

Master clockmaker recognizes local men for clock tower work

Two Heppner men who were instrumental in bringing the Morrow County Courthouse clock and tower back to life were recently recognized by their mentor. Master clockmaker Gary Kopperud of Pendleton took time out of his multi-faceted life to express his gratitude to Tony Clement and Rod Wilson for their work on the project.

Kopperud owns a drafting and design business in Pendleton, is a third-generation clockmaker, and donates countless hours to Morrow County on the sometimes-daunting endeavor. His interests combined to give him the knowledge needed to perform the complex calculations so the clock would function after the mechanism was moved from the tower to the lobby—a four-story difference. But he couldn’t do it all himself; that’s where Wilson and Clement became indispensable.

Clement is Morrow County’s General Main-

tenance Supervisor, while Wilson owns Wilson Construction Services, LLC and contracted his services to the county during the project.

Kopperud made a special presentation to the two local men during a meeting of Morrow County department heads and elected officials on Nov. 8 at the Bartholomew Building. Judge Terry Tallman made it clear the gifts were from Kopperud and not the county.

Kopperud presented Clement with a 1917 E. Howard Watch Co. pocket watch; Kopperud told Clement it’s his turn to take care of this watch, just as he and Wilson are now caretakers of the courthouse clock. He then presented Wilson with an Army Air Corps Aviator’s watch. These watches were only issued to pilots during World War II, he said.

The clock tower project was started in 2013 and the rededication took place on Sept. 29, 2014. However,

since then, a few problems have been encountered in trying to make a mechanism originally intended to run one clock face now run three faces.

The most recent setback involved a broken gear, which once again set Kopperud on the hunt for a rare replacement part. Not surprisingly, his diligence paid off and it is now in the process of being installed.

“We have more to do,” Kopperud told his partners. Wilson responded by saying, “I’ve been bitten by the clock bug. I want to know more about them when I see one.”

“We wouldn’t have gotten it done without his (Kopperud’s) help and we’ll see it through to make this thing go,” he added.

“The Morrow County Commissioners are delighted to see such interest and expertise at such reasonable costs for this project,” said judge Tallman.

GUIDE DOG

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and a half being socialized with people. They not only live with the puppy raisers, but they do everything and go everywhere with them, to be exposed to as many environments and situations as possible. After that, Long-Drew says, not every dog makes the cut. The dogs can’t display fear or aggression, and shouldn’t bark or lick excessively.

“There’s a small percentage of dogs who make it,” he says. “They can go many places in the city where most dogs don’t go, so they have to be well behaved.” Long-Drew adds that the dogs also have to be clean and healthy. That means that, as the owner, it’s his responsibility to keep Earl groomed, maintain his dental health (Earl really likes his doggy toothpaste), and make sure he gets regular check-ups.

After their time with the puppy raisers, the dogs return to Guide Dogs for the Blind, where they go through a series of evaluations, and then through mobility training. All in all, \$40,000-\$50,000 worth of training and preparation go into a dog that is then given for free to a blind person.

That doesn’t mean Long-Drew didn’t have to put in some work of his own, though. After he submitted his application to Guide Dogs, a representative did a home inspection, including lifestyle and home and work environments.

“Then they go back and match the dog with me,” he says. “They really scrutinize what dog is best for me in my situation.” In Long-Drew’s case, that included a tendency to walk quickly, balanced with the need to be quiet and calm for long periods in a church office setting.

After Guide Dogs for the Blind determined a match, Long-Drew went down to Boring to go

through a two-week course with Earl, which included work on the Boring campus and walking courses in Portland. At the end of the two weeks, Long-Drew “graduated”—a concept he didn’t find as silly after the fact as he did before.

“After working so hard with the dog and finding what a life-changer this is, it’s a graduation worth having,” he says. “I thought it would be easy, but it’s not!”

In fact, Long-Drew says Earl has already saved his life. During training in Portland, Long-Drew gave the dog the “hop up” command to go faster across an intersection. Instead, Earl slowed down and stopped. If he hadn’t, an inattentive driver would have hit them in the intersection.

Long-Drew said Earl’s capability to know when not to obey is called “intelligent disobedience.”

“Dogs are born pleasers,” he says. “To disobey you is stressful for the dog. But they know their job.”

Now that he’s on the job in Heppner, Earl’s work equipment includes a leash, harness, “gentle leader” and a pouch full of treats. When he’s in harness, he’s on the job, and his job is to be Long-Drew’s eyes. That means he needs to work through distractions that would send other dogs into a tail spin, whether those distractions are other dogs or friendly pedestrians.

“Because the dog is a dog, and a people lover, for our personal safety, he has to maintain his work etiquette,” Long-Drew says. That includes being a bit stand-offish to his admiring fans, so Long-Drew asks that people respect the dog’s working conditions as much as possible.

“Petting a dog while he’s working is like me being in the passenger seat while you’re driving, and I think the steering wheel is just the prettiest thing I’ve ever seen,” he explains, “so

I yank on it and we both go in the ditch.”

However, Long-Drew says the dog isn’t chastised or punished for falling down on the job, so to speak. Rather, Guide Dogs for the Blind believes in positive reinforcement. So, he may use the gentle leader—which looks something like a nose harness—to redirect the dog’s attention. Treats are used to reward good behavior, with special treats for getting through special challenges. Long-Drew also uses clicker training—a combination of a clicker and treats to condition a response—to develop good habits.

“You try to reward everything he does,” he says.

Long-Drew says his family and church community have been supportive, though it’s been an adjustment for everyone, especially his family.

“They’re used to talking to me when we’re walking. When he’s in harness, they can’t interact with me or him,” he says.

At the same time, it’s not all work all the time. Long-Drew gives Earl plenty of off-leash “dog moments” when they play tug-of-war or other games the dog enjoys.

Guide dogs like Earl remain in service for nine years before retiring. Then, Long-Drew will have the option to keep him as a pet or have him return to puppy raisers to live out his retirement. Even now, it’s easy to see which way Long-Drew is leaning.

“He’s becoming my best friend. I was not a dog person before, not really,” he admits. “It’s been a long time coming—25 years. Now that I have him, a whole new world has opened up to me through the eyes of a dog.”

To help people get to know Earl better, Long-Drew and Earl will have a Q&A at Sweet Productions Dec. 12 from 7-8 p.m.

COUNTY COURT

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he said.

Justice of the Peace Ann Spicer, who was on speaker call to the county court meeting, said there are four properties in Heppner that are the main problem, with a combined total of \$4,250 in unpaid fines for nuisance or dirty properties. Cutsforth added that these property owners will get cited numerous times, not pay the fines, not show up in court and will ignore the whole process of trying to get them to clean up their properties.

“I told the deputies (Morrow County deputies handle citations in Heppner) to quit citing because it is not going anywhere,” she said.

Members of the county court asked if other solutions had been tried, like having the city come in and clean up the property and then bill the homeowner, or providing Dumpsters for the property owners to use and do the clean-up themselves. Cutsforth said the city does not have the money or crew to clean up the properties, and she tried the Dumpsters once and received “blowback” from other law-abiding property owners who did not get free Dumpsters for their trash.

Under the proposed plan the Justice of the Peace will continue to handle the nuisance tickets and fines, keep the ones who pay, and turn over to the city ownership of all those who do not pay. The city would then use these unpaid fines as a basis to put liens on the

ticketed properties. These liens could ultimately be used to foreclose on the properties and sell them at auction to recover the outstanding fines.

“We only want to go to lien and foreclosure as a last resort,” Kuhn emphasized.

“We want people to know that we are not trying to wreck your life,” Cutsforth said about the offending property owners. “We just want you to quit ruining your neighbor’s life.”

The court voted to move forward with writing IGAs between the county and all three cities in the county covering usage of the Justice Court.

Finley Buttes to continue payment during river shutdown

In other business, the court heard from representatives of Finley Buttes Landfill, who said that the company plans to continue paying the county dumping fees, even when it will not be using the landfill during a planned 15-week shut-down of the Columbia River locks by the Corps of Engineers.

Finley Buttes Sales Manager Dean Large who, along with Assistant District Manager Kevin Green, was at the county court meeting, said he knows the county depends on the significant dumping fees from the landfill, and that the company “has decided to pay fees to both Wasco County and Morrow County, as we did in 2016. These payments reflect our commitment to keep Morrow County’s budget whole.” He said that during the upcoming extended lock closure, Finley Buttes will pay Morrow County the same fees paid to the county during the same period last year. Although no dollar amount was mentioned, he said it was close to 90,000 tons.

“We appreciate this (the offer to continue payments during the shutdown),” Morrow County Judge Terry Tallman told Large and Green, “and we would like to affirm the long relationship we have with Finley Buttes Landfill. All we can say is thank you,” he added.

Finley Buttes, which has been in operation since November of 1990, pays Morrow County for each ton of waste dumped at the large landfill located in the northern part of the county along Bombing Range Road. Large said the landfill has a continued life of more than 200 more years. He said representatives from the Portland Metro waste disposal recently toured Finley and were impressed with its operation. He said Metro, whose current disposal contract runs out in December of 2019, especially liked the gas generation aspect at Finley Buttes.

Finley collects methane gas produced from the decaying landfill material and runs three generators that produce electricity. In addition, waste heat from the generators is piped to a nearby facility and used to dry onions and potatoes.

“Metro was very impressed with the state-of-the-art generating system,” Large told the court. “Our facility is not just a tomb for waste,” he said of the recycling and sustainability aspect of the facility.

In other action the court voted to re-appoint Bob Mahoney and John Gould to the Wolf Depredation Committee. In 2011 the Oregon Legislature required the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to establish and implement a wolf depredation and financial assistance grant program. This program awards annual funds to Oregon counties to compensate their ranching communities when livestock and working dogs are attacked and killed by wolves and to fund preventative measures to reduce the possibility of wolf attacks.

Gould is the local business representative on the committee, and Mahoney is the cattle representative. Their terms will run until 2020.

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THE UPCOMING WINTER STORM SEASON IS NEAR

Morrow County Road Dept. would like to remind all motorists there will be **NO winter maintenance on Coalmine hill (USFS route 53)**

For the rest of the County winter maintenance practices include applying deicing agent, plowing and sanding.



The combination of practices used at each site may vary to accommodate the different climate, traffic, and storm conditions encountered. Morrow County's goal is to provide a safe roadway. However, it is always up to the motorist to drive according to conditions. Please use extreme caution and common sense. They will do their best and would appreciate your patience.

For your convenience the road department would like to direct your attention to a towing service in the area if needed. A-1 Martin's Towing 541-571-4260. **Again be prepared and be safe.**

Questions or concerns may be addressed 541-989-9500.



Second annual music fest Dec. 11

A Christmas Music Fest returns to Heppner for a second year on Sunday, Dec. 11, at Hope Lutheran Church (near the dam).

The hour-long concert begins at 3 p.m. and features the gifts of many area musicians, concluding with a carol sing-along. Admission is free but donations of canned food for the Neighborhood Center will be welcome.

For more information, or to be added to the program, call Pastor Katy Anderson at 541-676-9970.

Heppner Gazette-Times

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