

## Area teens hear anti alcohol-drug message

It took getting hit by a train to change Kitt Thongdy's life. But Thongdy hopes that other young people won't have to go through such a drastic experience to change theirs.

Thongdy, who lived in Heppner as a child in the late 70s and early 80s with his parents, Somchith and Phou Thongdy, returned Feb. 4 to speak with middle and high school students about the use of alcohol. "We're choosing the wrong road," said Thongdy. "And that road is with alcohol

and drugs." Thongdy said that in the space of two years, he lost eight of his friends to alcohol. He said that while he was drinking his grades suffered and all he was looking for was a good time.

Thongdy says that many people ask him if he was drunk when he had his accident or if he was trying to commit suicide. The answer is no. He says he had been fishing with his mother and was walking along the railroad tracks. He neither saw nor heard the train coming and doesn't remember

anything about the accident.

At first the doctors didn't think he would make it. Then they thought he would be brain damaged. While he did lose both legs and underwent six surgeries, Thongdy gained a new outlook on life.

"I thought my life was ended and I was dead," said Thongdy. "Some people look at me and say I'm disabled. I'm glad I'm disabled, because it made me strong. I thought I was never going to be anything. I found so much in me I never saw before."

Now, at 21, Thongdy is a counselor with Confidential Counseling Services at Walla Walla. He travels around speaking to young people about drugs and alcohol and teaches both high school and college classes. He has traveled to 48 states and four foreign countries and competes in wheelchair athletics. Two years ago he traveled to Paris and competed against 700 wheelchair athletes. He placed 7th and brought home \$4,500. Since his accident he says he has tried snowboarding, hang gliding, rock climbing and water skiing. A year and a half ago he married his wife, Angela.

Thongdy seems to be following in the footsteps of his parents in demonstrating strength and determination in the face of adversity. Phou and Somchith escaped with their four children from their homeland in Laos to Thailand. During the Vietnam War Phou had assisted the Americans and was persecuted for his actions. The family spent three years in a refugee camp in Thailand before coming to the U.S. in 1979 through sponsorship from several families at All Saints Episcopal Church in Heppner.

Phou died in January of 1993. Somchith and Kitt's sister Tippi (Phonetip) live in Walla Walla. His brother, Tom (Pradith), has two children and lives in Hermiston. His older sister, Bouapeth, has six children and lives in California.

## Chamber Chatter

By Claudia Hughes, Chamber Manager

Unknowns are not easy to live with. We all deal with them daily in small ways and in big ways as we make decisions that involve our livelihood...store owners go to market and have to out guess their customers as they put in seasonal orders; ranchers plan their operating budget around a fluctuating product and weather unknowns; new laws continue to change our way of life; and now the big unknown, what is going to happen at the mill? Kinzua has been our rock and a positive driving force for our community. Now it's difficult for anyone to focus until we have answers, but Heppner can and will meet the challenges ahead. At this point we can all "observe those moments of silence" as legislators chose to call them, and "send it up" as Ilene Laughlin advised people to do in difficult times. We can only hope that, should the sale go through, the new owners will recognize the importance of the families involved and the industry to Heppner. One step at a time.

In the meantime, it is imperative that we continue to work together to create a positive environment where business, community and people thrive. We need to continue to forge ahead with improvements and events that attract visitors who might have an answer for us. Our Wee Bit O'Ireland celebration comes to mind as volunteers are working to put together the best celebration ever. More music will be featured, including strolling street musicians, "Hoot", and the return of "Wham-a-Diddle-Dingbats" plus our ever faithful local musicians. New this year will be O'Bull Busting, featuring professional riders, directly following the St. Pat's auction. If you have friends with RVs encourage them to bring a large group to Heppner March 18-20 and make sure they stop by the auction, which keeps the event ongoing. If you're leaving town soon, stop by the office to take along brochures and posters to promote the event. Let's shoot for 5,000 this year.

Next week Frank Pearson, Kinzua Corp. will address chamber and the membership will review 1994 goals and action plan.

Thought for the weeks ahead: "Keep sending up those 'moments of silence'."



**Rick Koffler**  
Meyer, Silverton; Brandon Hettlinga, Phoenix; Brian Keller, Vale; halfbacks Jason Cousins, North Marion; Cliff Jeans, Elmira; Corey Maag, Vale; Brian Pursiful, Umatilla; Chet Mills, Weston-McEwen; Paul Rubrea, St. Mary's; J.J. Mast, Yoncalla; Marcos Lopez, Dufur; Nate Macrostie, Culver; Silas Turner, Powder Valley; centers Sam Coyle, Illinois Valley; Rod Isaacson, Crane.  
Leonard Brittner, Heppner, was named an alternate end.

*Valentine's Special*  
Monday, February 14  
**Fresh Tiger Prawns \$10.00**  
in Beer Batter  
**Prime Rib**  
Friday Nights  
**\$9.95**  
Cal's Restaurant • Heppner

**SPAGHETTI DINNER**  
Friday, Feb. 11, 4 - 7 p.m.  
HHS Home Ec. Room  
Spaghetti • Homemade Bread • Dessert • Drink  
Cake and coffee will be served  
**Adults \$4.00**  
**Kids Under 8 \$2.00**  
Proceeds Go Towards HHS New Baseball Field  
Ad Sponsored By Morrow County Grain Growers

**Pioneer Memorial Clinic  
will be closed Monday,  
February 21 to observe  
President's Day**

**MCGG Grower Meeting**  
DATE: Friday, Feb. 11, 1994  
Willows Grange, Ione  
**9 - 9:30 a.m.**  
Russ Canon, Monsanto-Weed control in minimum till systems  
**9:30 - 10 a.m.**  
Pete Vanourek, CIBA-New Products & Label Updates  
**10 - 10:30 a.m.**  
Barry Duerk, Miles-Proper Timing for Cheat Grass Control  
**10:45 - 11:30 a.m.**  
Dennis Wilson, DuPont-Herbicide Resistance Management  
**11:30 - Noon**  
Jim Benson, Cenex Land O'Lakes, New Products  
**12 - 1 p.m.**  
Lunch  
**1 - 3 p.m.**  
Denise Race, Sandoz-Small Grains Staging Clinic.  
Lunch will be provided and credit hours will be given  
Sponsored by Dobyys Pest Control & MCGG  
There will also be a welding clinic at MCGG Shop in Ione starting at 1:30 p.m.

## Koffler selected for Shrine Team

Heppner High School senior Rick Koffler has been selected as a quarterback for the 1994 East-West Shrine Game East Team.

Activities will begin with player pickup in Oregon City on August 5. There will be a seven-day training camp at Eastern Oregon State College at LaGrande before the game at Bulldog Stadium at Baker City on August 13.

Six coaches, representing A, AA, and AAA schools and each having a winning team within their own division, selected a 32-man first team with a 32-man alternate squad for both the East and West teams.

Net proceeds from these games lend to the support of Shrine Hospitals for Burned and Crippled Children. It is rated as the fifth highest contributor to the hospitals.

Other players named to the first team were: quarterbacks Kris Jensen, Baker City; Jeff Merrick, Marist; ends Casey Easterly, Ontario; Richard Milne Junction City; Greg Nolan, Cascade; Rob Brown, Enterprise; Josh Sarratt, Glendale; Jason Johnson, Lost River; Steven Goss, Wallowa; guards Justin Taylor, Burns; Grant Kudlac, North Valley; Cody Cory, Bonanza; fullbacks Eric Olsen, Mac-Hi; Wade Lockett, Stayton; Trevor Heighes, Elgin; tackles Andy Severne, Junction City; Colby

**CARD PARTY--Pinochle**  
Lexington Grange Hall  
Saturday, February 12, 7:30 p.m.  
Sponsored by the Grange Women's Association  
**\$5** includes prizes and refreshments  
**\$5 PRIZE** for high  
Ad sponsored by Morrow County Grain Growers

## Off the Wall

By Meryn Robinson

February is the month for hearts and flowers, a holiday to honor president's birthdays and the beginning of the Lenten season before Easter. Interestingly it was named after the Festival Februalia and became the second month of the Roman year. Custom says that February's flower is the blue violet and that amethyst, a purple or violet gem, is this month's birthstone.

Perhaps calendar makers made February into the shortest month of the year to ease the sting of winter and to hurry spring along. So with only six weeks left until the St. Patrick's celebration, it's time to start thinking about shamrocks and leprechauns as snowflakes fall.

According to Irish folklore this mythical little figure can reveal a buried crock of gold to anyone who can catch him. However there's some green cash to be had during this celebration, even if you're not fleet of foot.

Concocting a winning parade entry does take some forethought--take a tip from Vonnie Lovgren who already is working on three float entries for different organizations. But whether it's a sheepless shepherd or a baggy potato outfit, there are categories for everyone. More information can be obtained at VanMarter and Kahl's insurance office.

There's also time to organize a team of bed racers and get those bed wheels greased. People for the Pool are organizing this event and more information can be had from Kay Proctor. She is one of those pool pushers who have already raised over \$11,000 to help finance a pool, although the what and where's of this new facility are still not definite.

For those would-be chefs, whether it's barbecuing or conventional dishes, Maureen Krebs is organizing a lamb cook-off. It will be held in Skaggs Auto Clinic, the former Farley building. It's a chance to win some great prizes for preparing simplistic but tantalizing dishes.

Entertainment abounds during St. Patrick's weekend festivities, thanks to organization by the hard working St. Patrick's committee. From craft fairs to the coffee hour and dinners, it's a busy schedule. And Saturday evening will feature a Whammadiddle Dingbats Concert at the Heppner Middle School gym.

This year's sheep dog trials will be held at the Thompson ranch, three miles northwest of Heppner, in order to have sufficient room. However, the fairgrounds will still be a beehive of activity for campers and residents. Breakfasts and a Sunday afternoon barbecued beef rib and lamb dinner are planned.

Saturday afternoon the Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo committee is also sponsoring a bull busting event in which professional athletes will try their skills at riding bulls from the Beard Rodeo Contractors string. Clowns and bull fighters will be on hand to assist riders and entertain the crowd. For the younger set there will be stick horse races.

And don't forget to dust off stored items or prepare a craft for the Saturday afternoon auction. Each organization or individual could contribute something to help fund this annual funfest. And maybe you'll be the lucky winner of the drawing for a \$100 pot o'gold, without have to catch a leprechaun.

## St. Patrick's Senior Center Bulletin Board



There were 100 people present for the senior dinner Feb. 2, including six guests. Five meals were taken out. Members of the Methodist Church served. Huston Leslie of Hardman won the meal ticket, Neval Palmer the door prize and Olek Farrens the guest prize. Paul and Blanche Jones are host and hostess for the month of February. The meal site committee met following the meal.

The Senior Board has appointed Ruby Steers as senior representative to the Neighborhood Center board.

The menu for February 16 will be macaroni and cheese, green beans, relish tray, rolls, fruit and cookies. Members of the Lutheran church will serve.

Friday, Feb. 4, 12 volunteers folded newsletters for the Extension service at the senior center.

Six people were present for the Sunday night movie.

Important dates to remember are March 18, 19 and 20, the annual St. Patrick's celebration. The seniors will need lots of volunteers for their activities. March 19-the breakfast at the fairgrounds, the soup, roll, pie and coffee luncheon at the Senior Center, and the quilt raffle. Workers, pie makers and ticket sellers are needed. Please volunteer to do your part. The proceeds from these projects help support the Senior Center.

Tickets for the quilt are \$1 each and are available at the Senior Center office. The drawing will be March 19 in the sitting room.

A VFW Meeting will be held Feb. 16 at 7:30 p.m. in the Senior Center sitting room.

The AARP provides free tax assistance for low or moderate income tax payers. Call the Neighborhood Center for an appointment, 676-5024.

Other dates to remember: Monday, Bible study-10:30 a.m.; quilting-1-4 p.m.; Tues. and Thurs., exercise-10 a.m.; Wed, senior dinner-noon; Thurs., knitting-7 p.m.; Friday, cards-2:30 p.m.; Sunday, movie-6 p.m.

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