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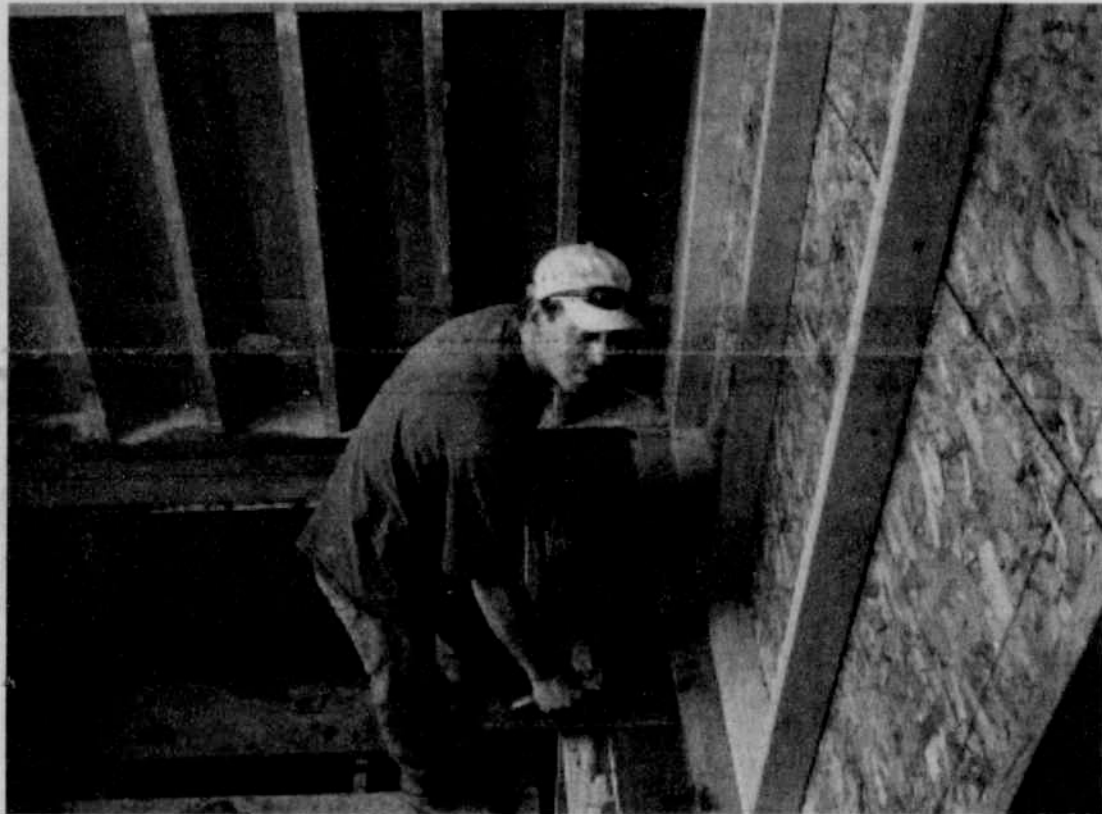
HEPPNER

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New elevator goes in at courthouse



Joe Hoffman, with Gentry Homes, works on smoothing out the concrete in the newly constructed elevator shaft at Morrow County Courthouse.

After many years of working to install an elevator at the Morrow County Courthouse in Heppner, the project has finally become a reality.

Construction on the elevator shaft began two weeks ago, with Gentry Homes in charge of completing the shaft construction and Schindler Elevator Company providing the elevator car.

The elevator is being installed so that services in the upstairs portion of the courthouse, including courts, district attorney, etc., can be "independently accessed" by persons with disabilities in accordance with the American Disabilities Act. Currently, services have been relocated to the lower floor when accessibility is needed.

A large portion of the funding, \$90,000, came from the Court Securities Fund. The fund is comprised of monies collected from fines imposed on law violations. The Fund committee as well as the county commissioners had to approve the use of the funds. The Morrow County general maintenance fund is providing the extra \$17,000 needed to complete the project.

Due to the courthouse being a national historical building, the elevator will not be protruding on the outside of the building, and the interior architectural features are being preserved. The windows will receive a "black out" treatment, that will make them appear darkened when looked at from outside.

"We are excited about this project, it has been a long time coming," stated Andrea Denton, personnel director at the Courthouse.

Construction of the elevator shaft is expected to be completed by Sept. 1, 2004 and installation of the elevator car is estimated to be completed by the middle of September.

Local man commands Guard unit



Captain Terry Chinen

Captain Terry Chinen, Heppner High School graduate of 1990, is the commander of G Troop,

82nd Cavalry, a National Guard combat unit recently activated for service in Iraq.

The 150-man unit is currently in Fort Bliss, TX, for training. They will be deployed this October for service in Iraq for 15-18 months.

Chinen and his wife Kelly, who is also in the Guard and works at the Redmond Armory, are expecting their first child in December.

Chinen received both his college degree and military commission at Eastern Oregon College.

His current address is: Capt. Chinen, Teruo, MRCS/116 BDE/G Troop, 82nd Cav, Bldg 2444 Cassidy Road, Fort Bliss, TX 79916.

Two new faces join Ione community

Two new little girls, Babali Renee Peterson, five, and Ola Rietmann, 15 months, have joined the Ione community. Babali is the daughter of Joel Peterson and Lea Mathieu and Ola is the daughter of Gregg and Shelly Rietmann.

The Mathieu-Peterson and Rietmann families have been good friends for many years and have talked about adoption in the past. Both women had also talked about wanting little girls to help balance the "maleness" in their families and give them someone to go shopping with. About a year-and-a-half ago, the two families decided to embark upon the trail of adoption.

To begin her journey, Mathieu looked on the Internet at the Holt International Children's Service's website. There she read a description of a little girl from India named Babali. She called her husband in to read the description and they both decided that Babali sounded wonderful.

They contacted Holt and began the process of filing for international adoption. Mathieu said the process was filled with lots of paper work and very rigorous screening.

"We weren't even allowed to see a picture of Babali until we were quite far along in the process," commented Mathieu.

Yet it was all worth it, when after flying to India the end of April, they were able to see Babali at her orphanage in Pune on May 3. They were then able to return as a family on May 10.

Babali, who was born Sept. 6, 1998, joins brothers, Gus Peterson, eight, and Oskar Peterson, seven.

She will start kindergarten this fall, and is excited about meeting new friends. She has a good grasp on English, due to attending preschool in India where they taught English, and attending Bible school.

"Babali is not only beautiful, she also has a terrific personality; she's smart, funny, loving and imaginative. She's very fun-loving and has an infectious belly laugh," said Mathieu. "She's the most wonderful daughter we could ever imagine."

Joel, who farms in the Ione area, and Lea, who is a teacher at Riverside High School, said they both loved India and look forward to returning. They had a chance to spend time in Delhi, Agra and Pune and were able to visit sights such as the Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Gandhi's Memorial and many other interesting historical sites.

"We were impressed by the friendly warmth of the people and the delicious food," commented Mathieu.

In five years, Mathieu hopes to teach overseas and take all three children with her so they can learn to be citizens of the world. She also hopes that when Babali turns 16, the two of them will be able to



Babali Peterson and Ola Rietmann

return to India to volunteer at orphanage.

Babali will receive her citizenship in January or February of 2005. India requires post-home visits to ensure the safety of their children and also requires the family to send reports on the child's progress for seven years after the adoption.

The Rietmann family took a slightly different road, which lead them through many trials, but eventually brought them to their precious Ola. For the first six months, the Rietmanns looked into domestic adoption, but were then lead towards international adoption.

After much research, they came upon an adoption agency called Journey of the Heart. The Rietmanns had originally been cleared to receive twins from Romania. However, due to a political skirmish between Romania and the United States, children are not being released to Americans.

After much waiting, and belief that they would still receive the twins, it became a reality that the Rietmanns would have to look towards another country for a child. They then looked at either Russia or the Ukraine and chose the Ukraine so as to not have to make two out-of-country trips.

After a year-and-a-half of going through the process of being approved to adopt, and then not being able to bring home the twins, the Rietmanns left their farm, and two sons, Tanner, 11 and Evan, nine, and headed to the Ukraine for a child, hoping to receive a daughter.

The difference for the Rietmanns, as opposed to the Mathieu-Petersons, is they traveled to the Ukraine not knowing which child they would receive. Shelly explained that they arrived in Kiev, Ukraine and the next day went to the National Adoption Center.

At the Adoption Center, the Rietmanns were given large notebooks filled with pictures and descriptions of children who were adoptable. "It was very hard going through the books," said Shelly. "You felt like you were rejecting a child as you flipped the page." After many hours of searching, and being drained emotionally, the Rietmanns were given a file of children who had just recently been released for adoption. On the top of the file was a picture and description of

Ola, who had just been released that day.

The Rietmanns felt that she was the one for them. They were told to return to their hotel to prepare for a 10-hour train ride to the orphanage. After the long journey, the Rietmanns were finally able to meet Ola.

However, their trials did not end there, due to less stringent medical practices in the Ukraine, many times doctors speculate about a child's health conditions. Ola's medical record was full of speculative diagnoses, which caused some concern for the Rietmanns. They returned to their hotel and Shelly called Pioneer Memorial Clinic and talked to the nurses and doctors there about what was said in Ola's file.

"It was wonderful to be able to call all the way from the Ukraine and have our family practice doctors take time for us," said Shelly. "We were able to determine that many of the things they listed just weren't true."

Another obstacle the Rietmanns faced was that it is customary to have to spend 30 days in the Ukraine before taking a child home. However, they were able to plead hardship, citing their need to return to their farm and children along with other things, and had the 30 days waived.

The Rietmanns were able to return to the United States with Ola in just two and a half weeks and have already received her citizenship certificate.

Shelly said that while a few parts of the Ukraine were beautiful, she would not want to return due to the horrible living conditions, including the poverty and pollution.

Yet, even with all the trials and hardships the Rietmanns had to face along the way, they are thankful and believe it was meant to be, as Ola had not even been born when they first started the process.

Both families said they have also been blessed with the Ione community's excitement and the support that has been shown to them throughout the past year and now that the girls have arrived.

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