

Around About By Justine Weatherford

How quickly April has flown by. Those who are still needing to get writing done for the forthcoming Morrow County Book only have two more days after today to meet the deadline. My time-consuming efforts to get a summary of the history of the city of Heppner down on paper has covered 100 years by the first of this week—and I am determined to get that last ten years completed before Sunday, May 1.

It hasn't been a dull assignment—the hours I've spent at the museum and going through many old issues of the Gazette-Times have brought back lots of enjoyable memories of my nearly twenty years here; and, because I enjoy things historic, I have found it pleasing to read and re-read about the years before I began to get acquainted with this community.

Last Wednesday at the Senior Citizen meal, program chairman Anna Mae Steagall, presented a dandy musical program featuring veteran pianist Merle Boyce, a resident of the nursing home; another veteran Jim Hayes, Sr. with his fiddle and forever-young Ron McDonald who played his guitar and sang. Everyone enjoyed the music—mainly old, familiar numbers. Anna Mae remarked that during the "Big Band Era" which included "Swing and Sway with Danny Kay" and others, Heppner had its own big band. Do you remember it?

How I loved good dance bands. I was such a nut about dancing during my late teens and early twenties that I hated to miss a summertime Saturday night out at the Jantzen Beach Ballroom. In fact, I even broke up my early friendship with Bill Weatherford because I knew that after our sophomore year at O.S.U. he was going to be in Eastern Oregon all summer. Then I managed to find Portland boyfriends who would take me to Jantzen dances.

During those years folks around here who liked to dance found great dance music every Saturday night in the different grange halls and lodges. The top music-making group was christened—"Shove and Push With Quackenbush" by Jimmy Farley. I talked with the maestro Roy Quackenbush and learned some about the musicians who played with him.

At the piano, Genia Huston was first, then Oma Cox, then Mary Bryant. The Leader, Roy Q., really twanged the banjo. The skillful drummers were Franklin Ely, Ione, and then Buddy Blakely, a young fellow whose dad was with a bank in Heppner. Al Bunch, Lexington, played the guitar, and Jim Hayes senior's older brother, Anderson Hayes, brightened the ensemble with his fiddle playing. Roy said "We played almost every Saturday night in Hardman, Heppner, Ione, Monument, or Lone Rock in lots of grange halls and lodges. Once we even played for a Fair and Rodeo dance when the band that had been arranged for in advance didn't show up."

Wow—just think, if I hadn't ditched W.W.W., maybe I could have gotten up here on a summer Saturday instead of to Jantzen Beach—but I didn't even see Heppner until into the 1960's.

Wasn't it nice to see three "Yards-of-the-Month" pictured last week's paper? Ione's Garden Club was first with this contest; Heppner came along last year; now it is so good to have a garden club at Lexington working to inspire civic beautification there. Last week when I stopped at the home of Rachel Harnett, who is helping me with my historic writing, I glanced above her Center Street location to the yellow apartment house now owned by Jane Rawlins. I doubt if a multiple dwelling is eligible for a garden award, but the flowers around that apartment are so brilliant, so tremendous just now that the place surely deserves an honorable mention. Go look!

Although garden awards have been for landscaping, for flowers and shrubs—someone should be calling attention to several super vegetable gardens. If you will drive or walk to the upper end of Church Street you will see the efforts of the Tom Wellborns. They had an outstanding garden last year, and now it is looking like they will be way ahead of almost everybody this year. My neighbors, Ruby and Harold Beckett, are pretty hard to beat as gardeners. Through the years they have raised such a wonderful variety of foodstuffs in the sizable space beside their south Court St. home. Now that Harold is retired, he is working on that land during all hours of the day.

We think Oregon is, at last, into spring weather, and it seems like a good time to mention hats. Around this part of the world—cowboy country—many males look quite attractive in their felt or straw hats. However, although fashion writers keep saying "Hats are back" very few appear here on female heads.

Ilene Kilkenny Laughlin surely takes the top prize locally for her glorious collection of chapeaux. Some weeks ago, after I had so admired her lovely green-netted St. Patrick's Day creation, I chatted with her. "Oh, that hat was brought back from the Mad Hatter's Shop at Disneyland by the Elks' Terry Smith as a wonderful gift" she said. On Easter Sunday, Ilene wore an all-white number which she told me was a gift from granddaughter Alecia Tarnasky. What nice gifts!

Then Ilene told a really cute way she got several "special occasion" hats in years past. "During the more than 20 years that Bob Lowe and I worked together at the hospital, she shopped for hats for me several times when he took patients to Portland in the ambulance. Bob went to a shop I liked: he actually tried on a group of hats, and then he chose for me. I really was very pleased with his choices." So—versatile Bob Lowe, has been a lady's hat buyer!

Now Ilene says that her hats have overflowed her closets and are taking up much of her apartment's guest bedroom. She has always enjoyed buying and wearing nice hats, and "so did my mother Lottie." Last fall the hat Ilene wore to the Notre Dame-Oregon football game, when her brother Judge J.F. Kilkenny took his entire family as guests, really took some attention off the game's action.

From my own very young years when I've always had much difficulty with my ears, my hat-minded mother insisted I "get something on my head." My scanty collection of lesser hats will never rate with Ilene's hats. Now that I claim five granddaughters—it is so delightful to see several of them wearing hats "for special occasions." Maybe some of them will stay hat-minded.

I.U.C.C. BBQ & Auction — a tradition

Twenty years have gone into the making of the traditional auction and barbecue sponsored by the Ione United Church of Christ each June.

Since its inception twenty years ago, the annual event has provided major funding for the Ione U.C.C. and a source of fun and enjoyment for all ages in the Morrow County area served by the Ione U.C.C., said Della Heideman, a church spokesperson.

Don Wink, the auctioneer, has offered his services to the church for the twenty-year history of the event and will be back this year.

Over twenty years ago, Gary Tullis, Fred Nelson and Milt Morgan travelled to Powell Butte to witness their version of an auction and came home bursting with ideas. Heideman said. The congregation then took several more years to build up the

courage to try it. But in 1963, Bob and Suzanne Jepsen chaired the first I.U.C.C. Auction and Barbecue. "With the aid of Jack Lloyd, a local school teacher at the time and an active member of the congregation, and a lot of sage advice from the members of the Heppner Episcopal congregation, the auction and barbecue finally became a reality," Heideman explains.

"That first year was hectic; without experience the members jumped into a full fledged money making event, which would end up netting them a little over \$1,900. That figure has grown considerably over the years, with the participation and attendance figures," she said.

The Deaconesses have provided and hosted the dinner every year. The menu has grown and changed a little over the years, but the basics are still the same. In 1963, dinner cost only \$1.75, she

continued. "Today's charge of \$5 for the meal is still more than fair for the fare as the saying goes, and it has remained unchanged for the past three years.

That early group of workers proceeded through the method of trial and error, and it is inspiring to note that many of those early participants are still actively involved in the auction and the dinner to this day. The Deaconesses, including Geneva Palmer, Helen Crawford, Mary Ann Palmer and others were here then and are still putting in many hours of hard labor to make the event a success, Heideman said.

"For two decades, we have been building our tradition of serving the community and the surrounding area and we hope that you and your family will come and join us again this year. June 4, starting at 10 a.m. with the opening of the Country Store," she says.

Fair News

The Morrow County Fair Board will be meeting jointly with the Morrow County Fair Committee and all other guests on Tuesday, May 3, at the fairgrounds dorm building, at 7 p.m. The fair board usually meets on the second Monday of every month, but, due to a meeting with the Oregon Fairs Association Board of Directors, on Thursday, May 12, there may not be enough time to take care of regular fairgrounds business.

If you wish to attend the May 12 meeting, it is scheduled for 8 p.m., at the 4-H Annex Building.

The Oregon Fairs Association Board of Directors will be meeting with the Morrow County Fair Board on Thursday, May 12 at 6:30 p.m. for a potluck dinner and will meet with the fair board following the dinner at 8 p.m. The Oregon Fairs Association represent county fairs from all over the state of Oregon.

Correction

In their April 21 story entitled "OSU college of Ag Sciences alumni invited to BBQ," Chuck Nelson of Lexington was not listed as a subdistrict representative for Morrow County.

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