

Whammadiddle Dingbats folk group to entertain during St. Pat's



The Whammadiddle Dingbats L to R: Kevin Shay Johnson, Lawrence Huntley, Mick Doherty

A Portland based folk music group, the Whammadiddle Dingbats, will be featured in a concert on Saturday, March 16, at 7 p.m. at the Heppner Junior High gym.

The Whammadiddle Dingbats play an inventive fusion of traditional and modern music. Featuring the innovative hammer dulcimer

playing of Mick Doherty and Lawrence Huntley and the big rhythm guitar style of Kevin Shay Johnson, the Dingbats create a vigorous and enthusiastic sound unlike any other in the world of modern folk music.

The hammer dulcimer is a tuned percussion instrument sharing common ancestral roots with the piano.

The dulcimers used by Doherty and Huntley are three-octave instruments played with two hand-held hammers and equipped with dampers.

The Dingbats play instrumental dance music. Not the stuff with the electronic drums, but the dance music from various American and European cultures. From Appalachian breakdowns to Irish jigs and reels, to dance tunes from the Andes, to German Polkas, the key to the Dingbat sound is rhythm.

Johnson and Doherty harmonize modern folk songs from Johnson's "Metal Detector" to Greg Brown's "Who Woulda Thunk It" or Dillon Bustin's "Moonshine in the White Pines". For the vocals, Huntley takes up an electric bass, adding yet another dimension to the bands music.

Chris Nielson, KBOO FM radio host of the "Root and Branch" folk show, said, "Individually the Dingbats are some of the finest folk musicians in Portland which makes them some of the finest in the whole Northwest. Their collective brand of progressive American folk appeals to anybody who enjoys good music, whether they're hard-core folkies or not. Great musicianship and arrangements, pleasing vocals, and a tasty collection of traditional tunes and songs by various writers who deserve more exposure. Their performances are beautiful, exciting and funny."

"A concert of the Whammadiddle Dingbats is bound to excite an audience, and guaranteed to please," said a concert organizer.

McLaughlin Family traces roots back to County Donegal



Mary Kathryn Wright



Mary Doherty McLaughlin



Cornelious McLaughlin

The McLaughlin family, the honored family for the 1991 Heppner St. Patrick's celebration, traces its roots back to County Donegal, Ireland.

Cornelious N. McLaughlin was born February 28, 1884, to Daniel and Mary Barr McLaughlin, in Ballylosky, County Donegal.

Cor, as he was known to his friends, came to Oregon in 1900 and worked for Pat Doherty of Big Butter Creek, who was married to Cor's sister, Mary.

On July 6, 1915, at St. Patrick's church, Heppner, Cor was married to Mary Louise Doherty, eldest daughter of James G. and Catherine Doherty of Blackhorse. They began their married life in a three-room home in Dixie Canyon, just off what is now Highway 74, halfway between what was then known as Lena and Vinson. Over a period of years, they purchased additional land which now comprises the McLaughlin ranch.

To accommodate their growing family, a new, large five bedroom home was built in 1926, a short distance from the other home.

Cor and Mary had 14 children, which, even in those days, was considered a large family. They are Mary Kathryn (Mrs. Russell Wright), formerly of Kodiak, Alaska for 30 years, now residing in Pendleton; Daniel Bernard, retired of Rhinebeck, New York; Nora Louise 'Nonie' (Mrs. Don Pointer), formerly of Lexington, now residing in Portland; James Cornelious 'Jim' retired, of Spokane, WA; John Frances 'Jack', Grass Valley, CA., deceased; High Kenneth, retired, Spokane; Joseph Charles 'Joe', mayor of Pendleton; Virginia Ann (Mrs. Jacob Penner), (Joe and Virginia are twins), Herbert Anthony 'Herb', Cornelious Michael 'Mike' all of Pendleton; Robert Patrick 'Bob', Heppner, present owner of the McLaughlin ranch; Herbert Anthony 'Herb', Pendleton; Sarah Christine 'Sally', Gig Harbor, WA.; Terence Edward 'Terry', Huntington Beach, CA. Terry had a twin brother who died shortly after birth.

All of the McLaughlin children, with the exception of Terry, attended Willow School in McDonald Canyon, a walk of a couple of miles "over the hill" into the next canyon.

This school served grades one through eight, with one teacher for all. The teacher boarded with a family who lived near the school.

Over the years Cor raised sheep, cattle and draft horses. Turkeys, hogs and chickens were also part of the "livestock" scene on the ranch. At a very early age, the first job the boys learned was to drive the team during haying, while the girls learned to cook, can, sew and help with the younger children, as well as helping during harvest on neighboring ranches. Mary, as you would expect, spent much of her time cooking, cleaning and caring for her family. She would bake more than a dozen loaves of bread a week, and as many pans of biscuits, for her hard-working family.

"Times weren't easy but Mary was always serene, easy going, and gentle in caring for her family," said the children. She also loved to read. Cor could often be found in the evening sitting before the fire with a baby or two on his lap.

When friends or relatives came by to visit, Cor could sometimes be coaxed to play the violin, accordion or harmonica, and he had an excellent singing voice.

The farmer-owned and maintained telephone provided the communication link so necessary to the isolated ranches. "Rubbering" was a fact of life and spread the news quicker than television today.

Most of the food for the family was grown on the ranch. Mutton, pork, chickens, an acre of vegetables and a potato field, all had to be prepared for the winter months. A well provided water which had to be hauled to the house, and water for the livestock and garden came from winter snow melt, rains, springs and other wells, one of which had been dug by hand by Cor. He was also a "water witch" and witched all the wells on the ranch as well as many all over Morrow County.

Prices for livestock fluctuated as much then as now and one incident points up the value of livestock during the depression. A truck load of hogs was stolen off the ranch and when traced to Portland, the value of the hogs did not make it worthwhile to go to Portland to claim them.

As the older children became high school age, they boarded in town

with relatives while attending school, and often stayed with grandmother Doherty. Dan was unable to attend high school because he was needed to help on the ranch. Eight of the nine McLaughlin boys served their country in the Armed Forces—three in the Navy, two in the Marines and three in the Army. Jim and Hugh both received the Purple Heart.

In 1944 Mary passed away, leaving Cor a widower with seven children still at home. Five of the children completed their schooling in Pendleton at St. Joseph Academy, with Virginia looking after them.

Bob, who purchased the ranch from his dad in 1955, has continued raising cattle, sheep, wheat and hay. Two more wells were dug and a water system installed in 1961, which provides water for the home, livestock and some irrigation. He was instrumental in providing the impetus and organization, through the REA, to bring electricity to the Big Butter Creek area in 1950. Bob and his wife, Bette, continue to operate the ranch in Dixie Canyon, where they reared their five children.

"Cor and Mary McLaughlin would be proud today of the accomplishments of their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, having instilled in their family, a strong work ethic, a real sense of "family", good Christian values and a true appreciation of their Irish heritage," said a family member.

"Family "get-togethers" can bring as many as 40 or 50 McLaughlins to one or another home—and that's a lot of blarney under one roof."

Carlson to speak at Grange

Judge Louis Carlson will speak at the Willows Grange Wednesday, March 13, at 7:45 p.m.

Everyone is invited to come and bring questions concerning the upcoming election.

Old favorites to be sung at Singspiration

Everyone is invited to come and join in singing some of the all-time favorite hymns, including "Amazing Grace," "How Great Thou Art" and "Rock of Ages" at a service of "singspiration" at the Hope Lutheran Church Sunday, March 10 at 7 p.m. The church is located near Willow Creek Dam in Heppner.

Those attending will witness the various singing talents of neighbors and friends and will have a golden opportunity to hear the South Morrow Community Chorus. A free will offering will be taken to support the various ministries of the South Morrow County Ministerial Association.

"So mark your calendars, bring friends and join your neighbors in an uplifting spirit of old hymn favorites and gospel songs," said Pastor Stan Hoobing. "And when we are finished you may wet your whistle and enjoy cookies and fellowship with fine folks of South Morrow County."

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