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Yaw's Restaurant open for business

By April Hilton-Sykes
With three vital requirements, good food, good atmosphere and good service—a new restaurant in Heppner can't lose.

Yaw's restaurant, formerly Cal's, recently opened on Main Street in Heppner following an extensive make-over.

Steve and Linda Yaw "guttered everything but the kitchen" in the restaurant, replaced paneling with sheet rock, painted, recarpeted, redecorated and put in new booths. "We got a lot of support from local merchants and from the Bank of Eastern Oregon," said Steve Yaw. "Thanks to our friends, we remodeled the whole thing with volunteer labor."

But despite the bright new interior, the Yaws still aren't quite done. Steve Yaw says that they plan to put new doors on the restrooms and eventually want to put in a new heating and air conditioning system next spring, buy some new cooking equipment, increase their hot water capacity and put a new heating system in the bar.

Yaw's will feature some of their best family traditions, hamburgers, French fries with gravy, roast beef and French dip sandwiches made with sliced prime rib, tenderloin and steak dinners, seafood, homemade soups, soft chocolate and vanilla ice cream and milkshakes. They will have at least three specials nightly over and above the regular menu and will have lunch specials Monday through Friday. The restaurant is open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. and the bar, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. The bar is only one of two in Heppner which are licensed to serve hard liquor. The Yaws also plan to put video poker and Keno in the bar as soon as they are able to get a license.

The Yaws are in the process of "retraining and training" their employees, said Steve. He anticipates that they will eventually employ 10 to 12 people when the restaurant is completely up and running. "Business has been excellent," said Steve. "Service has been a little slow because we're training, but most customers are really understanding. We'll work on speed as we go. We've also been plagued by breakdowns." Steve says that in addition to a dress code, they will have random drug screening, as required by their insurance com-



Steve and Linda Yaw, owners

pany. "Service is almost as important as the quality of the food," he added.

The Yaws aren't going into the restaurant business as babes in the woods. Between the two of them, they have over 40 years in the business and Steve's family has a long and celebrated tradition as restaurateurs.

Steve's grandfather, W.P. Yaw, founded the first Yaw's Restaurant in 1926, which, says Steve, was the same year W.P. and Englebert Franz invented the hamburger bun. Another of his grandfather's innovations was the gas sliding broiler, which sears the meat on both sides and holds the juices in. This type of sliding broiler is now used by a famous hamburger restaurant chain.

In 1946 Steve's dad took over the business, putting in the first car service in the Northwest and enlarging the business four or five times. He was also the president of the National Restaurant Association.

Steve took over the restaurant business after his father died in 1979. He expanded at five locations, three of which were franchised.

In 1988 Steve got out of the restaurant business, but not for long. A year later he moved to Wasco and bought the Wasco Inn. In Wasco he also bought a small ranch and began raising cattle and hay. He then found a ranch at Rhea Creek and moved to Morrow County. "I liked the area and the people here," said Steve, who branched out into the supplement business. But when the Yaw's restaurant in Orchard, Washington, sold, the family, at the urging of Linda and Steve's daughter, Heidi, bought Cal's restaurant in Heppner. "I just couldn't let the tradition die after 71 years,"

laughs Steve.

Linda has also had a long-time career in the restaurant business. She started working in a restaurant when she was only 15 years old. The two met when she was hired as the manager of the Orchard restaurant. Steve had been training cutting horses and one of the horses rolled over on him. Pretty much helpless, Steve was unable to fix his own meals or even eat, so Linda brought meals to him. Six months later, he asked her to be business partners with him. "She was such a fine cook," he says. For awhile it was all business, but then they started dating and married after moving to Heppner. Now married for four years, Steve, 49 and Linda, 39 and holding, worked together in the supplement business too. "We're a good team," says Steve. "She's good on the ranch and good in the business." Linda, who has also worked at RJ's and Cal's, will take care of the day to day operations at the restaurant and Steve will handle purchasing and quality control.

Steve says Heidi, 25, is planning to work her way into the business. Now living in Wilsonville, she hopes to move to the Heppner area as soon as she can find a place to rent. Steve also has a daughter, Deanna Wright, 26, who lives on Rhea Creek not far from the Yaws, along with her husband, Dean, and children, Christina, 5, and Alisha, 3. Steve's son, Steven Jr., 27, is a cabinet maker in Milwaukie. He has a son, Jeff, 3.

Linda has two children, Nicole Ernst, 26, who has a son, Andrew, 5, and Fred Ernst, 20, who works for Kinzua.

Steve says that they plan to buy as much as they can locally. "We want to keep our money in the area," he adds.

HEPPNER



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Rural residents propose livestock district

The now popular use of "districting" has spilled over into south Morrow County's livestock industry where an open range policy has prevailed. A majority vote of resident property owners within the proposed boundaries of a closed livestock range will determine the outcome.

A closed livestock district must encompass at least 2,000 acres by law. The proposed district is roughly described as private property below Heppner stretching from Willow Creek to Fuller Canyon and bordered by the Slaughterhouse county road and the Bunker Hill area. County roads will not be included.

South Morrow County has been under an open range livestock policy as many ranch holdings are divided by roadways that separate grazing land from available livestock water. Therefore animals have the "right-of-way" which means "driver beware". Livestock owners in an open range area cannot be held liable for animal trespassing or damages from accidents involving vehicles with animals.

Abandonment of the Heppner spur railroad has created problems. Neighborly differences including the age-old problem of sharing limited irrigation water from Willow Creek, were accelerated when Union Pacific Railroad officials allowed competitive bidding by anyone for the purchase of this abandoned railway.

Although unsuccessful in a high bid to purchase the railroad right-of-way from Heppner on down to his place between Heppner and Lexington, newcomer Jim Starr appears to be caught up in the controversy.

Starr says he didn't receive a fair share of irrigation water for his 20 acres of pasture land. By obtaining the railroad property, he hoped to obtain a new point of diversion for water from Willow Creek. Part of the irrigation ditch to his property now crosses a neighbor's land. But the fenced-in former railroad track doesn't include outlying boundaries of railroad land, some of which has been utilized as part of fields by farmers.

Neighbors say that a 1920 water right on Starr's property doesn't entitle him to receive ample water when supply is limited. Starr contends that some irrigators with older water rights have been water spreading.

Meanwhile railroad officials

rescinded a prior decision to sell to the highest bidder. They have allowed some adjacent property owners to increase their bids and purchase adjoining tracts of railroad land. However the rail line property includes some blocks of government land that will be under the jurisdiction of land agencies and may revert back to the county.

During this turmoil, some landowners submitted a petition to the county court to form a livestock district. Perhaps the motive was to fence Starr in pending his successful purchase of the rail line.

Local petitioners for this livestock district including Terry and Karen Thompson, Paul and Betty Brown and Jack and Ruth Maben, were not present at the Sept. 6 hearing for the petition that was held during court meetings at the courthouse.

"I'd like to know what the point is?" asked Starr, who voiced his opposition to this district at the hearing. "People may be irritated with me, but this is taking away my rights and the rights of others," he said.

"It means we now have to fence your cows out, the other way you would have to fence your cows in," said landowner and neighbor Jim Bloodworth, the only person present at the hearing favoring formation of the district. Although Bloodworth's property is outside of the proposed district, he indicated that he would probably annex into the district pending its formation.

According to petitioner Jack Maben, "The word was out that this man (Starr) was going to buy all the railroad right-of-way and pasture it. I didn't think that was fair. We were

just trying to help people out to keep Starr from getting it," Maben said. The Mabens are store owners whose home property at the lower edge of town joins the railway.

"It seems like a moot point at this time," said petitioner and Bunker Hill landowner Paul Brown, who, like Maben, is not a livestock operator. Brown said he was willing to go along with his neighbors, namely the Thompsons and Bernard Damon, a son-in-law of Happy and the late Claude Graham, whose place is currently under lease to the Carlsons. Damon is not a resident of the area, so he could not sign on as a petitioner.

"Is this a safety issue or to get back at a person?" asked Oliver Devin, the former owner of Starr's property. Devin, who was present at the hearing, expressed opposition to forming a livestock district. He said this could set a precedent for future livestock districts or the expansion of the proposed district which could impact him and others. It could adversely affect livestock growers that contribute to a major south Morrow County industry, Devin added.

"Whatever happened to neighborly concerns and values, including working things out and helping each other?" said Monique Devin, who also voiced opposition to a livestock district formation during the hearing.

"I didn't move here to get in a fight with anyone. Maybe the government will move me someplace else," Starr said. Starr purchased this local ranch after the Dept. of Natural Resources bought his property near Lyle, Washington, under the Scenic Rivers Restoration Act.

Hearings slated on park district

The Morrow County Court has scheduled a public hearing Monday, Sept. 18, at 7 p.m. at the courthouse. The hearing is concerning landowners who have petitioned out of the Willow Creek Park District. In March, voters passed a park district bond issue to build a swimming pool and a three operating levy for the pool.

Architects selected for pool proposal

Rundquist and Hard, an architect firm from Spokane, have been selected as the architects for the proposed Willow Creek Park District swimming pool.

Morrow County Judge Louis Carlson said that the hearing will be the second continuation of the first hearing and the first hearing for the second group of petitioners. A third hearing will be held for both the first and second groups of petitioners. Hearings will also be scheduled for a third group of petitioners.

History Center planning meetings slated

The Morrow County History Center's planning team will be in Heppner Sept. 17-23 working at the GEODC building for an intensive community design workshop.

This effort follows several months of research directed at understanding the land, people and landscapes of Morrow County.

In addition to plans for the museum itself, the design team will be exploring the possibility of integrating the museum's site design with street improvements already scheduled for 1997.

The goals of the workshop are: to establish a direction for

the future of the museum as an institution, a direction for the physical design of the buildings and exhibits and to integrate these goals with existing plans for community development.

Members of the community may choose the level of involvement that they are comfortable with, said a planning team news release. "They may simply attend the opening and the closing public sessions. They may attend open houses at noon on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. They may schedule individual appointments to share family histories. Regardless of the level on involvement, the design team

hopes that people will bring in their ideas, concerns, or objections; old family photographs and Bibles; photographs of potential items to be donated; and the stories that come from multiple generations of families rooted in the land."

The design team's preliminary schedule is as follows: Sept. 17, 12 to 5 p.m., design team sets up workshop in GEODC; Sept. 18, 10:30-11:30 a.m. consultants' work period with individual public appointments, 5-8 p.m., introductory public forum; Sept. 19, 12 to 1 p.m. community open house, 5-8 p.m. public forum; Sept. 20, 10:30-11:30 a.m. consultants work period with individual public appointments, 12 to 1 p.m. community open house, 5-8 p.m. public forum; Sept. 21, museum planning and exhibit design, rough drafting strategic plan report; Sept. 23, museum and exhibit design, 12 to 3 p.m. public design forum.

Ballots due Tuesday, Sept. 19

Voters are reminded that the deadline to submit ballots for funding for the Morrow County Unified Recreation District is Sept. 19. Ballots must be turned in at the Morrow County

Courthouse Clerk's office by 8 p.m.

The district is asking for \$450,000 a year for three years to pay for sports, clubs and other extra-curricular activities for county school children.

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