

St. Patrick's Senior Center

I have attended a number of Heppner's St. Patrick's celebrations (not all). Usually special tasks in some of the events have required my attention at the expense of others. This year I decided to imagine this to be my first time - to see what I may not have noticed; to hear sounds that escaped my attention in other years; to really take note of the variety of events and activities, especially new ones added. Following are some word images of my 2003 experience.

Thursday: I entered a sanctuary - no formal lines and lines of chairs. The room was filled with neatly spaced small tables, white cloths, small green napkins on each side, and a small blooming violet as centerpiece of each. The early arrivals were seated throughout the room, not huddled just inside the doors. Subdued conversation was soon a crescendo of voices and laughter as more people arrived, empty spaces filled, and curtain time approached.

Then darkness - silence - curtain - we are transported to a different time and place: Ancient Ireland - to learn of St. Brigid and St. Patrick... Young folk, men and women of the parish, invite us into a new "real time," and experience of this reality... It is the threshold of our celebration.

Friday: St. Patrick's Senior Center, 4 p.m. - Last minute preparations for Mrs. O'Leary's stew. People in green aprons at their tables; leprechauns all ready for their pranks and shamrock stickers. I missed the Ceremony of Dedication for the new People's Fountain, at the corner of Murray Drugs. I walked through little groups visiting and laughing; and now, some of them were moving to the opposite corner, waiting, joking, meeting and greeting.

The appointed hour - 5 p.m.: They came, steadily - newcomers, old-comers, natives, visitors, family, all with some familiar green insignia, especially wonderful Irish smiles. A pleasant, quiet hum of visiting and laughter hovered over the room for two hours, while the United Methodists served an evening meal.

The Old Time Fiddlers at the fair pavilion - 7 p.m.: a full house - and the wonderful rhythmic rhythm of Irish music. Fiddles, guitars, banjo, harmonica, singing with toe-tapping, clapping happy audience responding to every number. The performers, from six to 86, were energetic and eager to share their love of the music, whether soloists, duos, in families or other groups. Some were from far away and others were local. What joy they exhibited and with the same kind of joy they were received.

Saturday - 8:45 a.m.: another trek to St. Patrick's Senior Center for breakfast. A light rain began to fall, the streets were quiet; less than a dozen had come at this hour. And then we felt the town wake up. Ed Baker and Tom Wilson were soon very busy as more came for biscuits and gravy, eggs and sausage, hashbrowns and coffee, orange juice and peach-half. By 9 a.m., people were arriving by clan. The Senior Center volunteers were very busy.

KUMA Coffee Hour broadcast at 10 a.m.: I felt as if I had entered a focal point of energy and good will - song, story, laughter, bagpipe, fiddles, polkas, pathetic ballads, a wonderfully free good-hearted "Irish madness" prevailed. It happens like this only in Heppner.

Noon: Irish Potato Soup served at St. Patrick's Senior Center. People loved it and were glad to come out of the rain - but no dampened spirits on this day.

The Parade at 1 p.m.: "The Riotous Bunch" were first to follow the color guard and dignitaries. And then brave walking groups, people marching, people watching, all dripping and enjoying.

Into the afternoon and long into the evening, at the high school, the Elks club and other places, the show went on. One line from a song sung by the Sentimentalists stays with me to reflect a mood of the weekend: "In the lilt of Irish laughter, I hear the angels sing."

Does there need to be more?

The place and the people of St. Patrick's Senior Center contribute to every aspect of, and to the spirit of the celebration.

Cruz-In winners announced



Just one of the many vehicles at the Cruz-In

Fifty-one vehicles from the Columbia Basin and Blue Mountain area participated in the 2003 St. Patrick's Celebration Cruz-In, March 15 in Heppner.

Awards were presented to the following participants in their various categories: Carol Hudson from The Dalles won the People's Choice award with her 1953 Studebaker Commander Convertible and also won in her classification.

The Leprechaun's Choice award went to Rick Peterson of Lone with his 1959 Studebaker Silverhawk. Another Lone resident, Lindsey Kincaid, was presented the Best Dressed Award as a chauffeur with his 1985 Lincoln Stretch Limousine.

The Car Club award went to the Mid-Columbia Car Club, The Dalles, who had 12 entries.

Other winners and their vehicles included Pendleton residents, Bob and Susie Calhaun with their 1970 Dodge Charger and George and Sue Nelson with their 1957 MGA convertible.

Sharon Harrison, Lexington, was a winner with her 1956 Ford T-Bird.

Dave and Vickie Farley, The Dalles, won an award for their 1961 Chevy Corvette. Another The Dalles resident, Keith Jallen, went home with an award for his 1957 Chevy Camero pickup.

Mark and Deon Magnuson of Hermiston placed first in class with their 1968 Shelby Mustang.

Wasco resident Jack Wallace took home the top award for his 1963 International pickup.

The 1971 Dodge Dart belonging to Gary Jones of

Hermiston took top honors in his class.

The Dalles resident Robert Peickert entered his 1950 Ford Club Coupe and was awarded top of his class. Other The Dalles residents who were winners were Theeou and Donna Keller who entered their 1960 GMC Modified pickup and Sam Bilyeu who brought his 1938 Studebaker Commander.

Morrow County residents Lyle and Helen Bliss entered their 1953 Modified British Ford and went home as winners in that class.

Driving from North Powder with their 1923 T-Bucker Street Rod were Steve and Judy Nelson and they went home as winners in their class.

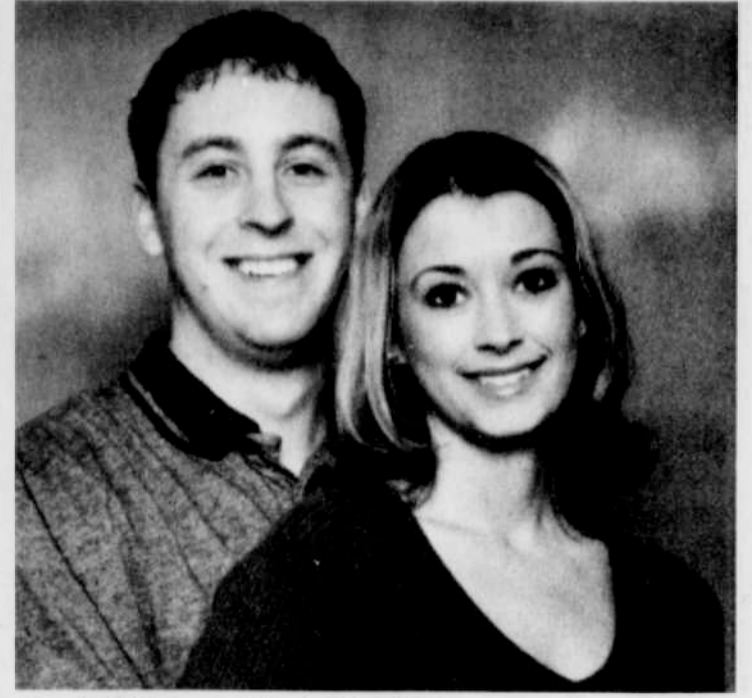
Spike and Delores Pieesoli from Hermiston brought their 2003 Ford Mustang.

Tony McCullough brought his 1972 Chevy Nova SS from Kennewick, WA and took home a winner's plaque for his class.

Sponsors of the 2003 Cruz-In were: Alpine Constructions, Artisan Village, Bank of Eastern Oregon, Blue Mountain Ceramic, Brannon Auto Repair, Bucknum's, C-4 Construction, Louis and Betty Carlson, Columbia Basin Electric, Columbia River Title Company, Coppock Surveying, Country Shears, Devin Oil Company, D&L Auto Parts, Drake Construction, G.D. Linger Longer Lounge, Green's Feed Store, Hayden Family Dentistry, Heppner Auto Parts, Heppner Gazette Times, Heppner Auto Service, Heppner Hardware, Heppner High School student body, Hermiston Dairy Queen, Jay Coil Fabrication, John's Other Place, Klamath First Bank, Kuhn and Spicer, Lexington Auto Body, Lott's Electric, Les Schwab, Miller and Sons Excavation, Miller Manufacturing, Morrow County Grain Growers, Murray Drugs, Northwestern Motel, Peterson's Jewelers, Pettyjohn's Farm and Building Supply, Pot O' Gold Café, R.J. Steak House and Lounge, Red Apple Market, R&W Drive-In, Shamrock Lanes, Sherrell Insurance Agency, Wheatland Insurance, Willow Creek Clinic, Willow Creek Realty, Hair Expressions and Rodgers Electric.

Engagement

VanWinkle-McHaney



Joseph McHaney and Jessica VanWinkle

Jim and Georgia VanWinkle of Heppner announce the engagement of their daughter, Jessica VanWinkle of La Grande, to Joseph McHaney of Pendleton.

VanWinkle is a 1998 graduate of Heppner High School. In June she will graduate from Oregon Health Sciences University in La Grande with a bachelor's degree in nursing.

McHaney, the son of Mike and Tammy McHaney of Madras and Dawn Madrid of Vancouver, Wash., is a 1997 graduate of Condon High School and a 2002 graduate of Eastern Oregon University with a degree in English. He is employed as a sports reporter for the East Oregonian in Pendleton.

The couple plans an Aug. 9, 2003 wedding.

Brownfield-Pitarys



Nick Pitarys, Jr. and Alissa Brownfield

Nancy and Dick Snider, Lone and Steve and Luanne Brownfield, Heppner, announce the engagement of their daughter Alissa Kathryn Brownfield to Nicholas Alexander Pitarys, Jr., son of Patricia Robertson of Fishkill, NY.

Brownfield graduated from Heppner High School in 1994. She attended Oregon State University for one year, and attended travel school in Kennewick, WA before moving to Denver, CO, in 1996. She is currently employed with Advantage Wireless, Inc. in Englewood, CO as a manager for the Denver metro area.

Pitarys graduated from John Jay High School in Hopewell Junction, NY in 1988. He received his BA from Seton Hall University in 1992. He moved to Phoenix, AZ in 1995 and has been employed as the Arizona market manager with the Englewood, CO based company of Advantage Wireless, Inc., since September of 2000.

The couple plans a June 28, 2003 wedding in Oregon.

Local Girl Scout troop to sell cookies

Heppner, Lexington and Lone now have their very own Girl Scouts troop. Troop #400, lead by Teresa Hintz of Heppner, currently has 18 members and meets Monday evenings, from 6-7:30 p.m., at Heppner Day Care. The group is open to girls in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

The Bank of Eastern Oregon donated \$200 to the group for start up expenses and Merry Brannon of

Heppner Day Care has donated the space.

The girls will be out Saturday, March 22, in front of the Heppner Post Office and Heppner Red Apple selling Girl Scout cookies. They will also be in Lexington and Lone the following Saturday, March 29.

Any one interested in joining Troop #400 can contact Hintz at 676-5985.

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