

THE HEPPNER GAZETTE-TIMES

MORROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER

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THE FLOOD OF DECEMBER, 1964

Control Projects Needed

It is pretty well established that the flood of December, 1964, is the worst in the state's history from the standpoint of the general devastation done. As its residents recover from the staggering blow and start a period of recovery, this is the best time to think about control for the future. Because of its severity, the flooding laid out a blueprint of trouble spots and showed very well where control is needed.

This is true in Morrow county. We know that whenever a flood of any proportion comes from surface water, Ione is liable to suffer. It took a severe blow in August, 1961, when a water spout sent waters cascading down Rietmann canyon, and this flood from melting snow repeated the damage with equal or greater loss.

Ione must have some relief. Army Engineers made some survey of the canyon in connection with the Willow Creek project but nothing has come of it. It may be possible that a series of landfill dams in the canyon could check the runoff. A substantial ditch or spillway might be created to carry water down to Willow Creek.

Possibility of aid for such a project should be investigated now before another flood comes and Ione residents find their city covered with muck and silt again. Congressman Al Ullman has sent a telegram to the county offering cooperation and any assistance he can give. Perhaps he will be able to see what might be done towards checking the perennial trouble spot of Rietmann canyon.

Oddly enough, Willow Creek behaved itself in the upper reaches on this flood, probably because snows in the mountains, from which it is fed, did not melt as fast as they did on the foothills.

The Willow Creek dam would help in controlling such a flood as this because it could check the waters of upper Willow Creek and those coming down Balm Fork. While Willow wasn't flooding over its banks, it did contribute a substantial volume to that rampaging towards the Columbia. It would not control Shobe canyon flooding nor that of Hinton creek, although some steps might be considered for the control of these waters.

Rhea Creek's flooding was devastating, and the project now under consideration for a dam on this creek certainly should be pressed. Where Rhea and Willow creeks came together was a virtual sea of water at the height of the flood.

A channel clearance project on the creeks would be helpful, if there were any way to get the job done. Ione's second blow came from the over-flowing Willow creek, thus getting the damage from both sides. Maybe there would be a possibility for federal aid on such a stream deepening and widening project.

This type of flood, coming principally from snow melt, found Heppner strangely secure—and this is the town that is conceded to be vulnerable to floods. It now seems that Heppner is threatened not so much by a flood of this type as it is by the water spout or cloudburst variety, and we well know how devastating these can be.

No Doubt About Levy Need

There were doubts in some residents' minds about the need for a county road serial levy obviously at the time of the November general election since it was voted down then, but there is no doubt of the dire need for it now. Virtually every section of the county took heavy damage on roads in the flood, and it is going to take considerable money to restore them to make them usable and safe. The current serial levy will carry the current needs until July of 1965 but at that time more money will be needed to continue programs. When the matter comes up again, as it surely will, it should be passed with a very strong vote.

Governor Hatfield Was Right

When the last legislature cut the proposed Civil Defense budget to a token amount, Governor Hatfield strongly protested, but the legislature's action stood. The governor went ahead and held together an emergency organization on what was available. He established an emergency center in the basement of the capitol building which brought some undercover taunts and jibes.

The current emergency should be enough to bring a few red faces among the legislature's opponents of Civil Defense. The emergency command post in the basement has been a real nerve center in this crisis, which well emphasizes the need for an effective Civil Defense organization.

Control Dams Helped

As the awful damage of the flood is considered in the areas where the monetary loss was the greatest, we might pause to think what it might have been if the Willamette River flood control projects had not been in place—Hills Creek and Lookout Point on the Middle Fork of the Willamette; Cougar on the McKenzie; and Detroit on the Santiam.

Without these dams, the Army Corps of Engineers has pointed out, Eugene, Albany, Salem, Oregon City and Portland would have taken terrific damage. The dams cut 15 feet off the crest of the flood at Eugene, seven feet off the crest at Albany, 10½ feet off at Oregon City and 4.5 feet off at Portland.

They said that without the Willamette dams, all Portland bridges would have been carried away but the St. Johns bridge and that water would have flooded up to S. W. 5th Avenue. Oregon City's main business section would have been covered, Salem flooding would have been close to the 1861 record, and large residential areas of Eugene would have been lost.

This is food for thought for any who may oppose such flood control projects.

What About the John Day Bridge?

The most stunning single aspect of this flood was the almost unbelievable loss of the John Day River bridge on the Columbia River highway. The layman has almost a blind faith in the skill of the engineers who design such structures and the men who construct them. They assume that the bridges are sound and secure against all hazards.

The John Day bridge did not prove to be invulnerable to the onslaughts of Old Mother Nature, and the first reaction from official sources was that its loss was an "Act of God."

Tendency was for the public to accept this at first until pictures revealed the old highway bridge and the two railroad bridges to be still standing and relatively undamaged.

One conjecture has it that the bridge was designed for slack water on the theory that the rising pool of the John Day dam would surround its pillars. Thus, onrushing waters from a John

Day river flood would be spent by the time the crest reached the bridge. Without an engineer's knowledge to guide us, this would seem logical. But what about the interim?

It was an "Act of God," all right, but shouldn't this bridge have been designed to withstand this Act of God? The governor's investigation should prove interesting. Loss of the bridge has served to shake the public's confidence in the invincibility of such structures.

Neither Snow, Nor Rain . . .

Traditional to the postal service is the quotation, "Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

Well, the flood put a dent in the indomitable reputation of the postal service, and like many parts of the state, Morrow county was without mail service for four days. But no one is going to taunt the department about it for their record is admirable. Probably most of our residents can never recall a previous single day in their lives when the mail did not arrive at its destination, except on holidays and Sundays.

Our post office crew did a fine job trying to get the mail out and in, with Postmaster Driscoll making many phone calls trying to find routes and ways and means of living up to the old quotation. When the mail finally arrived, the staff worked through the night to get out the big load and kept windows open through the day Sunday until 3 p.m. to serve the public.

Driscoll says that the public was very cooperative and uncomplaining. This, then, is apparently a story of good cooperation on both sides and shows that the public, prone to make an issue of some minor irritations, can stand major misfortunes with lesser complaint.

Better Information Needed

As has been pointed out by several sources, this flood story was one of the biggest news stories of all time, since every community, every area, had a major story of its own to tell. It taxed newspapers, radio and television to tell the story adequately.

It seems to point up a real need for consideration, too—the need to provide an official report, free from rumor, not to tell of the drama and tragic aspects of the flood but to give the public the information it vitally needs. It seems to us that the state might have designated a particular time on a particular television or radio station to bring to the public official reports on roads, communications systems, where supplies could be obtained, what dangers may be encountered, and what should be done. News of the flood has been on a catch-as-catch-can basis, and people caught in the holiday time have been endeavoring to grope their way across the state with only vague highway reports to go on. It would have been a big help to all, including those trying to make restorations, if there were a central information agency set up in various areas to provide official information, and if a daily telecast and radio program had been provided for authentic information. This would have saved a great many people who were trying to do vital work in the emergency, a great deal of harassment.

The Good Neighbor Helps Out

This is the sort of crisis that brings out the real goodness in people, and it is heartwarming to realize how good neighbors spring to the task to help a fellow man in trouble. The story of the Al Bunch elevator loss is a good case in point. Friends and neighbors gave up their Christmas eve celebrations to come out in the wet and cold to help salvage grain. They worked right through Christmas, and instead of eating turkey, ate cold sandwiches. Probably there were more persons, snug in their homes, who would have been glad to fall to and help, if they had known how to go about it.

May the bright star sparkle above the heads of these good neighbors. Didn't they best exemplify the true spirit of Christmas?

Boardman Schools Present Annual Public Program

By MARY LEE MARLOW

Boardman—"Isle of Christmas Dreams" was presented by the Boardman Grade school at the annual Christmas program at the school last Tuesday night.

There were about 40 children who participated as characters in the play, with 50 other pupils taking parts as the pajama children.

The Riverside High school chorus sang Christmas carols and Mrs. LaCombe and Mrs. LaVern Partlow sang "O Holy Night."

Following the program, everyone was given a sack of treats.

"Song from Heaven" was the theme of the Christmas program at the Boardman Community church Sunday night. It was the story of the origin of the song, "Silent Night." Special numbers were presented also.

Each person present received a sack of treats.

Cemetery Meeting Set
The annual meeting of the Boardman Riverview Cemetery Maintenance Association will be held at the city hall Monday, January 4, at 2:00 p.m. for the purpose of nominating one director.

There will be a New Year's Eve Watch service at the Boardman Community church, starting at 9 p.m. and lasting until midnight. Everyone is invited.

Holiday visitors at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Leo Potts were their sons-in-law and daughters, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Bundy of Arco, Idaho, and Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Houston and children Lea, Arlene and Donald of La Grande.

Mr. and Mrs. Gene Allen and children Stacie, Stuart and Stephanie of Walla Walla were Christmas visitors at the home of Allen's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Allen.

Mrs. Marie Golden of Portland has been a visitor the past two weeks at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Roy Partlow.

Visitors at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Kress on Christmas were their sons-in-law and daughters, Mr. and Mrs. Del Robertson and son Kevin of Walla Walla, and Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Ball and daughters Barbara and Karen of Hermiston, and their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Kress and children Brian and Dee Ann of La Grande. The latter also visited at the home of Mrs. Kress' mother, Mrs. LaVern Partlow.

Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Carpenter had as guests Christmas their sons and daughters-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Carpenter and children Cindy, Larry and Lyle of Renton, Wash., and Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Carpenter and children Annie and Johnnie of Umatilla.

Students home for the holi-

days from college included: Chloe McQuaw, Pacific University at Forest Grove; Larry West, Portland State; Keith Gronquist, University of Portland; Pat Partlow, Johnnie Partlow and Sharon Donovan, E.O.C. La Grande; Pat Miller, Marylhurst College; Jim Miller and Eileen Ely, Blue Mountain College, Pendleton; Jim and Ted Hoffman, Clark College, Vancouver, and Leonard Bedford, E. O. C.

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Mulholand and children Josie, Geri and Don of Wichita Falls, Texas, are spending the holidays at the home of Mrs. Mulholand's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Baker.

Mr. and Mrs. Mike Hibbard of Boise, Idaho are spending the holidays at the home of their son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Forrest Hibbard.

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Blank of Richland, were holiday visitors at the home of their son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Milt Barron.

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Linton and daughter, Lori, returned to their home in Bandon after spending Christmas week visiting at the home of Mrs. Linton's parents, Mr. and Mrs. N. C. Anderson.

Mr. Linton is a teacher in the Bandon schools.

Miss Joanie Miller and Sam Howell were united in marriage at the Canyon City courthouse in John Day last Thursday, December 24. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Miller on the W-4 Ranch. The groom is

Chaff and Chatter

Wes Sherman

FLOODS put a crimp in family Christmas plans for many, but human ingenuity finds ways of getting things done if the will is strong enough. It appeared as if many college students would be kept away from their holiday homecomings, but most of them made it here despite all the road closures. Some managed to fly to Pendleton, others took circuitous routes through Washington, some were stuck en route for a while but managed to get through later, and some got home via normal routes just ahead of the storm. Bill Wagner, coming from the U of O, stopped by Hoodoo Bowl on the North Santiam for a time and then drove to Heppner via the Spray road. He just made it through when impact of the storm hit,

and the North Santiam highway suffered some major washouts. Now families have to figure out how to get the collegians back to school, but it won't be quite the task it was to get them home. Conditions seem to be getting more back towards normal every day.

THE FRANK ANDERSONS missed out on a scheduled trip to Hawaii when the storm kept them from getting to Portland last week. They got caught out of Arlington on the John Day bridge down Jim McGhee, our faithful Zellerbach paper salesman, got caught there, too, along with another family. The three got acquainted, and suffering the same plight, drove up a driveway at a residence out of Arlington and the home owner invited them in. He fed them a fine supper, put them up for the night and gave them a hearty breakfast in the morning. Next day, Frank led McGee on a backroads route via Olex to Eightmile country that made it possible for McGee to get to Heppner. His customers here thought he must be a ghost because no one thought it possible at that time for a person to get through from The Dalles. At this point, we don't know how Jim ever made it back to The Dalles in time for Christmas. One idea he was considering was that his wife might bring their motorboat up the river and pick him up, but that might have been tough, too.

BOB DESPAIN got his bread truck through to The Dalles last week, crossing the river and then coming back over and finally proceeding via some construction roads. En route home he wasn't bothered with any traffic because everything was supposed to be closed. A surprised state policeman stopped him as Bob was homeward bound and asked, "Where the heck do you think you're going?"

Bob replied calmly, "I'm going to Arlington."

"Oh, no you're not!" the cop exclaimed. But that's just what Bob did. He was in Heppner next day putting bread in the grocery stores.

FOLKS SHOWED an indomitable Christmas spirit despite the bad weather. Homes had beautiful holiday decorations that took a lot of doing in bitter cold and rainy days to install. Those who did such a good job deserve real congratulations because it helped to brighten a rather miserable holiday season. Surely would have been dismal had Christmas come and gone without some gay bright lights to

bring cheer in the face of the storm. Not many entered the contest but there were some dandy jobs of decorating. Everyone is always thinking up ideas for the Jaycees as projects, but we think it would be nice if some lively group like this would try to get every resident to do some Christmas lighting, even if just one or two colored bulbs. Heppner could attract fame as a Christmas card town, and attract hundreds of visitors. What a beautiful sight it would be to come down the Condon highway hill and see the colored lights all over the town.

WE ARE more certain than ever now that Gazette-Times advertising pays. Our Chevy just a hubeap last week in the deep snow, and we put a "lost" ad in the classified section. On Christmas day Orlin Huston called and said he had found it. He later brought it down to us and wouldn't take a cent of reward. We certainly appreciate his kindness, and if he ever loses anything, we'll see that he gets free advertising to recover it.

THEY SAY Oregon State doesn't have much chance in the Rose Bowl tomorrow, but there's an old Ruhl that says a war is never over until the last battle is fought. We can be way out on a limb, but we truly think the Beavers have the stuff to put it over. Let's all concentrate on an OSU victory, especially out of loyalty to our native son, Dick Ruhl, and maybe they can overcome the dopsters just as they did against Syracuse.

AS WE boot the old man with the scythe out the door with the leaky rain can in his hand and the icicles in his beard, we say to you, "Happy New Year!"

COMMUNITY BILLBOARD

Coming Events

HEPPNER HIGH BASKETBALL

Tuesday, January 4 Heppner at Condon

Friday, January 8 Heppner at Pilot Rock

Jaycee game, 6:30 p.m. Varsity game, 8:00 p.m. Support the Mustangs!

HEPPNER PTA

Regular meeting Wednesday, Jan. 13, 8 p.m. High School Multipurpose room.

PUBLIC CARD PARTY

Holly Rebekah Lodge, Lexington IOOF hall, Saturday, Jan. 2, 8 p.m. Bridge and Pinochle.

4-H LEADER'S BANQUET

Wednesday, Jan. 27, 6:30 p.m. Episcopal Parish hall.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

TO ONE AND ALL!

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the son of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Howell of Wall Creek near Monument.

Mrs. Katie Enright and two sons, Joanie Miller, Clifford Howell and son Sam drove to John Day on business last Tuesday where they got caught at Mt. Vernon after the roads were closed by high water and bridges washed out. They were able to get home Wednesday night.

Ben Spain, Wayne and Ethel Leathers and Mrs. Lynn Forrest drove to Portland December 9 for a few days. Mrs. Forrest stayed at McMinnville to be close to her husband who is in the hospital at Salem.

Mrs. Elmer Asher went to Arizona to visit her sister for two weeks.

Couple Weds in John Day

Miss Joanie Miller and Sam Howell were united in marriage at the Canyon City courthouse in John Day last Thursday, December 24. The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Miller on the W-4 Ranch. The groom is

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