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Stork makes Thanksgiving Day delivery at Heppner's Pioneer Memorial Hospital

First birth at the hospital since mid-80s

by April Sykes

Pioneer Memorial Hospital had an unexpected delivery from the stork on Thanksgiving Day-the first baby born at the hospital since the mid-1980s.

Allie May Stillman, at 6.02 pounds and 17 inches long, made her appearance on Thursday, November 25, at 7:05 p.m. Parents are Amy and Heath Stillman, Lexington,

The Stillmans said they had planned for Amy to give birth at home with a midwife--she had given birth to their two boys at home in water births, the oldest in a birthing pool and the youngest in the bathtub, but concern that this baby was premature led them to Pioneer Memorial Hospital for delivery. They said that Amy was in actual labor for around an hour and a half. Needless to say, the Stillmans were not able to partake in Thanksgiving dinner.

Heath told the Gazette that they thought that Allie was going to be born seven to eight weeks early, but he said that Dr. Betsy Anderson, the attending physician, estimated that the baby was only two to three weeks early. Heath said that another of their babies was born three weeks before the due date. The Stillmans' two boys are Clayton Lane, 3-1/2, and Emmett Matthew, who will turn two years old on December 2nd.

Heath and his father, Beryl Stillman, said that he thought that Heath's brother, Thomas Stillman, 25, was one of the last babies born at PMH.

Heath and three of his oldest siblings, Ben, Isaiah and Thomas, were born at PMH to parents Susie and Beryl. Heath's five younger siblings, Isaac, Sarah, Micah, Joel and Joshua, were all born at home in Lexington. One was delivered by Beryl, when the midwife did not arrive in time. Heath said he had grown up "since the age of four" watching babies born, so he was used to the process.

Top Photo: The Stillman family (left to right): dad Heath holding son Clayton, mom Amy, baby Allie and son Emmett. Bottom Photo: Mom Amy with baby Allie. *-Photos by April Sykes*

The elder Stillman family also includes two other siblings, Jason and Chris.

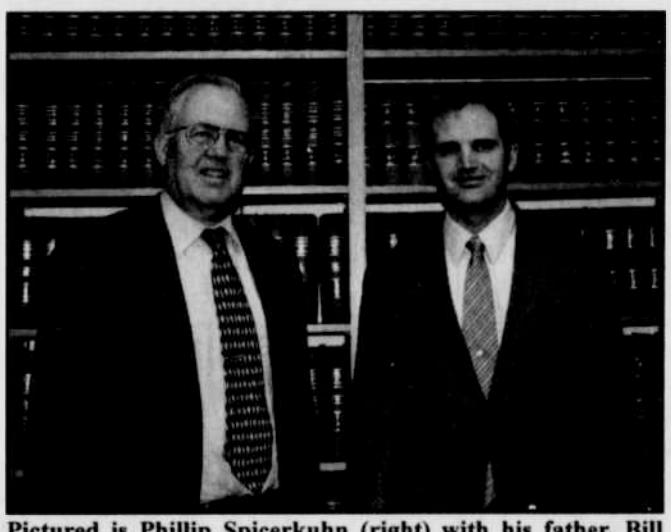
Susie Stillman said when she was pregnant with Isaac in 1987 her physician in Heppner at that time, Dr. Clare Koznek, told her midway through her pregnancy that the hospital would no longer be able to deliver babies, so they opted to have him at home rather than travel to Hermiston or Pendleton.

Michael Blauer, Morrow County Health District CEO told the Gazette-Times that the last baby was born at the hospital on February 14, 1986. The Gazette-Times has confirmed that the baby was Courtney Nelson, daughter of Chuck and Lisa Nelson of Lexington. The GT also learned that Chuck Nelson was one of the first babies born at the hospital at that location on August 8, 1950, and Justin Nelson, Chuck and Lisa's son and current Morrow County District Attorney, was also born there. According to G-T archives, the next to the last baby born at PMH on February 12, 1986, was Carl Miller, son of Debbie and Ray Miller.

In the mid-80s concerns arose over liability and other issues, such as the ability to provide anesthesiology and perform surgeries, and obstetric services were discontinued.

Spicerkuhn joins family business

Phillip Spicerkuhn recently joined the law firm of Kuhn & Spicer. Spicerkuhn is the son of Bill Kuhn and Ann Spicer. His parents, who have been attorneys for the past 30-35 years, have offices in Heppner and Hermiston.



Pictured is Phillip Spicerkuhn (right) with his father, Bill Kuhn, at the Kuhn & Spicer law office in Heppner. *-Photo by Autumn Morgan*

Though law is the family business, Spicerkuhn had not always planned to join. The 1996 Heppner High School graduate was born in Hermiston and raised in Heppner. "I had no idea what I wanted to do (when I started college)," said Spicerkuhn. At Oregon State University he began studying for a degree in engineering, but later switched his major to general science. He graduated from OSU in 2001 with his general science degree. It was during his last year at OSU that Spicerkuhn decided to jump into the family business and study law. He enrolled at the University of Oregon and in 2004 graduated with a doctorate of jurisprudence.

After college Spicerkuhn moved to Spokane where he has worked mainly as a public defender for the past six years. He began by primarily practicing criminal law and then moved to juvenile law. He joined Kuhn & Spicer on November 1.

Phil Mahoney started the Heppner law office in the 1930s and Kuhn and Spicer bought the practice from Mahoney in 1977. Spicer, who was the Morrow County District Attorney in the early 1980s, was recently elected Morrow County Justice of the Peace.

"I'm excited about working with my parents in the firm," said Spicerkuhn. "They are a little more diverse than what I was doing up there (in Spokane). I'll just take things as they come." He possibly will work primarily with family law since his mother has been elected Justice of the Peace.

Spicerkuhn and his wife, Melissa Naff, are temporarily living in Heppner. Naff, who is from Reardon, WA, is working part-time at Good Shepherd Hospital in Hermiston and part-time at St. Anthony's in Pendleton. She is a dietician and diabetes educator. The couple met while in school at Oregon State University.

Customer Appreciation Day is December 2

On Thursday, December 2, local merchants will hold special customer appreciation activities and offering extended hours to kick off the Christmas holiday season.

The merchants are planning activities to thank the community for shopping local. Hair Expressions will be having service specials, discounts on products, door prizes and refreshments from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. John's Place will be having a drawing for a free lunch and dinner. Murray's will be having hourly door prizes, the wish list treasure hunt will start (with the winner being announced during the December 16 Christmas event) and from 4-7 p.m. there will be a mini wine tasting. Sally Anne's will be serving cider and sweets while offering "half-price" tables, many unique stocking stuffers and lots of items to check out. Sweet Productions will be offering soup for $2 and pie for $1 and the Victorian Rose will be serving cider and cookies all day and have plenty of merchandise for browsing. The Video Store will be giving out free popcorn with every video rental. Cookies and punch will be served at Bank of Eastern Oregon and Community Bank (door prize and announcement of winner of the float contest at 6:00 p.m.).

At 5:30 p.m., outside the Post Office, Heppner Day Care and Heppner Elementary School children will hang their homemade Christmas ornaments.

Plan on staying downtown to eat (food merchants will be ready to serve you), shop at all of our local merchants, and enjoy the sounds and sights of Christmas. And don't forget to ask for your rewards card with every purchase.

Health district receives $90 thousand grant for new CT scanner

by April Sykes

Morrow County Health District CEO Michael Blauer told the MCHD Board at their regular meeting Monday night in Heppner that the district has received a $90,000 grant to purchase a new CT scanner for Pioneer Memorial Hospital.

Blauer said that the new 16-slice scanner will be a significant upgrade from the current one-slice scanner.

The Murdock Trust grant was obtained through the Rural Economic Development Program with Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative as the intermediary. Blauer said that the district's financial contribution toward purchase of the scanner was $41,000.

Also at the meeting, Blauer told the board that he has scheduled a meeting with staff at Oregon Health Sciences University concerning possibly coordinating cardiac care services at PMH. He said that Dr. Hanlon, who had previously provided cardiac care at Pioneer Memorial when he was affiliated with a Bend hospital, is now affiliated with OHSU and may be interested in offering some services locally.

In other business, the board:

-learned from Blauer that a baby was born at PMH on Thanksgiving Day, the first since the mid-80s (see story, page 1);

-toured Pioneer Memorial Hospital's laboratory with Betty Hickerson, lab supervisor.

-heard from Blauer that the district will begin sending out a periodic newsletter;

-met David Burns from Irrigon who said that he was interested in filling a board position now held by Linda LaRue, Ione, who, according to board Chair Larry Mills, has indicated that she does not plan to continue on the board. Burns, currently the mayor of Irrigon, attended the meeting with his wife, Paola. Burns said that one of his big concerns is domestic abuse and volunteers his time campaigning against domestic violence.

-held an executive session concerning Dr. Ed Berretta's contract with the district and subsequently approved a new three-year contract with Dr.Berretta.

-received the October profit/loss statement from Chief Financial Officer Nicole Mahoney which showed a $35,651 loss for the month. Gross patient revenue for the month was $565,876 with $100,268 in revenue deductions, $94,733 in tax revenue, $3,310 in other operating revenue for $563,651 in total operating revenue, $609,657 in total operating expenses and a $10,354 non-operating gain. The average monthly year-to-date loss is $29,476.

-received the following report: Pioneer Memorial Hospital had seven admissions, two swing bed admissions, two deaths, 14 admitted for observation, one swing nursing facility admission, 541 total outpatients, 81 total emergency room encounters, 1396 lab tests, 100 x-ray procedures, 21 CT scans, 18 EKG tests, two treadmill procedures, three colonoscopy procedures, one colon/endoscopy procedure, 44 respiratory therapy procedures; Home Health had 151 patient visits; Hospice had two admissions; Pharmacy had 1428 drug doses for $76,101 in drug revenue; Pioneer Memorial Clinic had 433 patient visits with 31 new patients, 75 seen by a nurse and 10 no-shows; Irrigon Medical Clinic had 164 patient visits with 23 new patients, 79 seen by a nurse and 18 no-shows; Heppner Ambulance had 18 total page-outs with 13 transports for $16,168 in revenue; Boardman Ambulance had 29 page-outs with 20 transports for $24,472 in revenue; Irrigon Ambulance had 16 page-outs with nine transports for $9,023 in revenue; there were three flights.

-reviewed the 2011 board meeting calendar. The next meeting will be held on December 27 in Irrigon. Meetings for the year are as follows: January 31-Ione Community Church; February 28-Sand Hollow Room, Port of Morrow, Boardman; March 28-Home Health Office, Heppner; April 25-Morrow County School District Office, Lexington; May 23-Home Health Office, Heppner; June 27-Morrow County Annex, Irrigon; July 25-Ione Community Church; August 29-Home Health Office, Heppner; September 26-Sand Hollow Room, Port of Morrow, Boardman; October 31-Morrow County School District Office, Lexington; November 28-Home Health Office, Heppner; December meeting date pending, Morrow County Annex, Irrigon. All meetings are held at 7 p.m.

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