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Small-town values motivate soldier in Iraq

By Staff Sgt. Patrick Caldwell

American small towns are often distinguished by their similarities.

Each community radiates parallel ethics but

also defines itself by its own personality, and Capt. John Qualls can recognize those unique distinctions easier than most.

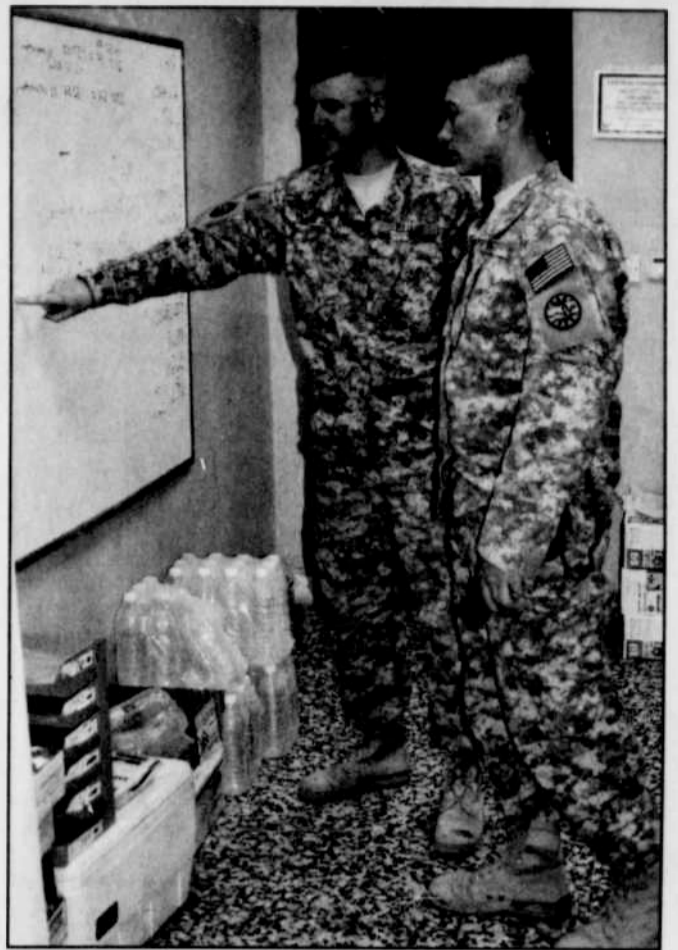
Qualls, the personnel officer for 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment, 77th Sustainment Brigade, 310th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, grew up and still lives in Heppner. While he said there are items that separate each small town across the arc of rural Oregon, he also said there is a common current that flows through the 3rd Bn. from those tiny settlements.

"We are all from a similar area," he said. "Our morals, our families are similar. We probably played against each other in sports. We have a lot in common."

Those small-town values play a crucial role in the 3rd Bn.'s success in Iraq, Qualls said.

"We've brought all these values of those little towns and applied them here," he said.

Like a large percentage of the 3rd Bn.,



Heppner native Capt. John Qualls (left), a personnel officer with the 3rd Battalion discusses business with Sgt. Luke True of Gresham in the office of the S-1 personnel section at the Tactical Operations Center for the 3rd Battalion on Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Qualls is serving his second tour in Iraq. —Photo by Staff Sgt. Patrick Caldwell

Qualls is no stranger to Iraq. He served as a platoon leader in the battalion when it deployed to northern Iraq

in 2004. —See SMALL TOWN VALUES/PAGE SIX

HEPPNER

50¢

Gazette Times

VOL. 130 NO. 26 8 Pages Wednesday, June 29, 2011 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Child molester gets five years in prison Heppner songwriter gets new beginning through song

Child molester Steven Clayton Rollis was sentenced to five years in prison after making a plea deal with the state the day his trial was to begin.

The 38-year-old Heppner man had been in the Umatilla County Jail in Pendleton since the Morrow County Sheriff's Office arrested him on July 28, 2009. The state charged Rollis with six counts of first-degree sodomy, four counts of first-degree sexual abuse and two counts of incest, all felonies.

On June 21, Rollis pled no contest to two counts of first-degree attempted sodomy, one count for each alleged incident. The charge of first-degree sodomy carries an eight-year, four-month mandatory minimum sentence. Sexual abuse carries a six-year, three-month mandatory

minimum sentence. As part of the deal, the state was allowed to ask for a five-year prison sentence, while Rollis could ask for a year-and-a-half in state prison. Rollis also admitted the victim was especially vulnerable.

Circuit Court Judge Dan Hill opted for the state's recommendation of five years (a two-year, eight-month sentence and a two-year, four-month sentence to run consecutive).

Oregon Department of Justice spokesman Tony Green said Rollis also will serve 10 years of post-prison supervision and will have to register as a sex offender.

Other standard sex offender conditions will also apply, including providing samples for DNA profiling and HIV testing.



Steven Clayton Rollis

Nella Britt of Heppner has a new CD on sale at Murray's Drug in Heppner. For the 66-year-old widow, though, "A New Beginning" is more than a collection of songs she's written...it's a journey through heartache and into healing.

The CD debuted on Valentine's Day of this year. Britt says they threw a party in a large hotel right on the beach in Daytona, FL. All of the recording artists featured on the CD were there, including guitarist Jimmy Jack Whitaker, folk singer and guitarist Sheryl Paige and folk singer Chris Kahl. Helena Jackman, who toured with Bob Hope for many years, contributed her vocals in the songs "Where Was I" and "Back to Basics."

Britt herself sang two of the songs, "The Briar Rose" and "A New Beginning." According to Britt, a new beginning was exactly



Heppner songwriter Nella Britt holds one of her previous releases. Her songs focus on family, faith and healing. —Contributed photo

what the CD represented. The time she spent writing it—from June 2010 to February 2011—was a time of healing and reflection after the death of her husband, John Britt.

"I'm a widow, and I think God just used my love of music to help me recover. And it has," she says.

Nor is this the first time music has helped Britt through a difficult emotional time. She has previously published three CDs, two of which she wrote on the themes of adoption and foster care. Those are topics close to Britt's heart, since she was forced to give her son up for adoption at the age of 17 and then later adopted a daughter of her own, Sarah.

Britt says family, whether biological or adopted, is one of the most —See HEALING THROUGH SONG/PAGE TWO

Health district considers Irrigon Clinic remodel

By April Sykes

The Morrow County Health District Board toured the Irrigon Medical Clinic at their regular meeting in Irrigon Monday night. The board is considering remodeling the clinic because of its cramped quarters for staff and only three small patient rooms. CEO Michael Blauer told the board that patient usage of the clinic and projected growth need to be considered when planning any expansion or improvements.

Board member David Burns jokingly commented that Irrigon was the fastest growing town in Morrow County with the addition of four residents.

The district has budgeted \$250,000 for expansion of the clinic to be funded by a flex lease/loan.

Blauer also presented a draft proposal for board evaluation of the CEO, which the board plans on a regularly scheduled basis. Burns brought up the idea of tying the CEO's evaluation to the health of people in the community. One hospital staff member later commented that because of the small sampling of the community served by the district, even one bad outcome could skew this outlook.

Blauer reported that negotiations with the hospital employees' union went well and were "very

positive." He said because of the "skyrocketing price of insurance" and the prospect of an 18% increase in coverage the district has switched insurance companies. He said that the district has increased its insurance contribution for employees, which will amount to a 25% increase for the district over three years; nine percent the first year, eight percent the second year and eight percent the third year. The district has also bumped up the cost-of-living increase for employees to about three percent; revamped the employee sick leave policy; decreased the employee probationary time from six months to four months, after which benefits begin; and clarified the definition of a temporary employee. Nurses are not included in the union.

"All sides came to the table," commented Blauer. "We're not just out for ourselves. We're here for everybody."

On a less than positive note, Chief Financial Officer Nicole Mahoney reported a \$160,036 loss for May, which puts the district into a \$67,522 loss for the year and a \$6,138 average monthly year-to-date loss.

"This puts us into the red, year-to-date, for the first time in several months," said Mahoney. She said that gross patient revenue, at \$523,632,

—See HEALTH DISTRICT/PAGE FIVE

RED, WHITE & BLUES CRUISIN' TO THE BLUES 4TH OF JULY IONE, OR 2011 FRIDAY JULY 1

11:00 AM-2:00 PM - Bank of EO customer appreciation BBQ - Main Street
Topic club book sale - all four days - Ione Legion Hall - All day
5:00 PM - Pulled pork meal & Back 2 Beecher's - Ione Legion Hall
6:00 PM - Texas hold 'em & cribbage tournament - Ione Legion Hall

SATURDAY JULY 2

9:00AM-1:00PM & 3:00PM-7:00PM JLT Paintball - Saturday, Sunday and Monday
11:00 PM-4:00 PM - All school reunion - Ione City Park & Ione Legion Hall
3:00 PM & 5:30 PM - Missoula Children's Theatre (funded by MCURD) - Ione School
Reunion evening event - Ione Legion Hall - 7:00 pm - 12:00 am
Wine & beer tasting 7:00pm-9:00pm • No host bar 9:00pm-12:00am
Music by Matt Howard 7:00pm-12:00am

SUNDAY JULY 3

7:00-9:30 AM - Breakfast in Paris - Ione legion hall
9:00 AM - Golf tournament - Willow Creek Country Club
10:00 AM - Interdenominational church service - Ione City Park
Early PM - All school reunion/ice cream social - Ione City Park
6:00 PM - Talent show - Ione City Park
Following - Music by Arsenal - Ione City Park

MONDAY JULY 4

US NAVY FLY OVER

7:00 AM - Fireman's breakfast - Ione Fire Hall
7:00 AM - 7:30 AM - sign-up - preschool 5k walk/run (donation requested) - Main Street
Food vendors & merchandise vendors open
11:00 AM - Fish pond, frog jump, bike raffle - Ione Fire Hall/City Park
11:00 AM - Altar society pie sale - Ione Fire Hall
1:00 PM - Red, White & Blues Parade (grand marshals: Ione Education Foundation Board of Directors)
1:00 PM - Blues Cruise car show - Ione City Park
1:00 PM - Park activities begin - featuring a petting zoo! - Fun games!
Gazebo entertainment by Cory Peterson - Austin Morter & John Wambeke
3:00 PM - Blues bands on stage - Ione Amphitheater
Tommy Hogan Band - Sonny Hess Band - Hookah Stew
The Ione All-Stars featuring Jime Mesi & Jimmy Lloyd Rea
7:00 PM - Boat trip auction - on stage Ione Amphitheater
Dusk - Firework display
Ione's 4th of July celebration is sponsored in part by Morrow County Unified Recreation District & Wildhorse Casino

Gazette-Times closed Independence Day

The Heppner Gazette-Times office will be closed Independence Day, July 4 for the holiday.

All news and ad deadlines will be Friday, July 1, by 5 p.m. The newspaper office will reopen on Tuesday, July 5.

Get your articles in for special Fair Edition

If you have an event or activity going on during this year's Morrow County Fair and Rodeo, you will want to get an article into the Heppner Gazette's Special Fair & Rodeo edition.

The Fair & Rodeo is August 17-20 and the special edition will be published August 3. The deadline for news articles, photos is July 15. People may also want to publicize their event with an advertisement, the advertisement deadline is July 22.

Submit your articles or advertisements by email to david@rapidsolve.net, mail them to PO Box 337, Heppner, OR 97836 or drop them by our office at 188 W. Willow. Fax number is 541-676-9211.

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