

HEPPNER

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Gazette Times

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Parishes bid farewell to Father Condon

Beloved priest, playwright and friend to retire

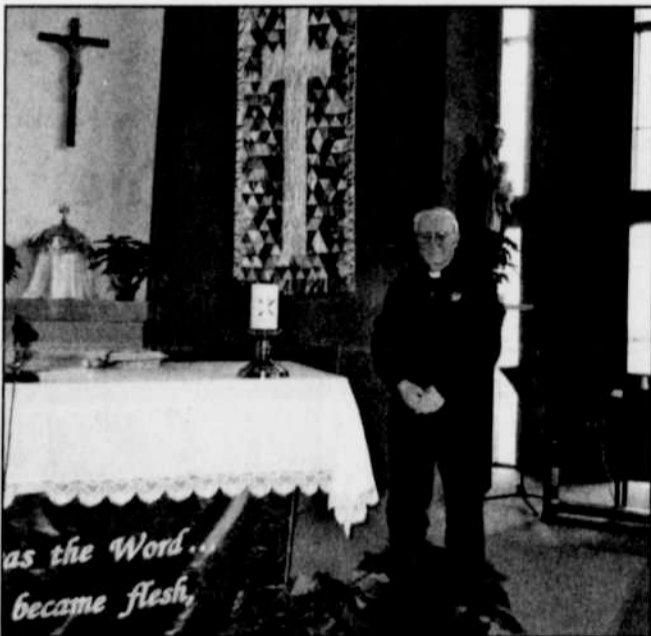
By Andrea Di Salvo

Parishioners at St. Patrick's and St. William's Catholic churches are experiencing a sense of loss this month as they bid farewell to long-time parish priest Father Gerry Condon. Condon, who has served the parishes since 1990, will conduct his final Mass before his retirement on Jan. 27.

No one who has heard Condon's soft Irish brogue will be surprised to learn that the 85-year-old priest was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1927. He spent his youth in Dublin, and says he first felt interested in becoming a priest through volunteer work when he was a teenager.

"In my spare time, I used to help at a hostel for the homeless, and I began to meet priests who would visit there from all over the world," Condon says. "Through that, I became interested in sharing the gospel of the Lord with other people."

As a young man, he went to study at Mount Melleray Abbey, a teaching community of Cistercian (Trappist) monks situated on the slopes of the Knock-



Father Gerry Condon in the sanctuary of St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Heppner, one of the churches where he has pastored for the past 22 years. St. Patrick's and St. William's Catholic Church in lone will say goodbye to their long-time priest on Jan. 27. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

mealdown Mountains in Co. Waterford, Ireland. Condon went from there to study theology at St. Patrick's College in Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

He was ordained at the cathedral across the street from the college in 1955 at the age of 27. That might seem young for a priest, but he said it wasn't considered a young age for an ordained priest at the time...especially not in Ireland, which

was an estimated 90 percent Catholic then.

Then, his life took a different turn, from the green hills of Ireland to the often not-so-green, wide-open spaces of Eastern Oregon.

"I wrote to half a dozen different areas where I had been informed there was a need for priests," says Condon. "The first response I got came from the bishop of

-See FATHER CONDON RETIRES/PAGE TWO

School district to implement stricter safety protocols

By April Sykes

Morrow County School District Superintendent Dirk Dirksen told the school board Monday night that in light of the recent shooting tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary, where more than 20 students and teachers were killed by an armed intruder, the district is in the process of establishing safety protocol and tightening up school security.

He said that he had met with administrators and the district's safety committee on Dec. 21 to discuss different scenarios and ways to improve school security, including locking all exterior doors except for the front door, establishing a tighter check-in process,

establishing better positioning of security cameras and making improvements in the ability for staff to view the cameras.

He said that he has set up additional meetings with safety officers and plans scheduling discussions with staff and law enforcement. A meeting with law enforcement has been scheduled for Jan. 23 at 1:30 p.m. at Boardman City Hall.

In other business, Dirksen said that boiler issues at Heppner Elementary School and Heppner High School have been resolved, but that a big problem remains at Windy River Elementary in Boardman.

He said that the boiler

at Windy River must be replaced. The good news, however, is that the boiler is still under warranty.

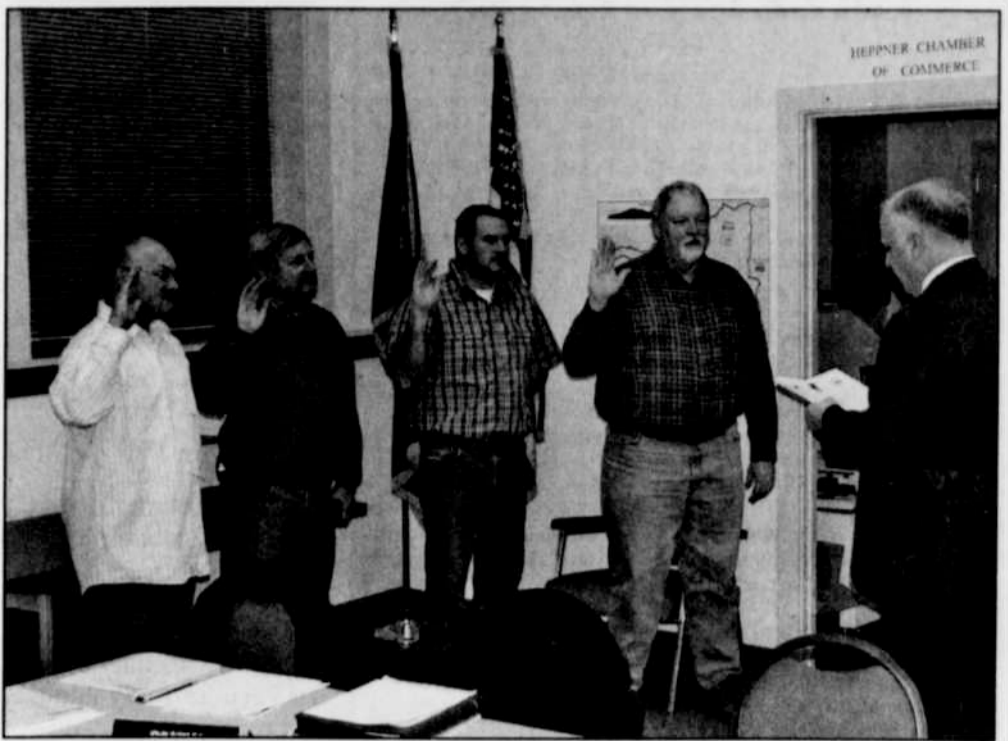
He said that since it will take around a week to replace the WR boiler, the plan is to install it during spring break.

The boiler motor at Heppner Elementary was repaired. He reported that there are two boilers at Heppner High School; the newer one had a problem with the fuel pump, which has also been fixed.

Dirksen also reported that Morrow County Public Works expects to start work soon on the project to resolve Irrigon Elementary

-See SCHOOL DISTRICT/ PAGE EIGHT

New council members, mayor sworn into office



New Heppner Mayor Joe Perry (right) swears in newly elected Heppner City Council members (L-R) John Bowles, Dale Bates, Corey Sweeney and Skip Matthews. Matthews, who has prior council experience, was later elected president of the council. -Photo by David Sykes

By David Sykes

The Heppner City Council Monday night kicked off the new year by welcoming in a group of four new council members, as well as a new mayor. Incoming Mayor Joe Perry was first administered the oath of office by outgoing Mayor Les Paustian, and then Perry did the same for new council members John Bowles, Dale Bates, Corey Sweeney and Skip Matthews. The council later elected Matthews, who has prior council experience, as council president.

In other business, the council approved a sidewalk ordinance covering businesses and the public's use of sidewalks on Main Street for sales, events and advertising. The council

first held a public hearing on the new ordinance. Although several main street businesspeople were in attendance, very little public testimony was taken on the new ordinance. The council voted unanimously to approve the sidewalk ordinance.

In other action, the council voted to approve a liquor license change for Bucknum's Tavern from John and Nancy Gochbauer to Sharon and Ryan Miller of Heppner. The Millers are purchasing the business under the name of 3s Company.

The council heard a report from council member Judy Buschke, who also heads up the Heppner Housing Authority, which runs the St. Patrick's Senior

Housing center. She said apartment manager Kathy Turner had resigned and so the Housing Authority was now looking for a new manager. Buschke said Turner did a good job and worked well with people, but did not care for all the paperwork involved in the job. She said Turner was now also able to begin drawing Social Security.

Buschke also said the apartments currently had two vacancies.

The council heard from Public Works Director Chad Doherty, who said the crew was replacing city water meters and had 43 more to go, was taking in picnic tables from Hager Park and weather treating them, and

-See COUNCIL MEMBERS SWORN IN/PAGE FIVE

Heppner holds Town & Country awards

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce Town and Country Community Awards event, sponsored by Ambre Energy's Morrow Pacific Project and Portland General Electric, was held at the Morrow County Fairgrounds on Thursday, Jan. 10. This year's theme was "Our Community Volunteers, Our Country Gold." The following awards were given out:

Youth Recognition, Maggie Collins; Business of the Year, TREO Ranches; Woman of the Year, Babette Wall; Man of the Year, Les Paustian; Citizen-Educator of Year, Terri Gentry; and Lifetime Achievement Award, Don and Jean Bennett.

Maggie Collins was selected for the 2012 Youth Recognition Award. Collins was chosen for her understanding of the importance of hard work and community, and for her maturity.



Maggie Collins

Collins, a senior at Heppner High School, is senior class president, a member of the National Honor Society, a participant in 4-H and FFA, was 2012 Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo Queen, and is involved in a variety of sports, among other activities.

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In FFA, she is among the top 10 percent in the state and has earned her state degree. Her love of animals and interest in veterinary medicine has led to a school-to-work experience at Dr. Temple's veterinary clinic in Lexington.

"This individual treats everyone fairly, with respect and compassion," said award presenter John Flaherty. "This student is also a take-charge person who both receives and gives directions well in independent and cooperative settings."

TREO (Tours and Recreation of Eastern Oregon) Ranches, owned by Phil and Kathy Carlson, was selected as the 2012 Business of the Year. TREO began operations 25 years ago, offering guided chukar and pheasant hunting packages. The Carlsons, known as "Mr. and Mrs. Hospitality," were recognized for their vision and hard work, as well as the hospitality that is said to be the key to their success.

"This business started with a vision of something new," said one person at the

event. "With a lot of hard work, this vision of tourism



Phil and Kathy Carlson, TREO Ranches

and hospitality came to be by bringing sportsmen to South Morrow County. Their guests come here from all over the nation and enjoy this beautiful area we often take for granted."

The 2012 Woman of the Year is Babette Wall.

"...She has entrenched herself in the fabric of our community," one person

said tongue-in-cheek of the seamstress, interior decorator and Bank of Eastern Oregon employee. "In fact, you could say she is 'cut out of the same cloth.'"

Wall was chosen Woman of the year because, said those who nominated her, she "brings back the real

-See TOWN & COUNTRY AWARDS/PAGE FIVE



Babette Wall

NAPA
Universal Fleet 15W40 Motor Oil
\$9.99
1 Gallon NOL 75122
5-Gallon Pail - NOL 75121 \$45.99 55-Gallon Drum - NOL 75128 \$519
Morrow County Grain Growers
Lexington 989-2221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcggl.com