

# County judge, commissioner turn over the reins

The new year at the Morrow County Courthouse in Heppner will bring a changing of the guard. Long time Judge Louis Carlson and commissioner Raymond French are retiring from office and a new group of commissioners will assume duties after the first of the year.



**Louis Carlson**

Louis Carlson is ending a 12-year career as Morrow County Judge. He began his first term in 1987 and successfully ran for a second term which began in 1993.

Louis was born on the family farm on Valby Church Road to Leonard and Julia Carlson. His paternal grandparents, Andrew and Sophia, homesteaded the land. His maternal grandmother, who lived in Boone, Iowa, had emigrated from Sweden. His maternal grandfather was killed in a coal mine and his mother was raised by an aunt. His mother came to Oregon to live with her aunt in Portland.

Louis had two sisters, Mildred Hope who lives in Eugene, and Joyce, who is deceased, and one brother, Clifford, also deceased, who was a grain trader in Portland.

Louis attend the Rocky Bluff school, a one-room schoolhouse at the Rocky Bluff School on Valby Road., until the third grade. He was then bused into Ione and attended Ione Schools until his graduation in 1948. He attended Oregon State University until 1950, when he returned to the area and married Betty Graves on December 22, 1950.

After his return he lived in Ione, working as a laborer. He helped build the grain elevator in Ione, putting the building together three feet at a time. He said that he and some of his classmates competed with each other to see who finished first, sometimes hanging on to the elevator at great heights with the wind blowing and snow flying. In those days, says Louis, labor was "very cheap and very productive."

He then went to work for Oscar Peterson, who was county judge at that time. It was then that Louis was exposed to the judgeship and county politics on the campaign trail with Oscar and his chauffeur.

Louis then went to work for his cousin, Swede Carlson, for about three years, until his parents retired from the ranch and moved to Portland. Louis bought their ranch and then rented his uncle Jesse Warfield's place. Some time later Louis and Betty purchased her parents' (Dorris and John Graves) cattle and wheat ranch in Hardman. In 1967 the Carlsons were named the state conservation farmers of the year.

The Carlsons raised four kids, Sandra Richardson, who now lives in Central Point, Phillip, Hardman, Cheri Frey, Tule Lake, CA, and Clint, Ione. Louis was active as a 4-H Club leader for 13 years and in 1970 he was named father of the year by the Heppner Chamber of Commerce. After the children were raised, Louis and Betty expanded their ranch further, renting neighboring land and turning it into a sizable wheat and cattle operation about the time their sons graduated from college. Since their sons had become active on the ranch, Louis was able to get more involved in civic affairs. He served on the Port of Morrow Commission from 1975 to 1986, acting as chairman from 1983-

86 and became active in the Oregon Wheat Growers League, serving as their president in 1982. In 1983 he was named the Heppner Chamber of Commerce Man of the Year.

The Carlsons leased the Claude and Happy Graham land and moved to the Graham Farm three miles north of Heppner in 1985. In 1986 Louis was urged to run for county judge. His bid was successful and in January of 1987 he was sworn in as judge.

Louis credits much of his success as county judge to his employees. "Nothing happens because one man does it," says Louis, adding that hiring a good staff is "probably one of the toughest things to do and even more difficult to keep." "We treat our people well and appreciate them," he added.

Carlson says he is also proud of the job the judge and commissioners have done in "recognizing the Boardman-Irrigon communities." "We made a genuine effort to treat them as equals in the Morrow County services and I believe we accomplished that," he said.

Carlson considers being a "major player" in the construction of the interchange overpass on I-84 at Patterson Ferry Road a major accomplishment during his tenure. The interchange provided a connection from the freeway to the waterfront area on the Columbia River, giving corporate farms access to the river and assisted in locating industry to that area. The federal highway administration project was "well worth the money," said Carlson.

He also was a major influence in establishing the Community Action Program for East-Central Oregon (CAPECO). He was a charter member of CAPECO, which is dedicated to aiding low income persons, senior citizens and the handicapped, and only recently resigned from the board.

Another major accomplishment during his term of office was the Finley Buttes Landfill project. The contract brings in \$300,000 a year in discretionary funds to be used for the communities in Morrow County.

Carlson said that another noteworthy project accomplished was the consolidation of all the county services--a sort of one-stop-shopping--with the offices of public health, juvenile department, Children and Family Services all located in the Gilliam-Bisbee Building, judicial services at the courthouse and GIS and accounting at the annex--at no additional cost to taxpayers.

Another coup of Louis' has been the county budget. "We've done it with virtually no tax increase," said Carlson. "Since the advent of Measure 50, we've had a tax rollback. We've held the line on tax asking and have even decreased the asking."

One of Carlson's major challenges has been dealing with the Army and the Federal Emergency Management Administration on the chemical stockpile program incineration program at the Army Depot in north Morrow County. He anticipates that it will probably not be until 2005-2006 until the program reaches fruition.

"I've really appreciated the support and the approval of most folks," said Carlson. "I can't say that I pleased everybody, but it wasn't that I didn't try." Carlson says that he feels it was time to resign and adds that he leaves his job in "some very capable hands."

After his reign as judge, Louis says he will change jobs, but still plans on working on the ranch. "I'll have seasonal jobs that will still need to be done," he said. "Other than that, I'll probably be doing whatever my wife tells me to."

Other than a trip to Puerto Rico, which includes a cruise through the Panama Canal and ends up in Mexico, they have no special plans. The Carlsons also have eight grandchildren--Amanda Richardson, Medford, Jodie and Kyle Carlson, Hardman, Andrea, Brad and Amy Frey, Tule Lake, and Alex and Julianne Carlson, Ione--who, no doubt, figure in grandma and grandpa's plans.



**Raymond French**

Raymond French's extensive public service includes eight years as Morrow County commissioner and a term at the Oregon State Legislature from 1985-1989.

Raymond was born in Pendleton in 1927 to Herb and Rose (Hirl) French, who lived on their ranch at Big Buttercreek. His dad passed away when he was only eight years old and his mother later married Bill Francis, who was the State Police officer here at the time. Three out of four of Ray's grandparents came from Ireland--Susan Doherty French, and Phillip and Mary (Doherty) Hirl. His other grandfather was Dillard French. He has two sisters, Francine Francis Evans, Irrigon, and Dorothy French O'Rourke, Pendleton, and a brother, Joe, Portland.

Raymond attended first grade at the Lena school, but the next year, there were so few students, the families fixed up a school on a neighbor's ranch. A new family moved to the area and the children returned to the Lena School. Tragically, then Raymond's father died and Raymond was sent to attend school at St. Joseph's Academy in Pendleton. From the fifth grade on, he attended school in Heppner, in what is now the middle school building. At that time, Heppner grade school and high school were housed in that building, with the grade school downstairs and the middle and high school upstairs.

Ray has vivid memories of his life as a child in Heppner. The business area was quite a bit livelier than it is now, with a Safeway in town a tractor and caterpillar dealership and numerous car dealerships. Traveling to Portland was an all-day affair and Ray recalls one time when he and his grandmother accompanied cattle on the train to the Portland stockyards, a hub of activity. If

you shipped cattle, you could ride free on the train's caboose. In those days, most of the cattle was sold in Portland and many big packing outfits were located there. Now, says Raymond, because of Portland development, you can't even tell that the stockyards were once there. At rodeo time, the family came to town and stayed in a hotel, because the roads and automobiles at the time made travel difficult.

Ray graduated from Heppner High School in 1945. His class had the distinction of being the smallest freshman class to ever enter high school, with 13 students. By the time they had graduated, the class had grown to 18.

As they graduated, World War II was in full swing and Ray enlisted into the Navy while he was still in high school. The war ended about two months later. "We had no idea the war was going to end," said Raymond. "But then they dropped the atomic bomb. If we hadn't dropped the bomb and we invaded Japan, there would have been tremendous losses." When he entered the service, he enrolled in the Navy's pre-flight training program, but as the war ended, the program was phased out.

Raymond returned to Morrow County and married Norma Denton in Oct. of 1946. He and Norma had gotten to know each other at the Heppner-Condon high school football games--he was a Heppner football player and she was a Condon cheerleader.

In 1948, they moved to the French ranch at Vinson, staying there a year before moving onto the ranch at Big Buttercreek. Raymond's great, great-grandfather Jesse Hamer had homesteaded land which he sold to Dillard French, Raymond's grandfather, who had also homesteaded his own place.

The Frenches raised three daughters, Karen Wood, who now lives in Beaverton; Verina Schiller, who lives in Pflugerville, Texas, a suburb of Austin; and Susie Ward, who operates the ranch on Big Buttercreek along with her husband, Jim. The Frenches have nine grandchildren: Gavin and Megan Wood; Ryan, Tina, Justin, Jared and Tiffany Schiller; and Ashley and Lindsey Ward.

In addition to his service on the county court and in Salem, Raymond served four years on the Heppner School Board and was a member when schools were consolidated into the Morrow County School District. He spent 16 years on the Soil and Water Conservation District and was vice president and then president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association. The Frenches are members of St. Patrick's Church.

Raymond was in the legislature during the formation of the Regional Strategies system which funds economic development and, among other things, helps small communities. At that time, the legislature was just starting to deal with the idea of incinerating the chemical weapons at the Umatilla Army Depot. Then they thought it would be done in a few years and wasn't going to cost much money, laughs Raymond. The

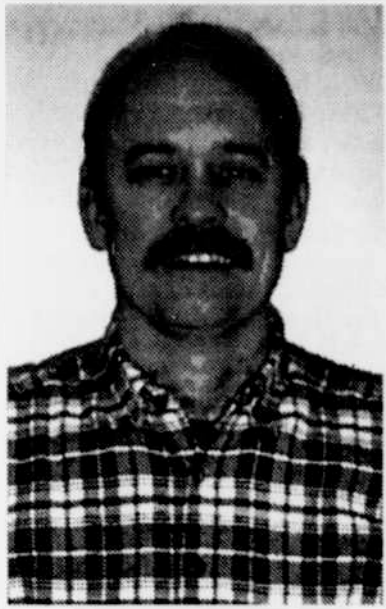
process turned out to be one of his biggest challenges during office. Another, he says, is the ongoing challenge of keeping small rural communities vital. "Our rural way of life is something we cherish and want to maintain," he says.

Of all Raymond's numerous achievements, he and Louis

agree that one of their biggest accomplishments is hiring and maintaining quality employees. "That has led to our successes," he says. "I think our road system has improved over the years, the government has become more accessible and our social services have been upgraded. But it all goes back to the one thing (quality employees).

After retirement Raymond says he plans to play a little golf and has always wanted to see Mt. Rushmore. The Frenches would also like to visit Ireland, where Raymond has countless relatives he hasn't ever met. His sister has been to Ireland and met much of the family and Raymond has corresponded with a cousin Birdie Hickey who lives in Ireland and hopes to eventually get together with her.

## Tom Wolfe named CBEC office manager



**Tom Wolfe**

Author Thomas Wolfe said, "You can't go home again." Heppner's native son, Tom Wolff, proves that theory wrong.

Wolff, the son of the late Dr. Wallace and Rita Wolff, has returned to Heppner to accept a position as office manager of Columbia Basin Electric, effective Dec. 1. The position became available when Jerry Healy, former office manager, was appointed CBEC general manager.

Wolff grew up in Heppner, graduating from Heppner High school in 1975. He graduated from Oregon State University in 1979 with degrees in both accounting and finance.

Wolff was a certified public accountant in The Dalles for seven years and has been a financial officer for the past 14 years. For the last five years, he has been chief financial officer and general manager for Caddis Manufacturing, a company out of McMinnville. Caddis Manufacturing manufactures fly fishing float tubes, pet bedding

and blankets and dog bowls and chews.

His wife Karen, who is from LaGrande, was in management in the insurance industry for 11 years, holding an executive position with State Farm Insurance until resigning four years ago to become a full-time mom. She also is a graduate of OSU.

The Wolffs have three daughters, Lindsay, a freshman at Willamette University, Kelsey, a third grader, and Ashley, who is in the first grade.

The Wolffs have half interest in a ranch at Hardman where Tom has been staying until they are able to find a house in town. The family plans to move to Heppner during spring break and they eventually hope to build their own home.

"I like Heppner and wanted to get back," said Wolff of his return. "It's a great place for my girls to grow up."

**'Tis the Season... to hope every day is trimmed with everything bright and merry!**

## G-T FOOTBALL PICKS CONTEST

Each week through football season, the below football "experts" will test their gridiron knowledge by picking winners of games in both the pros and college.

| PICK THE WINNER!               | Chris Sykes                         | Greg Grant               | Butch Laughlin           | Larry Mills              | George Koffler           | Molly Rhea               | Dennis Stefani           | Les Payne                | Kim Gutierrez            | Rick Paulius             | Stef Jensen              | Guest Expert, Kris Kringle |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Bold-Pro</b>                | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Miami @ Atlanta                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Pittsburgh @ Jacksonville      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Kansas City @ Oakland          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| New England @ NY Jets          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| San Diego @ Arizona            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Buffalo @ New Orleans          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Detroit @ Baltimore            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Washington @ Dallas            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| St. Louis @ San Francisco      | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Green Bay @ Chicago            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Seattle @ Denver               | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Tampa Bay @ Cincinnati         | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| <b>LAST WEEK'S RIGHT SCORE</b> | <b>3</b>                            | <b>1</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>4</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>4</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>2</b>                   |
| <b>SCORE WRONG</b>             | <b>3</b>                            | <b>5</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>2</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>2</b>                 | <b>3</b>                 | <b>4</b>                   |
| <b>TOTAL RIGHT SCORE</b>       | <b>98</b>                           | <b>93</b>                | <b>101</b>               | <b>110</b>               | <b>107</b>               | <b>83</b>                | <b>102</b>               | <b>110</b>               | <b>106</b>               | <b>98</b>                | <b>102</b>               | <b>105</b>                 |
| <b>SCORE WRONG</b>             | <b>60</b>                           | <b>53</b>                | <b>57</b>                | <b>48</b>                | <b>51</b>                | <b>63</b>                | <b>56</b>                | <b>48</b>                | <b>52</b>                | <b>60</b>                | <b>56</b>                | <b>53</b>                  |

The college games picked last week will be counted as the games are played.

Mr. Really Bighead-Larry and Les are tied for first! Mr. Bighead-Top Score for the Week! Congrats to Rick (first-time Mr. Bighead) and Les (perennial Mr. Bighead)!!