

St. Pat's committee meeting set

March 13, 14 and 15 is just around the corner and the city of Heppner St. Patrick's celebration committee is hoping for many more leprechauns this year during the "Wee Bit O'Ireland in Heppner, Oregon" celebration. All chairpersons of events and activities should plan on attending the committee meeting, Tuesday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m. at the Columbia Basin Electric Coop conference room. It's time to finalize location and times for the schedule of events, soon to be printed. People and organizations wishing to have concessions need

to contact Rene Devin at Heppner City Hall.

New events this year will be the Irish pageant on Saturday, "Erin Came to Morrow," the "Pot O'Gold" button drawing, and the Irish O'Golfers golf cart challenge. There will also be a mini-carnival for the youth. Auction items are needed. Call Bob Kahl or Steve Rhea for pick-up.

"Think green and encourage visitors to bring their RV's," say co-chairpersons Claudia Hughes and Diana Ball. "This tenth anniversary celebration should be bigger and better than ever."

Cake decorating class offered

By Anne Morter
Openings are still available for a basic cake decorating class at Ione High School. The six-week class, offered through Blue Mountain Community College

will start on February 3 and run through March 9. It will be held on Mondays from 7-10 p.m. The cost of the class is \$28. For more information contact instructor Maryann McElligott, 422-7567.

St. Patrick's Senior Center Bulletin Board



Ruth Bergstrom was honored with a surprise birthday party while she was on duty in the Senior Center office Monday afternoon Jan. 13. Around 30 friends stopped by to wish her well and share cake and ice cream.

Wednesday, Jan. 15, 121 people were present for the senior dinner. Four meals were taken out. Ernie McCabe won the meal ticket, Yvonne Connor the door prize and Phylis Halstead of Mitchell won the guest prize. Members of the Baptist Church served. A meal site committee meeting was held following the dinner.

The men for January 29 will be scalloped potatoes with ham, tossed salad, harvard beets, whole wheat bread, ice cream and cake. The members of the Episcopal Church will serve.

Saturday evening Jan. 18, 16 people enjoyed the dance in Hermiston. The bus will be going over to Hermiston again Monday, Feb. 3. The Old Time Fiddlers will be playing. Those wishing to sign up should call Irene Schroeder, 676-9132.

The dollaride car is available to take seniors for appointments around town, and also to Hermiston and Pendleton. Call Jane Rawlins, 676-9435 or the senior center office 676-9030.

Dates to remember: Jan. 27, 7 p.m. Housing authority; Jan. 28 10:30 a.m. focus group; Morrow County Special Transportation committee meeting, 11 a.m. The public is encouraged to attend; Mondays, 1-4 p.m. quilting; Tues & Thurs. 10-10:30 a.m. exercise; Wed. Senior dinner; Fri. 10:30 a.m. Bible study.

Free income tax assistance for the elderly will be available on Feb. 5. Call the Neighborhood Center 676-5024 for appointment.

Ione elementary classes reading program winners

Between October 7 and November 15, first through sixth-grade classrooms in Oregon and Southwest Washington were challenged to see who could log the most time leisure reading in the Blazer/AVIA Scholastic Improvement Concepts (BASIC) program 'Reading Fitness' competition. More than 17,700 students participated, according to Wally Scales, BASIC program coordinator. Total leisure reading hours logged exceeded 370,300 hours, an average of 20.9 hours per student.

Three classes at Ione Elementary School were regional winners in the reading program. Sixteen students in Mrs. Collins third grade participated, for a total of 159 hours and an average of 9.9 hours per student. Seventeen fourth graders in Mrs. Kincaids class read 211 hours for an average of 12.4 hour each. Thirteen fifth graders in Mrs. Pointers class read 233 hours for an average of 17.9 per student.

The main objective was to help encourage an increased interest in reading. Students could read whatever they liked. 'We just want them to get in the habit of spending some of their leisure time reading,' says Scales, and it's apparent by the number of hours logged that a lot of students tuned to reading instead of TV.

Participating schools were divided into 35 regional groups. Top regional classrooms were selected at each grade level based on the average number of hours each student spent leisure reading. Students could earn bonus hours by visiting their community library or completing a special reading assignment from 'The Oregonian.' Regional winners were then matched against one another to determine the 'overall' winners at each grade level. The top classrooms each received a check for \$500. All participants receive a special certificate of recognition.

The BASIC program was created seven years ago to help curb the high student drop out rate. The 'Reading Fitness' competition is one of three segments included in the program. Schools also have the opportunity to recognize students for academic or behavioral achievement through the four phase 'improvement' segment. An essay competition for grades one through 12 will kick off in January.

To date, more than 368,000 students have participated in one or more segments of the BASIC program. AVIA Athletic Footwear Company is a co-sponsor of the BASIC program which is presented by Bank of America in association with Portland Council International Reading Association, The Oregonian, the Oregon Department of Education and Washington Education Service District 112.

Gun club lists winners

Twenty one trapshooters tested their skills against the clay targets last Sunday, Jan. 19, in spite of the cold north wind.

Winning the 16 yard event were Loren Woodside and Kellwayne Haguewood, both with perfect scores of 25. A three-way tie, Curtis Cutsforth, Jeff Cutsforth and Sherron Woodside all made 23 out of 25 scores.

The gun club will open at 10 a.m. Sunday, Jan. 26, due to the superbowl.

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ASCS to administer disaster program

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service will administer a crop disaster assistance program to compensate eligible producers for crop losses caused by drought, flood, and other natural disasters in either 1990 or 1991.

"To be eligible, producers with crop insurance must have had losses greater than 35 percent," said county ASCS official Skip Matthews. "Producers without crop insurance must have had losses greater than 40 percent."

Program applications may be filed from February 3 through March 13.

The 1990-91 crop disaster program provides cash payments for production losses on participating program crops of wheat and feed grains; non participating program crops; peanuts, soybeans, sunflowers, sugar beets, sugarcane and tobacco; and all commercial nonprogram crops.

Matthews said producers who intend to file should begin to assemble their records now, so they will be ready when the program opens. He said that farmers will receive a special mailing with specific information on the program this month. "If a producer does not receive the disaster program information in the mail by February 3, he or she should call the county ASCS office."

Matthew explained that a producer may not file on one crop on a farm for one year and a different crop on the same farm for the other. "However, the producer may request benefits for 1990 on one farm and for 1991 on another farm."

The ASCS official said disaster payments would be computed according to the 1990 Farm Bill, and expects to begin issuing payments to farmers by April 16. Further details of the disaster payment program may be obtained from the local ASCS office.

Off the Wall

By Merlyn Robinson

The dull gray days of winter are here. And if you're tired of groping for the light switch, take heart, each day is one step closer to spring, sunshine and warmer weather.

With today's sophisticated types of illumination, flashlight batteries often corrode rather than wear out from use. A recent Roger Pond column brought to mind those earlier ranching days when people gravitated towards a lamp, like moths dancing around a porch light.

Room lighting in by-gone days meant a Coleman lantern or a smoking lamp with a sooty chimney. There were no sensor lights that pop on when the cat jumps up on the window ledge or the dog coughs. And how we kept from setting a tinder-dry old house on fire still amazes me.

It's no wonder that today people have to be taught not to be careless with matches. Back then, those scarlet-tipped wooden sticks were highly regarded as salvation from darkness. Once they were used, a pocket knife made those small sticks into workable toothpicks. It's too bad that someone in our family didn't possess a stop watch back then. I might have been credited with setting a world record for short-distance dashes. After dark that necessary trip to the old two-holer out back led to lots of fast-tracking.

And that was just one struggle with the scary black of night. Without television there was plenty of evening time story telling. Everyone sat around our 50-gallon barrel stove swapping yarns while mending clothes, braiding leather or patching harnesses.

Now I realize that those tales, particularly the ghost stories, were aimed at getting the appropriate response from two bug-eyed girls. So if the boogey man didn't get us on that terrorizing trip into the pitch black night it took a lot of courage to tackle the old, creaking wooden stairs leading to upstairs bedrooms.

Even though we tried to pretend we weren't cowardly, I remember counting those 13 steps. With my heart pounding, sometimes a prankster would be hiding in the dark hallway just waiting for a scream.

Upon reaching the bedroom door it took two long strides and a mighty leap to reach the safety of the bed. Since it was too dark to check for monsters under the bed, I lulled myself to sleep pretending the covers meant safety. And it took raw courage to bare one's head to blow out the kerosene lamp.

Unlike today's lightweight electric blankets, winter nights then meant flannel sheets and enough heavy quilts to smother a dinosaur. If zero weather air-conditioned the room, the old stove-heated flat irons wrapped in towels kept toes from becoming icicles. But because flannel sheets tend to pill, in the mornings one's hair often looked like it had been in a snowstorm.

Modernization of our ranch home began with a gas stove to supplement the old Monarch. It made summertime cooking more liveable. But without firing up the wood stove, there was no hot running water. Two gas lights were added in the kitchen and living room/dining area so that the lantern could take a breather. But the addition of a gas refrigerator that was installed was questionable, since we'd always gotten by with a sawdust cellar and icebox.

The pristine claw-footed bathtub was fine in the summer, since it was closeted in a very small unheated room. But cold winter days meant that baths required filling the old washtub carried in by the living room stove. Kids must have been skinnier then; they seemed to fit in the washtub even when they got bigger. Maybe it was all that outside running that kept them trim.

Before rural electrification the installation of a delco plant meant we'd really come up in the world. However, each week the gas motor chugged away for a day to recharge the batteries. But there was still plenty of stomping to do on the old washing machine and the well water gas engines.

Fortunately those were daylight activities. But lanterns still prevailed for use after dark in the barns. However my philosophy still tended to agree with that of any self-respecting chicken-evening-time darkness meant it was time to stop clucking and head for the roost.

So for those souls with a pioneering spirit who long for "the good old days", I'll stick to modern appliances and the ability to flick on a light as I head for the roost.

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