

HEPPNER

Celebration touched by Irish luck

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
East Oregonian

The luck of the Irish lingered around Heppner Saturday afternoon — although weather forecasters had predicted rain and wind throughout the day, the cloudbursts were delayed and the Wee Bit O' Ireland festivities marched on.

The KUMA Coffee Hour was treated to a handwhistler's version of "Danny Boy." Portland resident Sally Cohn, who was in town performing with the Irish Singers, first discovered her unique skill while in the seventh grade in Heppner.

Over the years, she has perfected her skills and made it to the quarterfinals of Season 5 of America's Got Talent with her handwhistling. Cohn, 80, said she was at a basketball game and became irritated with the cheers.

"I was messing around and discovered I could do sounds with my hands," she said. "I practiced with Bing Crosby records."

Cohn has whistled with several Celtic bands. She also plays recorder, tin whistle and the washtub bass.

Her whistling talents have taken her to competitions across the United States, as well as the Edmonton, Alberta Millennium Whistling Championships and the Eastbourne, England Whistling Contest.

In addition to competing in three Puckerama Festivals, Cohn also conducted handwhistling workshops during a pair of the Tulsa, Oklahoma events.

Other familiar faces during the coffee hour included Father Gerry Condon, U.S. Rep. Greg Walden and radio host Tom Melton. The



As the grand marshals, members of the Monagle family lead the Great Green Parade Saturday during the Wee Bit O' Ireland Celebration in Heppner.



Vance Nelson, 7, winds up while competing in the Welly Toss during the Wee Bit O' Ireland Celebration in Heppner.

coffee hour, which is live on the air, has been a regular feature of the 33 years of the festival. Melton has participated for nearly two dozen years. He enjoys the program sitting alongside Condon and Walden, and visiting with the people of Heppner.

"They truly love their Irish tradition," Melton said. "It is legitimate."

Top finishers in the Irish Brogue Contest included Joe Lindsay, Judy Dunning and John Doherty. With impromptu performances by his sons, Lindsay might have

some stiff competition in years to come.

Ryan, 11, engaged Condon in a knock knock joke and 6-year-old Andrew came up with a joke about sticky lips.

Lindsay was on the edge of his seat when his youngest son strode up to the mic.

"I never know what's he's going to say," Lindsay said.

Young Andrew may already be developing his father's sense of humor. After the show, the youngster said no one coached him in telling the joke.

"I made it up myself," Andrew said.

In addition to the musical entertainment, stories and blarney, the KUMA Coffee Hour honored the Monagle family as grand marshals for the event. Among those recognized were the children of Charlie and Katherine Monagle — Jack Monagle, Marilyn Monagle Barry, Bill Monagle and the late Larry Monagle.

The Monagle clan — with many donning apparel identifying their family ties — rode in the back of a flatbed and tossed candy and waved to those along the Great Green Parade route.

Other Saturday activities included Irish competitions, including the Welly Toss and a demonstration and workshop featuring Hurling and Gaelic football.

Musical entertainment continued with the afternoon Ceili and evening performances by the Old-Time Fiddlers and The Gothard Sisters.

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PENDLETON

Elk Foundation auctions guns, tag

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**
East Oregonian

The Pendleton chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation will hold its 28th annual Big Game Banquet Saturday, March 21 at the Pendleton Convention Center, with more than \$45,000 in raffle and auction prizes up for grabs.

But local chairman Tim Campbell said the organization is more than just a fundraising machine. When it comes to community involvement, members aren't afraid to roll up their sleeves.

"There's a lot of activity happening right here in our own backyard," Campbell said.

Last year, the foundation worked with the Umatilla National Forest to plant approximately 200 mahogany, bitterbrush and cottonwood trees on the North Fork John Day Ranger District south of Ukiah, in an area previously damaged by the 1996 Tower Fire.

Foundation members will once again partner with the Forest Service in May, rebuilding enclosure fence around aspen stands until the trees become established. The species are relatively rare in the Blue Mountains, but provide valuable forage and habitat for elk.

Campbell said the group also hopes to volunteer clearing trails on the North Fork John Day Wilderness later in the spring or summer. District Ranger Ian Reid said he appreciates the foundation's willingness to help on projects, and plans

to reach out to other conservation groups such as local chapters of the Mule Deer Foundation and Wild Turkey Federation.

"A lot of people think hunting groups are consumptive users. But they really do give back to conservation," Reid said. "I think it's really important to get these groups involved in public land management."

Statewide, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation has 26 chapters that have completed 791 conservation projects totaling more than \$53.6 million — everything from research to wildlife management and maintaining access on public lands.

More than \$2 million of that money has been spent in Umatilla County, Campbell said.

The 2014 banquet was the chapter's biggest to date, raising nearly \$50,000. Campbell said they hope to meet or exceed that goal again this year, with 23 guns and a statewide elk tag among the prizes up for auction.

Doors open at 4:30 p.m. for the event. Tickets include dinner and membership, and are available online at www.events.rmeff.org. A limited number of tickets will be sold at the door, though Campbell recommends people buy in advance.

For more information, contact Campbell at tmcampbell26@msn.com or 541-379-6612.

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BRIEFLY

Chamber executive to share details on China trip

UMATILLA — Karen Hutchinson-Talaski, executive director of the Umatilla Chamber of Commerce, will share about a trip to China during the Blue Mountain District Garden Club meeting.

Hosted by the Umatilla and Condon clubs, the event is Saturday at 9 a.m. at Umatilla City Hall, 700 Sixth St. A salad luncheon is provided for \$5 per person.

Anyone interested in learning more about the garden clubs is invited to attend.

Workshop offers genealogy help

WALLA WALLA — A Knitting Together of Generations is a free genealogy seminar featuring three sessions with 18 classes to choose from. Topics include information on getting started, searching records and identifying old photos.

The public is invited Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1821 S. Second Ave., Walla Walla. Lunch is provided.

To register for sessions, visit <http://wallawallahc.org>. For more information, call 509-529-9211.

Echo student highlights hometown in Oregon Blue Book

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
East Oregonian

An Echo School sixth grader received honorable mention for her essay on the topic "My Favorite Place to Visit in Oregon" in a contest for the Oregon Blue Book.

Lily Volger encourages people to visit her hometown of Echo. Calling it "a little rough around the edges," Volger points out some of the town's landmarks, including its tree arboretum, Sno Road Winery, Echo Hills Golf Course and the Echo Museum. The essay is included on page 276 in the 2015-16 Oregon Blue Book. It also can be viewed at <http://bluebook.state.or.us/facts/scenic/essay/essay06.htm>

Volger, a student in Mike Heriza's class, was among many Oregon schoolchildren who entered a contest sponsored by the Oregon State Archives. Essay winners and those receiving honorable mentions will be in Salem Tuesday to sign copies of the Oregon Blue Book and be recognized on the floors of the Oregon House and Senate.

The latest edition of the book also includes other local ties — the back cover features a photograph by Kenneth E. Thompson of the tree farm at Greenwood Resources, near Boardman. Thompson, who grew up in Moro, raised his family on a wheat farm near Helix before moving to Tigard in 2009.

Thompson will be on hand with Oregon Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins signing copies of the book Tuesday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. outside the Oregon State Capitol Gift Shop in Salem. Ted Demetriades of Grants Pass, who took a fall photo of Lithia Park in Ashland, which graces the front cover of the book, is unable to attend the book signing.

The Oregon Blue Book is the official state almanac. It contains facts about all levels of government and more. The Blue Book has been published biennially since 1911.

It includes listings and descriptions of government agencies and educational institutions. It also features maps and facts about Ore-

gon history and elections, as well as information about the arts, media and other cultural institutions in Oregon.

Copies are distributed free of charge to many public agencies, including schools and libraries. The paperback edition is \$18. For more information about the Oregon Blue Book, including how to purchase one, visit <http://bluebook.state.or.us>.



A photo by Kenneth E. Thompson of the tree farm at Greenwood Resources, located near Boardman, is featured on the back cover of the 2015-16 Oregon Blue Book.

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