

HEPPNER



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Gazette
Times

Drowning in creek narrowly averted



L-R: Fred Toombs, Ross VanEtta, Terri Hendricks, Merle Cowett

Tragedy was narrowly averted Sunday, when a teenage girl fell into Willow Creek and would have drowned, if it hadn't been for the quick thinking of nearby rescuers.

Terri Hendricks of Heppner, 17, was on the bank of the creek near the turn-around at the Heppner City Park helping a younger girl get out of the creek, when Hendricks fell in and was swept away by the current.

Fred Toombs and his wife, Nadine, were working at her father's place nearby, when they heard kids playing by the creek. At first they didn't think anything of it, but then Nadine heard screaming and alerted Fred, 62.

Fred ran across the bank and stepped into the cold water. But, as he stepped down, he slipped and went under. "When I got up," said Fred. "I saw a face and an arm. She had gone clear down to the downstream end of the bridge by the city park."

"The current had pushed her under the willow trees and she was so cold and so scared," Fred continued. "She was screaming, 'Somebody save me.' I don't believe you could ever imagine the terror that little girl was in."

Fred was able to grab hold of her and she held on for dear life, so fiercely that she left fingernail marks on his arms and back.

Once Toombs was able to get her onto a little sandbar, he couldn't get her to go back into the water to go upstream to get back on the bank.

Then, Ross Van Etta, who was doing chores at the home of Jean Strange, who lived nearby, jumped into the water. He got Terri's nine-year-old brother, Scott, safely to shore and then helped Terri out. Terri's mother said that Scott had followed Terri on the bank, holding her hand.

Heppner Police Officer Merle Cowett happened to drive by and was flagged down by Nadine

Toombs. He assisted Van Etta in helping Terri on shore.

In the meantime Terri's parents had been contacted. Since she had taken on so much water and had gotten so cold, they took her to Pioneer Memorial Hospital to be checked out.

Cowett said that later when Terri's sister tried to get her into the tub to warm up, Terri refused, still terrified of water.

"If Fred hadn't been there, we probably would have lost her,"

Propagation of weeds denied

Commercially raised noxious weed harvested for eventual medical uses was denied by the Morrow County Court last Wednesday.

The matter was referred to the county court by the Morrow County Weed Advisory Board. The board advised the county court that St. Johnswort, a noxious weed, is planned to be grown on trial plots in other parts of the state as a potential crop destined for medical purposes. St. Johnswort is listed in the state of Oregon as a class "B" weed and is also included in Morrow County's class "B" listing.

The court agreed with the Weed Board recommendation that any proposal to plant and raise for harvest any recognized weed violates the weed control ordinance of Morrow County.

St. Johnswort is a rhizome (elongated horizontal root system), found east of the Cascades preferably on range land of sandy, gravelly soils. It spreads in waterways and by bird and animal carriers. The plant may be controlled with certain chemicals or with biological efforts.

Cattle are reluctant to eat the weed although they will if there is a shortage of grass forage. When cattle eat the weed, they

said Cowett.

"The nice thing about it is that it came out all right," said Toombs. "She came by the house later and brought me a card and gave me a hug. I didn't do anything that anyone else wouldn't have done in those circumstances."

Cowett said that this incident should make parents and children more aware of the dangers of the creek. "It's so swift, even in a foot of water, someone could be swept away."

become sensitive to sunlight. Light colored animals are most susceptible, developing dermatitis, including skin blisters and hair loss.

The plant grows 12 to 36 inches tall with upright branches from the base of the plant and has a yellow flower.

The Soil Conservation Service and the Morrow County Weed Control Board caution local ranchers that propagation of plants that may be categorized as noxious weeds of economic importance would be a violation of the weed control ordinance.

WCC plans family barbecue

The Willow Creek Country Club will have a family barbecue on Sunday, June 14 at 4 p.m.

Each family is asked to bring their own meat to the barbecue. Those whose last names begin with "A"- "K" bring salad; "L"- "Z", dessert.

Dave and Karen Wildman, Howard and Beth Bryant, Randy and Bernice Lott and Earl and Carol Norris will be hosts.

Joe and Donna Rietmann named county conservation farm

The Joe and Donna Rietmann farm of Ione, JDR Farms, has been selected the 1998 Morrow County Conservation Farm of the Year.

Their farm tour and potluck, sponsored by the Oregon Wheat Growers League and the Morrow County Wheat Growers, will be held Friday, June 19, beginning at 4 p.m. on the Doherty farm. Personal vehicles will meet on Melville Road just off Highway 207 east of Sandhollow. Tour participants will see fall seeded Stephens wheat, summer fallow, Rod wheat and minimum till double fallow. The day will conclude with a potluck barbecue at the JDR Farms shop on David Rietmann Road. Participants with last names beginning 'A'- 'L' are asked to bring salads, 'M'- 'Z', desserts.

JDR Farms consists of approximately 11,500 acres of dry cropland with 50 percent seeded to wheat each year and 500 acres of grassland. The farm stretches across the center of Morrow County into eastern Gilliam County. There are three main areas of farmland concentration: 4,383 acres at the Doherty Farm at Sandhollow in Morrow County; 3,958 acres in the Ione area; and 3,070 acres in Gilliam County east of Olex. An addition 80-acre parcel located in the Eightmile area is seeded to CRP grass.

Most of the land farmed by JDR Farms is Ritzville silt loam with a soil depth varying from three to seven feet. The slope of the soils averages five-10 percent and average rainfall is 10 inches. The soils are prone to wind erosion and special care is imperative to sensitive areas. Most of the fields range from 300-800 acres and less tillage is used in sensitive areas of the fields.

The Rietmanns' goal is to produce maximum yields. Along with those yields comes maximum residue. They manage the overall straw disbursement for an even cover of residue, starting with the chaff and straw spreaders on the combines, which increases the efficiency of herbicide application and moves the residue more efficiently through seeding equipment. In high yield years the stubble is lightly disked after harvest. In low residue years or in sensitive areas, no disking is done. Anhydrous ammonia, applied with chisel plow, saves a tillage operation and all tillage is done with wind erosion in mind. Care is taken to rod weeds across the prevailing west to southwest winds.

Given the low rainfall, moisture conservation is imperative. The Rietmanns manage all aspects of farming to increase the chances of seeding in the best possible time frame. Early establishment of the wheat crop is critical in reducing water erosion over the winter. The newly-seeded crop is soil tested in October with top dressing needs based on the test results and on the amount of rainfall received over the winter.

The Rietmanns personally monitor the crop several times a year for insects and weeds, treating as necessary. They use only clean, quality seed in planting. The personal attention allows them to control undesirable plants and insect infestations before they get out of hand.

Joe and Donna Rietmann both come from fourth-generation farm families, but JDR Farms is a creation of their own making.

In 1981, Joe leased 1,300 acres in western Gilliam County from his cousin and employer, Van Rietmann. Three years later, other land in Morrow County became available and Joe and Donna began to farm in the Ione area. The farmland was increased by leases and purchases over the years. The formal JDR partnership came into being as a result of Donna's expanding role on the farm.

While Joe and Donna spend the majority of their time on the



Joe and Donna Rietmann

farm, they know the importance of being active in the community. The family belongs to the Ione United Church of Christ, the Wrangler's Riding Club and the Willows Grange. Donna has served as co-chair of the Ione Fourth of July Celebration and Joe currently serves on the board of the directors of the E.R. Jackman Foundation. He has been a

director of the Morrow County Soil and Water Conservation District and is a member of the Ione Lions Club and the Heppner Elks Lodge. He is also organizer and coach of the first girls' minor league fast pitch softball team in Ione.

The Rietmanns have an eight-year-old daughter, Emily, who attends Ione Elementary School, and a four-year-old daughter, Mary, who attends preschool.

BEO moving into Boardman and Irrigon Bank plans expansion

The Bank of Eastern Oregon, with branches in Heppner, Ione, Arlington and Condon, has announced plans to expand into Boardman and Irrigon, Bank President and CEO George Koffler announced this week.

"These areas are the fastest growing communities in the state," Koffler said in the decision to open the branches.

He declined to name the exact location of the branches, since property negotiations were still underway, but he did say the branches should be in operation during the last quarter of this year.

Mardean Patton, who currently manages the bank's Ione branch will move to Irrigon and manage

both the branches, Koffler said.

He said the bank plans to buy property in both Irrigon and Boardman and put up two new modular structures to house the bank.

Koffler added that the expansion will create 10 new jobs in the two communities.

"We are the only locally owned community bank in Eastern Oregon," Koffler pointed out. He said the bank has just over \$50 million in total assets and 275 stockholders, 85 percent of whom live in Morrow and Gilliam counties.

The bank last expanded in 1995 when it opened a branch in Condon.

Health district appoints new administrator

Susan Brock has been appointed the chief executive officer of Morrow County Health District, according to Roger Rieger, Adventist Health vice president and liaison to the district's board of directors.

Brock will assume her new responsibilities in early July.

Brock, who has 20 years experience in various capacities within health care, was appointed following the resignation of former district CEO Ken Schmidt.

Since 1995, Brock has been the executive director of Meridian

Association of Physicians, a 102-member primary and specialty care group in Tualatin. For five years prior to that, she was the co-owner/co-operator of the Pacific Crest Rehabilitation Center, an 88-bed sub-acute long-term care facility in Gresham.

Brock has also worked at other Adventist Health institutions including Feather River Hospital, Paradise, CA; Adventist Medical Center in Portland; and Walla Walla General Hospital. She holds a BA degree with a concentration in health care management.

VBS planned at Christian Church

Vacation Bible school, sponsored by the First Christian Church, the Christian Life Center and the Church of the Nazarene, will be held at the First Christian church, 293 N. Gale in Heppner, from July 6-10 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

The theme for the VBS will be "Space Camp" and Chadder Chipmunk will make and appearance.

Registration will start at 6 p.m. Monday, July 6.

For more information, call Chandra, 676-5424.

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