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HEPPNER

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Bringing in the greens



Margaret Flaherty and Wilbur Jackson carry fresh-cut greens into the fairgrounds' annex building for wreath making.

By Merlyn Robinson

Heppner's holiday season is enhanced with Christmas doorway decorations made by the Heppner Garden Club during the first week in December. This year, 140 wreaths, swags and candy canes were assembled by cutters,

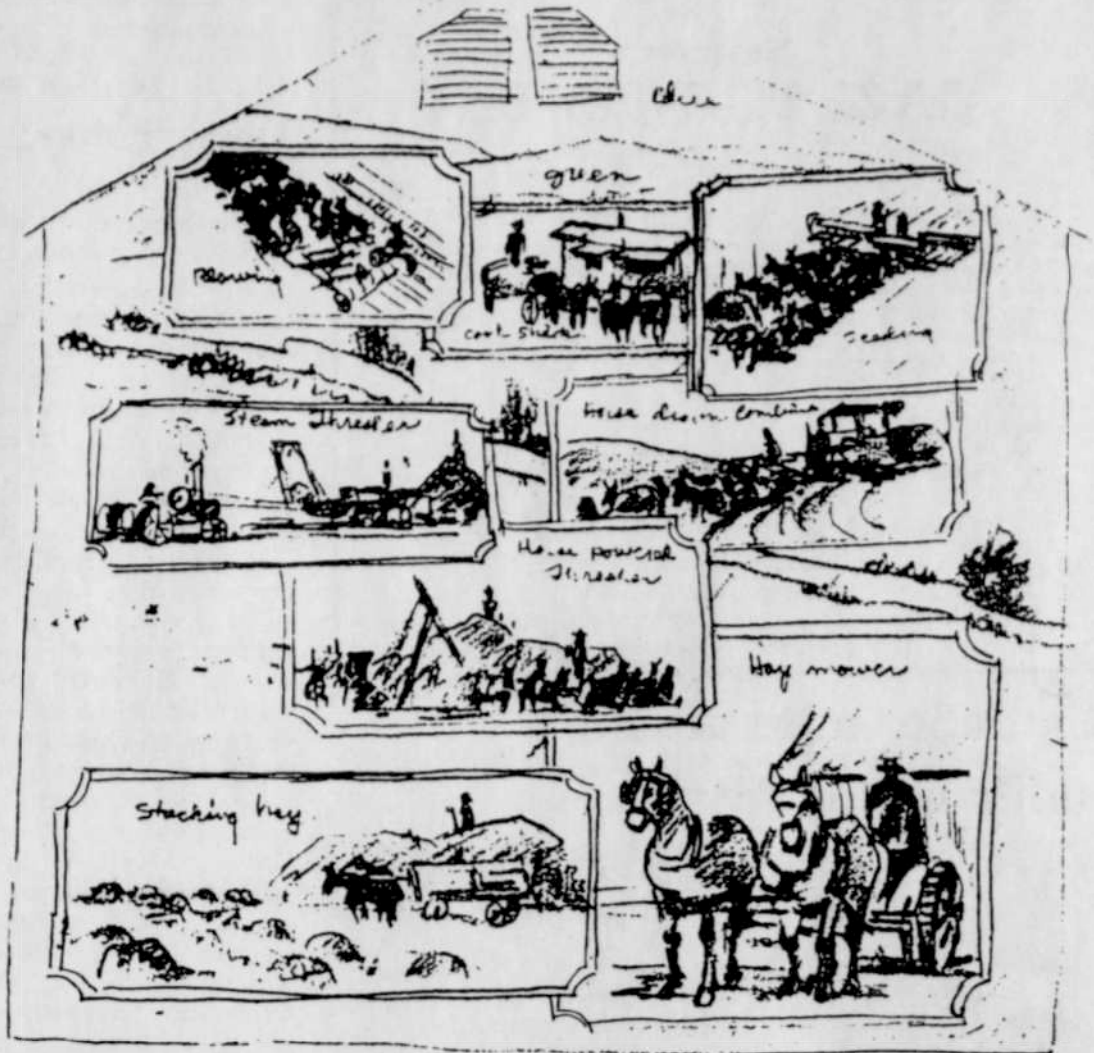
arrangers and bow-maker "elves". Also assembled were table arrangements using greens, candles, baskets and other decorations. Free evergreens were also available to about 45 people who made their own arrangements during a workshop last Saturday. The Garden Club provides the greens, wire rings, bows and other decorations, in addition to what participants choose to bring. This Christmas-time community service project has been a tradition since 1971.

Kool Kitchen Kids spread Christmas goodwill



The Kool Kitchen Kids, a local 4-H group, is doing its best to help spread holiday cheer. The group, for the fourth year in a row, made and decorated cookies to distribute to senior citizens at St. Patrick Senior Center and others this Christmas season. The members made the cookies at home and then got together for a fun afternoon of decorating the plates. Members pictured are Linsey Mitchell, Shanna Rietmann, Blair Keithley, Madison Bailey, Codi Rosecrans, Shelley Rietmann, Kylee Disque, San Juanita Elguezabal, Claire Anderson and Mahaley Huddleston. Not pictured are Laurie Murray and Leland Rill. Leader is Tami Rietmann.

Creative Arts Group to sponsor mural project



Proposed mural

The Morrow County Creative Arts group is sponsoring a mural depicting horse farming in Morrow County. The mural will be on the north end of the old elevator building where the antique farm machinery collection is located.

Morrow County families have brought in photos and some photos from the museum will be used so that the mural is an authentic depiction of horse farming in the county.

Robert Thomas of Kooskia, ID, will be the artist. Thomas has been a professional artist for many years and has done murals in Toppenish, WA, and The Dalles. In addition, he recently completed some work in California.

According to the Creative Arts Group, Thomas' work is "well received and outstanding."

Thomas has submitted a sketch using the photos selected. The mural will be done in sepia tones, making them look like something from the past. The eight panels in the mural will be approximately

Schwab starts Christmas toy drive

The local Les Schwab tire store is starting its Christmas toy drive to benefit local children around the area.

Anyone who would like to make Christmas a little happier for local children is urged to drop off their new toy at the local Les Schwab tire store.

"We want everyone to know that these toys will be distributed to kids locally," said Schwab manager Glen Bridgmon.

Santa and Reindeer to be here Dec. 17

Santa and his live reindeer will be back in Heppner this year on Sunday, Dec. 17.

Pictures with Santa and his reindeer will be available for purchase at \$5 each. He will be outside Central Market from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Flu shot clinics cancelled

The flu shot clinics, which were to be sponsored by the Morrow County School District, on Friday, Dec. 8, have been cancelled.

The clinics were planned at the district offices in Lexington and A.C. Houghton Elementary School in Irrigon.

10 feet by 20 feet.

To make this a reality, funds are still needed. Those wishing to donate a panel will receive an oil painting done to scale of that panel for their home of office.

Contact Betty Mills, 676-5546 or Bob or Sharon Harrison, 989-8496, to see available sketches and a sample of one of the oil paintings. Donors can then make their choice as to which panel they would like to sponsor.

A plaque will be placed on the building recognizing the donors and an information kiosk will have a description of each panel, which will also have the donor(s) name on it.

All donations, regardless of size, will help the project and donations are tax-deductible. Those wishing to be donors may make donation checks payable to the Farm Foundation P.O. Box 515, Heppner, OR. 97836.

Court studies options following levy defeat

By Doris Brosnan

In a special session on November 29, the Morrow County Court studied the current financial position and options in light of the levy defeat on November 7.

Included in the discussion were Finance Director Lianne Currin and County Assessor Greg Sweek.

Currin offered a summary of the county's present situation. She reported cash and other revenues and expenditures at approximately the level to be expected at this time of year. Measure 1608 money remains an uncertainty, said Currin. She also explained her four-year projections, based on Sweek's most current numbers on estimates of values and subject to change.

Further into the future, some enterprise-zone industries will be coming onto the tax rolls in 2003, 2007, and 2008. Judge Terry Tallman interjected that the Racing Unlimited project is looking hopeful and would have a two-plus years' construction schedule. Sweek noted that related figures are included in his estimates.

In response to Currin's question of why the commissioners feel that the levy was defeated, Commissioner John Wenholz said that he thinks the voters have spoken, and they want less service. He asked about the amounts budgeted for non-mandated services, which Currin partially listed. She noted that the court would need to look at the statutes to determine what other services are not mandated. She pointed out that some agencies supported with state revenues could also be facing funding difficulties.

Commissioner Dan Brosnan noted his belief that the voters sent a clear message and to support another type of taxation in lieu of the levy would seem to be circumventing the voters' will.

Tallman agreed that the court needs to follow through with its message issued before the levy election, that a "no" vote would mean the voters wanted cuts in service. He questioned whether or not the general public believes the county situation is as dire as the court has explained. Currin agreed that the efforts to make cuts with the least possible impact leads people to believe that additional money was not needed.

The group discussed some possible approaches to trimming the budget and approaches to the necessary budget process. Brosnan said that, recognizing a shortfall of \$686,000 next year, the county should look at making cuts this fiscal year in preparation for that.

Wenholz and Sweek agreed that the court should solicit input from the department heads first. Currin questioned the possibility of a hiring freeze, but Tallman said he would like to talk to department heads first, wanting departments to feel a part of the process.

Sheriff Verlin Denton contributed that he would be hard pressed to fill a current vacancy, knowing that the person would be cut in July. Tallman noted that good management dictates that such a vacancy not be filled, but he does not support stating a hiring freeze yet.

Brosnan suggested dealing with the reality of the fiscal situation, "the sooner, the better." The court agreed to meet individually with department heads during December, after having given them some choices and asking for recommendations. Upon Currin's return to work in January, she will work with the information to formulate the results of those meetings.

Stressed at the meeting was the need to keep lines of communication open with the court and departments during this process.

You are invited to our
OPEN HOUSE
on Friday, December 8th
Refreshments will be served!

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GRAIN GROWERS**
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