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Gazette Times

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Morrow County Museum dedicates parlor to Balsiger family

The Morrow County Museum recently celebrated the grand opening of the Balsiger Parlor. Minette Sicard of Glen Rose, TX and her brother Allan Learned of Irondale, WA were on hand for the dedication. They are the grandchildren of Paul and Lydia Balsiger.

Minette Sicard and Allan Learned sit in the parlor dedicated to their grandparents at the Morrow County Museum. *-Photo by April Sykes*

Paul George Washington answered the call "Go West Young Man" when in 1895 at the age of 21 he bought some tools, packed his trunk and traveled from Highland, IL to Ione. He was met at the Ione train station by his parents, Ferdinand and brothers Louis and Arnold along with other family members who had preceded him in coming to Morrow County. Paul was trained as a water tank builder and established an implement business on Main Street to serve the farmers. He left behind his fiancée, Lydia Anna Mange, also of Highland. Six years later, when he had the resources, he built her a new house at 2nd and C Street. They were married in Highland on February 10, 1902. After honeymooning in California they arrived in Ione and settled into their new life together in the far west.

As the years passed by, three children were born to them in their home, delivered by Dr. Chick of Ione, Arlene in 1904, Helen in 1907, and Alfred in 1910. During their school years, Helen learned to play the piano and organ, and at the age of 16 began teaching piano. Alfred, at the age of 10 started repairing bicycles in his front yard, the first of many businesses throughout his lifetime. Arlene was the star of the Ione High School girls' basketball team. When little, the girls would join three others and all five would ride Ginny, the Rietmann white mule to school every day. Later the Balsiger children would drive the family car throughout the countryside. During the summer, they all enjoyed swimming in Willow Creek with cousins and friends. All the children graduated from Ione High School and in 1924 Helen was valedictorian of her class. Shortly after their school years, Arlene married Paul Koehring and moved to Indiana. Alfred moved to The Dalles and married Esther Hutson. Helen graduated from the University of Washington with a bachelor of music degree. In her senior year on her birthday, March 25, 1928, she married her college sweetheart Allan M. Learned in the Ione home. Rev. Head of Ione officiated and she descended the stairway as a bride to music played on the organ in the parlor.

Paul and Lydia were very active in the community. Paul helped build the Ione Congregational Church and made all the pews by hand, some of which are still in Ione with his signature. He was very musical and played the harmonica, guitar, accordion, French and baritone horns. Lydia also played guitar and they would often play and sing together in the parlor for family entertainment. Paul played in the Ione City Band and always marched in the Fourth of July Parade. Helen was the Parade Queen when she was 10 years old, she always said it was because she had long hair. Lydia was very active in the Congregational Church and every Sunday invited Rev. Head and his family for dinner. Helen became church organist when she was eight years old, and one of her fondest memories was accompanying her father to the church to light the candles on the Christmas tree for Christmas Eve Service.

Paul's business was very successful and many of the windmills he installed in Morrow County are still standing. The Balsiger family continues to own wheat land north of Ione and is farmed by their cousin Ed Rietmann. Paul retired in 1937 and sold his business to his cousin Omar Rietmann. He and Lydia moved to a home with a cherry orchard on the bluff at White Salmon, WA overlooking the Columbia River and Mt. Hood. They lived there until 1957, celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary in 1952. They then moved to The Dalles at the age of 90 and 94 respectively.

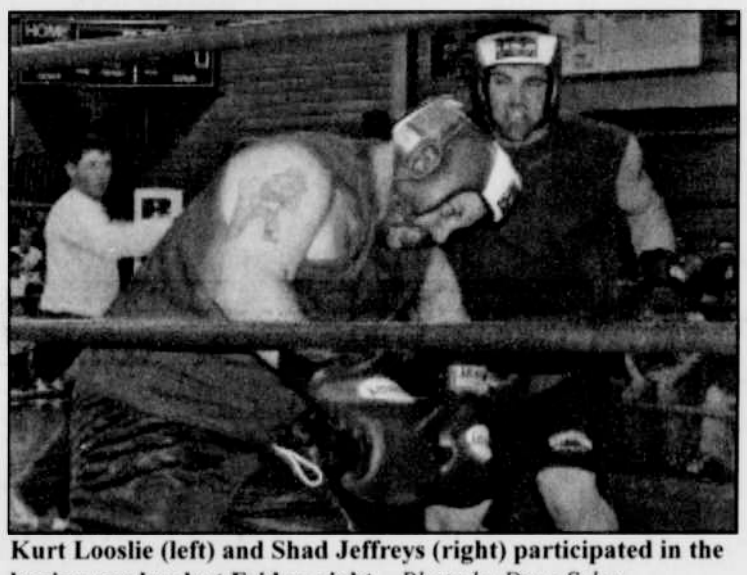
Paul, Lydia and the family love Ione dearly and passed along many precious memories to succeeding generations. They were a pioneer family who worked hard and lived well. True to their Swiss heritage they worshiped God daily and were ever grateful for the blessings of this wonderful place that was their home. The Balsiger family is deeply grateful to the Morrow County Heritage Museum for preserving so lovingly this family history and memorabilia for the future generations to enjoy.

First ever Heppner boxing smoker a success

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce and URock Radio recently organized the first boxing smoker in Heppner. The event was held Friday, March 14 at Heppner High School. The smoker consisted of 11 bouts.

The Fight of the Night was Bout #11 between Brandon Davis and Cody Walton. The fighters went four rounds and each received a $100 check

The Fighter of the Night was Dimitar Dimitrov who received $100 check. Winners of each bout received a medallion.



Kurt Looslie (left) and Shad Jeffreys (right) participated in the boxing smoker last Friday night. *–Photo by Dave Sykes*

The event was put together by Daye Stone, principal of Heppner High School. All proceeds of the smoker benefited the Heppner Chamber of Commerce.

Ione School Board approves management contract with Umatilla-Morrow ESD

By April Sykes

The Ione School Board approved a $169,388 management services agreement with the Umatilla-Morrow ESD for educational services, including business services, human resources, including payroll and negotiations, an autism aide, other board services and operation and maintenance services.

The district will be billed in two semi-annual payments of $84,694.

Superintendent Bryn Browning told the board that she has met with an architect, engineer, contractor and a project manager with regard to the possible district bond projects. Information concerning different project costs will be presented at the April board meeting.

Also at the meeting the board:

-heard from Browning that the district has upgraded their safety procedures at the school. She said that decals have been ordered which will notify all visitors that they must report to the office; parents and other visitors will no longer be able to go directly to classrooms, but rather students will be sent to the office to meet with the parent or visitor; phone calls will no longer be forwarded to or made in the classrooms, but rather students will be sent to the office to make or receive phone calls; and other safety procedures which were outlined in a handout.

-heard from Browning that the Ione High School boys' basketball team placed first in the Dairy Farmers scholastic contest for having the highest grade-point average among 1A schools and the girls placed third.

-heard from Browning that she had attended a small schools conference. Topics at the conference included legal issues, particularly requirements of the school to provide child abuse identification and prevention classes for staff, parents and students. Browning also told the board that she viewed a demonstration of an interactive board that can be used in the classroom and said that the Echo schools had received the boards through a grant.

-heard the following report from Browning that new lockers have been installed; a propane heating unit has been installed at the Cardinal fitness club; student conferences are planned for April 10; an open gym will be held from 4-6 p.m. beginning March 30 for kids and parents; International Club students will soon embark on their trip to Germany and the Czech Republic; the long jump pit has been poured; greenhouse items will be available for sale the end of April or the first of May; student conferences will be held April 10; an overpayment of a salary was discovered and has been corrected.

-approved the second reading of policies concerning students with disabilities and special education students.

-approved the first reading of required Title I policies.

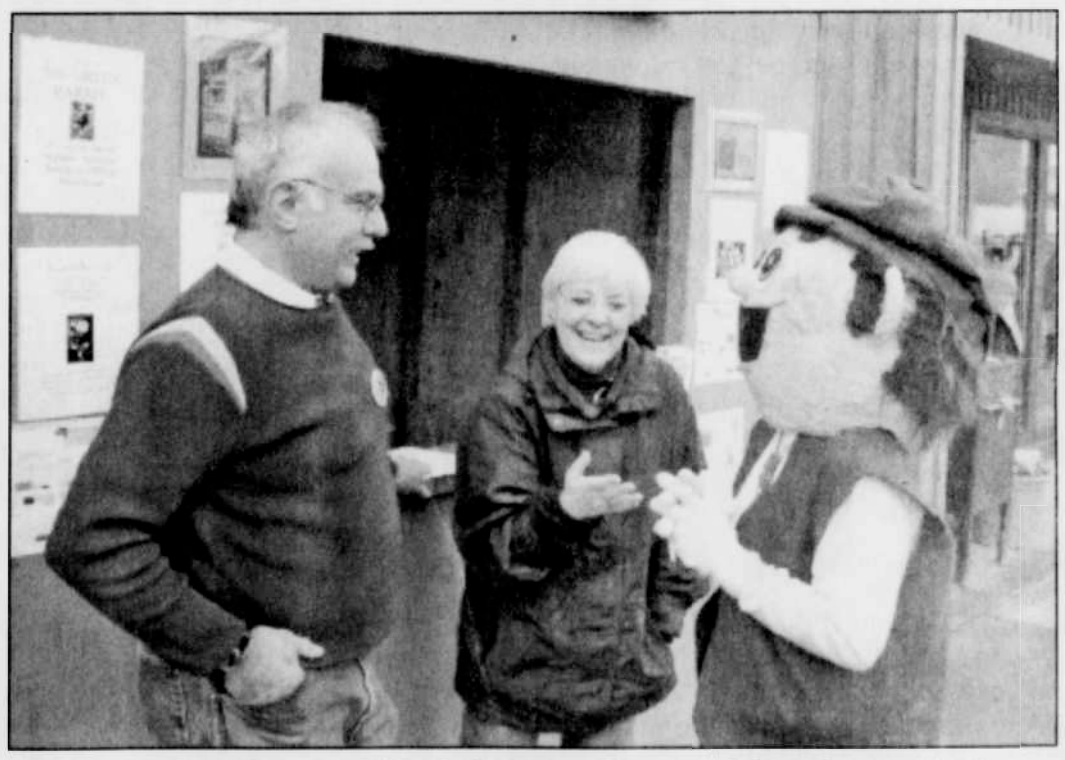
-accepted the following resignations: Dick Allen, from the middle school boys' basketball coaching position; Ryan Rudolf, from the high school head girls' basketball coaching position.

-accepted a recommendation to hire Rudolf as the 2008-09 athletic director,

-Continued on page two

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

He did what?



City Manager Steve Bogart and Marsha Kemp catch up on their leprechaun gossip. See more pictures of St. Patrick's Celebration in Heppner on page Five. *–Photo by Dave Sykes*

Ione High School boys' basketball team takes first in OSAA/Dairy Farmers academic all-state awards

The Ione High School boys' basketball team took first place in the 1A division of the Oregon School Activities Association/ Dairy Farmers Academic All-State awards. The IHS boys had a combined 3.66 grade-point average.

The IHS girls' basketball team was third in the 1A classification with a 3.84 gpa.

The Heppner High School boys' basketball team was fifth in the 2A classification with a 3.46 gpa and the HHS girls were 14th with a 3.42 gpa.

The Riverside High School girls' basketball team was 11th in the 3A classification with a 3.44 gpa and the Irrigon High School girls' team was 22nd in the 2A classification with a 3.24 gpa.

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