

Gazette Times

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VOL. 111 NO. 1 6 Pages Wednesday, January 8, 1992 Morrow County Heppner, Oregon

Four locals arrested in Tuesday drug raid



Verlin Denton displays STP oil can and the drugs that had been stuffed up inside the bottom.

Burglars strike three Heppner businesses

Burglars broke into Central Market and Napa Auto Parts store and an outside refrigerator at Miller's Mini Mart and Chevron in Heppner in the early morning hours of Sunday, Jan. 5. According to Heppner Police Chief Doug Rathbun, burglars ripped apart a pop machine for money and took a handgun at Napa Auto Parts and stole a camera, a handgun, a police scanner, beer, wine and cigarettes from Central Market. An attempt to pry open the safe at Central Market was not successful, said Rathbun, but the store's office had been broken into. The thieves broke a hasp to steal food from the storage refrigerator at Miller's

Mini Mart. The value of the stolen items and amount of damage done has not yet been determined, he said. The break-in at Central and Miller's was discovered at opening Sunday, and the owner of the auto parts store discovered the damage when he went to the store to work on Sunday, said Rathbun. Rathbun said that their office does have some information concerning the break-ins and the incident is under investigation. Penalties for burglary I and theft I, both C-felonies, are five years in jail minimum for each offense, although the sentences may run concurrently, said Heppner Police officer Merle Cowett.

Booster Club plans winter chili feed

The Heppner High School Booster Club will hold its annual winter chili feed during the Wahtonka game Friday, January 10 beginning at 4:30 p.m. at the Heppner High School cafeteria. The menu will include chili, baked potato, homemade bread and pies, punch and coffee. Members are reminded that membership dues should be paid.

St. Pat's meeting

A meeting of the St. Patrick's Committee will be held Wed., Jan. 15 at 7 p.m. at Kate's Pizzeria. Topics will include final scheduling for St. Pat's weekend. People are reminded that the St. Patrick's celebration is less than two months away.

Lexington writer helps keep community alive

A whirlwind of activity at 75 years, Delpha Jones of Lexington has been chronicling the lives of Lexington residents in her Gazette-Times column for over 40 years.

"I've lived through several G-T owners," laughed Delpha, "the Crawfords, the Joiners, the Heards, the Sheldons and the Sykes. That's been quite an accomplishment in itself. I was tempted to quit several times, but then people would call up and say we need a reporter. I don't know, it's just habit I guess."

Things have changed quite a bit in Lexington since Delpha first began reporting. "When I first started," said Delpha, there was the tavern, two grocery stores, Van Horns and Hatfields, and the post office. I miss the school activities when Lexington had a school. That was fun." Delpha says that people complain more about what's not in the paper than about errors.

Besides writing about the comings and goings of her friends and neighbors, Delpha just seems to have the knack of getting herself appointed reporter or president of the many clubs she has joined over the years.

She has been the deputy for Wheatland Pomona Grange for



Lexington correspondent Delpha Jones is right at home behind a typewriter.

eight years, secretary of the Rebekah Lodge for 30 years, president of the Morrow County Historical Society for 12 years ("They said it was just until we got going. I guess we just haven't got going yet," she laughed.), master of the Lexington Grange for eight years, secretary of Pomona Grange for six years, and fair committee chairman for five years. She also still works as a volunteer at the fair office during fair.

Delpha is not a Morrow County native, but fate just kept returning her to the Lexington area.

She was born in Baker City on Dec. 22, 1916 to Florence (Spence) and Fred Merritt. She was raised by her grandparents and came to Lexington to live around 1921. When Delpha was in the first grade they moved to Arlington. She returned to Lexington around 1930 to live with her mother and stepfather, Ted McMillan and her two half-sisters, Jo Irvin, now of Irrigon and Pat Cool of Pendleton. She graduated from Lexington High School in 1935.

In 1936 she traveled to Baker to visit her grandfather, Thomas Spence, and it was there she met her husband-to-be, Cecil Jones. They married on Aug. 12, 1937 at LaGrande. They lived in Union for two years and then returned to Lexington. Cecil got a job with well drillers who were drilling the city well at the time. They traveled around the country while Cecil worked for the drillers and lived in Missoula, Mont., Nampa and Rathdrum, Idaho, Yakima, WA., where their daughter Charlene was born in 1942, Hanford and Hermiston. They were gone from the area for 11 years until they finally decided to settle down in Lexington when Charlene was in first grade. Cecil got a job at the Lexington Oil Co-op, now the Morrow County Grain Growers. When her step-father died they moved out to the ranch, which they later purchased.

The Jones' son Kenneth was born in Heppner in 1947 at Corda Saling's Nursing Home. "I'll bet half the kids in town were born there," added Delpha. "She spoiled us to death. She fed us all kinds of goodies. Four people were having babies there at the

same time Kenneth was born." Her son was delivered by Dr. Tibbles, but both Dr. Tibbles and Dr. McMurdo delivered babies there, said Delpha. The nursing home was located where Wavel Wilkinson's home is now, near the Catholic church.

Over the years of writing news, Delpha says two things stand out in particular--the flood in Lexington around 1950 and an incident with the mayor of Portland, Bud Clark, both of which could have turned out to be disasters.

"In the flood," said Delpha, "the water came from Blackhorse, across Main Street and down Willow Creek. It flooded the basements of homes."

In the incident with Bud Clark it was the case of too much of a good thing. Delpha was in charge of arranging a speaker for the 1985 Morrow County centennial affair planned at the fairgrounds. She called Bud Clark, who has ties to the Heppner area, but his office said he would not be able to attend. So Delpha arranged to have Jack Morton, the retired dean of students at Western Oregon State College in Monmouth, to be the guest speaker. In the meantime, Clark's office called to say that he would, indeed be able to speak at the banquet. No problem, said Delpha, and the banquet had two honored speakers.

Still going strong, Delpha has no plans to quit writing. "It's just something I do. We want to keep Lexington alive," said Delpha. "I still get letters from people who have left. It helps people keep in touch with Lexington."

Nursing home auxiliary plans meeting

A nursing home auxiliary meeting will be held Jan. 9 at 7 p.m. upstairs at Kates Pizza.

The club is still recruiting new members so anyone interested is invited to join them. The District representative will be at the meeting, weather permitting.

Anyone interested, but unable to attend the meeting should call Tonia Adams, 676-9616 or Tonya Jones, 676-9133.

Heppner girl remains in critical condition



Kelly Rafferty

A Heppner girl, Kelly Rafferty, remains in critical condition at Emanuel Hospital in Portland following a severe reaction to medication.

Kelly, the daughter of Beth and Dennis Rafferty, was admitted to Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner Dec. 27, and then flown to the University Hospital in Portland. She was then transferred to Emanuel's burn center.

Kelly may not receive any flowers or gifts because she is in isolation, but cards may be sent to the Emanuel Hospital Burn Center, fourth floor, 2801 N. Gantenbein Ave., Portland, OR 97227. The family requests that you please do not call the hospital, but if you want information about Kelly you may call the Ronald McDonald House in Portland, switchboard 494-5200 between 9 and 10 p.m. Kelly's

parents are staying at the Ronald McDonald House, which provides housing for the families of seriously ill children.

Kelly, 10 years old, is a fifth grader in Mrs. Dowdy's class at Heppner Middle School. The family has lived in Heppner around two years. Dennis is employed with the Forest Service and Beth is a nurse at PMH. Kelly has been active visiting and helping patients at the PMH Nursing Home.

Donations to help with Kelly's medical and family expenses may be made to the First Interstate Bank in Heppner.

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