maybe pick up a few inexpensive new items at the Salvation Army or garage sales. Does

Jesse have any takers?

Jesse feels that people take themselves far too seriously with possessions, cars and status. After she left the Cayuga Museum in 1999 where she was the educator/outreach coordinator, she held a "Jesse Kline Art Camp" for youth and teens in her back yard, where she taught self portraits, collage, still life, landscaping and decorating her car with contact paper. Jesse will readily admit that the contact paper is a big help in holding the car together. She says when people spot her car with its decor they start pointing and getting a big smile on their face. Jesse added that "People can't figure me out by my car or my style of dress and I find that entertaining and then I get a big smile on my face." She also added that the car is for sale for a cool \$950,000! Any takers?

Jesse is employed by the Cayuga County Office of Tourism as a communications specialist. Her boss, Meg Vanek, said: "I have known Jesse since her days with Collins Communications and through her time with the Cayuga Museum and the chamber of commerce. We were

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Kline committed to community

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so fortunate that the timing was right for her to make a move to the tourism office back in January 2000. Besides her well known flair for fashion, Jesse's talents in public relations and event planning, along with her background in art and history, have been a great benefit to our organization. She also provides marketing services for the city's Historic Sites Commission."

Jesse said what she likes best about Auburn is that "It's the biggest smallest town I've ever been in. The things that happen here never cease to amaze me. I'd like to see people more appreciative of their culture and history that we have here in Cayuga

County. They need to understand if they want tourists to come here they have to take care of the resources they have."

Jesse said that her necessity for "creating an artistic and fun environment is maybe why Ormie considers me a 'legend.' Or maybe it's my dedication to my community. My philosophy is, I had a wonderful experience growing up in Auburn, and I came back after grad school to give back. I am always hearing people vocalizing Auburn's faults, but how many of us are actively doing anything about it? As I've said before, you can only expect your community to be as wonderful as the effort you personally put into it. Those folks that complain about Auburn are

probably the same folks that have never really traveled to other places. They have no comparison which enables them to understand how many positives we have here. It drives me crazy, but I know I am doing my part. Every work day, I convince people from outside the area to come and spend their (money) leisure time here. And I'm proud of it!"

Jesse, I consider you a legend because of your philosophy you just shared with us. We need more young people like you, Jesse, who will return to their roots and make a contribution of their talents back to our fair city!

There are givers and takers and you, Jesse Kline, are most certainly a giver! Thanks for being a legend of Auburn.