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HEPPNER 50¢
Gazette Times

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Easter Bunny visits Heppner

The Easter Bunny made his annual visit to Heppner on Saturday, March 26 at City Park where Kayla Vandercoevering, 3-½, of North Plains, granddaughter of Warren and Irene Plocharsky, of Heppner, got a chance to sit on his lap.

Heppner Ranger District welcomes new district ranger

Joining the Heppner Ranger District as the new District Ranger is Tom Mafera. Mafera has been with the United States Forest Service for over 20 years and began his career in the southeast region of the country, but has spent the past 14 years in Oregon.

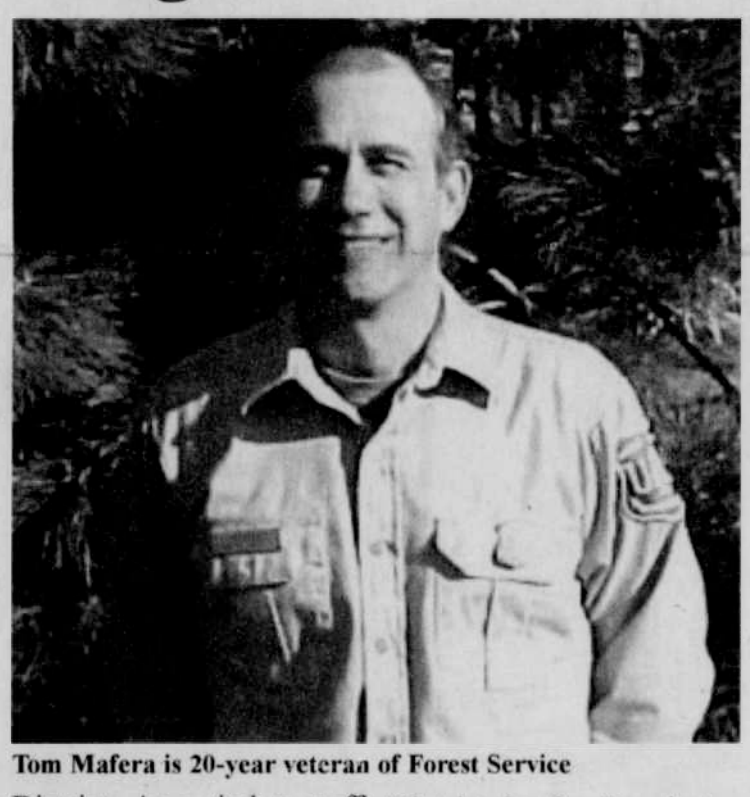
Mafera, who was raised in New Hampshire, graduated from the University of New Hampshire in 1980 with a bachelor of science in forest management. After graduation, he spent two years in the US Peace Corps, serving in Nepal as a volunteer working in reforestation.

It was in Nepal that Mafera met his wife of 21 years, Debra, who was also a Peace Corps volunteer and now currently works as a botanist on the Paulina Ranger District.

After returning from Nepal, Mafera began his career with the Forest Service working in the Kisatchie National Forest in Louisiana and the Daniel Boone National Forest in Kentucky. While working in the southeast region, he held positions including pest management, timber marking, district silviculturist and prescribe burning manager.

Wanting to expand his career, in 1990, Mafera moved from the south and attended Oregon State University where he earned his master of forestry degree in 1992. After graduation, Mafera moved to Prineville, where he began working for the Ochoco National Forest.

Mafera spent 10 years on the Ochoco National Forest, holding positions as the assistant timber staff officer in the supervisor's office and as the natural resource team leader on the Paulina Ranger District. As a timber staff officer, Mafera had oversight of the timber sale program. Being a natural resource team leader saw Mafera supervising and managing aspects of the forest such as archeology, wildlife, hydrology, silviculture, timber, fisheries and botany.



Tom Mafera is 20-year veteran of Forest Service

For the past couple of years, Mafera has been the environmental coordinator on the Sisters Ranger District in the Deschutes National Forest.

With his diversity of experiences, Mafera said he feels ready to step in and manage a district. As the district ranger, he will be in charge of management of the Heppner Ranger District's work force and the land base association.

He is also glad to still be in Oregon, which he says is a great state and where he plans to retire.

Local Elks Lodge installs officers, announces awards

The Heppner Elks Lodge recently held an installation ceremony and installed their officers for the 2005-2006 Lodge year. Installed as Exalted Ruler was Anthony Clement. Other officers installed were: Leading Knight- Lindsay Kincaid; Loyal Knight- Colin Anderson; Lecturing Knight- Marc Orem; Esquire- Josh Coiner; Chaplain- Wade Smith; Inner Guard- Shad Jeffreys; Tyler- Shawn Chandler; Secretary- Roger Mortimer; Organist- Ken Turner; Treasurer- Joe Kenny; and Trustee- Burke O'Brien. Installing Grand Lodge Officers were Marvin Brannon, Dave Barnett, Roger Mortimore, Eddie Gunderson, Jr., Glen Ward, Bob Lovgren, Tom Wolff and Scott Dougherty.

Outgoing Exalted Ruler Burke O'Brien and his wife Ginger received accolades and plaques for the successful year just concluded. A steak and oyster dinner was enjoyed following the ceremony. A full calendar of community and charitable events will occupy the attention of the newly installed officers.

Health district approves raise for RNs; district in the black for month

The Morrow County Health District Board Monday night approved step increases for the district's registered nurses for one year, which would amount to increased costs for the district amounting to over $20,000 a year.

MCHD CEO Victor Vander Does said that the increases would bring the RNs' wages more into step with those in surrounding areas. RNs' wages start at $21.98 an hour, rise to $22.64 at four months and $23.92 at one year, with additional increases for years two through four, five years- $25.83, seven years-$27.09, 10 years-$27.89, 15 years- $28.71, and 20 years- $30.50.

Also at the meeting the board learned from CFO Nicole Mahoney that the district was $7,692 in the black for the month of February. The district has a $21,270 average monthly year to date loss.

In other business at the meeting, the board approved purchase of a new traditional x-ray machine and authorized Vander Does to purchase the Turnkey machine which would be around $94,050, if the machine receives a favorable report. Bids were within several thousand dollars of each other, ranging from $94,050 to around $96,940, including installation. Some site modification is expected.

Vander Does said he will come back to the board for purchase of a digital machine for the second-phase of plans for the x-ray department. The digital system, which would interface with the traditional machine, is also expected to cost under $100,000.

In other business, the board:

-heard that a new physician's assistant the district plans to hire has cleared another credentialing hurdle and will soon have a temporary license.

-learned that current board member Leann Rea, Boardman has filed for position #3 on the board; John Gochnauer, Heppner, has filed for position #1; and John Murray, Heppner, and Margaret Hollandsworth, Boardman, will vie for position #2.

-heard a report from outgoing board member Ed Glenn concerning the status of the new migrant health clinic in Boardman.

-approved changes regarding employees' retirement plans.

-approved an intergovernmental agreement between MCHD and the city of Boardman which would allow the district to accept monies from the city to be passed on for use by the migrant clinic.

-heard the following report: Pioneer Memorial Clinic had 421 patient visits in February with 16 new patients and an additional 45 seen by a nurse; Irrigon Clinic had 184 patient visits with 24 new patients and an additional 52 seen by a nurse; Heppner Ambulance had 13 runs, Boardman, 12, and Irrigon, 10; Pioneer Memorial Hospital had six patient admissions, 432 outpatients and 57 emergency room encounters; 1430 lab tests, 107 x-ray procedures, 24 CT scans, 73 EKG tests, 34 respiratory therapy procedures, 180 Home Health visits and procedures and 690 drug doses were delivered for $26,937 in drug revenue.

Electric Co-Op to conduct extensive line patrols

Columbia Basin Electric Co-Op, and their subcontractors, will be conducting extensive and in-depth line patrols and inventory of the distribution network throughout parts of their service territory during coming year. Periodic extensive patrols are required by REA, RUS and the OPUC and help reduce failure rates and power outages. Crews will be visually inspecting each pole unit for any degradation and inventorying each structure for type and location. Vehicles will be marked with "Columbia Basin Electric Co-Op" signage. Crews may be operating 4-wheelers when traveling from pole to pole along the power lines.

The Co-Op asks all their consumers to make a mental note of this on-going Co-Op activity so as to reduce undue concern and alarm when seeing the crew conducting its operation. All personnel will carry appropriate identification. Any comments, concerns or questions about the inspection crews or program may be made to Slater Mitchell at 676-9146 or cbecsdm@oregonvos.net.

Hager Park rest room proposal set aside

The proposal to apply for a grant from the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department for a public rest room at Hager Park was discussed at a public meeting in Heppner on March 8.

The local owners of residences on Hager Street facing the park were present at the meeting. They were unable to reach an agreement on the proposal. Consequently, work will not go forward on preparing a grant application and the project is set aside for now.

City officials indicated their intention to deposit the excess soil from the upcoming water system improvement project on to the lower (west) end of Hager Park. This area will be leveled, seeded and irrigation will be extended in order to make this part of the park more usable.

The issue of upgrading the playground equipment was discussed, but no decision was reached on doing this.

Daylight Savings Time begins

Daylight Savings Time begins on Sunday, April 3. Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour Saturday night.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:
MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.

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