

71 years ago tomorrow

'03 Heppner flood was big in Atlanta

"Great Horror in Oregon Took Four Hundred Lives," reads a headline on the front page of the June 18, 1903, Atlanta Semi-Weekly Journal.

One and one-half columns describe, in a somewhat sensational tone, Heppner's flood of June 14, 1903, in the Atlanta, Ga., paper.

Last November Roger Budke sent an old copy of the Atlanta Semi-Weekly Journal to Morrow County Planning Director Del Smith. Budke wrote Smith that he had found the paper in the print shop of the Underground Atlanta. Smith turned the paper over to Rachel Harnett, curator of the Morrow County Museum, where the paper is now on file.

Reports from The Chronicle of Spokane and Portland Oregonian were used as references for the story which began, "Great wall of water came like roar of thunder and none could escape it."

"An estimate this morning places the total number of dead at 400," claims the article. Mrs. Harnett says the actual count was closer to 250 people dead because of the flood.

"David McAtee, a business man of Heppner, whose residence is on a bench above Heppner, was an eye witness of the disaster..."

"On Sunday afternoon, said Mr. McAtee, there had

been a very severe rainstorm, accompanied by much wind and lightning. I was standing in front of the house and noticed that a cloud of remarkable denseness approached the top of the hill on the east side of the canyon. I turned for a moment, when a roar caused me to look again at the hill. I saw a wall of water, whose height I would be afraid to gauge, rushing down the mountain carrying immense trees and timbers on its crest and tearing every rock from its foundation..."

Mr. N.I. Tooker from Portland was quoted as saying, "A low estimate places the dead at 300. The town had a population of about 1,250, but only about half of the population of the town could be found. We do not know where they have gone unless they have gone down stream. They may have gone to the hills, but this is doubtful. The whole thing was one horrible scene, destruction being spread on every side."

Many of the home and places of business were described. Leslie Matlock's famous ride to warn Lexington was described. The article ends in a rather gruesome manner, "No systematic effort has as yet been made to find the dead, who are undoubtedly strewn along the canyon."

Hospital problems explained at CC

Morrow County Judge Paul Jones and Pioneer Hospital Administrator Ilene Wyman opened the drive for voter approval of the resubmitted hospital levy at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce Monday.

Jones told businessmen that during a recent meeting of the budget committee and revenue sharing committee the county felt it could not come up with the money necessary to support the hospital for another year, although some money could have been diverted to the hospital.

"After checking all the figures we feel that this issue should be placed before voters of Morrow County another time," he said.

Many voters did not realize the seriousness of the hospital tax levy, Jones declared, and voted against it.

"We are faced with the necessity of keeping the hospital in operation, and this can only be done by raising the money ourselves or by a tax levy," he pointed out, "and should the tax levy be defeated a second time the hospital will have to close."

With the retirement from practice of Dr. L.D. Tibbles, who has been serving the community for the past 40 years, Jones said the county has taken action to attract another doctor.

"In order to encourage a new doctor \$25,000 has been set aside by the Morrow County Court for his first year's salary. Also, an additional \$5,000 has been designated for a mobile clinic," the judge said.

Mrs. Wyman explained that before the hospital budget had been submitted she had pared it to the point where only the

amount needed to operate the hospital for the coming year was included.

"Unemployment benefits going into effect and an 8 1/2 per cent increase in employee salaries, plus other increases caused by state requirements caused the bigger budget," she explained.

Citing one example, Mrs. Wyman said the state now requires at least two people on each hospital floor at all times. In the past only one nurse has been on duty, serving both floors.

"In the past year our census has dropped from 44 per cent to 31 per cent, and unless hospital occupancy increases we are looking at a higher budget in the future than we now have."

In answer to a question from the floor as to reasons why three janitors are required, Mrs. Wyman said one of the engineers is in a training period learning routine work now performed by Bob Lowe, who plans to retire in the near future.

The state requires that the hospital have a nursing administrator, but she cannot also be a nursing supervisor because she would be too busy taking care of chart and paper work. Mrs. Wyman said that after discussing this problem with state authorities Pioneer Hospital has been given temporary permission to combine the two positions.

"What is killing us," Mrs. Wyman said, "is the Oregon Nursing Home rules and regulations, not the regulations of the hospital."

Hospital rates are being increased to \$58 a day effective July 1.

"Many people in Morrow County do not realize that the

hospital is the only establishment that is open 24 hours a day and must have personnel to care for patients 24 hours a day," she said.

Jones said the hospital levy, if approved, would increase the present tax rate by about 60 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. "The \$65,000 from the levy would keep the hospital in good working order, and if the census goes up the money will revert to the county."

Dr. Wallace H. Wolff told the group that state and government agencies, such as Medicare, and welfare patients put great stress on the hospital. According to Wolff, a patient must be notified of the length of his stay in the hospital and must be asked to leave it at the end of that time. If he continues his stay the hospital is unable to collect government funds for the overstay period. And if a patient is not notified in advance that he is to pay for hospitalization he may refuse to pay the bill.

It was suggested that before the July 16 election on the resubmitted levy a public meeting should be held where the hospital's problems could be aired and questions regarding the hospital be answered.

Guests at the next Chamber of Commerce meeting will be the Morrow County Rodeo Court.

ANNUAL UKIAH BARBECUE, JULY 6

Ukiah's annual barbecue will be held Saturday, July 6, 2 to 7 p.m.

The barbecue will be preceded by a parade. Dancing will be held at the Ukiah school gymnasium, 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Hospital levy to voters, July 16

Morrow County voters will get a chance to reconsider on July 16 the \$65,000 three-year serial levy for operation of Pioneer Memorial Hospital which they defeated 703 to 496 at the primary election May 28.

The decision to "re-vote" the issue was approved Thursday morning at a meeting of the joint budget and revenue sharing advisory committees; hospital board members, the county court and other citizens.

The committees were confident that a campaign to inform voters of the importance of the hospital, and the need for funds to maintain it, would result in voter approval. Especially, the committees agreed, in view of the necessity of a continued full facility hospital to attract new medical facilities and doctors to the county.

At the start of the meeting the committees had begun work on reducing budgets to compensate for voter rejection of the \$75,000 serial levy for the county road department and the defeated hospital levy. Hospital Administrator Ilene Wyman presented a tentative budget reduction of \$30,306, which left approximately \$35,000 which would have to be diverted from revenue sharing funds or transferred from general budget accounts to keep the hospital in operation.

To come up with the \$30,306 in budget cuts Wyman had tentatively cut two part-time office clerks and one part-time janitor from the budget to cut \$4,000 from the levy budget. Another \$4,000 was cut from the budget by deleting free meals for employees, and \$3,000 was cut from the budget by trimming hospital insur-

ance, unemployment and state accident insurance.

If the budget levy for the hospital is again rejected, these cuts in the budget will probably be implemented.

After deciding to resubmit the levy, the proposed budget cuts were set aside, as they will not be made if the budget levy passes.

It was pointed out that the results of the levy vote have created concern among local citizens. The committees believe public sentiment supports the need for the hospital. Yet the May 28 vote shows that the budget levy for the hospital was carried only in the Hardman district, where a total of only about 25 votes were cast.

It was noted by the committee that if the hospital levy passes the extra revenue sharing funds marked for the ailing hospital fund will be

transferred to the already trimmed road budget.

The hospital levy will not be changed in any way, and will still call for \$65,000 per year for three years.

In other action by the joint committee Thursday morning it was agreed to investigate the cost of hiring a consulting firm for the purpose of working out a salary equalization program for county employees. When a price quotation is received, the committee agreed to budget this amount for next year. Estimated cost for this program is \$800 to \$1,000.

To add to the budgeting problems, Judge Paul Jones noted that the state has raised the retirement fund rate which must be reflected in the coming year's budget. The raise in the retirement fund will be from 1.75 per cent to 2.0 per cent of the employees

present wage. Although several department figures were reviewed by the committee they could not be approved as the general and road budgets will have to be "floated" until the outcome of the hospital serial levy vote is known.

The needs of the Neighborhood Center were presented to the committee by Pat Brindle.

The Neighborhood Center had originally asked for \$12,150 to operate, but had cut that figure to \$4,632, about one-third of the original figure. Judge Jones said money spent for the Neighborhood Center was a real bargain, as over \$30,000 worth of government funds for human services would be provided for the county's \$4,632.

The committee will convene following the July 16 election.

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City loses another round

Removal of building thwarted

The burned out skeleton of a building on Main Street may yet be designated "an historical monument" and left as it is for the ages, for the city has again failed to "score" in enforcing its statutes regarding dangerous and unsightly debris removal.

James Hager, one of the three owners of the fire-gutted property, has threatened court action if the city allows Shockman Bros., Hermiston contractors, to tear down the remains of the fire-razed building and remove it. When Donald Shockman appeared with his wrecking ball Monday Hager was on hand to order him off the property; and later demanded that Police Chief Dean Gilman arrest Shockman for trespassing. Gilman refused when Hager declined to sign a complaint.

Shockman removed his equipment from the property Tuesday. "The city didn't do its homework before asking me to tear down the building," he said. Two weeks ago the common council, which has been attempting to persuade Hager to clean up the debris for the past year, accepted a bid of \$4,349 from the Hermiston contractor firm to raze the burned-out building and remove the rubble. The council ordered the cost tentatively divided between the owners, Hager, Bank of Eastern Oregon and Everett Harshman. The city ordered that if any of the owners refused to pay his part of the costs a lien would be placed against his property.

Hager and his attorney, Herman Winter, threatened an injunction to stop the razing.

The city charges that Hager has not conformed to city ordinance by failing to comply with previous directives to clean the place up. Hager failed to appear at a public hearing for abatement of the property, and has refused to allow city forces on the property to clean it up.

But Hager said he had not been properly notified of the action of the council on May 30 in accepting the Shockman Bros. bid. Winters told the Gazette-Times Tuesday that the only official notice Hager received regarding council action on the property came Monday about noon when written notice from the city was hand-delivered, not to Hager, but to Winters. The notice, Winters said, was dated June 7 whereas the council resolution was adopted May 30.

Hager's second contention is that the city proposed to divide the cost of demolishing the building equally among

the three owners. However, Harshman owns 80 per cent of the property and would be required to pay only one-third of the cost. Winters believes an equitable division of the costs would be for Harshman to pay 80 per cent "because he owns 80 per cent" and the remaining 20 per cent divided according to the two owners' proportionate share.

"Even Mr. Shockman said such a division would be fair," Winters said.

Bob Abrams, city attorney, said Hager is unjustly and

illegally opposing the city in its right to remove an unsightly and dangerous structure as called for in the solid waste ordinance.

Two engineers have, within the past year, declared the building shell unsightly and dangerous.

Mayor Jerry Sweeney said Monday that "the building will come down even if we have to wait the necessary time for the court's decision, but it will come down."

Meanwhile, Hager has forced the City of Heppner into

an unusual position wherein it may require from three to six months in the courts to determine whether the city has the "right" and the power to enforce its own ordinances and charter provisions. The ordinance and statutes

probably won't be challenged. But Winters said his client, Hager, has a case because of improper notice by the council and in the way the council has divided the cost equally among three owners.

Fund established for leukemia victim

A fund to help with medical expenses for Kasey Neistadt has been set up at the local Bank of Eastern Oregon and the First National Bank.

Kasey's parents, Barney and Ann Neistadt, were told their daughter has leukemia after a diagnosis at the Oregon State Medical School in Portland, May 8.

Kasey, who is just 18 months

old, has been under going chemotherapy and radiation treatments in her spinal cord and brain. She has also required intravenous feeding and supplies of blood platelets have been used.

Ann and Barney are long-time residents, and both completed high school in Heppner. The Neistadts moved to Pendleton last year

where Barney is now employed by Blue Mountain

Forest Products. Ann is the daughter of Pat Brindle of Heppner, who heads the Neighborhood Center.

Donation to the Kasey Neistadt Fund may be made at either bank to help meet mounting medical expenses for Kasey.

Cattle raisers to hold picnic

Families of Morrow County Livestock Assn. and Cow-Belle members are invited to a picnic at Anson Wright Park Sunday, June 23, at 1 p.m.

Members should bring their own meat for barbecuing and their own table service.

Families whose last names begin with A-M are asked to bring salads; N to Z families should bring desserts. The CowBelles will furnish bread, punch and ice cream. Du Ann McCarty, Boardman, is chairman of the event.



Dangerous, ugly eyesore remains...

Board praises Daniels

Search begins for new superintendent

The resignation of County School Superintendent Ron Daniels was formally accepted by the school board at a special meeting Thursday evening at the district office in Lexington.

Daniels has resigned from the position he has held for seven years to accept the presidency of Blue Mountain Community College in Pen-

dleton. Daniel's resignation from the Morrow County post will become effective July 31.

Dr. Wallace Wolff, chairman of the school board, commenting on Daniel's resignation, said, "We regret his resignation very much but realize the real opportunity for him in his new position. The board has valued his

services very highly and appreciate the services he has rendered to the district."

Daniels reported to the board that he will be in and out of the county during the month of July making the transition from his Morrow County job to the community college position. The two weeks of vacation time he has coming makes this possible before the

July 31 resignation date.

The board established procedure for filling the superintendent's position at its Thursday meeting. The projected timetable sets July 1 as the deadline for applications and July 6 as the completion date for screening applications. Between July 8 and 13 the finalists for the position

will be interviewed. Hopefully, the final selection will come between July 15 and 19. Members of the selection committee are Jim Bier, principal of Heppner High School; Mike Tolar, principal of the A.C. Houghton Elementary School, one faculty member to be selected by the Morrow County Education Association; and those mem-

bers of the Morrow County School Board who wish to participate.

Requirements for the superintendent's position are a master's degree in public school administration, a valid Oregon superintendent's certificate, and a minimum of three years administrative experience, preferably at both the elementary and secondary

level. Additional qualifications the committee will deem important to the position are successful experience in budgeting, bond elections, building construction and knowledge of Oregon School law.

In other business the board hired three new teachers, Bill Buckendorf, a graduate of the College of Idaho, has been

hired to fill the vocal music position at Heppner Elementary School. Another College of Idaho graduate, Madeline Kelley, will teach language arts at Heppner High School. Ken Lemley, who has taught for the past five years at Beaver, Ore., was hired to fill the vacant 6th grade position at Heppner Elementary School.