

The Official Newspaper of the
City of Heppner and the
County of Morrow

**The Heppner
GAZETTE-TIMES**
Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper
U.S.P.S. 240-420

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Sifting through the TIMES

1929
Fifty years ago Cecilia Kenny and William Bucknum were married on Christmas morning at St. Patrick's Church. The honeymoon trip was to Walla Walla.

About 250 persons attended the dinner, program and installation ceremonies of the Masonic Blue Lodge.

The state highway commission ordered a survey of the Wallula cut-off to shorten the distance between Spokane and Portland. The Heppner Lions club went to Portland a few weeks earlier to voice their approval for the cut-off.

Gophers were busy at work in the alfalfa fields in Morrow County and agricultural agent Charles Smith recommended poisoning the critters with Strychnine sulphate sprinkled on carrots or parsnips.

1951
The first shipment of Morrow County grain was made from the Morrow County Grain Growers' elevator and dock facility at Patterson ferry.

New owners took over the mill which was changed to Heppner Pine Mills Inc.

Heppner merchants were going to give out prizes to the first baby born in 1955.

Henry Rauch won first place in the Heppner Christmas Lighting contest. He won a picnic kit. In second place was W.C. Rosewells and he won a set of Christmas lights. The third place winner of an alarm clock was Walter Edgar.

The youth activities committee of the local Chamber of Commerce decided to rope off two special areas for young people to sled on. The streets were on cemetery hill for the older sledders and Baltimore Street for the younger ones.

1971
Five years ago Harold Kerr was named president of the Morrow County-Heppner Chamber of Commerce succeeding Jim Bier.

Santa and his helpers made 200 phone calls to children in Heppner, Lexington and Ione.

Clinton Krebs of Ione and a junior at Oregon State University was leaving to study agriculture in New Zealand.

In Heppner basketball action, the Mustangs lost two close games. One was 52-51 to Condon and the other a 45-43 loss to Riverside.

We'd like to wish all our very good friends in the Heppner area a belated Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year.

We do miss all the fine folks in Heppner!

Sincerely Vi and Conley Lanham

"Nothing astonishes men so much as common sense and plain dealing."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

1980 & The Voters

What 1980 will hold in store for Oregon, including Morrow County, is a whole raft of elections.

Being a presidential year, some of the candidates for their party nominations—possibly including President Jimmy Carter—will be visiting the state. The primary is scheduled on Tuesday, May 20. Once upon a time, Oregon was a bell-wether state in national politics, but with so many other states establishing presidential preference primaries earlier in the year, the Oregon primary may have lost some of its impact.

In 1948, for example, Gov. Thomas E. Dewey of New York clinched his hold on the GOP nomination in a radio debate with Harold E. Stassen, the former governor of Minnesota. The debate was broadcast from Portland.

The two of them had criss-crossed the state—at least the main portions of it—in chartered Greyhound buses, accompanied by their campaign assistants and national press correspondents.

Dewey had been the Republican standard bearer four years before. Stassen had left the Minnesota statehouse to serve in the Navy as flag secretary to Admiral William F. Halsey. They faced each other in Oregon for the chance to lead what they hoped would be a successful Republican comeback in 1948. It's history now—we all know that a feisty Harry Truman won the presidency in his own right against all the odds.

In the Oregon campaign that year, Dewey and Stassen had addressed small-town audiences from courthouses steps or in National Guard armories, and had shaken countless hands along many a Main Street.

Dewey won Oregon—so far as Republicans were concerned—when he faced Stassen in a Portland radio studio. His skills in debate, honed as a crime-busting prosecutor, held him in good stead.

Southern Morrow County has never attracted the presidential candidates. It is too remote and the population too small. Perhaps it is less our loss and more that of those who aspire to high office. However, to make up for it, Morrow County may face quite a political battle of its own—for every county official holding an elective office, except the district attorney, is to face the voters.

The entire County Court will be on the ballot. County Judge Don McElligott, a Democrat appointed recently to succeed D.O. Nelson, would face the voters for a six-year term. Commissioners Warren McCoy, a Democrat, and Dorothy Krebs, a Republican, would be up for four-year terms.

Treasurer Sylvania McDaniel, a Republican, Assessor Greg Sweek, a Democrat (who was appointed to succeed Everett Harshman), and Sheriff Larry Fetsch, a Democrat, would seek four-year terms.

The two main election hurdles will be the May primary and the November general election. But those may not be the only times voters will be called to the polling places. By action of the Legislature, fixed dates have been set for special elections, such as to approve school district budgets. Considering the difficulty some districts have in persuading the voters to approve budget levies, the process may be started early. The fixed election dates in 1980 are to fall in February, March, May, June, September and November.

There may be voter apathy but it cannot be denied that elections are the spice of participatory democracy.

The Heppner Gazette-Times invites letters for publication. They should concern matters of general interest. They must be non-libelous in nature and in good taste. Preferably, letters should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the sheet of paper only. Letters of diverse viewpoints may be published and their appearance in these columns does not necessarily reflect the opinions of this newspaper.

Insight into Morrow County's Irish

(We thank J.W. Forrester, editor of the Daily Astorian, for permission to reprint the following. It was inspired by a short article on the history of the Morrow County Courthouse that appeared in the December issue of the Oregon State Bar Bulletin.)

(The Bar Bulletin's holiday issue "cover story" was written by John F. Kilkenny, a Morrow County native, former Pendleton attorney, and now a senior circuit judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, whose office is in Portland.)

(Last week we reprinted Judge Kilkenny's article along with an early-day photograph of the courthouse that was used in illustration. Mr. Forrester's comments, under the heading of "Editor's Notebook," provide an insight into the Irish population of Morrow County.)

I can't reconcile it with the population of the place, but it has seemed to me over the many years that I encounter more people who have lived in Morrow County or have had some family association there than with any other location in Oregon.

The late Giles French, long time editor of the Sherman County Journal, wrote a history of Morrow County. When I discussed my observation with him he said I might be right because in writing the book he'd come upon many more persons than he'd anticipated who had ties with Morrow County.

Some of the most delightful past and present residents of Morrow County are Irish. The Irish settlement was quite small in the beginning. It grew as Irishmen who had come there to do farm work, principally sheep herding, sent home for Irishwomen whom they married. Those families invited others to come and the Irish population grew and grew.

I thought of all of this the other day when I picked up the December issue of the Oregon State Bar Bulletin. There was a picture of the Morrow County courthouse at Heppner on the cover and inside there was a story about the 76-year old structure written by one of Morrow County's most distinguished sons, U.S. Court of Appeals Judge John F. Kilkenny.

John Kilkenny grew up in Morrow County. He was educated at Notre Dame and practiced law for many years in

Pendleton with one of eastern Oregon's oldest firms which was put together in an early day by Col. James Raley. The firm's members over the years included a U.S. senator, state Supreme Court and federal court judges.

When Kilkenny left the firm to sit on the U.S. District Court bench in Portland it was Raley, Kilkenny and Raley, and he was known far and wide as an exceptional trial lawyer.

Stories were told with both amusement and pain by western Oregon lawyers who had opposed Kilkenny in trials heard by circuit court judges in the Morrow County courthouse. It was impossible to draw a jury the majority of whose members did not know John Kilkenny or other Kilkennys. He was much better than most trial lawyers wherever he worked but he was unbeatable in the Morrow County courthouse.

Many wonderful stories are told of the Morrow County Irish. One of the best, I think, involves John Kilkenny's father.

He was called upon by the members of a sheep crew to settle an argument that was threatening to break out into fighting. They were arguing the pros and cons of prohibition. What was his judgment?

After due deliberation the honorable gentleman pronounced his judgment that "prohibition is better than no whiskey at all."

Before I leave this subject I should tell you a story about that old Morrow County courthouse.

Three months after the courthouse was occupied, a flash flood devastated Heppner, did great damage elsewhere in Morrow County and took many lives. As editor for many years of the East Oregonian, I read and heard countless accounts of the Heppner flood, including several by survivors. One of the most interesting is that when the flood hit the city the tower clock in the courthouse, which had been donated by the residents of the county, chimed 24 times and stopped.

Does that sound like a story invented by an imaginative Irishman? I leave it to you. I have many Irish friends in Morrow County and I accept whatever they tell me.

—J.W. Forrester

SALEM SCENE by JACK ZIMMERMAN

It's the Boss who pays the benefits

Year's end is a time for celebration and resolution. We toast the old year, salute the new and pledge to do better in months ahead. But when celebrating ends and bills come due, most Oregonians face the sobering task of matching income with outgo. If at any time during the year a worker compares a gross pay with the amount he or she takes home, it's during the first pay period of the year.

Too often pay vouchers and check stubs do little to satisfactorily enlighten their readers. The amounts withheld are legible enough. But the initials or abbreviations for which those amounts are withheld might as well be printed in Greek.

Furthermore, the stubs and vouchers seldom if ever tell the worker how much the boss matches and pungles up in addition to the amount withheld for the worker.

For instance, there's the indication something called FICA is taking a bite out of a worker's wage or salary. FICA stands for Federal Insurance Contributions Act. What's that? It's Social Security.

All right, the worker earning Oregon's average weekly wage of \$241.70 learns \$14.82 is being withheld from his weekly pay to help provide for Social Security benefits on retirement. But there's nothing on that check stub indicating his or her employer pays the federal government the identical amount every week, \$14.82, for that worker's retirement benefits also.

That's right. Each employer matches dollar-for-dollar every bit paid the federal government for Social Security. That's a handsome fringe benefit. And it can get expensive.

When the system first became law in 1937, each worker and employer was taxed \$30 apiece annually. The wage earner making Oregon's average weekly wage and that worker's employer now pay nearly that much every two weeks. What's more the maximum Social Security tax paid by employe and employer on the maximum taxable wage in 1980—\$25,900—is a whopping \$2,807.54. That's an increase in maximum Social Security tax per worker of more than 3,500 percent since 1937!

That's not indicated on the check stub. And this comes as a surprise to many workers. They believe they contribute to unemployment insurance. How often have you heard a person who leaves a job and applies for jobless pay declare:

"I deserve it. I've been paying for it all along!"

Not true. Unemployment compensation is mandated by the federal government and paid for wholly by employers. Little wonder workers are confused. They see that they pay 40 cents a week for Workers' Compensation Insurance. But they don't understand that eight cents-a-day isn't the premium for Workers' Comp. It's only a token assessment to help bring benefits up to date, insure against second injuries and disability prevention.

The boss pays the insurance premium for every worker. And Workers' Comp is more expensive for Oregon employes than in any other state. Employers buy Workers' Comp Insurance at different rates for each \$100 of payroll, depending on relative job safety.

The average rate in Oregon is \$5.77 for every \$100 in pay. But on hazardous jobs some employers have to pay almost 100 per cent—dollar-for-dollar of pay! And recall that eight cents the worker pays? The employer pays another six cents daily for the same reasons.

If one who compares gross pay with takehome is discouraged or confused because reasons for the deductions are unclear, imagine how much better the worker would feel if the whole withholding story were known?

In the case of that average weekly wage earner, only \$15.22 is withheld each week for the Social Security, Unemployment and Worker's Comp. That worker's employer pays more than twice that much—\$37.77 every week—for benefits accruing to the employe.

If that unseen fringe were added to the worker's base pay, the weekly average would be \$279.47, not \$241.70. While this situation does little to help pay current bills, it helps guarantee payment of some in the future. And it's something everyone who works for a living should know about.

"Self-control is at the root of all virtues." Samuel Smiles

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