

Air Force vet relives 1944 mission to Lone

By Andrea Di Salvo

It was October of 1944, and World War II was raging. In Europe, the Allies were pushing the offensive into Nazi Germany; Rommel committed suicide

after being suspected of conspiring to kill Hitler, and Italy was back with the Allies. In the Pacific, The U.S. had Japan reeling and MacArthur fulfilled his promise to take back the Philippines. In Lone, a U.S. bomber crashed in a stubble field while flying practice runs.

It may not seem like the most spectacular piece of World War II action, but for one retired Air Force vet and one Lone resident, it created plenty of lifetime memories.

U.S. Air Force veteran Bill Allison, who was a 2nd Lieutenant in 1944, led a crew of 12 men who retrieved a crashed bomber near Lone in October of that year. Allison, who turned 90 in July, returned to the scene last week as part of a "nostalgic" tour of some of his life's highlights. He was met by Lone Mayor Linda LaRue, her husband and "first man" Del LaRue, and Lone resident Bill Rietmann.

LaRue was the person Allison initially contacted in his trip down memory lane.

"He just sent a letter addressed to 'Mayor of Lone,'" said LaRue.

In the letter, Allison recounted some details of the event and asked if there was anyone around the area who would remember anything about it. After reading the letter, LaRue said she recalled hearing the story from someone. She thought it was 85-year-old Rietmann. She took the letter to him and, sure enough, he remembered it all.

The plane was a P-38 bomber that apparently was flying practice runs over the Bombing Range. The P-38 was a fairly new



Bill Rietmann of Lone (left) and Air Force vet Bill Allison examine an area map to pinpoint the location of the military bomber that crashed near Lone in 1944. —Photo By Andrea Di Salvo

aircraft, formally accepted into military service in August of 1940.

"They told me that he became disoriented and didn't know where he was," said Allison, who now lives in Houston, TX. "He ran out of gas and had to put down."

The plane came in at night, wheels-up, in a soft stubble field on the Rietmann brothers' ranch about five miles north of

Lone, on land now owned by Harold Rietmann and farmed by Harold's son, Greg.

Allison said he never met the pilot but heard he was not badly injured. The pilot walked to the nearest house, the home of Warner and Juanita Rietmann.

Looking at pictures of the crash site in Rietmann's house in Lone, Rietmann

—See WWII BOMBER CRASH/PAGE THREE



The P-38 loaded on the flat-bed truck that carried it to Portland. "We had so many close shaves," said crew leader Bill Allison. —Contributed photo

HEPPNER

50¢

Gazette Times

VOL. 132 N.O. 36 8 Pages Wednesday, September 4, 2013 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Assessor retires after more than three decades

Sweek longest tenured of current state assessors

By Andrea Di Salvo

Morrow County's long-time "tax man" is saying farewell to his office in the county courthouse. Greg Sweek retired this week after 34 years as Morrow County Assessor.

Sweek, 60, was born and raised in Heppner. Not only is he a local man, but a person could almost say he was born to the office. His birthday is Nov. 15, the tax due date, and he says his mother worked in the tax office when he was growing up.

"I never had a cake on my birthday unless it was on a weekend," he remembers, saying the tax



Retiring Morrow County Assessor Greg Sweek (far right) with his office family (L-R) Patricia Hughes, Mike Gorham, Sandi Patton and Cyde Estes. —Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

season was too hectic for his mother to take the time to bake a cake. "Guess I was destined to end up a tax collector at some point."

Despite having the cards stacked against him, so to speak, Sweek didn't start out on a path to the assessor's office. After graduating from Heppner High School in 1970, Sweek attended Oregon State University in Corvallis. He says he attended college in "split shifts," dropping out after a couple of years to work at the Kinzua Mill in Heppner.

The mill was as much in the Sweek family's blood as tax work; both Sweek's father and his brother worked there, as well as Sweek's wife, Marsha, before their marriage, and her mother and stepfather. He says he probably would have continued with the mill if he hadn't run his hand through a saw. Instead, his life took a different path when he returned to OSU and obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture in 1977.

After college, Sweek says his options were to work for the Forest Service

—See SWEET RETIRES/ PAGE FOUR

Ployhar leaves City of Heppner



Long-time City of Heppner employee Alice Ployhar was recognized for her many years of service to the city at a gathering in her honor recently. Ployhar (center) is pictured with the two mayors during whose tenure she served, Les Paustian (left) and Joe Perry. Ployhar isn't ready for retirement quite yet, however; she has taken a position as manager at St. Patrick's Apartments. —Photo by David Sykes

It's time for trophies

Did you bring down a bull elk? Bag a buck? Stop a gator in its tracks or wrestle in a marlin? The Gazette-Times wants to know about it.

Send in or drop by a picture of yourself and your

prize along with your name, age, size of the animal, date of capture, where you brought it down and any other information you think we should know. If we're impressed, you'll see it

right here on the front page of the Gazette.

Contact us by email at editor@rapidsolve.net or mail submissions to Heppner Gazette-Times, PO Box 337, Heppner.

The Heppner Gazette-Times wants to see pictures of your trophy animals from this hunting season. Stop by to have your picture taken, drop off photos, or email them to editor@rapidsolve.net.



Health district hires new doctor

By April Sykes

Morrow County Health District CEO Dan Grigg told the MCHD board Monday that a new doctor has agreed to work for the district. The board approved hiring Dr. Dan Hambleton, contingent upon him getting his Oregon license and passing the credentialing process. Dr. Hambleton is currently practicing in Alaska.

The board also approved an updated contract, with some minor changes, for Dr. Betsy Anderson. Grigg told the board that the changes would bring Dr. Anderson's contract in line with the other physicians'

contracts. Her previous contract expires Sept. 18.

Changes include a \$5 increase from \$100 to \$105 per hour at Pioneer Memorial Clinic while on emergency room call and \$90 per hour for ER patients; monthly student loan payments in the amount of \$776.78 each month until the loan is paid in full; a 120-day advance resignation notice, increased from 90 days; with the contract to continue through Sept. 18, 2016, unless 120 days advance notice is given; and an automatic three-year renewal available to the physician.

The board learned

that board member David Burns has submitted his resignation. They learned that he had also resigned from his position as mayor of Irrigon, but then rescinded his mayoral resignation, so the health district board opted to wait for confirmation of Burns' resignation. His term runs until June 2015. If the resignation is confirmed, the board will appoint someone to fill the position until the term is up. The board learned that Sandy Toms, new mayor for the city of Boardman, has indicated

—See HEALTH DISTRICT HIRES NEW DOCTOR/ PAGE FOUR

CREZ considering grants to Morrow County homebuyers

By David Sykes

In an effort to encourage people to live in Morrow County, the Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ) Committee is considering offering grants to people purchasing homes in Morrow County. The program would be similar to Columbia River Processing's (Tillamook Cheese), which gives employees \$7,500 dollars toward purchase

when they buy a home in the county. Tillamook operates a cheese facility in Boardman with about 123 employees; however, only about 10 percent of those workers are living there, and the company wants to encourage its people to live in Morrow County.

The CREZ has been talking about starting a similar program that would be available to anyone buying in the county. For

several meetings now, and at their last meeting Aug. 26, board members began putting the final details together. CREZ board member Leann Rea said the grant amount should be based on a percentage of the home purchase value not to exceed a certain amount, but at this time was not sure what that figure should be.

—See CREZ CONSIDERS HOUSING GRANTS/PAGE THREE

POLARIS FACTORY AUTHORIZED CLEARANCE

Up to \$1000 Thru September 30

rebates plus financing as low as 2.99%

SNOWMOBILES - RANGERS
ATV'S - 4 WHEELERS

Call Jason Hanna for details

Morrow County Grain Growers
Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcgg.net