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Tazette
Times

New physician hired at PMH clinic

With his affinity for rural practice, Dr. Ernie Atkins is a rare find among today's physicians. While others often choose to work in urban areas with less hours and greater cultural opportunities, Atkins has chosen to join Drs. Ed and Jeanne Berretta in their busy practice at Pioneer Memorial Clinic. He began seeing patients on Monday, June 12.

Atkins cites Heppner's rural lifestyle and the opportunity to work with the Berrettas as his primary reasons for accepting the position. He says, "I've always worked in rural areas and I enjoy the variety that a family practice provides. When we heard about this opening, we decided to come and see what it was all about. We liked what we saw and felt this would be a fine place to raise our child. I think it's a good match and I'm appreciative of the opportunity to serve this community."

The Morrow County Health District signed a three year contract with Atkins at its June meeting. "We're extremely pleased that Dr. Atkins has agreed to join us in Morrow County," said health district administrator Kevin Erich. He added, "I agree that it's a good match between our needs and Dr. Atkins' interests and areas of expertise. We're very glad to have the doctor and his family here."

Erich said the board decided to hire a third physician because of the costs involved with providing round-the-clock ER coverage. Previously, locum tenens (fill-in) physicians have been used to provide relief for the Berrettas. "The board felt hiring another full-time physician would be a more responsible and efficient use of funds. Now we can offer additional coverage for close to the same cost," he added.

Before coming to Heppner, Atkins' most recent position was as medical director and sole physician at the Selkirk Family Medicine Clinic in Ione WA. There, he provided family practice and emergency medicine services. He notes that the geographic isolation of the area is very similar to that of Heppner; the nearest hospital or other physician is 50 miles away. When federal funding for his Washington position ran dry, Atkins began searching for another community that would offer the quality of life he and his family wanted.



Susan, Jenny and Dr. Ernie Atkins.

Photo by April Hilton-Sykes

Atkins had a general practice in Fisher County, TX, before moving to Washington. In addition to providing general medical care, he gained extensive experience in emergency medicine by providing ER coverage for hospitals throughout the state.

Atkins made a mid-life career shift to become a doctor; he was a science teacher and coach in McCaulley, TX, before pursuing his longtime dream of practicing medicine. He received his medical degree from the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine in Fort Worth, TX, and graduated cum laude from McMurry College in Abilene, TX, with a bachelor's degree in

biology.

Atkins, wife Susan and nine year old daughter Jenny are settling into their new home in Heppner. Susan is an avid bowler and also enjoys golf. She was a math teacher before the birth of their daughter; now she devotes her time to raising Jenny. Along with golf and fishing, carpentry is a favorite hobby for Atkins. In addition to handyman projects, he says he has helped build two churches over the years, including one in Mexico. His first effort with a hammer in Heppner will be building a swing set for Jenny. "We designed it together," he says, adding, "and she said she knows if I build it, it'll be solid."

Country club plans championship

The annual Willow Creek Country Club Men's Championship will be held Sunday, July 9. Registration is at 7:30 a.m., with a shotgun start to follow at 8 a.m.

The competition consists of three nine-hole rounds for a total of 27 holes of medal play. Golfers will be divided into three flights by handicap. Prizes will be awarded by flight for gross and net scores and for special events. The tournament entry fee is \$5.

Members of WCCC are eligible to play in the tournament. Golfers planning to play in the

tournament should sign up in the club house.

Coffee, fruit and rolls will be served before play and sandwich service will be provided by People for the Pool as a fund raiser.

The champion in 1994 was the late George Waterland. He has been designated the honorary chairman of this year's event. In recognition of his contributions to junior golf, a target shoot fund raiser will be included in the activities.

For more information, contact John Edmundson, 676-5177.

'Ice' returns to Ione for a visit

When Asbjorn Sigurdarson of Iceland visited Morrow County during the 1991-92 school year as an ASSE exchange student, he made many close friendships. Earlier this spring, he got a chance to renew ties with old acquaintances when he made a three month-long return trip to the lone area. Circumstances surrounding his visit were unfortunate in that he was scheduled to arrive in time to visit with his former host father, Gale Gray, who was seriously ill with cancer. However, Gray had passed away by the time Asbjorn, more commonly known as "Ice" arrived.

A group of friends around Ione took up a collection to purchase Ice's ticket from Iceland, allowing him to make the trip. The price was well worth it, according to many who said Ice provided a big boost to Gale's widow, Betty Gray, and to other members of the community hard hit by Gale's death. "It was wonderful to have him here," said Betty Gray. "He was a real support at the time. Everyone enjoyed having him around," she added.

After leaving Ione the first time in the summer of 1992, Ice returned to a job he had held for several years, working for the president of Iceland. In a country of 265,000, being an assistant to the president covers everything from mowing the lawn to driving the car. Ice noted that Iceland's president is a woman, the first female president in the world, elected in 1980. When he returned to Iceland this May, he reported for his sixth summer of this same job, a job he enjoys.

In the fall of 1992, Ice and his family moved and he changed schools, moving into the age 16-20 school.

Last Christmas, he graduated



'Ice' Asbjorn Sigurdarson gives Betty Gray a hug

and he and 20 classmates celebrated by spending 27 days in Thailand. There were many highlights of the trip, but he noted that being directly over Moscow on midnight of December 31 was a special feeling.

In Thailand, the group stayed right on the beach and did the things tourists do, such as parasailing, jet skiing, taking boat trips, and even an elephant trip. The elephants, figuratively, made quite an impression, as members of the Iceland contingent let the elephants walk over them and pick them up with their trunks.

Ice said the main reason they chose Thailand was to see something totally different. He said the trip was very enjoyable and "really unique"

Even with the sadness surrounding his return to Ione, Ice said he had a good time. He was able to get together with most of the people in his class, and attended a couple of weddings and three Blazer games. He helped out around the Padberg ranch where he stayed for part of his visit, and even got the opportunity to pull a calf.

As for what the future holds, Ice answered in Shakespearean style, "That is the question". He was looking into a college in Oregon or Idaho where he could get into the ROTC program and train to be a pilot. Some red tape would need to be worked out and a special visa obtained to meet this goal. "If all goes well, I'll be back here by fall or next Christmas," remarked Ice.

Classified union charges bad faith

The Oregon School Employees Association has charged that the Morrow County School District has bargained in bad faith concerning the district's decision to contract school bus services.

OSEA says that the district solicited bids and selected a bidder before bargaining was completed by the employees. "It's a done deal," said OSEA legal counsel Mike Tedesco. "The district has done everything except cross the I's and dot the T's. There was

nothing left to negotiate at the bargaining table. We feel the actions constitute bad faith bargaining."

"There is no done deal as far as contracting transportation," countered Morrow County School District Superintendent Chuck Starr. "The district has done everything in its power to negotiate with the association on this issue. The association has refused to meet with us with the exception of one occasion on June 5. We had a second negotiation scheduled for June 15 and they cancelled."

Starr said that the district had been negotiating with the association on the transportation issue over a year. "We still stand ready to negotiate," said Starr. "And we plan to do so."

A hearing on the issue of subcontracting was held Wednesday, June 14, between the district and association before administrative law Judge Dave Siteler. A decision is expected within 30 days.

The district board earlier voted to pursue contracting of bus service as a money-saving measure.

Board approves extra duty contracts

The Morrow County School Board, at its June 12 regular meeting, approved extra duty contracts for the 1995-96 school year. Following are those hired for district positions:

Heppner High School, grades 7-8: football, Dave Gunderson, head coach, Jess Osmin, assistant; Volleyball, head coach open, Vicki Broden, assistant; Boys' Basketball, Dave Gunderson, head, Greg Grant, assistant; Girls' Basketball, head and assistant open; Track, open; Talented and Gifted, Linda Shaw; Chorus, open; Band, Geneva Mathews.

Heppner High School, grades 9-12: Football, Greg Grant, head, Les Payne, assistant, second assistant open; Volleyball, Terri Gentry, head, Nancy Swarat, assistant; Boys' Basketball, Lee Padberg, head, Bob Ployhar, assistant; Brian Padberg, assistant; Girls'

Basketball, head, assistant open; Baseball, Rick Johnston, head, Robin Graff, assistant; Track, Dale Conklin, head, Steve Brownfield, assistant; Golf, Greg Grant, head; Drama, Nancy Swarat; Athletic Director, Dale Conklin; FFA, Bill Umbarger; TAG Linda Dutcher; Annual, Linda Dutcher; Band open; Chorus open; Cheerleader Advisor, Jolynn Britt; Head Teacher, Les Payne.

Ione High School: Football, Gregg Rietmann, head, Robin Graff, assistant; Volleyball, Charity McElligott, head, Anne

Bedortha, assistant; Boys' Basketball, Del LaRue, head, Dean Robinson, assistant; Girls' Basketball, Dana Heideman, head, Kelley Swarat, assistant; Track, Del LaRue, head, assistant open; Tennis, Jim Raible.

Ione Middle School: Football, Dean Robinson, head; Volleyball, Barb Collin, head; Boys' Basketball, Dale Holland, head; Girls' Basketball, Steve Schaber; Track, Dean Robinson, head; Head Teacher, Betty Rietmann; TAG, Diana Kincaid; Athletic Director, Del LaRue; Annual, Sarah Rucker.

Coordinating Council to meet

The next regular meeting of the Heppner Coordinating Council will be held Tuesday, June 27, at 7:30 a.m. in the GEODC office.

Topics to be discussed include the Heppner Foundation,

the Shobe Creek Watershed, the old swimming pool, the summer youth program and the HCC meetings' schedule and agendas for the summer quarter.

The public is welcome to attend HCC meetings.

Summer Sale

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