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HEPPNER 50¢
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Heppner residents rescued following three days and two nights in mountains

What started out as a nice afternoon drive turned into a three-day, two-night ordeal for Floyd Jones, 89, and George Flynn, 74, and Winifred Flynn, 71, all of Heppner. Jones and the Flynns got stuck in the snow on Western Route Road between Heppner and Ukiah on Saturday, Feb. 26 and were found unharmed by Morrow County Search and Rescue members on Monday, Feb. 28 at 8:30 p.m.

The trip started out with the Flynns inviting Jones on an afternoon drive as they do many times during a week, said Jones. Thinking they were only going to be gone for about an hour, Jones put on only a vest and the trio headed out in the Flynns' Chevy suburban. The first few miles along the Western Route Road were free of snow, but after about 10 miles the snow began to accumulate. They got stuck once and were able to free the vehicle, but going a little further they got caught again and this time, even with 4-wheel drive, couldn't get the vehicle out of the snow.

"The snow was about 14 inches deep," said Jones. "There was about eight inches of fresh snow on top of six inches of ice."

Not having cell phones or anything with them to call for help, the group was forced to wait for help to come. Also, being that this was just an afternoon jaunt, they did not have food, water or matches. However, being resourceful they were able to stay hydrated by melting snow and had enough gas that they were able to run the vehicle every 20 minutes for about 10 minutes at a time to get heat.

Jones did say that they walked a little ways and found a couple people, but they weren't willing to help.

After going to sleep for the third night out, at around 6 p.m., the group was awakened at 8:30 p.m., by search and rescue members, said Jones. They were given some food and then taken by snowmobiles to Cutsforth Park. Jones said that he was surprised to find that Cutsforth Park was only about 30 minutes away; since they had lost their orientation and assumed the rescue ride would take a few hours.

"They were the nicest bunch of people," Jones commented about the search and rescue members. He was also so grateful that he took a $50 bill out of his wallet and gave it to the crew who said they would donate to the search and rescue fund.

Jones and the Flynns returned to their homes Monday night and were in good condition, except for being a little weak.

Floyd Jones

"We didn't suffer, we were just inconvenienced," said Jones. He also said the Flynns were good company.

The Flynns were not home Tuesday for comment.

The search for the trio began after Morrow County Sheriff's Office received a call Monday afternoon around 12:30 p.m. from the Flynns' daughter-in-law who was concerned because the couple had not shown up for dinner Saturday night.

Personnel from the Sheriff's Office patrol division, detective division, communications division and volunteer search and rescue members participated in the search. Oregon Emergency Management had scheduled an Oregon National Guard helicopter to join the search on Tuesday morning.

Fire destroys house on Willow Creek

Firemen battle blaze at the Joey VanDoorn home on Willow Creek Tuesday afternoon. The Ione fire department also sent trucks to help fight the fire. Details of how the fire started and the extent of damage was not available at press time.

Clogged sewer causes school cancelation last Friday

Classes at Heppner Elementary was cancelled on Friday, Feb. 25 due to the city's sewer line backing up into the school, said HES Vice Principal Daye Stone. The backup was caused by a root ball from the trees growing near the school clogging the line. A few pencils were found in the drain inside the school, but they were not the cause of the backup.

O So Clean was brought in Thursday evening to clean the carpets and remove the sewer water from inside the building, said Stone. They were able to complete the project over the weekend and school resumed as usual Monday.

Ione teams headed to state tourney in Baker City

Both Ione basketball teams, girls and boys, will be playing in the 1A state basketball tournament in Baker City.

The boys will be playing the Crow Cougars on Wednesday, March 2 at 3:15 p.m. The girls will be playing St. Paul on Thursday, March 3 at 8:15 p.m.

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St. Patrick's Day leprechauns are getting lambs ready for Ewe-Do Bingo

Our leprechaun works at coaching the ewe on just what to do.

More St. Patrick's Day stories pages 11 & 12

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 19 at 2:30 p.m. into a fenced area, in the parking area of the Bank of Eastern Oregon, 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, March 19, with the remaining tickets. By calling 676-5257, a person can buy tickets in advance.

Heppner Garden Club to meet

The Heppner Garden Club will be meeting on Monday, March 7 at 7 p.m. at St. Patrick's Senior Center. Hosts for the evening are Peggy Connor and Daisy Collins. Shirley McNary of Ione will share about her hobby of raising orchids with club members.

Heppner woman indicted on embezzlement charges

Sharon Robinson, of Heppner, was indicted on 480 counts on Wednesday, Feb. 23 as a result of embezzlement allegations that she stole approximately $70,000 from the Miller and Sons company.

The 480 counts are broken down to include: seven counts of Aggravated Theft in the First Degree, a Class-B felony, for seven six-month periods in which she stole at least $10,000; 150 counts of Theft in the First Degree- for incidents where at least $750 was taken at one time; 262 counts of Fraudulent Use of a Credit Card; and 61 counts of Theft in the Second Degree- for incidents where an amount of $50-$750 was taken at one time. These counts were taken from times Robinson wrote checks without authorization or made unauthorized purchases on the company's visa card, stated Allen.

Robinson was arrested Monday, Feb. 28 and arraigned Tuesday, March 1 by Judge Hill, who set bail at $100,000, said Allen. The next court date for Robinson has been set as March 24 in which a pre-trial conference will be held.

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