

## Eggs that fly

Twenty-six teams of students competed in a tournament at Lone Schools November 19. Two-student teams were challenged to design and construct a vehicle to carry a raw egg from Aviator Mary Peterson's perch near the gym ceiling safely to the gym floor 30 feet below.

Teams were awarded points for creativity, passenger comfort, survival, and re-entry time. No perfect

scores were recorded, said a spokesperson for the project. About one-third of the passengers survived the flight.

The teams were composed of the district's fifth through eighth grade talented and gifted students enrolled in the Challenge Program.

Certificates were awarded to the first place team: Seth Smythe and Amy Dalton both of Sam Boardman; second place team Kenny Mounts of Sam Boardman and Ryan Halvorsen of Lone; third place team Jeff Saunders of A.C. Houghton in Ir-rigon and Bob Krein, Heppner; fourth place team Endy Hedman, Heppner, and Mark Evans, A.C. Houghton; fifth place team Chris Tallman, Sam Boardman and Crystal Minster, Lone, and sixth place team: Mandi Marchek of Sam Boardman and Amy Pointer of Lone.

Left: Aviator Mary Peterson. Below: students create egg-craft.



## North & South health care

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Morrow Clinic and the ambulance, the approximate rate for the north end would be six cents per \$1000. The approximate rate for the south end would be \$2.73.

The tax support required for North end services and South end services have differed greatly since the beginning of the NMMC in 1977.

Tax figures provided by County Budget Officer LoRayne Bowman show that for 1983, the first year the NMMC and ambulance were on their own, apart from the hospital budget, the clinic asked \$36,858 to balance their budget and the hospital-nursing home-ambulance asked \$93,365 to balance their budget. For 1984, the clinic asked \$27,666, the north Morrow ambulance asked \$3,184, and the hospital asked \$338,258. For 1985, the clinic needed \$33,885 to balance their budget, the ambulance did not ask to levy a tax, and the hospital asked \$419,704. For 1986, the clinic needed \$32,385 to balance their budget, the ambulance asked \$6,372, and the hospital asked \$358,792 to balance their budget.

It's difficult to split out the costs for the nursing home from those of the hospital from those for the ambulance, Pioneer Memorial Hospital Administrator John Hempel said Monday. It can be done in several ways, to favor either the hospital or the nursing home, but the hospital has to use costs based on the most current medicare cost report. The number of beds and the percent of occupancy in the nursing home have increased in the last year, he said. "I'm optimistic about the nursing home. We're providing better quality care and getting a higher utilization rate." The Hospital Board will have to make some decisions concerning the acute care provided by the hospital, he said. Because the hospital is partially tax-supported the daily bed rate, is less than at either

the Hermiston or Pendleton hospitals.

The taxes the hospital asks for depend on the number of people who use the hospital, Hempel said. The greater the use, the less tax money the hospital needs to balance its budget.

Many people do not realize that many of our costs are fixed expenses. Our malpractice insurance does not depend on whether we serve one or 12 patients. It is the same, he said. The hospital is required to have a minimum of one Registered Nurse per shift excluding the Director of Nursing Services which state law says must be in the hospital eight hours each day. Now we have 32 nursing home beds and 12 acute care beds. Perhaps we really should have only six acute care beds, he said. That might best suit our needs now, if we could switch six beds from acute care to nursing home care. The state tells us if we can do that.

The hospital must also keep medical supplies, even if we've had no need for a particular item for a year, we have to keep it in stock, or we are putting ourselves in a position for a possible lawsuit. In addition, the federal government tells us how much we will get for people who are on medicare. We cannot turn to our supplier and say, "We're not going to pay 20% more for band-aids this year because we're only getting a 5% increase from medicare."

The hospital also might consider a Preferred Provider Organization arrangement with local businesses. For a membership fee, employees would receive a discount for services at the hospital.

The hospital will probably always need some tax support, but with switching six beds from acute care to nursing home status and a PPO arrangement, in three or four years, the amount may be reduced to \$125,000, he said.

The hospital uses volunteer ambulance drivers and volunteer EMTs when possible. Two EMT IIIs, one EMT II, and three EMT Is are on staff at the hospital.

Donations to the hospital, according to business manager Linda Kenny, were \$6,802 for 1986, \$15,175 for 1985, \$9,588 for 1984, and \$2,780 for 1983.

The North Morrow Medical Clinic began in 1977, according to Board Vice Chairman Don Eppenbach. Three doctors from Hermiston built a clinic in Boardman and subsequently abandoned the practice. At that time, Eppenbach said, the county acquired a half-interest in the building. The other half is owned by an investment firm.

Eppenbach was on the first clinic board. At that time the ambulance was also under the direction of a seven-member clinic board. Five years ago, the clinic board became a five-member board, separate from the Pioneer Memorial Hospital Board and at the same time a separate ambulance board was also formed. All three boards are appointed by and submit budgets to the county court.

At the early clinic board meetings, Eppenbach said the primary concern was the creation of a separate district which would provide funding because the clinic building would need funds for expansion and upkeep. Dr. Jim Anderson was the first doctor at the county-subsidized clinic. After he left, Eppenbach said, it became a community joke because we never knew which doctor would be serving there on which day until Dr. Sam Pobanz of Hood River was hired for three days a week in Boardman and one-half day a week at Ir-rigon. He had a slow but steady practice, Eppenbach said, but the travel began to wear and he was asked to take over the emergency ward at Hood River.

We consulted a physician placement service offered by Oregon Health Services after Dr. Pobanz gave his notice. We considered staffing the clinic with nurse practitioners, but because we saw large resistance in the community with a parttime physician, we thought there might also be resistance to nurse practitioners. The placement service referred two doctors for interviews. Dr. Steve Zielinski, a recent graduate of his second year of internship and was eager to come to a new location. "We knew if the clinic were to survive the transition from parttime to fulltime, we needed someone voluble and knowledgeable. Dr. Zielinski's teacher's said that he was a brilliant student and they wanted to keep him on staff but couldn't afford to at the time."

The potential exists for a fulltime clinic operation able to handle emergencies, Eppenbach said. Part of the problem is that we're working in a building we have no control over, he said. It's currently valued at approximately \$125,000, and it needs a new roof. The clinic pays \$200 per month rent to the county and \$200 to the investment firm which owns the other half. We are responsible for all upkeep. The clinic also needs additional medical equipment, he says an old x-ray machine was fine when it was purchased 10 years ago. Two years ago, it had to be completely refurbished, but the newer machines will give a much clearer picture and a cheaper price.

Basically, the clinic tries to provide the best medical coverage possible for the North end of the county. We have encouraged the doctor to go beyond the borders of the county and now have patients from Arlington and Hermiston who come to the clinic.

Immediate funding needs, Eppenbach says are a replacement x-ray machine, a defibrillator, improved emergency medicine facilities, and a new roof for the building.

We're also looking into the possibility of providing an information center, he said. The doctor must travel as far as Portland or San Francisco sometimes for one-day seminars and a satellite dish could bring specialized medical programs here relatively cheaply. No other facility in the area provides that service.

The clinic board contacted St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton two

years ago and asked then if they could provide services in Boardman. At that time, they were not ready to expand, Eppenbach said.

Now, St. Anthony has made a proposal, but it was very generalized. The Board did not receive it well because it was not specific enough. Basically, they offered to take over the operation of the clinic, staff it, and handle the traffic through there and pay the county \$1 per year. The county would still be responsible for rent and upkeep on the building, he said. The board also was skeptical because no time frame was indicated. We don't want to find out a year from now that the offer was for only one year.

## Housing project

From page 1

intend to make any changes in policy but to make a more "polished policy."

Mayor Cara Costa said the policies have to be a living document and subject to change. She suggested that at the next meeting the original changes proposed be written as adopted so council members could make needed changes.

She announced a resignation from the council had been received from Marvin Lane and a new member will be appointed at the next meeting.

She said the city was incorporated Feb. 9, 1887, so plans for a centennial should be undertaken soon.

City Administrator Marshall Lovgren said the Heppner TV franchise expires in the spring and if the council wants to make changes they should be made soon as a 90-day notice is required. He also said he was telling department heads to get to work on budget requirements. The mayor said an effort would be made to get started on budget meetings in January. A motion to endorse passage of the school district serial levy was approved.

Kate Jones of Gregor Professional Corporation, Eugene, auditors, gave a report on the city audit, saying the city had accurate records, and the debt reserve was in place as it should be. The city's audit is in the computer at the company and will thus provide better services. Bids will be called for next year's audit, Mayor Costa said.

The copy machine for the city is so old paper can no longer be obtained for it. "We've known this was going to happen for five years," Councilman Ployhar said. He said the budget committee had instructed the city to run it until it broke down, and this looked like it. Cost of a replacement will be \$1,295 and this was authorized by the council.

## Corrections

The annual children's church school Christmas program at the Heppner United Methodist Church will begin at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 7. The wrong time was submitted for publication in last week's Gazette-Times.

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