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Morrow County Heppner, Oregon

Ione soldier welcomed home



Kevin Ball (center) with his wife Shannon and their six month old son Joshua. Kevin last saw his son when he was one week old.

By Anne Morter

Kevin Ball, who just returned home from Saudi Arabia, was welcomed back to Ione with a community potluck held Sat. April 6. Ball, stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., is an E-4 Specialist in the Army. During his tour in the Gulf, he served as an assistant gunner, operating a 155mm Howitzer cannon. The well attended gathering gave local residents a chance to share Kevin's experiences. Ball and his wife Shannon and six month old son Joshua have returned to Fort Bragg where he reports that his unit is still waiting for most of their equipment to be shipped home.

Ball was deployed to the Gulf on September 24, in plenty of time to experience the 115-120 degree weather and brutal sand storms that filled the nightly news reports. He says that the Army wanted them to drink around six liters of water a day to fend off dehydration and heat stroke. He says that in his first days there, he drank almost nine liters but after a short period he cut down to about three. On the subject of the oppressive heat, Ball said "I didn't

mind it that much. It (the weather) is like here, but hotter." He mentioned that after dealing with hot, humid temperatures in North Carolina, the transition wasn't that difficult. By the time he was shipped home, the seasons had shifted abruptly. Temperatures dipped to the 15-20 degree range at night, forcing the armed forces to issue warm weather clothing to the troops.

Ball's unit was posted 100 miles north of Dhara and they stayed there until late January, when the air strikes began. They then moved with a group near the border of Kuwait and were moving into Iraq when the war ended.

Ball said he was lucky as far as being shipped home. His unit was stationed close to an airport and when a couple of other units were unable to make their flights, the units nearest the airports were able to use their space.

Ball's unit did not get too close to combat situations because of the long range on the cannon that they operated. He says they did "run a

front" for the famed 82nd Airborne and for the French.

Ball described the living conditions as "not too bad," although showers with only cold water would seem fairly uncivilized on a 15-degree morning. He says that they lived in tents like the Saudis use, called Hodge Podge. According to Ball, these tents were very effective in keeping out both sandstorms and the mist. He also noted that the sand storms in Saudi Arabia were like nothing we've ever seen. "It blew so hard, it felt like a sandblaster," he said.

Kevin mentioned that his stay was made much more tolerable by all the support that the troops in general and he, in particular, received. He said he really enjoyed the cards and packages he received from the school children in Ione and Heppner.

Ball is a 1988 graduate of Ione High School. He has been in the Army for almost three years and has 14 months left. Ball is the son of Jim and Marie Boor of Ione and Wayne Ball of Portland.

Judge rules out-of-state garbage surcharge unconstitutional

Umatilla County Circuit Court Judge Jack Olsen ruled April 12 that the state may not charge a surcharge on out-of-state-garbage shipped to Oregon landfills. According to Morrow County District Attorney Jeff Wallace, Olsen ruled that the "statutory scheme upon which the fees were based was unconstitutional."

Morrow County and Finley Buttes Landfill Co. jointly filed a suit against the state concerning a \$2.25 per ton surcharge the state Department of Environmental Quality had planned to implement April 15. The fee for in-state garbage is 50 cents a ton. Two landfills, one at Finley Buttes, near Boardman, and one near Arlington, are the only ones in the state to accept out-of-state garbage. Finley Buttes landfill, built by Tidewater Barge Lines of Vancouver, has a contract with Clark

County, WA, to dispose of their garbage. Finley Buttes receives the garbage on a limited basis now, but volume is expected to greatly increase by 1992. Columbia Ridge Landfill near Arlington has been receiving garbage from Kennewick and Portland and this month began receiving garbage from Seattle.

Wallace said that the state may appeal the preliminary injunction or may go back to the legislature to get another bill passed concerning the surcharge.

The DEQ surcharge had been approved by the state Emergency Board, comprised of 17 legislative members, which is able to act when the legislature, which meets biennially is not in session.

Several legislators are in favor of banning out-of-state garbage from Oregon disposal sites entirely. Gilliam County Judge Laura Pryor

has said that her county, which includes the Arlington landfill site, could lose millions of dollars and many jobs if the surcharge stood.

Minor/T-ball tryouts

Tryouts for minor league and T-ball will be held April 20 at 10 a.m. at the junior high lower field in Heppner. Any child who turns seven by July 31 is old enough to play T-Ball.

Children from Heppner and Lexington who did not get pre-registered and would like to play may still sign up at this time. Please bring your birth certificate to the tryouts if you have not already pre-registered. Children also need to bring their baseball mitts and a hat to tryout.

For further information contact Jim VanWinkle, 676-5249 or Ron Bowman 676-5035.

New High school baseball field proposed in Lexington

The Morrow County Grain Growers have proposed a plan which would provide a high school baseball field for the Morrow County School District and would also allow for future expansion of the Grain Growers' operation.

The plan, proposed Monday evening at the Morrow County School Board meeting, specifies that the Grain Growers purchase a piece of property, which they would then trade to the school district for a field.

According to Morrow County Grain Growers manager Larry Mills, MCGG would buy a nine-acre plus piece of property on the northwest side of the Grain Growers' building in Lexington. MCGG would then trade the property to the school district for another piece of land, now believed to be owned by the district. The school district property is located on the south side of the Grain Growers building and is now used as a community park-baseball field.

A new high school baseball field has been necessitated by the proposed renovation of the Morrow County Fair and Rodeo grounds. A com-

mittee has been formed to make long range plans for the grounds. According to Mills, who is also a member of the fairgrounds planning committee, plans include moving the rodeo grounds somewhat, which would eliminate the present high school baseball field. The high school football field would remain in its present location, as would a smaller little league field near the fair pavilion.

Mills said that the fairgrounds plan would not allow enough room to accommodate a football field, rodeo grounds and a baseball field.

Bob Ployhar, Heppner, proponent of the plan and youth sports organizer, said that "120 kids are in the little league program this year, but once they're out of the program, we don't have a good field for Babe Ruth or high school baseball. We're not going to have the one at the fairgrounds and it was never adequate anyway." Ployhar said that the condition of the high school baseball field at the fairgrounds was not good and it prevented Heppner High from hosting tournaments. Both Ployhar and Mills say that the Lexington property is the best option for the baseball field so far. "We spent a lot of time looking for something in

Heppner and just couldn't find anything," says Mills. "Lexington came up and it's halfway (between Heppner and Ione.) Ione doesn't have a good regulation field either. It would make a nice facility for the town of Lexington and could be used by all three towns," he added.

Ployhar said that the Heppner High School track area had been considered, but there is no room now for a field and rock underlying the field may make excavation prohibitive. Wind encountered at the high school, which is located on a hill is also a problem, said Ployhar.

Mills said that the property which is now a community field in Lexington would also allow for future expansion of the Grain Growers facility, but the property must be first rezoned commercial. He said that there is also a question over ownership of the field-whether it is owned by the school district or the town of Lexington. The community field is smaller than the Cutsforth parcel and is not big enough for a regulation field.

A meeting has been scheduled in May concerning the fairgrounds long range plans.

Hospital contract negotiations bog down

Contract negotiations between Pioneer Memorial Hospital and its workers came to a standstill recently when negotiators for both sides couldn't agree on which employees will be part of the union.

Hospital administration says the Association of Federal, State, County and Municipal Employees, which represents 41 employees at the hospital, is trying to add three new groups of workers to the union which shouldn't be there. The union says it is going for an election that will expand its membership at the hospital.

"The union has indicated they should be representing three broad groups of employees and we don't agree," Hospital negotiator Don Scott of Salem said Monday. Scott said the union wants to add lab and X-ray technicians, probationary employees and less than half time employees to the bargaining unit, and this is unacceptable.

Scott said traditionally professional people such as lab technicians are not included with non-professionals. "We think they should agree to be in the union. They were hired knowing it would not be

a union position, and we don't think that's fair." He added that probationary employees should not be included because the union cannot offer them job protection, and that including less than half time employees would greatly increase the hospitals employee benefit costs.

Cal Hackler, the union negotiator from Pendleton, says there is "a difference of interpretation of who is in the union and who isn't," and he says the matter will go to the ERB (Employee Relations Board) "in a matter of days."

Meanwhile until the ERB gives a ruling, contract talks between the hospital and the union have ceased. Hackler says a ruling could come as early as June, but with objections could take longer. Scott says it may take six to eight months.

The current contract is a three year pact, which expires in July. The hospital and the union have been negotiating since February of this year, and as both sides agree no other issues can be decided until union membership is established.

Hackler says he has asked for a certified election in June where all

employees would vote whether to be represented. "We're going for a wall to wall unit" representing everyone except doctors, nurses and supervisory personnel, he said.

Hackler said some of the other issues to be dealt with include retirement plan, wages and insurance. He also said there was a "major problem" with employee moral as regards to the administration, but that "the hospital has made some changes on how they treat employees."

Scott, who has represented the hospital in contract talks since 1978, said other issues such as wages and hours can't be tackled until the hospital knows exactly who is in the union and who isn't. He added that he felt the union did not necessarily have the best interests of the hospital, patients or the community at heart. "I feel it's unfortunate for the hospital and employees to get into this kind of situation. But we can't just lay down and say yes without considering the effect on the hospital, employees and the community," Scott said.

Memorial Day picnic may be cancelled

Whether or not there will be a Memorial Day picnic this year remains to be seen, according to Judge Louis Carlson. A year-long search for a host family, organization or community to host the popular annual event has resulted in a no-takers situation Carlson said.

Although the majority of those contacted indicated a desire to have the picnic, no one seems to want to take the responsibility to host the event, said Carlson. Originally the Memorial Day picnic was sponsored by the Heppner Cemetery District. Members of that district included Paul Jones, Harold Beckett, Garnett Barrett and Mrs. Harold Evans. The courthouse lawn served as the picnic site until the Morrow County Fair Pavilion was built.

During the past few years Morrow County pioneer families have hosted the event. A checking account has been established to help offset the expense of dinnerware and the main course of the meal. To date there is an account at one of the local banks in the amount of \$1,210 which is available to any family or organization willing to carry on this tradition. Unless some family or organization would like to host this traditional event, a notice will be published next week of its cancellation.

Sheriff's Dept. donates to youth services commission



Morrow County Sheriff Roy Drago presents a \$5,000 check to Corrine Lindsay, chairman of the Morrow County Children's and Youth services commission.

Drago said that the money had been seized by the sheriff's department in drug operations. He said that since January of 1990 Morrow County alone had received \$56,993 in seized drug money. "This comes at a beautiful time," said Lindsay. "We're just in the process of

reviewing our budget and we have more requests than money."

The commission funds various on-going programs, such as Great Start, juvenile services, the student retention initiative and a foster home program.

Garden club plans gardening clinic

Heppner area gardeners are reminded that Heppner Garden Club is giving a gardener's clinic for the public on Saturday, April 20 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the dining room of the Heppner Senior Center.

Experienced gardeners will be available to answer questions, exchange or supply information concerning gardening in this area. Their goal is for beautiful yards and gardens in Heppner this summer.

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