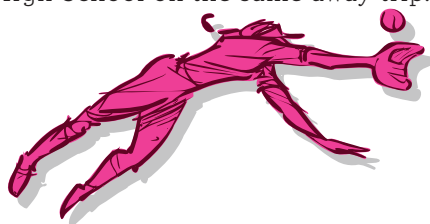


K SPORTS

McNary girls varsity softball on track for a stellar season

BY CHARLES GLENN
Of the Keizertimes

This year's McNary High School girls varsity softball team has already racked up five non-league wins since their opening 4-2 victory over Roseburg High School in Grants Pass on March 15. Their only real disappointment to the season so far was a 4-5 loss to Grants Pass High School on the same away trip.



The girls responded by winning four games in a row in dominant fashion, starting with a 13-2 win over West Linn High School on March 16.

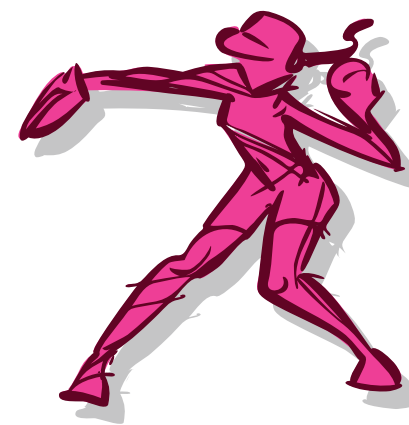
The team represented the 6A-6 Mountain Valley Conference against squads from all over the region in the Jesuit/Sunset Varsity Softball Tournament March 21-22, opening with back-to-back shellackings of La Salle Prep (17-4) and Sunset High School (18-4). The following day, March 22, they repeated their performance by beating Camas High School 15-2, and then Liberty High School XX-X, sweeping the non-league tournament.

"We've had a great start to the season," said Kelly Parsell, McNary Girls Softball Head Coach. "In six games, we've scored a combined 71 runs and hit eight home runs. The girls come to practice ready to learn and are visibly getting better each day. This is a special group of girls - they play hard and have fun while doing it."

The team's starting pitcher, Lacey Vasas, was on the mound for 32 innings while maintaining a 1.53 ERA over the last five games. Batting average leaders include Heather Ebner, at .524, with seven doubles and four home runs, and Madison Morse,

batting .611 since the opening game. The Celtics have one more non-league game this month, facing Jesuit High School on March 30 in Beaverton. They finish their non-league play in the first part of April at Tigard High School on April 1; followed by two home games against Tualatin High School, April 4, and Newberg High School on April 7; and then at Westview High School on April 11.

League play opens against McKay High School on April 12 in Salem. The Celtics are currently ranked #26 by the Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA).



Celtic boys pick up steam in tourney

BY CHARLES GLENN
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary Boys Varsity Baseball team had a rough opening to their season with a non-league endowment game loss to Lakeridge High School, 4-7, on March 16, but that game won't count against their season stats. They followed this up with a 5-11 loss vs. Tualatin High School on March 18. The low point of the season, thus far, was getting blanked

by Putnam High School, 0-6, in their opening game of the Red Lion Buckaroo Classic at Blue Mountain Community College.

They began turning things around at that tournament, however, with a 7-7 tie against a Pendleton/Griswold team, followed by two back-to-back wins against Roseburg High School, 8-5, on March 22, and a 6-4 win over North Medford High School on March 23.

Non-league play continues for the

Celtics at home vs. Reynolds High School on March 28, followed by a four-game road-trip to Crescent Valley High School, and both North and South Medford high schools from March 30 through April 5. The boys return home for a non-league game against Grant High School on April 6, and they finish that segment of their season at Roosevelt High School on April 8.

League play kicks off for the Celtics on April 12 at home vs. Sprague High

School. The team is currently 2-3-1 for the season, and ranked #24 by the Oregon School Activities Association (OSSA).



The happy driftboat

After more than 50 years of fishing with my friend, Stinky, I have book's worth of his misadventures. We all do things that lead to small disasters, but he is the master of creating these situations.

One recent example occurred while launching his driftboat on the Nestucca River about a half mile above the fifth bridge, upriver from the town of Beaver. The boat ramp is actually a 30-foot slide on wooden planks at a 45-degree angle. It requires tying rope to the bow, then around the trailer, to ease the boat down the slide.

We had done this dozens of times before without mishap. This time, however, Stinky made sure to bring about rope. He got the rope, for free,



Casting about

by JIM TAYLOR

from our friend Crab Bait; it was used and frayed, but Stinky thought it was perfect for the job at hand. Especially for the price he paid—nothing.

We eased the boat to the tipping point to start its slow descent down the slide, keeping the right tension on the rope. As the full weight of the boat tightened the rope, it suddenly broke. The boat took off down the slide at an extraordinary speed, hitting the river stern first, the shooting across the river.

I was left standing next to the trailer, holding what was left of the rope while Stinky was rolling around in the mud, halfway down the riverbank. The boat was bobbing

peacefully on the water across the river. It slowly started to drift down the river. Alone.

Normally there would be a number of other boats being launched at this spot, but not this day. We had the river to ourselves. Not a good situation because there was nobody down river to grab our boat.

We all piled into the pickup and raced down the road toward the bridge. Halfway to the bridge, we stopped. I scrambled over the steep bank through thick blackberries and mud. I couldn't see the river until I reached the bottom, just to see our boat lazily drift by, out of reach, headed for the river rapids, just above the bridge. The little 16-foot boat seemed to be smiling, as it kept drifting downriver. As it kept going I sensed it flipped me off.

I crawled back up the bank, pulling myself up using the blackberry bushes for something to hant onto so as not to slip back down in the

mud.

It occurred to me that I hadn't signed up for this abuse, but, it was the lot I drew. Finally, reaching the road, I piled back into the truck and we headed for the bridge.

When we reached the bridge, there was a construction crew unloading equipment. One of them asked if we were looking for a point, pointing to the river eddy downriver from the bridge. Next to the bank, there was the boat, seemingly carefree, undamaged, without a drop of water inside. I walked down and grabbed our wayward craft.

We loaded our fishing gear aboard and headed down the river to finally do some fishing. We hooked a couple of steelhead but the trip will be remembered for the sight of the happy driftboat, unencumbered with human load, taking its own path less traveled down the river.

(Jim Taylor lives in Keizer. His column appears frequently in the Keizertimes.)