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Kris Chronic turns on the speed as the Bucknum's Tavern entry in the St. Patty's Day Bartender's Race. The race was won by Yaws Restaurant. **More photos-page 3**

Ballot counting machine in use



Morrow County Clerk Barbara Bloodworth (left) and staff, Denise Betsinger and Shirley McCarl, certify the new county ballot-counting machine prior to the election held March 12.

Barbara Bloodworth, Morrow County Clerk, said that the new machine, the OPTECH II Eagle Counting Machine, will simplify and speed up the ballot counting process.

Bloodworth said that ballots are fed into the machine by

hand, but that the machine tallies the votes in around 10 minutes. She said that previously the counting board has sometimes had to stay until 6 a.m. counting ballots.

In addition to counting votes, the machine breaks down the votes by precinct. "The only

thing we'll have to do is add the precincts together (to arrive at city tallies)," said Bloodworth. She added that Morrow County was the "last of four or five counties in the state" still hand counting ballots.

The machine is tested prior to each election.

Heppner's Carmen Healy becomes U.S. citizen

By April Hilton-Sykes

Carmen Healy's flag is still red, white and blue, but she's a citizen of a new country now.

Carmen, who lives in Heppner, became a U.S. citizen Friday, March 15, at a ceremony in Portland, accompanied by her husband, Jerry, children, Joseph, Jonas and Janelle, and friend Vicky Broden, also of Heppner.

Carmen's long journey to U.S. citizenship began in the small town of Villa Trina in the Dominican Republic where she was born on July 15, 1953, to Nicolas and Leonora Tineo. Villa Trina has a population around the size of Heppner in an area around the size of lone. The Dominican Republic is about two and a half hours from Florida and shares the island with Haiti. The flag of the Dominican Republic is also red, white and blue.

Carmen's father was a farmer, raising cows, pigs and coffee. Her mother was a homemaker. Carmen was the youngest of the family, with eight older brothers and five older sisters.

Carmen's life changed dramatically in 1975. She was living with her brother in La Vega, a larger city about 20 miles from Villa Trina, where she was attending business school. During Holy Week that year, she traveled home to visit a sister who lived in Villa Trina. In the Dominican Republic, not many people own cars and car pooling is common. So, on her trip back to the city, one of her traveling companions was a handsome young man from the U.S., Jerry Healy.

Jerry, then 25, was working in the Dominican Republic in a coffee cooperative in Villa Trina through the Peace Corps. But, by the end of March, the coffee harvest was over and his job ended. He was in the process of moving to a regional cooperative, kind of a combination rice co-op, grocery store co-op and savings and loan co-op at La Vega.

Conveniently for Jerry, Carmen, only 22 and exotically beautiful, lived only about three blocks from Jerry's office in La Vega.

"He didn't speak much Spanish," said Carmen. But somehow the couple managed to communicate, because they fell in love. After a whirlwind courtship, Jerry and Carmen were married in October, 1975, at Nuestra Senora del Carmen Catholic Church in Villa Trina. "Before we got married, I told him he would have to talk to my dad," laughed Carmen. "I was really nervous," added Jerry.

"I didn't know Jerry was Catholic then," said Carmen. "I just thought we were getting married in the Catholic Church because of my family." All of Carmen's big family, except for a brother living in New York, attended the wedding and a lot of Jerry's Peace Corps friends also came. Jerry's parents, Gwen and Jack Healy, traveled all the way from Heppner to be there, as did his friend, Mike Smith. Jerry's sister, Jean Marie, who had visited while Carmen and Jerry were dating, also came for the ceremony.

Ironically, the priest who married them was from Oregon, but he had been in the Dominican Republic so long, he spoke better Spanish than English.

During Jerry's stay in the Dominican Republic he had become quite ill. He had lost a great deal of weight and was down to around 140 pounds. He had a very high fever and the doctors at one point thought he had contracted typhoid fever. They finally



Jerry and Carmen Healy, 1975

determined that he didn't have typhoid, but never discovered what was making him ill. His illness cut short his stint with the Peace Corps.

Shortly after their marriage Carmen also began feeling ill and they thought perhaps she, too, had contracted something. Her illness, however, was of the nine-month variety. Happily, they later discovered that she was going to have a baby.

Carmen and Jerry, suspecting that she might be pregnant, decided to move to the U.S. where there is better medical care. After a visit to Washington, D.C., New York and a couple weeks in Heppner, Carmen, then two and a half months pregnant, and Jerry moved to Portland. He got a job as assistant manager of a Pietro's Pizza and Carmen attended Portland Community to study English. After six months they moved to Vancouver, WA.

"I didn't know what to think," said Carmen of her new home in the U.S. "I just knew I was very far from home and it was very hard. I was really lonely. My mom and I had been really close because I was the youngest and the last to leave home. I wrote letters probably every day to my brothers and sisters and nieces and nephews. Now I probably write twice a year."

"I was very honored that Jerry's family welcomed me into their family," said Carmen. "They were really my family because my own family was so far away."

After the Healy's firstborn, Joseph, arrived in October of 1976, Carmen didn't have much time to be homesick. When Joseph was six months old, they traveled back to Carmen's home so her family could meet the baby. When they returned, Jerry quit his job at Pietro's and began working for his uncle, Harry O'Donnell, at Morrow County Abstract and Title (MCAT) in Heppner. Harry had built MCAT, which was in the family for 50 years until it was sold to current owner, Tom McElligott. Jerry is now employed as office manager at Columbia Basin Electric Co-op.

When Joseph was three and a half, Carmen went to work at Central Market in Heppner, which was owned by Ernie McCabe and his partner and still owner, Forrie Burkenbine.

While the English classes at PCC weren't very effective, Carmen says that working at the grocery store was "really good practice".

"It was pretty scary to go to work not knowing the language," said Carmen. "But everyone was really nice to me and they helped me. Everyone was pretty nice, really friendly."

Carmen thought then about becoming a U.S. citizen, but



Carmen Healy

she believed that it was necessary to live in the country five years before applying for citizenship. She later discovered that it was only three.

But, after a year and a half, Carmen became pregnant with her second son, Jonas, who was born in July of 1980. Their daughter, Janelle, came along in September of 1981. For many years Carmen had her hands full running a home, taking care of three kids and returning to work at Central Market. She just didn't have the time to even think about becoming a citizen.

Last year, however, while she was in Florida, she helped her niece fill out an application for citizenship. Carmen's niece had two copies of the papers, so Carmen brought home the second set to fill out for herself. She sent the application to immigration in December of 1995 and they set a date in January for her to take her test. The Healys traveled on ice all the way to Portland, but, on her first try, Carmen wasn't able to pass. "It was really hard," said Carmen. "It was a lot harder than I thought." "Most people who were born in the U.S. couldn't pass it," added Jerry.

Now determined, Carmen scheduled another test for Feb. 27. This time, Jerry taped 100 sample questions and answers. Carmen studied while she was doing the dishes, cooking dinner and traveling to their kids' numerous basketball games. This time, not only did she pass, but she scored 100 percent. She even passed a trick question, said Jerry, which asked who the mayor was. Obviously they were seeking the name of the mayor of Portland (Vera Katz), not the mayor of Heppner (Bob Jepsen).

When Carmen returned from Portland, her friends showered her with flowers, balloons and gifts. "Everyone was really excited for me," said Carmen. "I want to thank every for being so nice. My bosses (Forrie and Gail Burkenbine) were really great."

Although Carmen is an American citizen now, speaks the language excellently and is completely assimilated to life in the U.S., there is one thing that she will never get used to—the weather. "I still dress in layers," laughs Carmen.

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