

Christmas Lighting Contest

★ Residences ★ Churches

Judging will be Dec. 23 by a committee of the Heppner-Morrow County Chamber of Commerce.

Cash prizes in each category will be awarded as follows: \$30, first place; \$20, second, and \$10, third.

Yes, I wish to have our display judged in the Christmas Lighting Contest.

Name _____

Street Location _____

Mailing Address _____

Please mail to Heppner Gazette-Times, Box 337, Heppner, or bring to our office, 147 West Willow Street.

Developer of tropical 'Schmoo Tree,' son of Heppnerites, leaves for Africa

By Justine Weatherford
Mike Bengé left for Africa on an indefinite assignment with the U.S. Agency for International Development, Sunday, Dec. 9. Before his departure, he telephoned his Heppner parents, Mary and Terrel Bengé, of north Main Street, to tell them to notice the article in this week's Time magazine about his latest project.

The Gazette-Times has carried several articles with pictures about Bengé's work in Vietnam and about his imprisonment by the North Vietnamese from 1968 to 1973 which so distressed his family and friends. It was in Vietnam that he discovered a tall, slender-trunked tree with a ragged umbrella of drooping leaves that looks like a mimosa, and he recognized its potential.

He noted the tropical Leucaena Leucocephala is a bit different from other trees in that it grows as high as 65 feet in just five years. This makes it a prime candidate for reforestation projects in over-logged and wood-short Third World countries.

Forestry expert Bengé, Time states, has become a

Labor force in county shows rise

The Morrow-Umatilla two-county area labor force trend for the September-October period of 1979 was virtually a carbon copy of the same period in 1978.

The two-county area experienced a slight decrease in total civilian labor force. The unemployment total was 1,700 people in October, up 200 (13.3 percent) from September. A year earlier, in 1978, unemployment increased even more (+240 during the same period).

The unemployment rate jumped up to 5.1 percent, higher than the 4.4 percent registered in September. The rate increase is significant in size but not in scope when compared to previous years' experience for the same period.

Agricultural employment throughout the area was lower in October than in September. In Morrow County potato harvest employment started its decline as many of the smaller growers completed their harvests. In the Pendleton area timely rains allowed most growers to seed their grain with only a few deciding to wait until spring. The apple harvest in the Milton-Freewater area was near completion and employment was down to 150 from a late September high of over 200 pickers.

Lumber and wood products employment was down slightly (20) in the two-county area, the start of a normal seasonal downturn. Food products was the big loser of the month with 220 less jobs in October than September.

sort of bureaucratic Johnny Appleseed. Bengé tells that in some tropical lands the leaves from the tree are eaten like candy by children, and when dipped in a pepper sauce, are tasty hors d'oeuvre for adults. Its seedpods are chewed or stewed or painted as tourist trinkets. The seeds can be ground as a surrogate for flour or coffee. Better yet, the leaves can be used for protein-rich cattle feed, and nitrogen-fixing bacteria on the roots help to fertilize the soil.

Because of its rapid growth, the tree could become a vital source of firewood still used to cook food by 75 percent of the world's population. Its wood can be processed into charcoal or flammable gas—or used for building houses and furniture and making paper pulp.

The secret of the Leucaena's rapid growth is in its roots. They extend as deep as the tree is tall. This enables the tree to soak up nutrients below the reach of other plants. Growing on the Leucaena roots are fungi called mycorrhizae that help by absorbing phosphorus compounds that cannot be used by most plants, and then convert them into forms that can nourish the tree. The steady dropping of leaves provides rich nutrition for other plants.

His mother, Mary Bengé, says he refers to the miraculous tree as the "Schmoo Tree." He took this name from a mythical Al Capp creature that provided Li'l Abner and friends with unlimited supplies of milk, butter and eggs. Mary explains that as a kid, before TV, her son was an ardent reader of the comics and he especially enjoyed

cartoonist Capp's works. Time chose to title its article, "Schmoo Tree. It Gives Food and Fuel."

When Mike returned to the U.S. after his imprisonment he began to herald the wonders of the Schmoo Tree and news spread to the growing list of tropical countries that are suffering deforestation. A group of Haitians now plans to grow 12,000 acres of Leucaenas. The Philippines has its own ambitious Leucaena program, as does India and Indonesia.

In fact the only sign of indifference Bengé has found is in his own federal agency. He however, will not be deterred. "They complain, 'All you do is talk about Leucaena,'" he reports of his superiors.

Disappointingly, the Time (Dec. 10, p. 95) article does not mention Mike's hometown or his family. He has made several trips back to Heppner when I have heard him talk to groups, and when he has shown some of his most interesting colored slides to local schoolchildren.

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Heppner youth nominee to Air Force Academy

Oregon Congressman Al Ullman has nominated 23 young Oregonians including Dale William Holland of Heppner for appointment to the service academies.

Holland, 335 North Gale St., was one of ten nominations to attend the Air Force Academy. He is a senior at Heppner High School.

The candidates will compete for appointments to the Air Force, Naval, Military, and Merchant marine academies.

"This is an outstanding group of young men and women and those selected will serve their country well," Ullman said in announcing the nominations.

Ullman made the nominations after reviewing the academic records of applicants from throughout the 2nd District. Final selection for admission to the schools for the year starting next July will be made on the basis of academic and physical examinations.

"I am not going to go to the



Dale Holland

Air Force Academy even if I am selected," Holland said in an interview Monday. "I would have to go to school for four years and then serve four years as a commissioned officer and I don't know if I would want to make a full career out of it."

Holland said he plans on going to college somewhere else and playing football and baseball.

Bonneville awards contract to build transmission line

Bonneville Power Administration has awarded a \$5.6 million contract for the construction of the last section of a transmission line that eventually will carry power from eastern Washington to the Willamette Valley.

The double-circuit, 500-kilovolt line to be built under the current contract will cross the Columbia River at Crow Butte Island near Boardman. The first 20 miles of the line in Oregon will end at Slatt substation near Arlington.

Sterling Munro, BPA administrator, said the contract was awarded to Wico, Inc. of Spokane. The completed transmission line will run from near Richland, Wash. to Salem.

The award of the contract had been delayed pending receipt of a river crossing permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The permit was issued late in September.

Under the terms of the contract, Wico will construct access roads, place foundation footings, erect the transmission towers, and string conductor on the towers. Wico will begin work on the contract this fall, placing footings and erecting towers on the Oregon section of the line as long as weather permits.

The line is scheduled for

completion in September 1980.

"Unless it's an unusually severe winter, we expect Wico will have most work on the Oregon section of the contract completed by early spring," said Munro. "The major environmental problem associated with construction in hot, arid climates like that around Arlington and Boardman is dust in the summer, so it's best to do construction work there in the winter when the ground is wet or frozen," he explained.

Work on the river crossing itself will not begin until April 1, 1980. In the meantime, BPA has contracted with the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education for a study of bird flight patterns on the Crow Butte Island and the surrounding area. This study will form the foundation for 3 to

4 years of continuing studies of the effects of the transmission line on birds on the island.

The 500-kV, double-circuit transmission line is designed to carry 5,000 megawatts of generation. The power will come from federal hydroelectric generation additions at Lower Granite, Little Goose, and Lower Monumental dams on the lower reaches of the Snake River, and the Dworshak Dam on the Clearwater River in northern Idaho. It will also integrate power from Washington Public Power Supply System nuclear plants under construction at Hanford and Portland General Electric's new Boardman plant in eastern Oregon.

The Netherlands covers about 13,100 square miles.

Home loans available

Rural homeowners in Morrow, Umatilla, and Gilliam counties who need to upgrade their homes may be eligible for financing from the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA).

Ken Durrell, FmHA county supervisor, said that in addition to financing the purchase of homes, the agency also has funds available to families who already own homes that need insulation-weatherization improvements.

FmHA will offer loans for energy conservation improvements to all rural families of low or moderate incomes who cannot obtain adequate commercial credit and are otherwise eligible for FmHA loan assistance. Durrell said that this is not a new loan program, but a part of the total loan program FmHA has had for a number of years.

More information may be obtained at the FmHA County Office located at 1229 Southeast Third in Pendleton or by calling 276-3811 ext. 438.

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