

Cake bakers compete

All of the county fairs are over and 10 counties have selected their champion cake baker to compete for the state crown at the annual Oregon Wheat Growers League convention, Monday, Dec. 16, at the John Adams High School, Portland.

Practically all counties had more contestants this year than in previous years. County winners are as follows: Arlene Strutz, Umatilla County; Barbara Marks, Union County; Agnes Nash, Walla Walla County; Augusta Kliever, Willamette Valley; Lucille Ryan, Jefferson County; Roberta Garrison, Morrow County; Marilyn Anderson, Sherman County; Mary Wirth, Baker County; Mrs. Dick Neal, Wasco County; and Mrs. Allen Anderson, Gilliam County.

Lexington

Pendleton, Hermiston and Morrow County members of the Eastern Oregon Historical Auto Club met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Harrison of Lexington Tuesday evening. The evening began with a potluck dinner served at 7 p.m. The business meeting was held following the dinner, with President Bob Harrison presiding. The next regular meeting will be the third Tuesday in December at the Swarenger home in Pendleton.

Mr. and Mrs. Jamie Sands are living at the home of Mrs. Eula Bloodworth while she is spending some time with her granddaughter, Mrs. David Anderson, and family in Hua Hen, Thailand, where Mr. Anderson is employed by the Dole Pineapple Co. Mrs. Bloodworth plans to remain there until after the holiday season. Mrs. Sands is also a granddaughter of Mrs. Bloodworth, and is employed at First National Bank in Hepner.

George Irvin has returned to his home in Pendleton after a week's stay at the C.C. Jones ranch.

The Food Sale and Bazaar sponsored by the Rebekah Lodge at Case Furniture Store in Hepner was well attended and the ladies express appreciation to all who helped with the project.

The Morrow County Historical Society meeting is scheduled for Dec. 2 at the Lexington Grange Hall.

A pre-Thanksgiving celebration, anniversary dinner and four birthday parties were combined Sunday at the Wilbur Steagall home when members of the family gathered for the day. Present were Mr. and Mrs. Howard Crowell of Ione, Mr. and Mrs. William Steagall and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Roger Brandhagen and children of Pendleton, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Dougherty and children of Hepner, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Steagall and family of Lexington and the host and hostess, Wilbur and Marie Steagall.

Bill Padberg was a Portland weekend visitor.

School committee to meet

The Long Range Planning Committee of the Morrow County School District will meet Tuesday, Dec. 3, 8 p.m., at Riverdale High School in Boardman.

The committee will examine costs of proposed building and remodeling plans that have been developed to help the district keep pace with the changing population in the schools. Notable among these are increases in school population within schools in the north end of the county and the Hepner area.

The committee will also consider items which have been included in the plan to accommodate changes in emphasis in school curriculum especially in the areas of career education and vocational agriculture. The district's present shop facilities are inadequate to accommodate the program. The Long Range Planning Committee will consider the advisability of changing the organizational pattern of Hepner schools to the 6-6 plan. This plan calls for the first six grades to be housed in the elementary school and the 7-12 grades at the senior high school.

Advantages of this plan would be to allow junior high age youngsters to utilize facilities, equipment and staff at the senior high school.

Irrigon news

Karen Richards, Irrigon, leaves Tuesday for the 4-H National Congress in Chicago. She received this expense-paid trip as an award for her outstanding achievements in 4-H work. She has been in 4-H work for 9 years. Her greatest achievement was in her 4-H swine project. She has also had sewing and cooking and has won many trophies on her Montadale sheep at county and state fairs and at the Pacific International Livestock Exposition.

Carl Wiley has completed his basic training in the U.S. Army and is now stationed at Ft. Lewis, Wa. He was married two weeks ago to Becky Johnson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Duane Johnson of Alderwood Manor, Wa. They are former Irrigon residents. Wiley is the son of Mrs. Tom Sweeney, Irrigon.

Mr. and Mrs. Clark Stephens of Hermiston and Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Stephens of Irrigon were dinner guests of Mrs. Mae McKinney in Pendleton on Saturday.

Dry autumn, inflation squeezing farmers

The long, dry autumn and the persistent, upward march of production costs have in most quarters of Oregon agriculture created serious problems for the coming crop year, according to reports made at the Nov. 13 State Board of Agriculture meeting in Portland.

Central and Eastern Oregon wheat, caught short of rain, may not achieve enough growth in time to endure subfreezing winter temperatures. The beef and lamb industries, already distressed over low prices, have had poor grass yields on pastures because of low moisture. It is the same story in the dairy business.

Dry weather also has caused delays in getting nursery products to market, Board member Jim Doty, West Linn, said the dryness and unseasonably warm temperatures have delayed winter dormancy in many nursery products. This means, he said, everything will be dug and shipped late. He also said deciduous plants are faring well only where there is irrigation.

The dry spell also has provided some farmers with an unusual advantage in both harvesting and planting. Edwin Gebhard, Central Point, said the dry weather made for a favorable harvest of pears and apples in the state.

Mamaro Wakasugi, Ontario, said the late season also helps in soil preparation and late harvests in his area.

Wakasugi did, however, paint a grim picture of rising costs. He said high costs are driving many farmers out of

the business of growing alfalfa seeds. Fertilizer prices for any crop have more than tripled in some formulations, going for \$180 a ton and still rising. Suppliers are dealing on a cash basis only for fertilizer. He said loan money is available, but at a price ranging from 9 per cent to 12 per cent. He said machinery is being financed at up to 14 per cent interest. Machinery itself has risen in price to the point that many farmers are refusing to buy needed equipment. Repair parts also have more than tripled in price.

He said, "Repair parts are hard to get and, when you can, they are expensive. An item I paid 50 cents for last year is \$2 this year."

Wakasugi also said the cost of key employees is going up rapidly. He said a "steady man" gets more than \$4 an hour, plus a pickup, gasoline and usually a house and annual bonus. Some farmers also are paying for health insurance.

At the other end of the labor force, however, as unemployment climbs in the state, farmers are finding ample workers willing to work for low wages.

Edwin Gebhard found this to be a cause for concern. He fears agriculture will be criticized for exploiting a situation which has created cheap labor.

Doty said the nursery industry, particularly near Portland, has found labor readily available. He said many persons are happy to find work at almost any wage.

Prices are holding on a high level on most crops. The clear exception to this is the

livestock industry where production costs have far exceeded returns.

Garland Meador, Baker, told of many ranchers on the brink of bankruptcy. "That's not just the small operators. One fellow has a \$6-million operation and is looking for a buyer," he said.

Representatives of Oregon's cattle industry met recently with President Gerald Ford in Portland seeking some form of federal assistance. The cattlemen requested an embargo on imported beef, which represents 10 per cent of U.S. beef consumption. Meador said they received an indica-

tion that some relief may be forthcoming in that instance.

He said some cattlemen are asking for additional financing, "but," he said, "this should not be available until we can pay it back."

Meador said Oregon cattlemen, and most in the nation, abhor tactics as those used in Wisconsin recently when hun-

dreds of calves were slaughtered.

Board member Mrs. Clara Peoples, who represents consumers, suggested agriculture should conduct a consumer awareness seminar to help consumers become more aware of the true picture of the current plight of agriculture.

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Effective Dec. 1, 1974

Morrow County Grain Growers

will be open

8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Monday through Friday

and

8 a.m. until noon

Saturdays

These new hours will be effective in the hardware, parts and shop departments.

The BACK FORTY by Lex Orskov

"I guess the grass is getting pretty short when a cow has to get on her knees to reach it."

Morrow County Grain Growers INC.

Lexington, Ore. Established 1879 989-8221