

## Are there Irish in Heppner? Sure 'n begorrah

By Claudia Hughes

"Are there Irish in Heppner," a visitor asked? Sure 'n begorrah! In the mid-1800s the Irish began to arrive, some coming around the horn, working in the goldfields of San Francisco, and then finding their way to the bunchgrass hills of Heppner, while others arrived at Ellis Island and traveled the Oregon Trail.

Historically, a month prior to March 17, the late Jim Farley would announce two Irish families, whose ancestors had come to County Morrow from the old country. These families were contacted and honored at the Coffee Hour, hosted by Ted Smith of

Pendleton. Most of the honored families came to Morrow County in the 1800s through Ellis Island. They were: Lennon/Healy 1984; Kilkenny/Kenny 1985; Doherty/Lindsay 1986; Hughes/Rends 1987; Monahan/Farley 1988; O'Brien 1989; Healy 1990; McLaughlin 1991; Laughlin 1992; Mollahan 1993; Wilson 1994; Brosnan 1995; Cunningham 1996.

In 1997, the newest Irish to arrive in Heppner were honored. They were Father Condon, who returns to the old country each year for a visit and Winnie Flynn, whose family now ranches in the area. Because they were most recent to the U.S., their brogues

were still intact, and people love to hear the Irish brogue, especially on St. Patrick's weekend.

In 1998 the Hirl family was honored; in 1999 it was Iris Doherty from Umatilla County (strong supporters of the Irish celebration). In 2000, Bill Mitchell was recognized. "Big Willie", as he is fondly known, has returned from California for the past 19 years to attend the KUMA Coffee Hour and festivities. All past Irish families were invited to stand and be recognized in 2000, the new millennium.

## Something for the wee ones

The "Little Leprechaun Karnival and Kids Cuisine" will be held Saturday, March 16, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. on Main Street between the Post Office and Shoe Box.

Hot dogs, sausage dog meals, sauerkraut, tater tots, brownies, hot cocoa and pop "at affordable prices" will be served.

Fun kids games include duck pond, miniature golf, face painting, go fish, junk food walk, wheel of fun, and ping pong games. Cost is 30¢ per ticket or four tickets for \$1.

## Breakfast served on St. Patrick's Day

Everyone is invited to attend the St. Patrick's Breakfast on Sunday, March 17, from 7-10 a.m. at the Heppner Nazarene Church, 335 N. Gilmore (the church by the hospital).

French toast, ham, juice and coffee will be served. The breakfast will feature live bagpipe music by Mike Keown.

Cost is \$4 adults, \$2 children (12 and under) and \$12 max. family rate.

## The story of St. Patrick

Centuries ago, when Britain was ruled by Rome, a young boy named Patrick lived in Britain with his family. Although Patrick's parents had reared him as a Christian, he didn't take their teachings seriously, preferring instead to follow the sinful example of other youths.

Patrick continued in this way of life until one day he was captured by a band of marauders from Ireland who made him return with them as a slave to their country. They forced him to live in poverty and hunger, working as a shepherd and a swineherd.

Patrick missed Britain and his family so much that he thought his heart would break. He began to pray, however, asking God to help him and begging forgiveness for his sins. The Lord heard his prayers, filling him with the fire of a new faith he had never known before.

One night while Patrick was still in captivity, God showed him a way to escape from Ireland, and, after six years of slavery, he found his way back to Britain and his family.

From that time on, Patrick dedicated his life to God, eventually receiving Holy Orders. His life became a continual quest for holiness.

One night while Patrick was at prayer, he heard a voice calling him. An angel appeared to him with the message that the people of Ireland wished him to return to their country and walk among them once more—this time, not as a captive, but as God's apostle.

Patrick saw God's plan in all that had happened, and he consented to return to Ireland. He was consecrated bishop and was sent there to preach the Gospel of Christ.

In the early days, Patrick suffered great persecution, but the fire that God had kindled in his heart spread throughout all of Ireland and Patrick came to be regarded as an angel among men.

Now a saint, Patrick stands as a symbol of the Irish, of the unique destiny they claim, and of the beloved place they will always have in God's heart.

180 N. Chase,  
Heppner

**Shamrock Lane**

**BOWLING TOURNAMENT**

Saturday, March 16th  
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sunday, March 17th  
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**SATURDAY NIGHT**

All Bowling: \$1.50 per game/\$1.50 shoes

**PIZZA SPECIAL**

Saturday & Sunday 1-6 p.m.  
\$2.95 for two slices and small pop

**Shamrock Earrings**



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Irish Capital of the Northwest*

*Enjoy the St. Patrick's Celebration!*

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## St. Patrick's Celebration Button History

How long do you think the St. Patrick's Celebration Button has been distributed? This being the 20th celebration, one would think it was started in 1980, but it actually came into existence on the fifth celebration in 1987 by the celebration committee. Several people over the years have collected all the buttons for a total of 15 this year. All 15 years of buttons sold were made by committee member Judie Laughlin. She also designed all but one year when the logo was derived from a design by Irene Anhorn's daughter.

Do you recall the large banner made for the town depicting all the fine Irish heritage and resources from around the county? It usually flew high above the street between The Shoe Box and Elks Club and was later draped across the front of the Elks building. It is now a little worn but still proudly signifies what Heppner's celebration is all about on the weekend of March 17.

The Pot of Gold winnings for the purchase of the lucky button and a chance to win cash was started in 1992. The committee added an extra \$100 for a total of four drawings for 2002. Perhaps

you could be one of the lucky four winners!

The celebration button is designed by Laughlin through suggestions from the committee or ideas of her own. It is approved for the year's festivities by the St. Pat's Committee. Some years it's a hard task to come up with just the right design.

Buttons through the years have depicted different events for Heppner. One had a sheep symbolizing the sheepdog trials and early Irish sheep men. Another was a leprechaun beside the historic Morrow County Courthouse. Then there was the covered wagon reflecting the celebration of the Oregon Trail, the bull rider recognizing the artwork of Tom Simonton, and the Heppner lamppost, the year of Heppner's new Main Street. The buttons tell a story.

This year's button for 2002 depicts a jovial leprechaun leaning against the number 20. Be sure to get it!

Anyone who would like to submit a design for the 2003 button may send ideas to Judie Laughlin at P.O. Box 687, Heppner, OR 97836. The committee will then decide what idea would be next year's collectors' button.

## DON'T MISS THE ANNUAL ST. PATRICK'S AUCTION!

Friday, March 15th at 7 p.m.  
Heppner Elks Club, upstairs  
(more room this year!)

Music provided by Joe Lindsay's group  
"Somebody Else"

Snacks  
available!

Auction list available on  
[www.heppner.net](http://www.heppner.net)  
and in local businesses

Have a wee bit of fun and  
help support our annual celebration!