

# Short results in \$500 in damages for couple

by MICHAEL P. JONES  
Post Correspondent

An arson-caused car fire, two house fires, a two-car rear-end accident and eight first aids occupied the week of Hoodland Rural Fire Department personnel.

Last Saturday morning, July 17, the fire department responded to the report of a car fire at the

junction of Highway 26 and Highway 35, just east of Government Camp.

Hoodland Fire Chief Don Armintrout said upon arrival firefighters found a 1969 Ford station wagon totally engulfed in flames. It was a total loss. The driver of the vehicle was nowhere to be found.

Armintrout said that the vehicle belonged to Allen Jeffery Tipton, 11065 S.W.

60th, in Portland. Tipton had just reported the vehicle stolen from Government Camp. A Clackamas County sheriff's deputy was on his way up to Government Camp to take a report on the theft when the department was dispatched to vehicle fire.

Armintrout said the fire was arson caused and the case has been turned over to the Oregon State Police

for investigation.

This is the second arson fire involving a motor vehicle in the past seven months.

The first arson fire occurred on Jan. 8 and the case is scheduled to go to trial this week. Ronald John Piccolo, 24, formally of Government Camp, is being charged with criminal mischief and theft in the first degree in connection with a fire that totally destroyed a 1976 Fiat.

At 2:10 p.m. the department responded to a two-car rear-end accident just west of the Whistle Stop Tavern on Highway 26.

Armintrout said two persons received minor injuries in the collision.

On July 15 firefighters responded to the report of a chimney fire on Dewey

Avenue in Welches, which was out upon arrival. The department is encouraging any person who has a chimney fire not to take any unnecessary chances and call for assistance as heat from such fires can reach up to 2000 degrees Fahrenheit.

Studding or framing surrounding a chimney, as well as the roof, could catch fire.

Mortar and brick in a chimney could also crack as a result of the intense heat.

At 8:15 p.m. a malfunctioning wall plug in a storage shed that was attached to the home of Brookings and Vernice Gex, who live next door to Son Village in Wemme, shorted out and started a fire.

Armintrout said a total of 18 firefighters, two engines, two tankers and one rescue rig responded to

the blaze. The fire was caused when a long wall plug unit, that contained five to six plug-ins, shorted out and burned a plywood wall and ceiling, according to Armintrout.

Brookings Gex said the heat from the fire was so intense that it melted his tool box.

Total damage as a result of the fire has been estimated to be between \$500 and \$800.

# Henry Creek, water district's history traced

by MICHAEL P. JONES  
Post Correspondent

Henry Creek, with its watershed stretching from the junction of the Zig Zag River on up to the 3,000-foot level of West Zig Zag Mountain, above Rhododendron, has a rich history in relation to the area's development as a recreational town.

The development of the town of Rhododendron has been primarily attributed to Henry Rowe, who served as mayor of Portland from 1900 to 1902.

After Rowe served out his term in office, he located his business interests in the Mt. Hood area and founded the Rhododendron Mineral Springs Land Company. This officially ended his political career in "city" politics.

Surviving historical records on the early days of the town, however, show that Suzette Franzette, as contributing equally as much, if not more, than Rowe. She was a widow who operated the town's main hostelry and tavern.

Franzette reportedly broke through the traditional bonds of the times and became the biggest real estate broker the town has ever had, despite the fact she was a woman alone.

Both Rowe and the widow Franzette hold the title of being the biggest promoters of the area. They would boast to city people that their town was "the recreational getaway of the mountains." Today, their energy has yet to be matched.

On March 20, 1920, Rowe died and this "wide spot in the road"—which was then referred to as Rowe, Oregon—had a long way to go in order to accommodate the large number of summer home people that had been envisioned.

This quaint little hamlet of barely a dozen people or so still was a bit too rough to spark a tourist boom. It wasn't until a few years later that Franzette jumped in with both feet and became a full-fledged land speculator.

She picked up where

Rowe left off and opened up the town's first real estate office. She made the seemingly sleepy cluster of buildings between the Zig Zag River and Henry Creek a thriving mountain village that attracted both tourists and summer home owners, as well as permanent residents.

## STREET OF DUST STORMS

But the widow Franzette had two major obstacles to hurdle before the town of Rowe could blossom into the new town of Rhododendron.

The first was the area's streets. Whenever cattle and sheep ranchers drove their herds through town to graze on federal land, in such areas as Devils Peak and Old Maid Flats, the pounding hooves kicked up enough dirt and gravel that people quickly tired of the "dust storms."

And, in the rainy season the town's main thoroughfare—which was actually what was left of the historic Barlow Road—became a sea of mud.

When the winter freeze came the deep ruts caused by the horse-drawn wagons and the solid rubber tires of Model-T Fords were almost impossible to walk through without stumbling.

The town needed paved streets badly but at that time even the old wagon road (which later became the Mt. Hood Loop Highway) was in such a sad state of repair that a trip to the mountains was an all-day task. Travelers fought for hours struggling up steep hills, forging swift streams and braving swollen and unpredictable rivers.

The old highway that "snaked" a difficult course from Portland to the mountain seemed to be the main priority with state and county officials, who gave little thought to the problems of an unincorporated town's main street. So they ignored Rhododendron's problems and emphasized the maintenance of a roadway.

This unique thoroughfare was inlaid with logs to give both horseless and motorized

vehicles extra traction. It ran along the roadway and was used during times of inclement weather.

The ride was jarring and bumpy, but more tolerable than sinking deep into the mud and being forced to deal with the Herculean task of getting unstuck from two to three feet of muck.

It would not be until the '40s, however, that the area would be able to do without the inconvenience of mud and dust.

## CROW CREEK SUPPLIES WATER

Water was another problem for the area. Digging a well was sometimes a difficult task because of the area's rocky soil.

The Zig Zag River had changed its channel so many times that it had deposited large quantities of rock and gravel throughout the area. It took a lot of "back-breaking" work to dig deep enough to get an adequate supply of water.

Widow Franzette decided to solve the easiest problem first—supplying an

adequate supply of water for domestic use. She did this by creating a public water system.

Franzette realized that providing a service, such as water, was as important as dividing the area into plots (which she did just prior to the 1920s).

Franzette's water source was Crow Creek, a relatively short creek that was given this name due to the large flock of crows who tended to nest during pleasant weather, in a nearby 30-acre meadow.

Actually, the creek was misnamed as the flock of

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# Improper fill a bad start

Continued from Page 1

"I didn't want my footings to break or my floor busting up," said Fahrenkrug.

It took the contractor about two and a half weeks to get the sewer line in, according to Fahrenkrug, and the exposed organic material should have been seen by both Hamblin and Gessford during inspections, as well as a "clerk of the works," who drove up occasionally from the architect's other job in Estacada.

Fahrenkrug said he began to have serious doubts about the stability of the fill in the "B" wing area. He said he went directly to Gessford and told him he didn't want to be responsible for any concrete work poured across the ditch because the cement slab wouldn't "stay there."

"I don't have a (architect's) license. I don't have a shingle to hang out," said Fahrenkrug. "All I could go on is (the) years I have worked with this stuff. And you can tell when you have unsuitable ground to work on."

Fahrenkrug said he poured one of the "B" wing footings on a Thursday or Friday. Over the weekend it rained. On Monday "a big cavity appeared under the footing." When he showed Gessford the cavity Gessford reportedly commented that it looked all right to him, and to just pour more concrete into the hole.

"That was an indication to me right there that, 'Emil, you'd better start covering your butt and make sure everything is right because this guy doesn't know what he's doing.'"

He (Gessford) should have stopped the guy right there and had the plumber come back and dig his ditch out. But it's his sub (contractor). If it would of been us we'd have had to do it (again)."

Further digging was required in the kitchen area to set the footings on solid ground, according to Fahrenkrug.

"All the footings that I put in the ground I put extra steel in and I made the footings anywhere from an extra six inches to one foot wider and thicker," said Fahrenkrug. "I took that on my own and Glynbrook paid the price of the steel and extra concrete."

Fahrenkrug estimates that he poured an extra 60

yards of concrete in the footings, at a cost of \$45 a yard.

An electrician who was present while the "B" wing site was being prepared, according to Fahrenkrug, told him that workers discovered the base for the slab was too narrow. So a bulldozer was reportedly used to push fill material, which had been "stripped off" the site, to the south side to make up the difference.

## SINKING SCHOOL?

As "B" wing was being poured, Fahrenkrug said the problems grew worse. He said he set up a transit to check the elevations of the "A" and "C" wings and got different readings.

He said he thought there was something wrong with the transit so he took

another reading with a different instrument. The results were the same. The pads were sinking.

Fahrenkrug said he took readings once a week throughout the month of September and learned that each week "C" wing was going down at a rate of one-sixteenth of an inch to one-eighth of an inch. Within a three week period it had gone down three-eighths of an inch, with "A" wing also sinking.

With the floors now uneven, Fahrenkrug said he had his subcontractor for the slab, Jess Ellingson of Ellingson Construction, grind an inch and a half off of the floor in "A" wing. He said Ellingson spent thousands of dollars working evenings and weekends to get the floors even.

The floors were rejected about three or four times, said Fahrenkrug, before they were accepted.

Fahrenkrug said he informed Gessford of the floor problems and told him he felt it was due to the organic fill beneath the slab. Gessford reportedly responded that that "was impossible."

In "C" wing, Fahrenkrug said workmen discovered that the building "was moving." A corner sunk an inch and a half, with the walls pulling away from one another. Above the doors, at the expansion joints, they had opened up anywhere from three-eighths of an inch to a half.

Fahrenkrug said, "When I told Gessford that he said, 'Don't say a word to nobody; not your boss or

nothing until I get this checked out.'

"Right then I lost a lot of respect for that man professionally, because if there's a problem then Goddammit lets hit it and find out."

Fahrenkrug said he called Glynbrook officials and informed them of the problem. He said he told them he thought Gessford was trying to "pass the buck" and blame the company.

He said he wanted an attorney right there on the spot to see the damages but, instead, Ken Hillgoss from the company came up and inspected the floors.

Fahrenkrug said, "He just rubbed his eyes and he'd say, 'Gosh, I don't know.' That was it and these guys stood a chance of losing their tails."

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