

## St. Patrick's Day in Heppner March 11-14

### Irish Hoop Shoot

What makes a hoop shoot Irish? Maybe it is the lineage of the participants, the spirit of competition, or just the fact that it is part of the Wee Bit O' Ireland celebration in Heppner. The shoot is free, sponsored by the Colts basketball program. Organizer Rod Wilson says it is meant to be a fun time for all and a contribution to the weekend's festivities.

The first of three divisions will begin shooting at 10 a.m., Saturday, March 13 in the driveway of the Bank of Eastern Oregon. The age groups will be 5-7, 8-10, and 11-13. Certificates redeemable at local businesses will be awarded to the top three scorers in each division.

Shooting will use a "round-the-world" set-up. Each participant's score will be the total number of attempts he or she needs for making a shot from each of seven spots on the semi-circle.

No matter the weather, Wilson knows the hoop shoot will draw several enthusiastic participants. And he knows, too, that the adults will be enthusiastic about the recent change in location of the hoop shoot, for they will be able to watch from under the protection of the nearby covered walkway.

### KUMA Coffee Hour

The original St. Pat's weekend event consisted of Pendleton's radio station KUMA's Coffee Hour's broadcasting from the showroom of Jim Farley's car dealership in Heppner. From that simple format of the host's visiting with some of Heppner's first Irish families' representatives, the weekend celebration has grown to include a wide variety of events for all ages. Still, however, KUMA returns each year to broadcast live from Heppner. Now a one-hour-plus variety show hosted by Tom Melton and a sidekick, the program begins Saturday, March 13 at 10 a.m., broadcasting from the Elks building.

In keeping with the emphasis on Heppner's Irish heritage, the Grand Marshall of this year's parade, Bob Kilkenny, will be one of the first introductions on the Coffee Hour. Kilkenny's father settled on Hinton Creek, where a fourth generation Kilkenny family now resides. Other introductions, interspersed with toe-tapping music and some joke telling, will include visiting dignitaries and the Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo Court.

Before a standing-room-only crowd, the Irish and the Irish-for-a-day will entertain with music and humor. Scheduling of all performers for the KUMA Coffee Hour is yet to be completed, but a staple of the show is John Doherty and the Irish Singers. This sometimes-rowdy group can move the crowd to tears, to hand clapping, and to laughter with their renditions of Irish ballads, other songs, and stories. Joining them on stage will be a talented local writer and singer, Joe Lindsay, who has written some energetic Irish-Heppner-related songs for the weekend events. The local women's group, The Sentimentalists, will offer some soothing vocals. The strings of Shenanigans and Mulligan Stew will impress the audience, as these fiddle students of Peg Willis of Pendleton contribute their talents to the hour's entertainment. One segment the audience looks forward to is the brogue contest. Anyone who wishes to compete simply recites a poem, sings a song, or tells a story in his or her best Irish-sounding voice. The audience decides the winners of the cash prizes for first, second, and third place.

And speaking of prizes during the coffee hour, the second drawing for a \$100 pot o' gold will make another commemorative button owner very happy. And it will surely mean a leprechaun is close by.

### MCCAC ready for St. Pat's

The members of Morrow County Creative Arts and Crafts will be selling items on Friday, March 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, March 14 from 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m., at Les Schwab.

Molly Day comes with paintings on turkey feathers, pen and ink on bone and paintings on leaves, along with clay pot bells.

Mary Ella Johnson will be bringing her crocheted cotton and wool rugs of various sizes. These are one-of-a-kind accent rugs.

Sandra Haynes will be showing works of colored pencil, graphite drawings and small scratchboards. She will have prints of western subjects and wildlife and also prints of pen and ink. Prints of western subjects and wildlife will also be available on tiles. Cards of each set of a number of different subjects of wildlife and western subjects will also be available. Haynes will be at Les Schwab on Friday and Saturday. She will also be the featured artist at the Morrow County Museum. You will also be able to see Haynes at a reception in the museum on Friday from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

The Mural Society will have the painting of the next mural on display in the window of Les Schwab. The Mural Society will be taking orders for Giclee (print on canvas) of the next mural or any part of the mural you would like a print on canvas made. Only preordered prints will be made. Contact Bob and Sharon Harrison at 989-8496 or Betty Carlson at 676-5302 to preorder a print.

### Collector's item celebration button

In the fifth year of the "Wee Bit O' Ireland" celebration, a commemorative 2.5" button was designed. Each year's button is uniquely designed by a local artist, numbered, and sold at local businesses and at the information booth on Main Street. Each year's limited edition sells out, making the button more precious to collectors, of whom few have complete collections.

The \$3 button has three chances of winning \$100 during the weekend of the celebration. Drawings will be held at the Friday night Auction and on Saturday at the morning's KUMA Coffee Hour and at the evening's Trail Band Concert.

The button designed for 2004 is commemorating the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Our little leprechaun seems to be spotting the new trail right along with Lewis and Clark.

Proceeds from button sales help to fund weekend activities at the next annual celebration.

### Ceili

From 2-4 p.m., on Saturday, March 13 celebrants can experience more things Irish by sitting in at the Ceili (pronounced "kaylee"). This variety show, held in the warmth of the Elks building, is emceed by Mike Duffy, of the Irish Singers, and offers a fast-paced two hours of entertainment.

If it is Irish, it can be humorous, and John Doherty and the Irish Singers will be on hand to guarantee laughter. They will continue their repertoire of traditional Irish songs, with their signature sound.

Joe Lindsay will return to the stage to delight the audience with his original songs and renditions of other Irish tunes.

Shenanigans have delighted audiences with their fiddle music for several years now, and these youths seem to enjoy their playing as much as or more than the listeners do. Their Ceili performance will showcase the talent they will be taking to their special sessions with some Irish fiddlers in Ireland this summer. Joining them on stage for some music will be the younger fiddlers, Mulligan Stew.

Rounding out the afternoon show, step-dancing and piping are expected to contribute to the Irish atmosphere that makes the Heppner celebration "the next best thing to being in Ireland."

### Shuttle Service

More than a wee distance exists among some weekend events, so St. Pat's Saturday shuttle service will surely prove useful. Volunteer leprechauns will be making their stops throughout the day, at one-hour intervals, from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Brightly colored sidewalk signs will mark the stops, from the Willow Creek RV Park south of Heppner to the Sheep Dog Trials north of town. The service is free and the drivers are eager to get celebrants where they want to be. They also stress that they will make every effort to maintain the schedule, though unforeseen circumstances might create brief delays from time to time.

The stops: Willow Creek RV Park, Heppner Hardware (Southeast Main and May Streets), Morrow County Fairgrounds, Sheep Dog Trials at the Thompson Ranch, Riverside Street near the Agricultural Exhibition and parking, Main Street across from the library/museum/city park, Forest Service Building (west corner of Main and May Streets).

On Saturday evening, if details can be worked out, the shuttle will also provide transportation to the 7:30 p.m. Trail Band Concert at the elementary school.

### Enjoy two parades, Cruz-In and Great Green

Two parades will take place in Heppner on Saturday, March 13 as part of the 22nd annual St. Patrick's celebration. At noon vintage vehicles will cruise Main Street as part of the 4th annual St. Paddy's Cruz-In. All participants will assemble at 11 a.m. at the Kinzua Mill site office. The public will be able to view the entrants after the parade when the vehicles are parked on Willow Street, where judging will also take place. Three plaque awards will be given for Leprechaun's Choice, Mustang Award, and Judges' Choice. A \$5 registration fee will also include a dash plaque of the entrant.

As this is one of the earliest gatherings in Oregon for auto aficionados, organizers expect the weather, as usual, to affect the number of Cruz-In entries. One organizer thinks that this year's event will top previous years in numbers. He acknowledged, however, that some owners will wait for a weather report before making a decision, and some will wait until the morning of the event to have a look at the sky before deciding whether to cruise to Heppner or not. An enthusiastic crowd will welcome the hardy.

The Great Green Parade will be held at 1 p.m. on Main Street.

For further information regarding the Cruz-In, call 676-9949 or the Heppner Chamber office at 676-5536, or visit the website [www.heppner.net](http://www.heppner.net).

### Great Green Parade

Grand Marshall Bob Kilkenny will lead the "Wee Bit O' Ireland" Parade in his antique vehicle. Kilkenny is honored as a member of one of the area's prominent Irish families.

Following close behind will be the restored Paddy Wagon familiar since the early days of this celebration. The expertise of a recent returnee-retiree, Gary Jones, has brought the green vehicle back to life, with his guarantee that it can easily complete the parade route.

Youngsters who participate in the Parade this year might think that the Celebration Committee found the leprechauns' pot of gold. They will each receive a \$1 "gold" coin. All participants have an opportunity to win special recognition, as judges will be looking for the best entry in each of sixteen categories: commercial Irish float; non-profit Irish float; junior Irish character (under 12 years); senior Irish character (12 years+); family group Irish character; Irish bicycle; Irish golf cart; custom vehicle; bands and musical groups; dance or drill groups; commercial Irish group; non-profit Irish group; pre-1945 antique vehicle; post-1945 antique vehicle; parade/special event car; and the Irish open class (sometimes called "miscellaneous").

The parade begins at 1 p.m., on Saturday, March 13 so entrants need to be signed in at Green Feed at the north end of Heppner by noon. Entry forms and additional information may be requested by calling (541) 676-9961 or (541) 676-5536.

### Ewe-Do Bingo

A sheep with attitude can create a tense atmosphere at the Ewe-Do Bingo event sponsored by the Heppner Junior High and High School Cheerleaders. Simply put, an ewe (female sheep) will be released on Saturday, March 13 at 2 p.m. into a fenced area, at the corner of Center and Main, containing a grid of 200 numbered spaces. Anyone who wants to take a chance can pick a number, buy a \$5 ticket, and hope that the sheep is positioned over that numbered space when she clears her bowels....

A speedy sheep may delight the owner of the \$300-prize ticket, but more common is the ewe that meanders, checks out the crowd, and takes its time in choosing when to "drop her pellets" on the grid. The cheerleaders are patient, however, knowing that eventually the sheep will make someone happy, and they will have some leftover funds to help them with uniform and camp expenses. Cheerleaders will have tickets for sale as of March 1, and they will be on site Saturday morning, with the remaining tickets. By calling 676-5257, a person can buy tickets in advance.

### Sheep dog trials

No event better typifies the Irish heritage of Heppner, than do the Sheep Dog Trials. The handlers and their dogs gather three miles north of Heppner, along Highway 74, on Saturday, March 13 at 8:30 a.m. to begin the entertaining competition that will reach a conclusion on Sunday afternoon.

The Sheep Dog Trials were added to Heppner's tribute to its Irish settlers 21 years ago. Since then, the event has relocated from the rodeo grounds to the Thompson Ranch, which was founded in the sheep industry. Today's organizer, Mary Hamilton, has served for twelve years, even though she moved from Heppner to Walla Walla several years ago.

Heppner's event is one of the calendar year's earliest of those sanctioned by the U.S. Border Collie Handlers Association. March's still-scant hours of daylight dictate that entries be limited to about 55 teams (handlers and dogs) each day. By earning points in the sanctioned trials, of which there are just over 100 in the United States and Canada each year, teams work to be included among the 150 that qualify for the National Finals competition. This year's finals will be held in South Dakota in September. The St. Pat's Weekend trials attract competitors from all over the Northwest, from as far away as California, Alaska, British Columbia, and even Alberta, Canada.

During the two one-day trials, each team competes for prize money and points. Day monies will go to about six places each day, and the top 20 percent in the rankings will earn points in the USBCH Association. On Sunday, the overall winning team of the two days will receive a trophy sponsored by the Thompson Ranch.

The class in which a handler enters a dog can depend on the dog's age and level of training. Dogs in the open class are usually at least three years old. A sheep dog can usually compete until it is nine years old. Essential training takes about two years, and then more time is spent "seasoning" a dog, getting it used to different venues and types of sheep. Handlers represent a wide variety of ages. Hamilton reports that, currently, one of the best is Derek Fisher, who just turned 23.

Patrick Shannahan, of Caldwell, ID, has won the Heppner trials more often than any other competitor, winning with several different dogs. Shannahan is a past National Champion. Scott Glen, of Alberta, Canada, has won more than once and was runner-up in the Nationals two years ago.

Hamilton finds interesting that Heppner has "such a huge turnout for this trial." She believes that the reason lies mostly in the Skye Krebs sheep, which "offer a great challenge to the dogs and are always healthy and even." Secondly, Hamilton reports, "the Thompsons offer such a lovely place for the trial. They do lots of work to get ready." Though the early spring weather is often inclement and overnight accommodations in Heppner are limited, competitors are willing to travel from surrounding communities each day and "keep coming back year after year."

Spectators who are dressed for the weather are encouraged at the trials. They will witness the manipulation of sheep through a course that measures the working bond forged by handler and dog. A shuttle bus will provide transportation from Main Street to the site hourly on Saturday.

### O'Ducky Race

"On your mark, get set... float." And the race will be on. The O'Ducky Race starts at the May Street Bridge, in front of the courthouse at 3 p.m. on Saturday, March 13. Depending on the strength of the Willow Creek current, the wee winners of the annual race will be floating to the finish line at the footbridge by the museum building and the RV Park about 15 or 20 minutes later.

Entering a duck (plastic) in the race is simple and could result in a prize of \$100, \$75, \$50, \$25, or \$10. The first five places are paid. Duck entries will be for sale on Main Street near the TV office until shortly before race time. Each entry costs \$3, or two for \$5.

The luck of the Irish has been with many a visitor, as well as local participants, over the years. At least one of the prizes last year had to be mailed to a winner from Beaverton. Proceeds from the O'Ducky Race help to finance the Colt football program.

### Local artist to be honored at Morrow County Museum

The Bisbee Gallery will be opening on Friday, March 12, with a reception honoring local artist, Sandra Haynes. The reception will begin at 1:30 p.m.

Haynes was born in Oregon and was raised in a family that considers wilderness, the old west and creativity a normal and necessary part of life.

Her work has won awards throughout the western states, including the Phippen Museum Show in Prescott, AZ, The 49'ers Show in Death Valley, CA, The Western Heritage Show in Great Falls, MT and many others. She works in oil, pencil, mixed media, pen and ink and scratchboard. Haynes has always had a particular interest in animals and the western life. Her research lately has been more focused on the part that women have played in the settling of the western states.

Haynes has developed her style of art through the years with a realism marked by a heightened sense of color and movement. She is self taught and her life-time of close encounters with her subjects shows in the personal details and vivid expressions of both animals and humans. It is always a pleasure when people recognize the joy and passion that shows through in the images that she creates.

In the town of Heppner, which she calls home, Haynes lives by the following thought: "Most of us go to our graves with our music still inside us. My journey of Earth has been forever shaped by the ability to draw and so, with great pleasure, I will dedicate the rest of my life to creating my 'music'."