

April Fool's b-ball event changed

By Doris Brosnan

April Fool's Day is still almost two weeks away, and already a joke has been discovered and a near disaster averted. At last week's planning meeting for the merchants' basketball game, the committee learned that the NCAA championship game will play on April 1, April Fool's Day, the very day chosen for the Heppner event.

Though the planners of "April Fools On Court" at first thought the report was a bad joke, they had to acknowledge the news as fact when they received a letter from the NCAA asking the merchants to please move the game to another night. "They were afraid that we would draw too much of their Northwest viewing audience away," reported one committee member. Quickly, the merchants examined their options and settled on an alternate date for the game between Main Street's Westside Blue Blazers and Eastside Gold Trotters.

The merchants do not seem at all concerned that the NCAA championship game would, in fact, impact the Heppner event if the two occurred on the same night. Another committee member said, "We are moving our game because we don't want to risk creating that very problem for the NCAA and their advertisers."

"April Fools On Court" will begin at 7 p.m., on Tuesday, April 2, at Heppner High School. The Blue...Bruises and the Gold...Walkers will have one more opportunity for practice than they originally expected to have, which one coach insists could be

"a good thing or a bad thing." He voiced confidence in his own team members' athletic prowess but added, "I think that they (the other team) are better than we think they are."

Team rosters will appear in next week's newspaper. The organizers are hopeful, of course, that publication of the two teams' lineups will not lead to any off-court betting on the game's outcome.

G-T invites pastors to submit Easter messages

Local pastors are invited to share inspirational Easter messages in the March 27 issue of the Gazette-Times.

The deadline for messages is Monday, April 25, at 5 p.m. Messages may be dropped by the G-T office at 147 W. Willow in Heppner, faxed to 541-676-9211 or e-mailed to hiltonsykes@hotmail.com. Messages may be typed or handwritten, as long as they are legible. Please include a contact number with the messages.

For more information, call editor April Hilton-Sykes at the Gazette, 676-9228.

Easter worship schedules and activities may also be submitted at the same time, but as a separate article.

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Elks contest winners essays published

Kelsey Wolff of Heppner and Miranda Hunt of Ione each won first place in separate categories in the Heppner Elks Club contest, "What Does the Flag of the United States Stand For?" Following are their essays:

"What does the flag of the United States stand for? I'll tell you what it stands for!

The flag stands for the freedom that was given to us by the men and women who fought for our country! It stands for the freedom of speech and freedom of the press. It stands for freedom of religion! It stands for a government for the people, and by the people!

Our flag stands for the firefighters and policemen who died on September 11! It stands for pride in our country, and pride in ourselves! It stands for peace and honor and justice.

It stands for all we believe in."
-By Kelsey Wolff, sixth grade, Heppner Elementary School

"What does the flag of the United States stand for? When first thought of what the flag of the United States stands for, freedom came straight to mind. Soldiers fought for our freedom. At the end of battles our flag was flying. It represents America.

What the flag means to me is many things. First freedom. We should be appreciative we have it. Many individuals don't have this right. When I think of a battle, I always think of the brilliant colors on our flag. It can also represent our individuality. We are free to be our own person, be whatever we want, and think for ourselves.

On September 11, they flew a flag near where there was the bombing. It got tattered and torn, but still was flying. We were proud. Whenever I think of that date, I will remember the flag.

I am proud to be an American. I show my pride by flying and respecting our flag.

-By Miranda Hunt, seventh grade, Ione Middle School

Artisan Village has St. Patrick's giveaways

Angie Walters was the winner of the basket giveaway at the Artisan Village during the St. Patrick festivities. She also won \$10 in the shop's shamrock treasure hunt, along with Karen Anderson, Gresham, who found three shamrocks for \$10 each, and Kristal Temple, Lexington, and Desiree Wilhelm, Heppner, who each found a shamrock.

Bonnie Wenberg, owner of the Artisan Village, said that her son Erik came up with the clues and then 10 shamrocks were hidden among the merchandise around the store. Each person who found a shamrock won \$10. Wenberg said that four of the people who found the shamrocks discovered them by following the clues and one person found a shamrock by luck.

Wenberg held the contest Friday, Saturday evening and Sunday during the St. Patrick's Celebration Weekend.

O'Ducky contest announces winners

Matt and Megan Doherty took first place and a \$100 prize in the St. Patrick's Celebration O'Ducky Race down Willow Creek. Ed Knecht was second for a \$75 prize. Pat Coleman won third place and \$50; Kaedene Bailey, fourth, for \$25 and John Ashbeck fifth for \$10.

The contest was sponsored by the Colt football players and coaches.

Rural Ministries Forum held at Ione UCC

Ione United Church of Christ hosted a Rural Ministries Forum on Sunday, March 17. The Rev. Jose A. Malayang, executive minister of Local Church Ministries, spoke at the morning service and participated in the discussions in the afternoon. The Conference Ministers of Central Pacific Conference, Rev. Hector Lopez and Rev. Gene Ross, also attended. Members of the UCC churches in Condon, Hood River and Smyrna joined with the members and friends of Ione United Church of Christ for a day intended to influence the way that the denomination works with its churches in small towns and rural settings.

The Rev. Malayang is a key leader in the national offices of the United Church of Christ. He is the executive in charge of the unit which provide for the needs of local churches, such as publications and resources, training events for lay and ordained leadership, the ministerial placement process, new church starts and loans for building projects. Local Church Ministries includes a staff of 110, of which 60 travel extensively to serve the conferences and local churches. The United Church of Christ includes 1.2 million members in almost 6000 churches, grouped into 39 conferences.

The scripture readings for the morning service included Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones and the story of Jesus raising Lazarus.

Rev. Malayang's sermon was about what is possible for small churches, including those in rural settings. He spoke of his own experience growing up in a small town in the Philippines, and of his years serving two small churches in an agricultural area in Michigan. He said the situation is not as bad as described by Ezekiel; we may have tired bones, but not dry bones. Small churches are not on the sidelines - they are the mainline in the United Church of Christ. Ninety percent of UCC churches have memberships of less than 200.

Rev. Malayang recently organized members of the Local Church Ministries staff to form a Small Church Ministry Team to assure that the denomination serves small churches as effectively as possible. He is encouraging the team to move quickly from study to action. The purpose of his trip to Ione was to gather insights to shape the work of this team. He closed his sermon with the comment that the story of Jesus and Lazarus was a story about caring, and that caring is essential to the ministry of local churches and to the services that the national offices provide to the local churches.

After a meal of ham, scalloped potatoes, salads, and desserts, about forty people gathered for discussion. Those present shared perspectives on the context of rural congregations, the mission and purpose of the church, barriers to effective ministry and ways in which the conference and the national offices could support and assist the work of local churches. Rev. Malayang listened through most of the afternoon, and spoke at the end of the day about what he had heard. The meeting closed with prayer.

This Rural Ministries Forum was the second of a series. The first forum, held at Ione United Church of Christ on February 10, considered the relationship between rural congregations and the denomination. Rev. Lopez

participated as speaker and listener.

On June 13, people from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming will meet in Spokane for a Regional Consultation on Rural Ministries. Rev. Malayang will return for that event, along with Rev. John Thomas, president and general minister of the United Church of Christ, and other members of the national staff. The consultation is intended to influence the actions and policies of the denomination in such a way that rural churches are well served by the national offices and well represented in denominational decisions. The planning process for these events began with concerns raised by members of Ione United Church of Christ. Rev. Paul Clay, the pastor of Ione UCC, has initiated and coordinated the forums, and is arranging the program for the consultation. The concerns of the local congregation have coincided with the questions of the national leadership of the United Church of Christ, and the resulting conversation will affect the role of rural churches in the life and ministry of the whole denomination.

Ione boys third, girls seventh at Umatilla Ice Breaker

The Ione boys' track team finished in third place at the Umatilla Ice Breaker Track Meet held March 15 at Umatilla, while the Ione girls placed seventh.

The boys' team was led by Andrew Rietmann and Brad Burright. Rietmann finished first in the 100m with a time of 11.49, and also took first in the 200m run with a time of 23.53. He also finished fifth in the triple jump with a jump of 37-7. Burright took first in the 110 hurdles with a time of 15.89. He also won the 300 hurdles with a time of 40.59 which beat the existing school record which he also set.

Burright and Rietmann teamed up with Mike Radie and Till Tullis to win the 4x100m relay with a time of 46.4. Radie also finished seventh in the 100m with a time of 12.25 and sixth in the 200m run with a time of 25.03. Tullis finished sixth in the 300m hurdles with a time of 49.03. Cayle Krebs placed sixth in the shot put with a throw of 36-11. He also took second in the discus with a throw of 116-2.

The girls were led by Natalie McElligott who took second in the high jump with a jump of 4-10. She also placed fourth in the triple jump with a jump of 31-5.5 and fifth in long jump with a jump of 14-1. McElligott, Cindy Heagy, Amelia Peck, and Missy Baker finished fourth in the 4x100m relay with a time of 55:56. Heagy finished eighth in the 100m with a time of 14.27. She also took fourth in the 200m with a time of 28.88. Peck placed seventh in the javelin with a toss of 92-11. She also took fourth in the discus with a throw of 86-10.

Other times and distances for those competing for Ione were not available at presstime.

The next track meet will be Friday, Mar 22, at Wahtonka in The Dalles. Field events start at 4 p.m.

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LITTLE LEAGUE TRYOUTS SLATED

Little League Tryouts Schedule:

Major Baseball (ages 9-12)

Wednesday & Thursday, March 20-21, 4 p.m. at the George Waterland Field

Softball (ages 7-12)

Thursday & Friday, March 21-22, 5 p.m. at the Shad Hisler Field

Minor Baseball (ages 7-12)

Saturday, April 6, at 10 a.m. at Shad Hisler Field

T-ball (ages 6-8)

Saturday, April 6, at 2 p.m. at the Hisler Field

Heppner Little League is still accepting registrations for the season and encourages more four and five-year-olds to sign up for whiffle ball. For more information or to sign up, contact Janice Huddleston at 676-5358

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