

HEPPNER

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VOL. 133 N.O. 19 10 Pages Wednesday, May 7, 2014 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Dickenson to retire from school district

By Andrea Di Salvo

Heppner High School students, teachers and staff will bid farewell to Special Education Assistant Kathi Dickenson next month. Dickenson, whose last day is June 6, has worked with the Morrow County School District since 1992, serving as Special Ed. Assistant continuously for the last 13 years.

Dickenson, who just turned 62, was born and raised in Grants Pass, OR. She graduated from Grants Pass High School in 1970; in 1971 she went on to attend one year of business school in Portland.

"And I hated it," she confides.

She married her husband, Steve, in 1972 while he was a student at Linfield College in McMinnville, OR. He became a high school teacher, and the couple moved several times for his work in the first years of their marriage, spending a year in Lakeview, OR, two in Roseburg, three in Bandon, six in Myrtle Creek and two in Newburg before they moved to Heppner in 1989.

Dickenson worked for US Bank during their time in McMinnville and Lakeview, 1972 to 1976. She then had their first child, Chris, and became a stay-at-home mom to Chris and his siblings, Traci and Tim, for the next several years.

It was after the family moved to Heppner that



Kathi Dickenson sits at the desk in the classroom where she spends many of her afternoons at HHS working with Special Ed. students. Dickenson retires this year after spending the last 13 years working as Special Ed. Assistant in the Heppner schools. —Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

Dickenson first took a job as Special Ed. Assistant in 1992.

"I enjoy special ed.," she says. "I love to see the light bulb go off; when you see their accomplishments and how far someone has come."

Despite her love for her work, she quit after one year...not for herself, but because she felt she could serve the local school better in another capacity. HHS employees Darcy Robinson and Terri Gentry both had children that year, and Dickenson left her job as education assistant to serve as childcare provider.

"There weren't a lot of childcare options in Heppner back then," she says. "My schedule worked with their school schedule, so I said, 'Sure.'"

Dickenson looked after the two young boys, as well as the two younger siblings who came along later, in addition to her own three teenagers.

"I told everybody I was a short-order cook from 1990 to 1999," she jokes.

Change came again when she and her husband divorced after 30 years of marriage. In 2001 she again took a job as Special Ed. Assistant, spending five years at Heppner Elementary before moving to the high school.

"I went back to what was comfortable," she says, adding that the job allowed her to keep her summers free for her children and one of her other great loves, working in her yard.

Her retirement now also comes mainly because of her family. Of her three children, only Tim remains in Heppner; Chris and his family are in Cove, OR and Traci and her family live in Iowa. Dickenson says retirement will allow her to spend more time with her children and her eight grandchildren—all of whom are under the age of 10—and one grandchild on the way. Dickenson says she looks forward to being able to attend sporting events and school functions for all her grandkids as they get older.

She also says she will help son, Tim, with day-to-day organization and administration of his chiropractic practice to free him up to work on medical record and insurance changes required by federal law.

And, of course, there are the inevitable home projects.

"I have a few projects around my house; people who know me know I always have projects," she says. "I am one of those women who enjoys power tools."

For Dickenson, parting from her work, students and coworkers will be bittersweet.

"I will miss aspects, but I want to be able to enjoy

—See DICKENSON RETIRES/PAGE FOUR

Warm spring still low on moisture

Good 2014 moisture still leaves water-year levels lacking

According to preliminary data received by NOAA's National Weather Service in Pendleton, temperatures at Heppner averaged slightly warmer than normal during the month of April.

The average temperature was 49.6 degrees, which was 0.6 degrees above normal. High temperatures averaged 60.7 degrees, which was 0.2 degrees below normal. The highest was 73 degrees on April 8. Low temperatures averaged 38.6 degrees, which was 1.4 degrees

above normal. The lowest was 33 degrees on the 26th.

Precipitation totaled 1.22 inches during April, which was 0.29 inches below normal. Measurable precipitation of at least .01 inch was received on 12 days with the heaviest, 0.38 inches, reported on the 22nd.

Precipitation this year has reached 5.69 inches, which is 0.07 inches above normal. Since October, the water year precipitation at Heppner has been 8.06 inches, which is 1.62 inches below normal.

The outlook for May

from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center calls for near- to above-normal temperatures and near- to above-normal precipitation.

Normal highs for Heppner rise from 64 degrees at the start of May to 73 degrees at the end of May. Normal lows rise from 40 degrees to 47 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 1.66 inches.

The National Weather Service is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Local high schools among best in nation

Three Morrow County School have been named to the U.S. News & World Report's Best High Schools list for 2014.

Morrow County School District's Riverside and Heppner junior-senior high schools, as well as Lone Community School, all received bronze medals.

This is the fifth year in a row that Riverside has made the list and has received a bronze medal. Heppner also received recognition and a bronze medal from 2010-2012, while Lone has

received the award for the last three years.

Bronze rankings are awarded to high-performing schools based on state exam performance.

There are 287 high schools in Oregon, and just 51 received bronze medals for 2014 from U.S. News & World Report. Four received gold medals and 22 received silver.

A total of 77 high schools in Oregon made the list for 2014. Each year, U.S. News & World Report evaluates nearly 21,000

public high schools in 49 states and the District of Columbia.

Schools are awarded gold, silver or bronze medals based on state proficiency standards, how well they prepare students for college, and other factors.

U.S. News & World Report has published the Best High Schools rankings since 2007.

More information: <http://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/oregon>.

Community garden flourishes with tender care

By Kay Proctor

Those who (try to) garden on the hillsides in south Morrow County know it can be a challenge.

Besides the rocks to contend with, there is shallow, alkaline soil, wind and the need to irrigate on a regular basis. And we've all seen what deer can quickly do to a garden.

John Murray and Ed Struthers have accepted that challenge with good results on the hillside by Heppner High School. In an area surrounded by 6-1/2-foot fencing to keep out deer, they have developed a productive community garden from a rock patch

in just four years.

Twenty years ago, the OSU Extension/Blue Mountain Master Gardeners developed a community garden off Riverside Street on an empty lot owned by the City of Heppner. Since the BMMG did weed control on the lot, the city provided water. When the lot was sold and BMMG disbanded, Murray and Struthers started the garden from scratch in its new location; the two continue their dedication with general support from the Heppner Volunteers. The newer location has been christened the City of Heppner's "Irish Green"

Community Garden and has free plots available to the public with no charge for water.

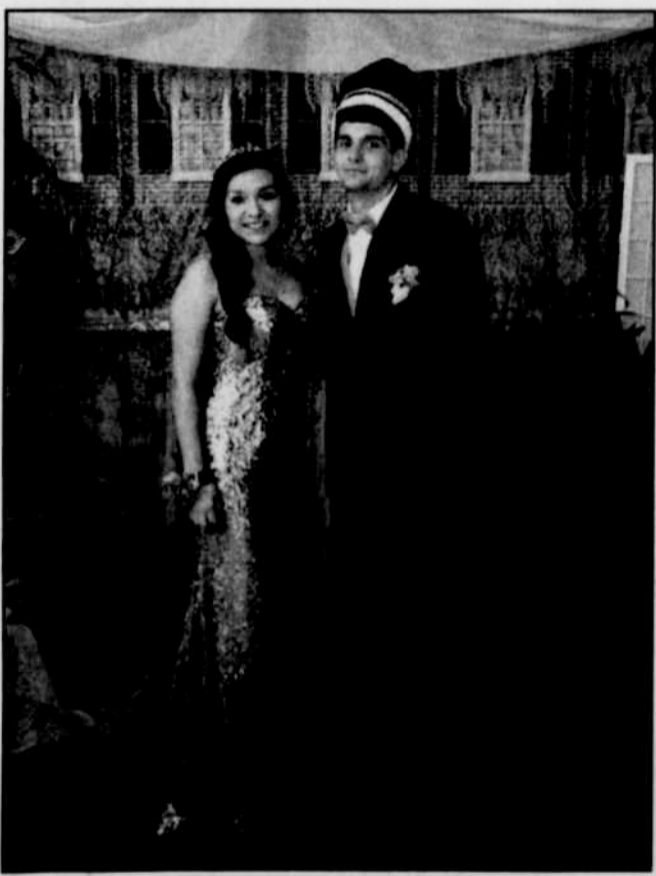
First priority for Struthers and Murray was to improve the soil.

—See COMMUNITY GARDEN/PAGE FIVE



John Murray and Ed Struthers have carved a community garden out of a rocky hillside in only four years. —Contributed photo

Ione celebrates prom



Ione High School held its prom April 19; pictured above are Ione Prom Queen Jacqueline Juarez and King Bailey Hagewood. —Contributed photo

Ballots due May 20

A portion of last week's article, "Primary ballots are in the mail," incorrectly stated the election deadline as Nov. 5; all primary ballots are due by 8 p.m. Tuesday, May 20. Remember, ballots must be received, not

mailed, that day. Call the Morrow County Clerk at 541-676-5601 for more information.

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

Heppner celebrates prom



Heppner High School held its prom April 19. Above: Heppner prom court members (back L-R) Jordan Bailey, JC Putman, King Treston Mabon, Jeff Dowdy, Tate Gentry, (front L-R) Samm Lemmon, Kayla Kindle, Queen Nicole Kempken and Blake Greenup. Not pictured is Jyla Dyer. —Contributed photo

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