

Young man nearly drowns at Lake



L-R: Matt Chetwood, Mike Hammons, Randy VanEtta

By April Sykes

A young Heppner man would have drowned in Willow Creek Lake Friday had it not been for the quick response of his two teenage friends.

Mike Hammons, 22, Heppner, was swimming at the lake around 4 p.m. July 28 with two friends, Matt Chetwood and Randy VanEtta, both 17 and also of Heppner, when Hammons apparently had a seizure and went face-down in the water.

VanEtta said that he had just gotten off work and the three decided to take a swim at the lake. He said that he and Hammons were in the water and Chetwood had just gotten out of the water when the incident occurred. "He (Hammons) looked toward me and said, 'Oh no, not again,'" said VanEtta. "I asked him what was wrong," said Chetwood, "and he said, 'Don't look at me.'" VanEtta said at that point it looked like Hammons' left eye rolled back into his head and he slipped into the water. Hammons had been hanging on to the end of the dock.

"At first I thought he was just joking around," said VanEtta. "He had his face in the water and just floated there," added Chetwood. "We thought he was just kidding. He does that. But then we realized he couldn't stay under that long."

Chetwood and VanEtta estimate that Hammons was probably under the water for around two minutes and then the two boys jumped into action. VanEtta grabbed Hammons and Chetwood grabbed VanEtta's hand to help him out of the water.

By the time VanEtta lifted Hammons' head out of the water, Hammons' ears and lips were blue and his face was white. "He looked like he was dead," said VanEtta. "He was dead," added Chetwood.

Both boys pulled him out of the water and laid him on the dock. "Right when we got him out of the water, he wasn't breathing," said Chetwood. "I pushed him on the chest a couple times and he started breathing." They then turned him on his side in case he had to throw up lake water.

Then, one of two women who were at the dock ran to call the ambulance. Chetwood and VanEtta said that the ambulance arrived in around 10 to 15 minutes and administered oxygen, but it was another 20 minutes or so before the rescue personnel could get him on a stretcher because by then Hammons, in a semi-conscious state, had started thrashing and fighting.

Both boys went to the emergency room and saw Hammons before he was airlifted

to Portland and Chetwood went to see him after he returned. VanEtta happened to see him at the Drive-In Sunday. "He came up and gave me a hug," VanEtta said. "He thanked us and said he owes us his life."

The boys said that before the incident they probably went swimming at the dam two or three times a week. While VanEtta says that he will go again, Chetwood says he's not so sure when or if he will swim at the lake again. "I don't want to go up there yet," said Chetwood. "I'll think about it every time I go up there," said VanEtta, "but it won't stop me from going swimming."

Chetwood said that he had taken CPR when he was a seventh grader. VanEtta said that he had just finished a course in CPR and First Aid required by the Forest Service, his employer.

Ironically, when Hammons arrived at Pioneer Memorial Hospital, his mother, Glorene Baker, Heppner, was already there. She had come to the PMH emergency room with her father, Mel Hammons, Hardman, who, they believed, had suffered a heart attack.

"I was totally numb," said Glorene Baker. "I couldn't believe what was going on. I was going back and forth from the emergency room. My mind was going a million miles a minute."

Fortunately, it was determined that Baker's father had suffered a heat stroke and not a heart attack.

When Mike woke up he was in the emergency room. His mother said that he was still having trouble breathing and that the doctor told her that his heartbeat was erratic. She said that after pressure on his heart from water and a large air bubble was relieved that his heart began to stabilize.

After Mike stabilized he was sent to Oregon Health Sciences University Hospital via Life Flight.

Glorene Baker said that the

last she heard before she took off to OHSU was that they may have to perform an emergency tracheotomy en route. The doctor on the helicopter told her that they had the equipment in case they had to perform the surgery during the flight.

Glorene herself took off on a "flying trip" to Portland by car, accompanied by her sister and brother-in-law, Jeanine and Ernie Dille, Heppner, and a friend, Sheryl Carty. Glorene's other children, Sarah, 14, and Beth, 12, stayed with the Dille children, Jennifer, 12, and Chris, 10, Friday night. Beth said that she "tried not to think about it" until the kids received word about Mike.

Glorene said that they were finally able to get a motel and get to bed around 3 a.m., after talking with doctors and nurses and learning that Mike was going to be okay. She called the other children around 8 a.m. Saturday morning to tell them the good news.

Mike was released from the hospital Saturday and his mother and aunt and uncle brought him back to Heppner. He is pretty sore from struggling against the straps that held him down and is suffering from bronchitis. His mother says that he's supposed to take it easy over the next several days and still could develop pneumonia.

While the immediate emergency is over, Mike still faces a battery of tests to determine what exactly caused the seizure. According to his mother, he may have had a seizure on one other occasion around four and a half years ago, but they're just not sure. Doctors told her then that they couldn't find anything wrong and that if he had no more seizures within a five-year period he probably wouldn't again.

For the time being, though, his mother is very grateful. "If the boys hadn't pulled him out, he definitely wouldn't have made it," she said. "It's quite a relief. It's a miracle. If they hadn't been there, he would have been dead."

Health district rejects Boss' counter offer

By April Sykes

The Morrow County Health District Board, at its meeting July 31, rejected a counter offer from Dr. Robert Boss on his current contract.

The board had earlier agreed to grant Boss, who operates the Boardman clinic, an increase of \$2,000 in salary per month under the condition that he agree to a full audit of his operations. Boss's counter offer proposed a "limited audit".

The board previously agreed

to an increase of \$6,000 per year for the clinic and capital expenses if a full audit was completed. The action was an addendum to Boss' current four-year contract which will expire May 1, 1996.

The increase would have put the district's annual payments to Dr. Boss at \$154,000, with an additional \$26,000 to be put into a reserve account for clinic and capital expenses.

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HEPPNER



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Princess Michelle enjoys summer on court

Princess Michelle Meakins

Height: 5'4"
Eyes: Blue
Hair: Brunette
Parents: Rob & Lynna
Age: 18 years old
'95 graduate RHS



Activities: Golf, camping, boating, fishing, sports, outdoors

Michelle Meakins, 18, a princess on the 1995 Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo Court, "cut her teeth" participating in horse shows and in fairs during her growing up years.

The daughter of Rob and Lynna Meakins, Princess Michelle is a lifelong resident of the Irrigon area. Her roots in the horse world go back to toddler days. Along with her older brother, Scott, and a younger brother, Eric, the family has grown up with horses.

However, it was sometimes difficult to tell where the Meakins family left off. Michelle's mother, Lynna, a long-time 4-H horse club leader, would load up the family and as many neighboring kids and horses as their large trailer would hold. That extended family type group would be off for a weekend horse show, some of which were staged by Lynna's club.

From the time that she was a small child with a winning smile, this princess has continued to capture a roomful of ribbons and trophies with horses as well as with her rabbits, swine and goat projects. Although she has added court responsibilities this year, she will again be showing her rabbits, pigs and horse during fair events.

"Meeting other people, going to different places and making new friends" are the perks of court life, according to Princess Michelle. In the past, she says she had admired court members, but she did not think it would be possible for her to attain that role due to her family's work schedule. Both parents are truck drivers who leave home at 2 a.m.

"They surprised me," Michelle says, when her parents supported her decision to try out for the court. However, it is no surprise that

these 4-H parents feel that court members fulfill an important role in the promotion of fair and rodeo, according to Rob, a former fair board member. Michelle has also been supported by a friend, Becky Meads, who has been on hand when it comes to washing horses, grooming and preparing for parades.

A 1995 graduate of Riverside High School, Michelle says this has been a whirlwind summer that takes an incredible amount of time. But everything has gone smoothly, unlike the

more hectic days of traveling to horse shows when "the unexpected always happened." There was one slight incident when a substitute court horse, appropriately named "Idiot" tried to climb over the box stall walls at the Sisters rodeo. That horse ended up spending the night in their stock trailer.

Michelle plans to attend the University of Oregon this fall with intentions of becoming a child psychologist. Her memories of high school years are filled with friends and sports, particularly participating on the golf team. Her other interests include camping, boating, fishing and enjoying the outdoors.

During their many mounted appearances, Princess Michelle has relied on a 15 year-old quarterhorse gelding named "Bet Ima Bonanza". This year's three girl court presents a striking picture in their formal attire of burgundy split skirt riding outfits with cream and blue accents. With an abundance of poise, personality and enthusiasm, these Morrow County ambassadors are looking forward to a fast-paced fair and rodeo where they will star as hosts.



Princess Michelle (center) gets help from dad and mom (Rob and Lynna) loading horse trailer in preparation for parades.

Football camp Aug. 7-11

South Morrow County football camp, offered by the Heppner-Ione junior and senior high school coaches for grades 5-12 will be held August 7-11, from 4:30-8:30 p.m. at the Heppner High School.

The cost of the camp is \$25, which includes a choice of a shirt or hat.

Sign up forms are available at the Heppner and Ione high schools and Murray Drugs in Heppner and Condon. Early registration is not necessary as forms will be accepted until the start of the camp.

For more information, call Greg Grant at 676-5257.

Harvest Hours

Mon-Fri 7 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat. 7 a.m.-4 p.m.
Wasco Mon-Fri 7 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat. 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

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