

Irish road bowling added to Wee Bit O' Ireland weekend celebration schedule



A St. Paddy's leprechaun tries her hand at road bowling

A first-time event comes to this 24th Annual Wee Bit O' Ireland celebration in Heppner. Road bowling, an old Irish sport, makes its debut on Sunday, March 19.

"The St. Pat's Committee is confident, after researching the sport, that participants and spectators will have more than a wee bit o' fun on Sunday," reports committee Chair Doris Brosnan. "Though none of us has played, we can see that the basics are simple, so I think it will appeal to almost everyone who has a drop of competitive blood. Simply put, the object of the game is to cover a designated course on a road or street with the fewest tosses of the 'bowl'."

Teams of two to three members can enter by showing up at the steps of the Morrow County Courthouse at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday. This year's event will be limited to a maximum of 10 teams, since the St. Pat's Committee will have just 10 bowls for teams to use, donated by Tim Daly, who first brought the sport to the attention of the committee. And the committee will only have the bowls for adults.

The Irish have road bowled since the 1600s, and today, passion for the sport is especially strong in County Armagh, in the north, and Cork, in the south. The origins are unclear - perhaps brought from England by weavers or from Holland by William of Orange's troops, or maybe started by Irish patriots' taking of small English cannonballs and rolling them home by the light of the moon.

Irish troops in the Civil War brought the sport to America. In 1954, international competitions were recognized, and in 1985, a world-association set of rules were adopted by the governing body, Bol Chumann na hEireann.

Ireland, West Virginia, added Irish Road Bowling to its Irish Spring Festival in 1995, and now Oregon is among the states that have organized-bowling groups. The West Virginia Irish Road Bowling Association has been the source of information and encouragement for the St. Pat's Committee, and the rules used by that association will guide Heppner's Sunday event:

A 28-oz iron-and-steel bowl (also called "bullet") about the size of a tennis ball is hurled underhanded down a road to a finish line. For a few reasons, this year's event will be played on an in-town series of streets. The team with the fewest shots to the finish line wins. A "trophy of distinction" is planned, with the winners' names engraved, to be displayed in a local, "prominent place."

A small entry fee of \$5 per participant will be used to pay for the trophy, and the remaining amount will be split 50-50 between the St. Pat's fund and the winning team.

"As we get better at this, we will surely acquire strategies and skills, in organizing and playing, but this year, we just want to get acquainted with the sport," says Claudia Hughes, St. Pat's Committee Chair. "Our planned course will offer a variety of straightways, curves right and left, and a hill."

The course will cover 1.1 miles, which could take about two hours to complete, according to available information. Participants will receive specific course information when they arrive at the courthouse steps on Sunday.

To sign up in advance, a person may contact the Chamber Office in city hall, at 676-5536, or call Doris Brosnan, 676-5382. More information is available at the Chamber of Commerce office on Thursday and Friday.

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Respected musician, Cal Scott, to perform with the Trail Band at Heppner St. Pat's festivities

By Peg Willis

He grew up in Eastern Oregon. And now Cal Scott's name is known and respected nation-wide for his musical performances, composition and production of film scores. How did it happen?



Cal Scott

Cal Scott's early years were spent in La Grande, during the relative peace and security of the '50's. Home, family, neighborhood - all figured prominently in his life. "It was a pretty ideal place to grow up - in that era particularly."

Both of Scott's parents were musical. His father, Don, was the high school band teacher, and superintendent of music for the La Grande schools (1952 till 1965). Scott's mother, Polly, had been classically trained on piano, and though she did not focus on performance as an adult, Scott grew up in a home surrounded by music.

"From the time we were little we would sing along with the family. There was Beethoven or Bach or Mozart on the hi-fi every morning. As far back as I can remember, that's how we woke up." This early exposure to the masters played a big part in Scott's musical education.

Music wasn't the only thing in Scott's life. "I liked Scouts and church youth group and playing baseball, but really, music was the main thing. It was what I really wanted to do."

Scott's formal musical education began at age seven with piano lessons. He soon added trumpet and clarinet. Scott bought his first guitar from The Fix It Shop in La Grande. "It was ancient - a 1915 Gibson L1 arch-top with an oval sound hole. It wasn't a great sounding guitar, but it was a real guitar. My dad helped me glue it back together and it was very cool."

By junior high age, Scott became involved in his first band outside of school. "I traded that old Gibson for a horrible imported electric guitar. Seems really dumb now, but hey, I was a kid." This band, The Sceptres, "did pretty well for 14-year-olds. We played for a high school dance - but they were kind of embarrassed to have a bunch of junior high kids, so they put us on the upper level of the gym - with no lights, so we wouldn't be seen."

A major turning point in Scott's musical enlightenment came when... "I was practicing a simple version of the Chorale from Beethoven's 9th Symphony

on piano. Somehow I discovered that I could play it in a different key. That's when the door opened. I spent the rest of the week playing that one tune in different keys. It was a really big deal for me. But my piano teacher wasn't impressed. She just wanted to know why I hadn't practiced my other pieces."

Playing music is just one part of what Scott does now. He is also a well known composer and owns his own recording and production studio. He has done over 30 specials and documentaries for PBS. Recent projects include Great Lodges of the National Parks, and the themes for Oregon Art Beat and Oregon Field Guide.

"This is a dream job for me. The reason I'm making a living is because I'm the composer and musician and recording engineer - all in one person. I've made a living at this for 20 years. I feel so blessed - so lucky."

The Trail Band, a big part of Scott's life, came together in the early '90's for just one performance - a stage play in Cleveland. But the band just couldn't be stopped! "It's the only band I've ever been in that took off on its own. We've kept playing because we enjoy playing together - and enjoy each other. I think that still shows." Audiences all over the Northwest would agree.

The Trail Band is one of the Northwest's most powerful and sought after musical groups. Their music, some of it composed by Scott who is also the musical director of the group, is varied, widely acclaimed and irreplaceable.

Marv Ross, the band's founder, says "Cal is the most versatile member of

The Trail Band and that's saying a lot. He moves from trumpet to piano to guitar to mandolin while missing nary a beat."

And Scott moves just as freely among musical styles. Be it classical, jazz, Celtic, ragtime, blues, reggae... Scott nails it with class.

Scott, who lives near Tigard with his wife, Sue, seems to have inherited his father's desire to help youngsters find and enjoy their music. Going out of his way to encourage young musicians, Scott's advice is "Practice. You've got to love it."

So, did he practice because he loved it - or because his parents made him?

Simple answer: "Yes." Sometimes we have to be made to do what we don't feel like doing.

What instrument should an aspiring musician learn? "I like to see kids play a linear instrument like a horn or a fiddle, and a chordal instrument like piano, and the guitar. I really think it's best if they can do all three. You get different things from each of them - really different things."

To aspiring composers Scott says, "First of all, copy your hero's style. Write something in exactly the same form. And finish it - no matter how bad you may think it is. You can't start your second song till you've finished your first."

Of the many facets of his profession, Scott says the thing he enjoys most is the composing. "I'm always looking at a visual image (film) thinking 'what kind of music's going to go here?' It's the emotional link to the viewer. I sit down with the director and we go over where there's going to be music. We develop what's called a cue list - where the music goes. And we'll talk about the nature of the music they want - orchestral or small, jazz or whatever. I go write it."

Scott's personality may be as much a factor in his success as his musical ability. Ross says, "He's a consummate pro, a gentleman, and an artist - I consider myself lucky to work and play with him."

What's up next for Cal Scott? He's currently performing and recording with Kevin Burke, renowned Irish fiddler. And of course, there's the Trail Band. And new film offers come regularly. There's not much



The Trail Band

chance of an early retirement for this gifted musician.

Scott will perform with the Trail Band on Saturday, March 18, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Heppner Elementary School gym. The performance is funded by the Morrow County Unified Recreation District.

To learn more about Cal Scott and his music visit his web site: www.calscottmusic.com or the site for The Trail Band: www.trailband.com.

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Chamber Chatter

By Claudia Hughes, Chamber Exe. Director

Welcome to Heppner all visiting readers. 'Tis glad we are to have you back in Heppner where everyone is Irish for the weekend.

For answers to your questions, stop by the green information booth beside the Post Office where you can purchase your button for the \$100 lucky button drawing. Now did ye know that you have become one of 33.7 million residents of the U.S. who have Irish ancestry and can legitimately wear the green?

And, with that, like a smattering of lucky clovers, I share the following:

A mischievous leprechaun was out and about this past week blowing flags to and fro and turning Father Condon's upside down.

Some wee folk have been seen climbing into the Heppner TV window and checking out the variety of baskets for the casino night auction and raffle. They want everyone to know that winners aren't limited to gaming enthusiasts; one and all have a chance to win "baskets".

Follow the leprechauns upstairs Friday night at the Elks. The Luck O' The Irish Casino Night proceeds keep the celebration ongoing and help market Oregon's Rugged Country in the Willow Creek Valley. (That's why the Heppner leprechauns are bigger than those ordinarily found under the toadstools; they have lots of work to do.)

Congratulations to Dr. Robert Rolen, who, though not Irish to our knowledge, has run a business for twenty years taking care of eyes in our community. May he have many more successful years in Heppner.

The Heppner Chamber continues to meet every Thursday and should ye be early in town, join us this Thursday, March 16, at John's Place, noon, to hear a presentation by Steve Brucker of Oregon International Speedway. He will give a presentation and answer questions regarding the race track that may come to Morrow County, west of Boardman. Plans are for races by 2008. Do you suppose leprechauns are allowed to participate in major league racing? Brucker plans to come to Heppner this weekend and enjoy the festivities, so ask him.

And should ye have such a great time this weekend, what with the entertainment, races, first ever road bowling and all, we can promise you an equally fine time if you join us April Fool's weekend for a repeat of Trivia Night. It's happening in Heppner.

Thought for the week: "May the road rise up to meet you, the wind be always at your back, the sun shine warm upon your face, the rains fall gently upon your fields... and until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of his hand." ... a version of the Irish blessing.

HEPPNER ELKS 358
676-9181 "Where Friends Meet" 142 North Main

St. Patrick's Day

Saturday, March 18th
Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner starting at 6 p.m. Live music with the Little McKay Creek Band starting at 8:30 p.m.

Have fun during the St. Patrick's weekend celebration!