

Mrs. Avent Convicted on Murder Charge

Story Column Three

County Fair and Rodeo Opens Today

Large Number Of Exhibits Expected To Set Fair Record

The Morrow county fair was in full swing today and fair goers are assured a greater display in many divisions than have been seen here in any previous year. Hundreds of workers were busy Wednesday installing booths and other exhibits in the fair building and members of the fair committee said that in the 4-H livestock division there are the greatest number of fat hogs ever displayed. Sheep and lamb entries are running about the same as last year, but one or two regular open class beef showmen will be missing. 4-H show beef will be a little shorter than last year, but early indications are that most other divisions will see an increase in animals.

Always of top interest is the 4-H fat auction sale at 7:30 Friday evening and buyers will have 10 steers, 10 lambs, six fat hogs and several weaner pigs to choose from. Immediately preceding the auction sale will be the 4-H pig scramble in the judging arena with pigs furnished by the winners of last year's event. New rules are in order for this year's scramble and each youngster will draw a number and must catch the properly numbered pig.

Committee members said Wednesday that the price for fat steers is expected to be 22 or 23 cents and there will be a 10 cent limit above the market price. The 10 cent ceiling will apply to all fat animals, it was announced.

Open class entries were pouring in to the grounds Wednesday with 4 top beef growers, Kirk and Robinson, Frank Anderson, Herbert Ekstrom and Bernard Doherty displaying a big group of their top animals.

Display Division Full

Booth space was at a premium late Wednesday and fair secretary N. C. Anderson said that there are the greatest number of 4-H and other booths reserved in the fair's history. Several new displays from 4-H electricity and entomology clubs will also be new to the fair.

Other divisions to show a heavy increase of entries are 4-H needle work and cooking. Already many sponge cakes have been entered in the Oregon Wheat Growers League sponge cake baking contest. The winner here will be eligible to compete in the area contest to be held later in Pendleton.

Judging started yesterday on the home economics and agricultural exhibits and by this morning all of the open class and the school exhibits were in place as were displayed in the commercial booths.

Carnival Arrives

Of top interest to many youngsters is the big Inland Empire Shows carnival which started setting up on the grounds early this week. A big variety of rides and games awaits fair visitors.

This is the same carnival which played the fair last year.

Another event of special interest to 4-H club girls and their parents as well as the general public is the 4-H style revue which will be held tonight (Thursday) in the main fair pavilion. Many of the county's youngsters will model the results of their sewing efforts during the year.

Dances Two Nights

The always popular fair and rodeo dances are again scheduled for Friday and Saturday nights at the fair pavilion. The music will be furnished by Gene Rietmann's orchestra.

Other weekend events, though not directly a part of the fair, will be the always popular Wranglers cowboy breakfast which will be served Sunday morning from 7 to 10 a. m. at the Wrangler's clubhouse on the fair grounds. Last year over 500 persons were served and general chairman Dimples Munkers, has made arrangements to take care of at least that many next Sunday.

Elsewhere in today's paper will be found a complete schedule of the fair events for the weekend.

Sarah Ellen Bengé Taken By Death Tuesday at Eugene

Mrs. Sarah Ellen Bengé, 70 years of age, died early Tuesday morning at Sacred Heart hospital in Eugene. She had been ill for over eight years. She was preceded in death by her husband, Ralph L. Bengé who passed away last March.

Mrs. Bengé was born in Morrow county September 6, 1884 and lived here her entire lifetime except for five years spent in Kansas when she was a girl. She was married to Mr. Bengé December 10, 1901 at McMinnville. Mrs. Bengé was a member of the Eastern Star, Daughters of the Nile, Rebekahs and the Christian church.

Funeral services will be held Friday at 10 a. m. at the Heppner Christian church with Robert Richter, pastor of the Hermiston Christian church officiating. Burial will be in the Heppner Masonic cemetery with graveside rites under the direction of the Eastern Star.

Surviving are two children, Terrel L. Bengé, Ione and Mrs. Luolla Bengéson, Eugene; four sisters, Mrs. Charles Stevens, Mrs. Bert Stevens, both of Day, Oregon; Mrs. Mary Baird, Newberg; and Mrs. Grace Robbins, Portland; seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild. One sister, Mrs. Nellie Willis, and a brother, Ed Driskell preceded her in death.

Creswick Mortuary is in charge of arrangements.

Verdict Returned After Three Days; Sentencing Tuesday

A seemingly calm and unemotional Mrs. Ann Avent late Wednesday afternoon heard a jury of 12 men return a verdict of guilty of murder in the second degree against her for the fatal shooting of Dellmore Lessard in O'Donnell's Cafe on June 4, 1955.

The jury returned its verdict in two hours and 45 minutes after listening to two and one half days of testimony presented by a series of 17 witnesses for the state and one for the defense. Mrs. Avent, who took the stand in her own behalf. The case was heard by circuit judge William W. Wells, who announced that sentence would be pronounced at 1 p. m. Tuesday, September 6.

The murder trial opened Monday morning and jury of 12 men, most of them Heppner, Lexington and Ione ranchers, were selected from a panel of 60 by noon that day.

The state produced two witnesses who testified that they saw the shot fired that killed Lessard, attorney who had been conferring with Mrs. Avent over the custody of her 14 year old son Kim. These two, who were the prosecution's top witnesses, were Russell O'Donnell, manager of the bar where Mrs. Avent was employed and Mrs. Hary Snow, a waitress in the restaurant who described in detail the entire series of events immediately prior to and during the slaying. Defense attorneys, John Bassett, of Portland and Ralph Currin, Pendleton, made numerous attempts to discredit Mrs. Snow's statements, but even during cross examination they were unable to shake or confuse her. Her testimony that she watched the entire affair proved a major part of the state's case against the small blonde defendant.

Defendant Only Witness

Though the prosecution brought forth 17 witnesses for its side of the case, the only defense witness brought to the stand, was the defendant herself, Mrs. Avent. She told her meeting with Lessard and claimed that he threatened that he would take her boy to Portland to place him in an orphanage. She said she remembered walking into the restaurant after having gotten the gun from its place under the bar counter, but claimed that she took it with no idea of using it against the attorney.

Mrs. Avent claimed that she couldn't remember anything from the time a cigarette machine which Lessard had dodged behind in an effort to avoid her, fell on her. She said she couldn't remember when, where or how the gun went off, though she did admit that before the shots were fired from the 38 caliber revolver, Lessard was walking away from her. The state showed that she followed him firing the gun five times, three

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CONVICTED—Mrs. Ann Avent who yesterday was convicted of second degree murder for the killing of Dellmore Lessard, Portland attorney. She is shown as she was entering the courthouse at the start of the trial Monday. (GT Photo)

N. Morrow Fair Funds Return Asked by Board

The Morrow county fair board at a joint meeting Tuesday with the county court voted to ask immediate return of funds which have been allocated to the North Morrow county fair at Boardman after it was discovered that a state law forbids the use of state money for more than one county fair in a county.

The discovery that the fair board was unintentionally operating outside the law in allowing some of its state supplied funds to be used for financing the North Morrow fair was made only a few days ago when the board met for the first time in nearly a year following the appointment of a third board member, Charles Carlson, by the county court. At the meeting, the laws governing the board's actions were reviewed by an attorney and the law concerning the distribution of state moneys was discovered. The board immediately made plans to request the return of money which had already been appropriated for this year's north fair and a letter was sent Wednesday to the fair board there telling them of the discovery and asking return of the funds.

The North Morrow fair has been receiving approximately one-third of the total money received from the state, or around \$4,000 per year. The withholding of the money will put the north fair in a bad spot this year with its show dates set for September 8, 9 and 10. County judge Garnet Barratt said Wednesday that in view of the discovery and the decision of the fair board to demand return of money appropriated to the Boardman show, the directors of the north Morrow fair had no recourse except to appeal to the court for local money with which to put on the fair. No provision was made in the budget for such appropriation, and if it could be made it would have to come from the emergency fund, if money was available.

It was pointed out that money appropriated to the north county fair has been used for fair purposes—buildings, prize money, maintenance, etc., the same things for which the money would have been used had it been all used here.

Members of the fair board are W. E. Hughes, chairman, Willard Baker of Boardman, and Carlson the recently appointed member.

Civic League To Promote Chest X-Ray During Fair Days

Seven members of the Heppner Civic League met Monday evening at the home of Mervin Leonard, Lexington to discuss the operation of a booth at the fair pavilion to be sponsored by the Morrow County T. B. and Health association.

Those who will be at the booth all day Saturday, September 3rd will be Mrs. W. L. Sowell, Mrs. Bradley Fancher, Mrs. Larry Dowen, Mrs. James Norne, Mrs. Ray Myrick, Mrs. James Sumner and Mrs. Philip Blakney.

Visitors will be directed to the hospital where a free chest x-ray will be available to anyone desiring one, from ten o'clock in the morning through four o'clock in the afternoon.

RHEA CREEK GRANGE

The regular meeting of the Rhea Creek Grange will be held on Friday September 9 with a potluck supper at 6:30 p. m.

County Schools Set For Tuesday Opening

All county schools with the exception of Irrigon, which opened last Monday, will open the fall term next Tuesday, September 6. Registration dates vary from school to school.

At Heppner all high school students are to register Friday, Sept. 2 at 9 a. m. in the gymnasium. On the same day first graders will meet in the basement of the new school and students new to the system are to meet in room six of the old building. Buses will make their run Friday morning and will return students to their homes by noon.

Superintendent Joe H. Stewart said today that all teaching positions are now filled with the hiring of Donald J. Ellsworth of Deer Lodge, Montana for the upper elementary grades, and Miss Lana Lea as girls' P. E., health and English II instructor. Lexington Starts Tuesday

The Lexington school will open Tuesday with student enrollment in the morning and teacher planning in the afternoon.

This year's staff includes Lawrence Brent, superintendent-principal, mathematics, education and shop; Robert I. Matthews, science, social studies and high school coach. He is a former coach at Clatskanie. Mrs. Nola W. Coval, high school English, homemaking and girls' P. E.; Serge S. Coval, 7th and 8th grade who came here from Sisters; Hildred M. Flud, 5th and 6th grade will arrive soon from Oklahoma. She had expected to be here now but was recently injured in an accident. Jewel M. Boone, 3rd and 4th grades, formerly at Ramona, Oklahoma; and Mary E. Brent, 1st and 2nd grades.

Two new classes which will be taught this year are shop and

homemaking, it was announced.

Hot lunches will start at Lexington on Wednesday with Mrs. Gladys Young as head cook. Gladys Van Winkle will assist Leonard Munkers as custodian.

Both the main building and the gym have been completely redecorated outside, many repairs made inside and considerable remodeling.

One school information is in a separate column elsewhere in today's paper.

Mother of Heppner Woman is Killed

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Brown left for Burns Monday morning after receiving word that her mother, Mrs. Mary E. Goodman had been instantly killed in a car accident Sunday.

The accident, a head-on collision with another car, occurred near Crane Junction southwest of Burns. Mrs. Goodman and a man who worked on her ranch were on their way home when the accident occurred. The driver of the other car and the farm worker in the Goodman car were both seriously injured and are in the Burns hospital.

Cowboy Breakfast Again on Program

The Heppner Wranglers will again serve their popular cowboy breakfast to all hungry visitors Sunday morning, Dimples Munkers, breakfast chairman has announced. It will be served from 7 to 10 a. m. at the clubhouse on the fair grounds.

Mrs. John Monahan of Heppner is in the Good Samaritan hospital in Portland.

NORTHWEST BUCKING CONTEST NEW TOP EVENT

Rodeo stock began arriving in Heppner early this week and several dozen entrants had already signed up for various rodeo events by Wednesday evening, rodeo committee chairman Floyd Jones said today.

Stock is being furnished this year by Ed Ring of Wilbur, Washington and Ring said today that he has had assurance from a large number of the northwest's top cowhands that they plan to be here to take part in Morrow county's big show.

Missing from the scene will be some of the famous names familiar to local rodeo followers, inasmuch as this year's rodeo is an amateur affair, yet the inclusion of the Northwest amateur bucking champions in the two-day program is expected to bring at least 5 of the top amateur bronc riders of the entire northwest to Heppner.

The Northwest Bucking, which was offered to the Morrow county fair and rodeo by the Pendleton Round-Up, will be one of the top attractions offered by any rodeo in this section of the west. Top prize will be a hand made saddle donated by Hamley and Company of Pendleton and Ring said yesterday that he had received assurance from Talbot Taylor, Yakima; Jackie Hooker, Colfax, Lewis, Williams Lake, B. C.; Tug Lewis, Williams Lake, B. C.; Tug Hansen, Alberta, Canada; Pete Peterson and others that they plan to be here for the bronc riding competition. A host of other top bronc riders from Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Canada are expected before the list is closed at 6 o'clock Friday evening.

Saturday Night Show New

Other new events scheduled in this year's rodeo will be the addition of a Saturday night show which will be held under the recently installed lights. On the program for the night show, which will start at 8 o'clock will be one go-around of the Morrow county amateur calf roping, the winner of which will receive a hand made K-V Saddle saddle donated by the Heppner Pine Mills. Second and third prizes of a buckle and belt and a western hat have been put up by Tum-A-Lum Lumber Company and Wilson's Men's Wear. Other features on the Saturday night show will be a wild horse race, a Calgary roping event, which is new to the Heppner show, a children's pony race, a cowgirl race and a special drill by the Umatilla Sage Riders of Hermiston.

Saturdays opening rodeo show will feature the grand entry parade with Queen Carol Ann Wigelsworth and her court, pennant bearers, rodeo officials and many others. All of the usual top-notch rodeo events will be included in the two-day program with the exception of bull riding which was eliminated to make room for the Northwest Bucking, Calgary roping and some of the other new events which have been added and which are certain to give spectators one of the best rodeos they have seen in many years. Other events will be the popular calf roping, several pony race divisions, cowboy and cowgirl races, bareback riding, junior amateur calf roping, the popular riding clubs' flag race, and the Morrow county derby which will feature Morrow county horses ridden by the owner or a member of his family. The latter event is scheduled for the Sunday afternoon show, Floyd Jones, rodeo committee chairman said today.

Rodeo announcer will be Johnnie Lee Williams of Spray. Ring, stock contractor, said his string of stock, which has been worked at nine top northwest rodeos this season, will provide some of the top rodeo stock available. He named several broncs which have been working at setting some kind of a record for such animals. He will have one bareback bronc which has never been ridden in four years and he said she expects to keep her record clean. Other broncs which are sure to give their cowboys a real ride are Charcoal Badger Mountain Jr., Soapbuds and others. Ring said Wednesday that he has been told that he

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FINAL PLANS for this year's fair and rodeo are being made by four members of the Morrow county fair board and committees. Shown left to right are Floyd Jones, chairman of the rodeo committee; Eb Hughes, fair board chairman; Raymond Ferguson, fair committee head and Jack Loyd, a member of the rodeo committee. (Photo by Irene Wilson)