

A View from the Hill

By Doris Brosnan

The last days of summer were viewed as a great opportunity for increased socializing on the Hill. The temperate, sunny, windless days were perfect for visiting on the "front porch." Though that opportunity continues into newly-arrived fall, sunshine does appear sporadically and the changing of seasons is greeted with mixed emotions.

Through those sunny days of September, Terrace Residents found more than a few topics to discuss on the front porch, beginning with the end of World War II, which occurred on Sept. 2, 1946, remembered by all of the residents, who related that memory to the younger staff members.

NFL season started on Sept. 4, and since then, on Mondays, Thursdays and Sundays, the stadium sounds and the sounds of clashing gridiron players can be heard in the hallways of the Terrace.

Reading is another favorite activity at the Terrace, so "Read a Book Day"

on the 6th and the following week were just more opportunities to discuss favorite authors, titles and genres, as well as to share books with neighbors. Ed Struthers continues his efforts to bring to the Terrace each week books that residents request from the public library and books in the genres most popular on the Hill. Soon, on Wednesdays after the reading of the Gazette-Times, the residents will be group-reading *A Certain Time...a Special Place*, a 1977 historical work by resident Lucile Urey Peck.

On "Patriot Day," residents discussed the 9/11 tragedy of 2001 and the project to erect memorials in all the states with pieces from the Twin Towers. This was soon followed, on the 17th, with the "Pledge America" activity, the attempt to have the Pledge of Allegiance recited across America at the same time. Residents and staff coordinated their pledge at 11 a.m.

September has not been without its share of food-

celebration days and a few frivolous designations. One such was the "Talk Like a Pirate Day" on the 19th, and some residents were hesitant about dining in that evening. On the menu was "roasted gator, cheesy-onion cannon balls, and treasure-chest veggies." Those residents needed assurance that the "gator" on the menu was actually better known for its mooing than for its viciousness.

This month, the Community on the Hill has put together baskets for Lone and Heppner booster clubs' dinner-and-auction evenings. They like to contribute to the fundraising efforts of these organizations because of the support received from the schools of both communities. This year's baskets feature "Terrace favorite-foods" mixes and prepared foods.

On Sept. 25, eight residents enjoyed a field trip to Boardman. The SAGE Center and the Port of Morrow developments were new to many. A new development coming to the Terrace has

residents, staff, and visitors eagerly anticipating the changes it will bring. The foundation forms for the new solarium are in place, so the foundation should soon be poured. Various approvals from the state for this addition have been slowly gained, so the builder and the Terrace administration are pleased to have the "green light." Already, many uses for the new structure are apparent, and more benefits will surely become obvious. At a cost of over \$50,000, the new facility is a large expense, but some donations have lessened the burden, and donations are still gratefully accepted and appreciated.

Maybe the solarium will be completed in October, maybe not until November, but Manager George Nairns is counting on its completion being one reason to be thankful on Thanksgiving Day.

While watching the progress of the project, the residents will be distracted by a few more special days in October, beginning on

the 2nd, which is the 64th birthday of the "Peanuts" comic and a good time to discuss comic books. And speaking of "comics," one seems no longer able to find comic books on the store shelves but can find a variety of "illustrated novels."

Two meteorological phenomena will also turn the heads of the residents in October. On the 8th, a lunar eclipse will occur. On the 23rd, a solar eclipse will draw their attention. One must wonder how common or uncommon is having both eclipses occur within the same month.

October 12-18 is designated "Firefighters Week," and the Community on the Hill wants to honor their firefighting friends with a special gathering. Every year, the Terrace staff receives educational instructions from the fire department, and twice every year, the state requires the fire department to perform unannounced fire drills at the facility.... And although this might be a noisy interruption to a resident's day or

night, everyone on the Hill knows the importance of this preparation and training and appreciates all of the volunteers.

October will draw to a conclusion after the annual Halloween party with the Heppner Day Care preschoolers, which will be held on the 21st this year, and the trick-or-treating by little ghosts and goblins on Halloween evening. As always, the residents will be encouraged to wear their special pumpkin-face T-shirts, and, as always, they will be helping the preschoolers create jack-o-lanterns with the pumpkins that the residents will give them. This year, however, those pumpkins will be purchased ones, since the deer obliterated the Terrace garden, including everything but three watermelons!

So goes the varied life on the Hill so far this fall, but one must stay tuned, for surprises seem to pop up each month at the Terrace, just one more reason the residents view each day here as a gift.

HEALTH DISTRICT

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ity care," commented board chair John Murray.

Rhea told the board that the new system is needed to replace the current aging one that is beginning to have operational problems.

"We've been nursing the (old) equipment along. We've been getting along, but we're past due to get a new system," said Rhea. "I think we're dangerously close to needing it."

She added that she believed that the old system may be around 15-20 years old and commented that the district's purchasing agent was having trouble getting parts for it.

Chief Financial Officer Nicole Mahoney said that the district has enough cash on hand to purchase the system outright.

The board also approved a \$14,087 expenditure, also with cash on hand, to complete the Pioneer Memorial Clinic roof redo, which was started last year.

The board learned that the Pioneer Memorial Hospital Foundation has donated \$20,000 toward purchase of a video colonoscope. The cost of the colonoscope was not as great as anticipated, so the remainder of those funds will go toward the cardiac monitor, said Mahoney.

Other proposed capital purchases for the 2014-15 fiscal year include: six ambulance gurneys estimated at \$72,000, tentatively funded with grants and cash; Centriq clinic electronic medical records final project payment and radiology interface-\$51,000 to be funded with federal Electronic Health Records reimbursement funds and cash; Pioneer Memorial Hospital nurse call system-\$30,000, cash on hand; a new washing machine for PMH-\$12,000, cash on hand; external facility signs and traffic directional signs-\$25,000, cash on hand; landscaping around PMH monument sign and plant bed areas-\$20,000, cash on hand; Pioneer Memorial Clinic roof, siding, windows, paint-\$58,000, less the \$14,087 for the

roof, to be funded with a loan and cash.

Grigg told the board that the district has hired Star Roth to fill a newly created position, director of clinic and home care operations. He said that Roth will have "administrative responsibility" for the district's two medical clinics and Home Health and Hospice operations.

He said that Roth most recently managed the Central Utah Clinic Women's Center and was previously manager of the Tigard (Oregon) Orthopedic and Fracture Clinic and Silverton (Oregon) Family Clinic.

"We are thrilled to have her join our team," said Grigg.

Roth is scheduled to begin in early November.

Grigg also reported that Morrow County Public Health was successful in obtaining a \$60,000 government grant, which will allow completion of planning for the proposed Lone School Based Health Center. He said the goal is to open the clinic at the Lone school by mid-May 2015.

He said planning for the clinic is a collaborative effort among Morrow County Public Health, Morrow County Health District, Lone Community School, Advantage Dental and Community Counseling. He stressed that receipt of the grant does not mean that a final decision has been made to go forward with development of the clinic, but said that the next step is to be an in-depth business plan "to identify revenue sources and associated expenses of setting up the clinic and operating it long term."

He said that one of the biggest questions still to be answered is where to locate the clinic and how to fund the clinic site and building.

Grigg said that the "planning team has been encouraged by the warm reception the concept has received from the community of Lone and is optimistic that the business plan will be favorable."

In other business, the

board:

-learned from Grigg that the district is measuring its "True North" progress by tracking patient survey responses. He said that the goal is to have 84 percent of all patients surveyed state that they would definitely recommend the hospital, emergency department or provider's office to their family and friends by the end third quarter of this year.

The percentage of people surveyed who would recommend MCHD services was 83.5 percent for the first quarter of this year, 78.9 percent the second and 91.9 the third.

-learned that the fall board retreat is planned for Wednesday-Thursday, Oct. 8-9, with meetings planned on Oct. 8 at the St. Patrick's Senior Center in Heppner from 3-7 p.m. and on Oct. 9 at the SAGE Center in Boardman from 8-noon.

-learned that 100 percent of the district's employees have signed and are "committed to living the Morrow County Health District Promise of Excellence," which basically asks employees to abide by certain work and attitude behaviors that result in improving the district's operations and patient interactions.

-learned from Grigg that the hospital held its required annual Critical Access Hospital meeting. A critical access hospital designation requires a hospital to satisfy certain strict criteria, one of those criteria being the distance from another hospital, but allows for more beneficial governmental reimbursements.

-heard the annual audit report from Erik Volk from WIPFLI, a Spokane-based accounting firm with numerous offices elsewhere. Volk said that the district received an "unqualified audit," which means that the audit was clean.

According to audit information, the district had a net gain of \$319,127 in 2014, down from \$905,928 in 2013; net patient accounts receivable increased from \$984,375 in 2013 to \$1,123,481 in 2014; net non-patient revenues, including property taxes, decreased by \$146,288 (seven percent); total overall operating expenses increased 8.5 percent, \$687,936; overall business declined slightly with gross patient revenue decreasing by \$234,958 (three percent), with net

patient revenue increasing by 3.5 percent.

Grigg remarked that the district's tax subsidy is critical for continued operation of the facilities.

Volk commended Mahoney for her work in preparing for the audit. "Nicole did a great job," he said, adding that the MCHD audit is "one we actually look forward to doing." Mahoney credited her staff for all the work they did.

-received the following profit and loss statement through August 2014: 672,754 in gross patient revenue, down from \$747,037 the previous month; \$7,232 in bad debts, down from \$12,543 the previous month; \$131,785 in contractual and other adjustments, up from \$114,497 the previous month; for \$139,018 in total revenue deductions, up from \$127,041; \$117,893 in tax revenue, the same as previous; \$24,021 in other operating revenue, up from \$17,533, for \$675,650 in total operating revenue, down from \$755,422 the previous month; \$684,673 in total operating expenses, down from \$765,860 the previous month; \$26,331 in a non-operating gain, including a \$20,000 donation from the Hospital Foundation, for a \$17,308 gain for the month, up from \$4,455 the previous month.

-received the following report: Pioneer Memorial Clinic had 386 patient visits for the month of August with five new patients, 32 seen by a nurse and 11 no-shows; Irrigon Medical Clinic had 216 patients for the month with 35 new patients, 52 seen by a nurse and 13 no-shows; Heppner Ambulance had 23 page-outs with 21 transports for \$26,021 in revenue; Boardman Ambulance had 24 page-outs with 21 transports for \$31,854 in revenue; Irrigon Ambulance had 26 page-outs with 18 transports for \$24,716 in revenue; there were five flights; Pioneer Memorial Hospital had four swing bed admissions, 12 admitted for observation, two admitted for hospital respite, 314 total outpatients, 55 emergency room encounters, 1,440 lab tests, 106 x-ray procedures, 35 CT scans, 25 EKG tests, six colonoscopy procedures, two endoscopy procedures, 13 respiratory therapy procedures; Home Health had 119 patient visits; Pharmacy had 1,031 drug doses for \$77,952 in drug revenue.

CBEC conducts safety program for local youth

Co-op announces poster contest



Top: Students at Heppner Elementary take in a CBEC-sponsored electrical safety program conducted by John Spain from Columbia REA and local employee Josh Coiner. Above: Lone third- and fourth-graders stay safely back from the 10,000-volt demonstration table manned by Spain and Coiner. -Contributed photos

One hundred and twenty-six third- and fourth-grade students from the area recently took part in a program titled "Stay Safe Around Electricity," sponsored by Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative.

Elementary school students from Lone, Heppner, Condon and Fossil were instructed by CBEC personnel and CBEC's Safety Trainer, John Spain from Columbia Rural Electric Association, on the basics of electricity, as well as the dangers of coming into contact with energized power lines, both above and below the ground.

With the use of a 10,000-volt demonstration table, children were

shown various scenarios where people, vehicles, farm equipment, construction equipment, kites and trees come in contact with energized lines.

Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative offers the safety program to each school in the service territory every other year. The program is targeted for third- and fourth-grade students.

In conjunction with the program, Columbia Basin also announced their annual Electrical Safety Poster Contest, which is targeted at the same audience. Winners of the poster contest will be announced at the Cooperative's annual meeting on Nov. 6 in Condon.

Eastern Oregon poetry writers invited to become part of permanent digital presence

Eastern Oregon residents are invited to become part of the permanent, statewide digital poetry readings archive of Oregon Poetic Voices (OPV), a nonprofit organization hosted at Lewis & Clark College in Portland. OPV is interested in preserving poems by Oregonians from high school age and up.

OPV will record local

poetry at the Word Round-Up, a free literary festival at Pendleton on Fri., Oct. 3, from 2-5 p.m. and on Sat., Oct. 4, from 9 a.m. until noon. Anyone interested is asked to bring up to four poems to read and, if possible, a photo. Photos can also be taken at the event.

A complete event schedule is at www.easternoregonwordroundup.org.

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