

Simply the Best...

By Anne Morter

When a tragic automobile accident claimed the life of Jason Halvorsen on April 24, 1994, he had only 16 years on this earth, but in that short time, he touched the lives and hearts of many. His funeral was evidence of that as approximately 700 people packed the Lone High School gym to say their last goodbyes and lend support to a grief-stricken Halvorsen family.

His death touched so many and hit them so hard. Fellow high school students came from all over for the very unnatural ritual of saying farewell to one of their own.

Students came by the bus load and the car load, representing all the schools in the Big Sky conference as well as Heppner, Umatilla, Hermiston, and Stanfield. These were young adults who Jason had touched with his easy going personality, his quick and quirky sense of humor and his competitive spirit in the sports arena. They cried and hugged and held each other. And maybe before the day was through, they found a small smile or laugh as they remembered good times they had shared with Jason.

Also filling the gym were heartsick relatives, friends of the family, neighbors and acquaintances, all feeling a small bit of the Halvorsens' excruciating loss. Many in attendance knew Jason only from the stands while he played basketball or football but they came and mourned with heavy hearts. To see a young man with so much promise go at this tender age, there was no other way to feel that day.

The same gym where Jason and his teammates delighted crowds with fast-paced basketball, was unnaturally still and solemn. Mountains of floral arrangements surrounded the casket, along with Jason's basketball jersey, number 44, and his letterman's jacket. Behind the basketball Jason had guarded for just two short seasons, a banner summed up the feelings of many, "Simply The Best".

Jason's teammates from both football and basketball paid tribute to him as casket bearers and honorary bearers. Football coaches Del LaRue and Dean Robinson followed the shaken young men to their seats. Their grief was not far below the surface as they struggled to deal with their loss.

The Reverend Lea Mathieu in a calm, soothing voice that belied her own pain. She tried to make sense of the ordeal. "I wish I were a wiser better person," she said. "I wish I could tell you why joyful, loving, witty human beings die at 16, but I don't have a clue."

She said that if she were God she would make sure they lived a long time because "God knows, we need more of them."

Mathieu remembered Jason's sense of humor. She shared a story she had been told where Jason and some friends were talking about death. Jason had said that "you will know when I tell God a good joke because it will rain." She pointed out that rain had fallen several times since the accident.

Jason was also known for his willingness to help and kindness to others. As a member of the Lone Youth Group, Jason had recently made the annual service trip to the Burnside area of Portland, his third. Lea read what Jason had written about the trip and one of his favorite stops, Loaves and Fishes.

"Serving lunches at Loaves and Fishes was quite an experience. One thing I was surprised to see was the amount of people that weren't homeless, they were there just to talk and that is all they have. Serving lunch there was an enjoyable experience for me," he wrote. She also remembered at the last youth group meeting, the leaders asked for volunteers for a fund raising project for the service agencies in Portland. She said Jason's hand came up without hesitation and he volunteered to go and to represent the whole group.

Mathieu also recounted Jason's



Jason enjoyed basketball

determination and commitment. As examples, she gave his sports honors and his placement on the honor roll. "He was a credit to everything he was involved in," she said.

The service was concluded with the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. "I chose this because it talks about Jason--love, faith, hope, light and joy."

Since the funeral, many people have spoken about what a fine young man Jason was with so much promise as an athlete, a student and a person.

Youth group leader, Jeri McElligott said Jason was "the type of kid open to any situation. He would do anything that was

asked." She said he always saw the humor in things making him a joy to be around. Both Jeri and Jason's mother Cathy, remembered an episode at the Loaves and Fishes Senior Citizen Center during the recent service trip to Portland. Cathy and a group including Jason showed up to work there and while she went to locate the director, she left the teens milling uncomfortably. But not Jason. She returned minutes later to find him plunked in the front row of the TV chairs watching "The Price Is Right" with the old folks, and loving every minute of it. "He felt very comfortable there. It was one of his favorite spots," said Cathy. Jason was a very committed

A tribute to Jason Halvorsen

LOAVES & FISHES
601 West Burnside 226-1906



Helping the homeless



Jason Halvorsen

student. His name was a fixture on the A or B honor roll at Lone schools. He was due to be inducted into the National Honor Society within the next few weeks. He served on the Creating the Future Communication Group, a school district-wide committee that made recommendations to Creating the Future Leadership Group as they worked to develop a mission statement for the district.

Ione English teacher Jim Raible, says Jason was "a rare treat in class." He was a conscientious student, always making sure assignments were done and turned in, but more importantly, he used his flair to make the learning fun. "He stands out more in my mind in Spanish class," said Raible. The students are encouraged to get into character and communicate the language, rather than just piece a bunch of foreign words together. "Jason was always willing to speak as loudly as possible and get into character. He was communicating and having fun doing it, even if the Spanish was sometimes wrong," he added. Raible remembers Jason's flair for exaggerating things to comic

proportions and his ability to play things up. "Everyone seems to remember, no matter what he was doing, he made it fun," said Raible.

While Jason enjoyed academics, it could be said he had a passion for sports. In the basketball season ending in March, he led the team in blocked shots and was the second leading scorer and rebounder. He was named to the First Team All League and his teammates chose him as the team's Most Valuable Player. He was on the varsity team both his freshman and sophomore year and secured a starter's spot and improved his game tremendously during his sophomore year. "He was an excellent player," said Del LaRue, Jason's coach. "He was steady, a real stabilizing force. He wasn't there yet, but he had the potential to be the best kid I ever coached. He loved the game. He always had a basketball in his hands," said LaRue.

At the conclusion of the high school season, with a showing at the state tournament, Jason was asked to join an age group AAU team, composed of boys from Helix, Hermiston, Stanfield and

Hood River. He moved from his customary post position to guard and found great success. The team played games and tournaments in Pendleton, Mission, La Grande, Helix, Spokane, Chehalis and Kellogg, ID. And while he was playing basketball he was rapidly improving on the Cardinal track team, recording one of his best discus throws in the area the day before his death.

Jason also played football, starting during his sophomore year in the offensive and defensive guard positions. He was named to the honorable mention selection for both positions during the 1993 season. He told his mother once that even though he loved basketball, football was his favorite. LaRue said that Jason had some great natural ability but that he was also a hard worker. "He was just a good kid," he said.

His mother describes Jason as a boy who "pretty much liked to do everything." He liked the outdoors and enjoyed camping with his friends, although they never got too far from home. He liked to water ski, snowmobile, ride the four-wheeler and his motorcycle. He tried deep sea fishing once and loved it. "He did a lot of things in 16 years," says Cathy.

Lea Mathieu said what many already knew, "he was a great kid. Everybody liked him. He was funny and a joy to be with." Mathieu says that she and her husband had talked well before the accident, that if they had a son, they wanted him to be like Jason. "He was an energetic, vibrant sort of person. He had a very unusual maturity for someone that age," she said.

Nothing anyone can say or do will ease the pain for Jason's family, parents Frank and Cathy, brother Ryan, sister Allison, grandparents, Pete and Laurel Cannon and Dot Halvorsen, and all the rest. Hopefully they can find some comfort in the fact that Jason enjoyed his short stay on earth fully and touched so many lives in the process. The community grieves with them. He will be missed.

Ione girls outdistance Heppner in meet

By Anne Morter

The Ione girls won all but two events to outdistance Heppner in a dual meet last Tuesday, May 3 in Heppner, while the boys won 11 events to win a three way meet going on at the same time. Heppner placed second in both meets. Some good performances were reported at the meet. Melissa McElligott jumped 16 4/8" in the long jump and 35 1/4" in the triple jump. She also won the 100 in 13.5 and the 200 in 28.6. Jamie Lovett recorded a 111'7" discus

throw, a new area best. Becky Wagenblast jumped 4'10" to finish second to Traci Dickenson's 4'11", both good efforts.

On the boy's side, Lars Krechting won the discus 112'0", the javelin 148'1" and the high jump 6'2".

Event winners are as follows: Girls: javelin, April Taylor; shot Jamie Lovett; long jump McElligott; high jump, Dickenson; triple jump McElligott; 400 relay, Heppner; 1500, Mindy Qualls; 100, McElligott; 400

LaRee Anderson; 100 hurdles, Stephanie Haguewood; 800, Becky Wagenblast; 200, McElligott; 300 hurdles Dickenson; 3000, Kim Bedortha; 1600 relay, Ione.

Boys: long jump, Len Britner; discus, javelin and high jump Krechting; shot, Tony Becket; 400 relay, Ione; 1500 Will Parm; 100 Reynolds, Echo; 400, Logan; 110 hurdles and 200, Ashbeck; 800, Taylor; 300 hurdles, David Michael; 3000, Crum; 1600 relay, Ione.

Ione track teams warm up for district

By Anne Morter

The Ione track teams warmed up for district last weekend with a pre-district meet held at Umatilla on Saturday, May 7. As temperatures soared into the 90's, the girls tallied 110 points good for second place while the boys scored 53 to place fifth.

In girl's action, Melissa McElligott was the only winner of the day for the Cardinals, taking the triple jump in 34 1/2". The Pilot Rock girls edged in three other events as McElligott placed second in the 100 in 13.28, the 200 in 27.33 and the long jump

in 14'6 1/2". Becky Wagenblast and April Taylor each snagged two seconds. Wagenblast was second in the high jump at 4'8" and the 800 in 2:39.83. Taylor threw the javelin 105'4" and ran 5:25:49 in the 1500; Jamie Lovett was second in the discus at 107' 1/4".

For the boys, Lars Krechting won two events and placed in two others as he continued to pace the team. He won the high jump at 6'5" and the javelin with a throw of 155'1". He was third in the pole vault at 10'6" and placed sixth in the 110 high hurdles in 17.92. Jared Ashbeck was fourth

in the 100 (11.72) the 200 (24.4) the 110 hurdles (16.99), and helped the short relay to a fourth place finish.

Other Cardinal results are: girls, shot, Lovett, third; 1500-Minster, fifth, Tworek, sixth; 400-L. Anderson; 800-Minster, sixth; discus-T. Anderson, fifth; 300 hurdles, Haguewood, third; 3000-Bedortha, third, Tworek, fourth; 1600 relay-Ione, third.

Boys: high jump, J. Bacon, sixth; 1500, Crum, sixth; 400, Bacon, sixth; 800, Taylor, fifth; 3000 Crum, fifth, 1600 relay, Ione, fifth.

Ione Legion auxiliary plans luncheon

By Anne Morter

The Ione American Legion Auxiliary will hold an election day luncheon on Tuesday, May 17 at the Legion Hall in Ione.

Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Homemade pie and coffee will be available from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

The lunch menu consists of

three types of sandwiches, made fresh to order, as well as homemade potato salad, pie and coffee. The full meal price is \$5.75 or items may be purchased ala carte.

American Legion poppies and crosses will also be available that day. Poppies are by donation. Crosses are \$5 each.

Roy Lindstrom receives 50 year pin

Roy W. Lindstrom was presented his 50 year pin by the Ione Masonic Lodge No. 120 A.F. & A.M. recently.

The presentation was made by Edwin Asher, district deputy of

District No. 30 from Fossil. Lindstrom served as worshipful master in 1959. Shortly after that he was elected treasurer, in which office he served until 1991, when he resigned because of ill health.

WCCC Ladies

Ladies Day
May 10

Flight A: low gross-Pat Edmondson; low net-Jan Paustian; least putts-Anita Boyer; long drive-Jan Paustian; KP-Pat Edmondson; chip in-Jan Paustian #13, Pat Edmondson #13; birdie-Jan Paustian #13.

Flight B: low gross-Carol Norris; low net-Norma French; least putts-Kay Anderson; long drive-Norma French.

Flight C: low gross-Doll Campbell; low net-Linda Schultz; least putts-Joyce Dinkins; long drive-Linda Schultz.

Stanfield

shuts out Ione

By Anne Morter

The Ione girls tennis teams suffered a shut-out at the hands of Stanfield last Tuesday, May 3, in Ione, losing all five matches.

In singles play, Lisa Monkus defeated Heidi Orem, 6-0, 6-3. Saluna Godinez downed Jessi Stefani 8-1 and Kristi Holcomb defeated Laurel Temple 8-1.

In doubles, Temple and Celeste Owen fell to Dawn Evans and Diana Bartoscsyk 6-0, 6-1 and Camie Crumand Angie Ball lost to Amy Morris and Amber Kinlock 3-8.

Heidi Orem places in contest

By Anne Morter

Heidi Orem placed second in the electronic calculator division at the recent state convention of the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) held April 28-30 at the Portland Hilton.

Orem, in her third trip to state, earned the trip by winning the regional contest. Laurel Temple also competed at state in the business communications division on the basis of a fourth place finish in the region.

Ione is the only school in the

Morrow County district to have an FBLA chapter. It is one of the few clubs that is totally self-funded, according to advisor Sarah Rucker. Funds are raised by the members operating a school store during lunch time. This is the fourth year for the club and students have advanced to state each year.

"This is our highest award received so far," said Rucker of Orem's second place. "It was a good trip, a good experience for the kids," she added.

Tygh Valley Rodeo slated May 21 & 22

The 45th annual Tygh Valley All Indian Rodeo will be held at the Tywama Saddle Club grounds in Tygh Valley on May 21 and 22. The event will kick off Friday night, May 20, with a western dance at the club hall at 9 p.m. Another dance will be held in the arena at 6:30 p.m. Saturday night, weather permitting.

Rodeo time, both Saturday and

Sunday will be 1 p.m. Sunday morning a Buckaroo Breakfast will begin at 6:30 a.m. Other featured events include a mounted parade, Native American craft booths, hand craft booths, cowboy church, food concessions, Davis show carnival, camper parking and a beer garden.

For more information call 775-4684 or 544-3371.