

## Ron McDonald & Outhouse Singers to entertain during St. Pats



Ron McDonald and the Outhouse Singers

Returning to add a musical and entertaining touch to the St. Pat's Auction on Sunday, March 19, will be Ron McDonald and the Outhouse Singers.

Three years ago, Ron's groups delighted the early crowd, and this year they promise even more. As the doors open at 11 a.m., they will tune up and turn on their "Americana" sound. The entertainment is free to everyone who is wearing a St. Pat's weekend button. The group will

return to the stage two more times during breaks in the live auction action.

The Outhouse Singers originated from a trio formed in 1987 when Ron, his son, Joe, and Denny Story began singing together. From that grew this group that now also includes Bob Story, Jon Granby and Dave Fischer. All the band members sing. Joe, Bob and Ron also play guitar. Denny plays bass. Jon plays banjo and Dave plays a mandolin.

Their music "leans toward country," Ron says, but their repertoire offers a broad range that includes some Dylan, Kingston Trio, Bluegrass and Statler Brothers sounds, to name a few. Ron adds that they can be "good and we can be awful, but it all costs the same!" He says that they have a good time performing, and the auction committee is eager for them to share their talents and fun-loving nature on Sunday.

## Golf cart added to auction goodies

The St. Patrick's Day Auction committee has recently added a golf cart to its list of donations that will give this year's event a bit of a twist from last year's.

Maybe this is the year of transportation? We have had fun with the '72 VW Bug that John Gochner donated for a raffle, and now we have this cute three-wheel Harley cart, donated by Jean Strange and Sally Walker.

The golf cart will be offered in the live auction. A get-away package this year includes two 18-hole rounds of golf with a golf cart included. In that package are also two trips on the Mt. Hood Railroad.

And we are up in the air, so to speak, over having two airplane trips this year. At the opposite end of the transportation spectrum is a tractor-trailer... the kind that requires a child's pedal power.

If we might at first be mistaken for a used car lot on Sunday, a look inside the fair pavilion will reveal well over 200 items for sale. About 95 percent of the donations are of new merchandise and services, but the bug and cart are unusually fun.

"The Heppner merchants and individuals have been supportive even beyond the committee's



Golf cart to be auctioned

hopes," said the auction chairmen. "Each year we count on everyone's thoughtfulness and each year we are impressed with the giving, supportive attitude of the community."

Several of the items that will be in the live auction can be viewed before Sunday in the Heppner

TV window.

On Friday, the auction program will be printed and distributed to eateries in Heppner, for patrons to browse while dining. A list of donations will also be posted at the entrance areas to the dinners on Friday and Saturday. The Heppner.net web site also contains a list of donations.

## Mrs. O'Leary's Stew Feed Friday

Experience the best beef stew in town at Mrs. O'Leary's Stew Feed, Friday, March 17, at St. Patrick's Senior Center on Main Street in Heppner, served

between 5-7 p.m.

Along with the stew, coleslaw, fresh baked yeast rolls, a choice of desserts and beverages will be furnished.

"The United Methodist men and women are some of the best cooks in town and use these funds to support outreach in the community," said a church spokesperson.

Cost is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children 6-12; children five and under are admitted free.

"The good conversation is free, too," they said. "Afterwards, take a short walk to the grade school for the Blue Mountain Old Time Fiddlers' Concert and enjoy a wonderful evening of music."

## Ancient Order of Hibernians plan organizational meeting in Heppner over St. Pat's weekend

On Saturday, March 18, David O'Longaigh, Chuck Duffy and John DeZell members of the Portland E.H. Deery Division, Ancient Order of Hibernians will be upstairs in the rug-mirror room at the Elks Lodge in Heppner at 4 p.m.

The purpose will be, with the assistance of local AOH member Pat Sweeney, to reorganize the AOH division, which existed in Heppner during the early part of the century.

Oregon State President AOH

O'Longaigh has done extensive research into the general history of the Irish in Oregon, and in particular in Heppner. He will be there with others to swear in those interested in promoting Irish culture, friendship unity and Christian charity in north central Oregon. Membership is open to Catholic men of Irish descent.

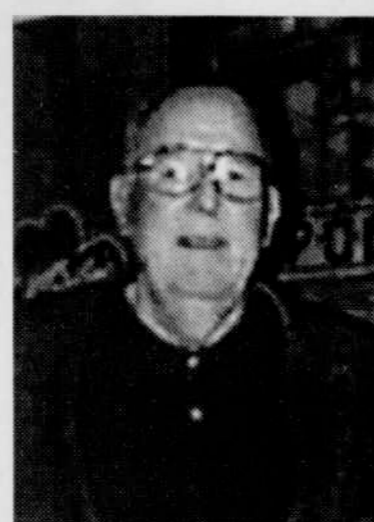
The ancient Order of Hibernians were organized in America on May 4, 1836, in New York City. The Order was

established in Oregon in 1877. The Order disappeared from Oregon during the Depression of the 1930s, but has recently been re-established. There are currently two AOH divisions in Oregon, Portland (est. 1998) and Salem (est. 1999). In addition to Heppner there are plans to establish divisions in Medford and Lakeview. The Order members are 40,000 strong nationwide.

## Bill Mitchell to reign over St. Patrick's Parade

Bill Mitchell has been selected as the grand marshal of the 2000 St. Patrick's Celebration Parade on Saturday, March 18, beginning at 1 p.m.

This is not Mitchell's first experience in the limelight—he was featured in the March 18, 1998 Gazette-Times.



Bill Mitchell

It just wouldn't be the Wee Bit O' Ireland St. Patrick's Celebration without Heppner's favorite son and Ireland's too -- Bill Mitchell.

Bill, who at six feet, five inches is affectionately called "Big Willy" by his friends in Heppner, has returned without fail for 15 years (including this year) to attend the festival. In fact, he wouldn't miss it, despite some complicated travel arrangements.

Bill was born on a small farm in Cloone, County Leitrim, Ireland, on November 3, 1918. His parents, John Mitchell and Rose O'Brien Mitchell, sold their family farm and left Ireland in June of 1925 to move to New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada. The family lived there for over a year and then came to Little Buttercreek in August of 1926.

Bill enrolled in school at Pine City that fall and the following year the family moved up the creek and he spend one year at the Pleasant Point School. At Pleasant Point, he was taught, says Bill, by the "brilliant teacherage of Juanita Leathers Carmichael." The Pleasant Point School was a one-room schoolhouse, where his schoolmates included the Dalys, the Cunninghams and the Swaggers.

The Mitchell family moved to Heppner in the fall of 1928 and lived in the Phil Hirl House. In Heppner, he attended school at the schoolhouse on the hill from fourth through eighth grade. Some of his classmates included Kathryn Hoskins, Riley Munkers and Lloyd Burkenbine.

The family left Heppner and moved to Pendleton where Bill attended St. Joseph's Academy, graduating in 1937. Two years later, the whole family moved to California where Bill has lived ever since. Although he has lived in Daly City, CA for the past 60 years, Bill says, "I've always considered Heppner, with its

great people and sprinkling of Irish, as my second home." He says what he treasures most are his many friends here, including Dean Gilman, Bill Kenny, Jack Healy, Raymond French, Dan Brosnan, Howard Bryant and "others too numerous to mention."

"I remember the old days of Heppner," says Bill, "with all the Irish sheepmen -- the Kilkennys, Kennys, O'Briens, Monahans, Farleys and Healys, among others. There was a large influx of young Irish who came over and tended sheep. At that time the town had a real Irish flavor and many were native-born Irishmen." Bill says that Pete Lennon was the last native Irishman of the early immigrants to pass away.

Bill's father, John, worked in construction, helping build the Heppner-Spray Road and assisting Father Thomas Brady in construction of the Catholic church in Boardman. He continued construction work after the family moved to Pendleton and then to California. Bill's mother, Rose, was a homemaker. Rose's brother was Tom O'Brien, who is the father of Gordon O'Brien of Heppner. Her sister was Kate Campbell of Condon.

Bill says that his parents "dabbled" in Gaelic, but spoke mostly English at home. Bill's brother, James, who has passed away, and sister Kathleen Mitchell of Walnut Creek, CA, were also born in Ireland. Youngest sister, Margaret Prindle, now of the San Francisco Bay area, was the only sibling born in the U.S. She was delivered by Dr. McMurdo in January of 1927.

Bill and his wife, Claire, celebrated their 52nd wedding anniversary in November 1999. They have three grown daughters, Joan Thomas, Cindy Mitchell and Maureen Mitchell, all of the Bay Area, and two grandchildren, Tyler and Emily Thomas.

Bill was in the freight transportation field in operations and sales, working for truck lines and railroads before his retirement in 1984. Bill and his wife bought their three bedroom home in Daly City in 1950 for \$15,000. Now, says Bill, the house could be put up for sale at over a quarter of a million dollars.

Besides his annual trek to Heppner, which involves flying to Portland, renting a car and

driving from there, Bill has been to Iceland six times since 1980. "I had two very delightful trips with the Number One Heppner Irishman, Jim Farley (who passed away Friday, March 10, just before the St. Pat's Celebration this year)," said Bill. "It was the highlight of his life to go back to County Longford and locate the ancestral home of his mother and father." Bill says he has a number of cousins scattered throughout Ireland and really enjoys the socializing there and "a sampling or two of a pint of Guinness, which is so nice and easy on the draw." He says that more and more of his Irish relatives have come over to visit. His cousin, Brede Lyons, was the grand marshal for the 1989 honored Irish family, the O'Briens.

## Irish joke & story contest offers cash prizes

Get out your favorite Irish joke or story, brush up your Irish brogue, and get ready for the Irish joke & story telling contest to be held during the KUMA coffee hour Saturday, March 18 during St. Patrick's day weekend.

\$100 in prize money will be given away this year, with \$50 going to the first place winner, \$30 to second place and \$20 to third. Entrants will be judged on content and presentation (how funny is the joke or story, how good is your Irish).

To enter contact David Sykes at the Heppner Gazette-Times, or you can enter right before the coffee hour, which starts at 10 a.m. and is held upstairs at the Elks Lodge.

## Sell your 'treasures' at Flea Market

Are you tired of looking at all of the "treasures" that you have accumulated over the years? Well, now is your chance to sell them. Plan now to participate in the second annual Pioneer Flea Market May 20-21 at the Morrow County Fairgrounds.

Spaces for rent are available both inside and outside. Call 676-9474 for more information and to reserve your space.

**Welcome to St. Patrick's Day in Heppner**

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