

## It's Up to Us Now

When Howard Preston, chief of the planning section, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla district, said at the conclusion of the informational meeting on the Willow Creek project last week that the matter is now in the hands of the local people, he made it precisely clear that now is the time to "fish or cut bait."

After long years of hope and effort, the multipurpose project, authorized by Congress last year, is within our grasp. It is now up to the people to unify and coordinate their final efforts so that the Willow Creek dam may be built.

The one final hurdle, before the Congressional appropriation can be sought, is the organization of the irrigators of the Willow Creek valley. Without this part of the multipurpose plan, the benefit-cost ratio would fall below the 1.2 to 1.0 that now stands on the benefit side, and the dam would not be considered feasible.

While the Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation people and the State Water Resources Board are convinced that the irrigation feature would bring economic benefits to the ranchers, it is no secret that some of the farmers are hesitant.

After years of growing their crops under their water rights and using the creek's flow when it is available, they are a bit wary of this new concept. They are in the position of trading the known for something that is promised to be better, but they do not know for a certainty that it will be.

To the non-farmer it would seem quite apparent and logical that having the water at the peak of the growing season would certainly be much more beneficial than following the practice, which some do, of saturating the soil in late winter or early spring when plants are dormant. If a resident in town were watering his lawn now, his neighbors would laugh at him.

But it has been pointed out that soil conditions on the north end of the creek are different. When a rancher applies a heavy irrigation to deep, sandy soil during the time of heavy runoff, it saturates the ground and holds pretty much through the season. Some have followed this practice for many years and believe in it. They can get three good cuttings of alfalfa by this method.

The question is—would it be better to have the stored water available for the growing season and reduce the early-year irrigation?

Quentin Bowman of the Water Resources board believes that there would be enough water in most years for both—early-year and summer irrigation.

Something long considered but never accomplished came up again this week when the Heppner-Morrow county Chamber of Commerce earnestly discussed moving towards diversion of more Ditch Creek water into Willow by means of a reservoir in the Herrin Meadows area. The county and state agencies are doing work towards this end. This water would supplement the supply to the proposed dam and help assure both early and later irrigators.

At the same time the Engineers are initiating a study of the John Day basin. Some believe that the county should accelerate its work on the Herrin Meadows project to save the Ditch Creek water for Morrow county, although Judge Paul Jones says that the county has a long standing water right on the upper Ditch Creek flow.

Some of the ranchers on Willow Creek do not have the depth of soil that those on the north end have and do not follow the practice of early irrigation. It would appear that the stored water for summer use would be particularly beneficial to them.

It has been made clear, too, that the irrigation district has virtually complete control over the use of the water. If it is agreed that some should be released early, this can be done. It would be a self-governing body.

The estimated cost of the water seems fair at \$3 per acre foot and a maximum cost of \$6 to \$7 per acre (not to be confused with acre foot) regardless of how many acre feet a farmer needs to apply irrigate his land. The officials have made it clear that the irrigators would not be asked to pay more for the water than would be economically feasible for them and that the federal government would make up the difference from power revenues on the repayment schedule.

Despite all these points, though, the non-farmer cannot make up the minds of the irrigators for them. They must decide for themselves. There are many persons in the community who earnestly hope that they can see their way clear to proceed with the organization and do it as promptly as possible.

We believe that the rancher has another stake in this matter that may not have been emphasized enough, and that is his general relation to the economy and welfare of the county as a whole.

It was quite surprising when one farmer at the recent meeting remarked that the dam would be a difficult thing for the City of Heppner because of the additional burdens of sewage disposal, school facilities, and other needs that it would place on the people.

These are problems that a great majority of the people of Heppner would gladly meet in order to obtain the benefits of the dam! Somehow there has not been enough communication between farmer and city dweller. We are in a position to know how many businesses in the community are making plans for moving ahead and expanding when the dam comes. The surge of construction dollars in the community would give our businesses a badly needed lift for two years. The influx of workers would help fill vacant houses in Lone, Lexington, as well as in Heppner.

In the ensuing years, the benefits accruing from the recreation and wildlife features, the possibility of attracting perhaps some small industries with the water supply marked for industrial use, and the knowledge that the area would be pretty well protected from another major flood would contribute to the local economy. There is no doubt that the recreation facilities of the dam would attract many visitors. The Engineers measure this feature, in terms of economic benefit, at \$26,500 per year. One only has to look at the accelerating use of Bull Prairie reservoir to envision what this would do—and the Willow Creek dam would be much more accessible, as well as considerably larger, than Bull Prairie.

Currently under consideration here is the development of a retirement home, which is a great idea. Many older persons have left Heppner reluctantly in their golden ages to seek the sanctuary of retirement houses elsewhere. They liked it here—the fine climate, the lack of congestion, the quiet way of living. But they had to sacrifice this for the unfamiliar memories of some of them are the horrors of the flood of hustle and bustle of the cities.

The dam would mean something to these people. In the 1903. They would have the security that the dam would offer. They would be able to enjoy fishing from the banks of the reservoir and outings on its shores.

As to the problems that might come, the City of Heppner is aware of these and working on them. The planning commission at the present time is operating under matching funds on a study of needs for the community and is moving with the thought that the dam will some day be a reality. Fortunately schools were constructed with the future in mind, and an influx in population would not overtax them.

We believe there is too much of a cleavage between our farm and city people. Actually Morrow county has no "city" people. We are all rural residents—both farmers and townspeople. We live in a rural county. We are interdependent. We need each other. What is good for one is good for the other.

One benefit that is not included in the Engineers' estimates is the indirect economic benefits that come both during the construction phase and post-construction period of the dam. This will help make the business community to live and grow. Goods and services that ranchers have not found available close to him will start filling in.

We have seen some businesses discontinued in recent years—ones that really hurt to lose. There is a need for concern here, and it is time that our people realize that they must unify, work together, and seek avenues for progress.

It is time for all to stop looking critically at the other fellow but rather to boost him, to work for his good, and in doing so, to contribute to the general welfare of the county.

We have often expressed in the pages of the Gazette.

# THE GAZETTE-TIMES

Heppner, Oregon 97836

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## Mustangs Head Into Stretch

With only three games remaining on its regular league schedule, the Heppner High basketball team is now entering the home stretch drive for the championship of the Western division of the Greater Oregon league. They go to Wahtonka at The Dalles Friday night and then finish the following week-end at home with a pair of games—against Burns on February 25 and Grant Union February 26.

After winning two games against top competition over the past week-end the Mustangs are now in sole possession of first place in the division. Their season's 15 win-2 loss record includes a one-point loss to DeSales of Walla Walla, Wn., in a non-league game (one which they squared with a victory over DeSales here later) and a 4-point loss to Grant Union on their long road trip at the start of the league season.

Should the H-Men go on to win the western division, they still have to battle their way through the district tournament at La Grande on March 4 and 5 before they have a ticket to the state tournament on March 14-16 at Coos Bay.

So there is yet a long road ahead.

Fortunately the team hasn't shown any inclination to be unduly impressed by the high ranking it has held among the state's A-2 teams throughout the season, and the "rating jinx" hasn't caught up with them yet. They have played each game for itself with the knowledge that this is a tight league this year. Every team is a fine one with many excellent players. There are no easy games in the western division, and each contest requires maximum effort for victory.

Heppner may have had it a bit tougher than the others in the competition through the season because it has been marked as "the team to beat." To the present, however, this pressure has been good, for it has kept the squad at a peak.

For eastern Oregon teams the road to Coos Bay is longer than for most other squads in the state, in a way besides the mileage involved. Many teams have only to win their league championships to qualify. In the eastern Oregon circuit, however, the split league is virtually the same as two separate leagues, and a playoff is necessary between the two halves to determine the representative. This is done at the district tournament with the two top schools of the western division eligible to play, together with the winner of the eastern division. The fourth spot is determined by a playoff between the third team of the west against the second of the east—the hard route that Heppner took last year. The 1965 "Cinderella team" which entered the district tournament in this lowly position swept the field and went on to the state.

It appears this year that conditions will be different. If the Mustangs continue as they are, they may enter the district as champions instead of in the underdog role. They will be the ones that all others attempt to vanquish, so it won't be easy.

In early games this year, the Mustangs showed only flashes of state tournament caliber, but in recent games they have approached a season's peak, nicely brought to that condition through the guidance of Coach Bob Clough.

With most of the squad qualifying as veterans of last season's district and state tournament, the team now has developed a poise and skill that gives one the impression that it really has the stuff of which champions are made. Games against Madras and Sherman were tough ones—close, tight contests against teams that were bent on winning. But the Mustangs never slipped, never faltered, never lost their poise. At the same time they were alert to take advantage of any weaknesses shown by their opponents.

If they maintain that poise, if they continue to show the fine coordination that has characterized their recent play—demonstrated by their lightning fast break, it is going to take a truly inspired team to beat them.

To the sports fans the next few weeks will be exciting ones. The Mustangs again this season are adding zest to the hometown spirit and are giving us all a lift by their achievements on the basketball court.

To those of us at the stage of life when joints are stiffening and muscles ache at physical exertion, it is invigorating to watch these boys develop to the physical and mental fitness they attain. Every year from the unknowns a new crop emerges to demonstrate skills of which few realize they were capable.

It is a bit on the side of the cliché to say that we are proud of these Mustangs—but we are. Since they have kept a humility through the season notwithstanding their high statewide ranking, we know they can accept another compliment that might swell lesser heads. All the people of the Heppner area think they are great.

Times how important the rancher is in Morrow county; we have helped publicize his causes; and we have tried not to overlook any opportunity to boost this most important industry.

Now comes the time when a segment of the ranchers holds the balance of a vital development in their hands. It is not for us to attempt to tell them that this irrigation project would result in Utopia for them because they are the ones who work with the soil, not us. But we say in all earnestness that this project is of more vital importance to Morrow county than some may realize.

It is our sincere hope that enough of our ranchers will be able to justify the irrigation feature so that it may move ahead with dispatch.

Ranchers will soon be contacted to sign up for the irrigation district or organization. It is emphasized that this still does not obligate them to participate in the purchase of irrigation water. Their individual decisions on that would come when the project nears reality. What it would do is pave the way for pre-construction work, a step that will require some three years before actual construction could begin.

Nearly every day some anxious citizen comes into this office to express his hope and concern for the Willow Project. An elderly man came in last week saying, "There must be something I can do. Isn't there something I can do?"

Mrs. Frank Parker at the meeting last week emphasized what some have tended to forget—one of the main functions of the dam is aimed at preventing a major flood like the one in 1903, something that remains vivid in her mind.

Should there be a cloudburst again that caused another disaster would there be any doubt about the construction of the dam? We think not, and this is a possibility that should not be pooh-poohed.

"If you want it, I think the project is yours," said Preston. Do we want it?

This is the time of decision.

## Chaff and Chatter

Wes Sherman

ORVILLE CUTSFORTH and Glen Ward, expecting to do some survey work at Herrin Meadows, turned back Monday at Cutsforth Park where there was some 14 inches of new snow on the ground.

When the bright warm days of last week moved us to remark to Roice Fullerton that we were thinking of taking off our snow tires, he advised us to wait until April. We're glad now that we heeded his advice.

WHEN WE mentioned recently that Mrs. Sherman's father made the race for the Cherokee strip in the Oklahoma territory in 1889, this struck a spark with R. G. (Pete) McMurtry.

Both his father and his mother made the race, too, although they were not acquainted at the time. His mother, who was Margaret Walters of Illinois, rode in a two-seated surrey, and his father, J. S. McMurtry of St. Louis, Mo., was mounted on a pack mule.

Unfortunately Miss Walters wasn't very well versed in bench marks, and she staked out a section that had been set aside for school use, so she didn't get any land.

McMurtry, on the mule, didn't have the fastest mode of transportation by any means, but he got a choice section on the banks of the Cimarron River.

Maybe it was good that the young lady didn't get claim to land, for Pete's sake. She, being unsuccessful, went to join a sister and her family on another section, and this happened to be near McMurtry's claim. That's how the two eventual parents became acquainted.

A bend in the river cut off a choice bit of McMurtry's land, a piece of about seven acres. This proved to be prime cotton land, and he raised 500-acre bales of cotton to the acre on it. McMurtry sold the first load of cotton ever ginned at Perry, Okla.

About 3 1/2 miles from the McMurtry section, some lucky homesteader found oil on his property and they brought in a well producing 800 barrels.

Others were found closer, but when a well was sunk about a half-mile from McMurtry, it proved to be a dry hole. That's the only thing that keeps Pete from wearing diamond stickpins and from driving a Rolls Royce today.

AFTER SITTING in the Heppner High cheering section at the Sherman County basketball game in Moro Saturday night, we think the yell leaders should be called the "Heppner Hallmarks". They have a cheer for every occasion—one when the team takes the floor, one when they score, one when someone goes out on fouls, one when they want to cheer up their opponents, one for the coach, and so on.

These kids have some sort of intelligence agency that develops a system of counter-cheering. When the band across the way strikes up with song, they immediately break forth with different words—to their school's credit—sung to the same tune.

One thing about it, this basketball season they have had plenty to cheer about.

IT JUST COULDN'T HAPPEN: When George Steagall observed his birthday last week he got a greeting card from his mother, Mrs. Cora Burnside of Spray, and another from his mother-in-law, Mrs. Della Parsons, clear across the nation at Jonesville, Va.

Now these two ladies have never met, and don't know each other at all.

The two cards, chosen from thousands on the market, were absolutely identical.

JIM DRISCOLL, Heppner postmaster is going to have to go on a crash program of physical fitness. The roster for the East squad of the Shrine All-Star football game lists Jim Driscoll as a halfback, and Jim's our postmaster. Of course, we know they mean Tim Driscoll, and not Jim, but the dad is getting all the statewide publicity.

Jim is used to getting signed up for sports action, though. They used to make the same mistake with son Tom, who is J. Tom Driscoll.

It's an easy mistake to make. I think the G-T may be guilty of writing Jim Driscoll occasionally in sports stories when Tim Driscoll was meant.

ISSUED periodically by the Soroptimist Club of Heppner is its bulletin, "Soroptimistings."

with Sylvia McDaniel and Eleanor Gonty acting as the editors. Gene Starks is president of the club this year.

In the last issue, under "From the President's Desk," were some cute quips about the vocations and avocations of some of the members:

SADIE FARRISH: The first robbin of spring—April 15.

OLA MAE GROSSHENS: Folk singer: Teen-ager with a criminal record that's somehow a bit.

ELEANOR GONTY: Why is it everyone seems to think if the shoe fits, their foot probably would look better in a size smaller.

HELEN SHERMAN: Samson had the right idea about advertising. He took two columns and brought down the house.

GENE STARKS: One of the stimuli that keeps a chaparrone awake is memory.

DAISY COLLINS: (This space cleaned by Heppner Cleaners.)

VI LANHAM: Adult education will continue as long as kids have homework.

SYLVIA McDANIEL: There is nothing wrong with the younger generation that becoming taxpayers won't cure.

BETTY PFEIFFER: Save U. S. Currency—redeemable any time for anything.

JO PETTYJOHN: You can tell that a child is growing up when he stops asking where he came from and starts refusing to tell where he's going.

WAVEL WILKINSON: When driving, girls, watch that freazy kid stuff!

ETTA PARKER: Of the various kinds of compulsory education, the most compulsory is experience.

MADGE THOMSON: Never get mad at someone for knowing more than you do. It's not his fault.

DONNA GEORGE: In America, land of opportunity, even the greatest men and women were born illiterate.

JOAN HUGHES: Procrastination is a thief of time and so are a good many other long words.

JEWEL HAGER: There is a charity that is not tax deductible.

MARJORIE WORDEN: A gardener needs a hatred for weeds even more than a love for flowers.

JOYCE JOHNSON: Has no trouble naming one of the happiest days of her life: The day her term as program chairman expires.

WHAT'S NEXT? DEPT. From OSU comes an interesting piece with Mary Holthouse, food marketing specialist, reporting these developments:

1. Now being marketed is sandwich spread, peanut butter and jelly, from a pressure can.

2. Spaghetti in circles (which we have seen advertised on TV).

3. Roast beef in pear-shaped cans.

4. Vellum paper place mats for feeding pets.

5. An oven to cook hamburgers in 20 seconds.

6. An aluminum foil package that enables the consumer to roll the foil in or out by twisting a knot on the end.

7. Freeze-dried coffee, which, when mixed with hot water, tastes like percolated coffee.

## Death of Brother Follows Visit By Mrs. Brown

Maurice A. Frye, age 74, of Alameda, Calif., died Sunday, February 13 in an Oakland hospital. He was the brother of Mrs. Blanche Brown, city librarian. She had just returned to her home here Sunday from a plane trip to California to visit him, after she had heard of his serious illness.

Born February 11, 1892, in Wheeler County, he was the son of Olive L. and Freeman N. Frye. He lived in Heppner as a boy, and graduated from Heppner High school in 1908. He was married to Mary B. Herens on August 21, 1915, in Evanston, Ill. After his return to Heppner with his family, he operated an electric store during the 1920's. Survivors beside his wife, Mary, are two daughters, Mrs. Donald S. (Frances) of Sun Valley, Calif.; Mrs. W. G. (Margaret) MacNiece, who will be remembered here as "Bunnie", of Cold Bay, Alaska; one son, Maurice A. Frye, Jr., of Alameda, and one sister, Mrs. Brown of Heppner.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, February 16, in Alameda. Rev. B. Stanley Moore, former rector of All Saints Episcopal church here, assisted in the service, which was under the auspices of the Knights Templar of the Alameda Commandery, of which he was a past commander.

## Dads Weekend Set At OSU Feb. 18-20

Fathers of Oregon State University students will be honored on campus February 18 to 20 and in typical father fashion will give a financial boost to the student body.

Some 2,500 fathers are expected to participate in the traditional Dads Week-end program that will include meetings with the deans of the schools in which their son or daughter is enrolled and campus tours along with athletic and entertainment events.

The Dads Club is sponsoring 17 full-tuition scholarships this year, worth \$5,160, and has given more than \$9,000 to the student loan fund in the past three years to help worthy and needy students complete their education.



## Coming Events

**BASKETBALL**  
Friday, February 18, Heppner vs. Wahtonka, Wahtonka High gym, The Dalles  
Jayvees, 6:30 p.m., Varsity 8:00 p.m.  
Support the Mustangs!

**ELKS' ANNUAL**  
Saturday, Feb. 19  
69th Anniversary Celebration  
Registration from 11 a.m., initiation at 2 p.m., ladies card parties, 1:30 p.m., dinner and dancing.

**FFA BANQUET**  
Annual Parent and Son FFA banquet  
High school cafeteria  
Tuesday, Feb. 22, 6:30 p.m.

**PANCAKE LUNCHEON**  
Shrove Tues., Feb. 22, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Episcopal Parish Hall  
Everyone welcome.

**FOOD SALE**  
Cherry Desserts, by Heppner Extension Unit  
Tues., Feb. 22, 2 p.m.  
Western Auto Store.

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