HEPPNER 50¢ azette

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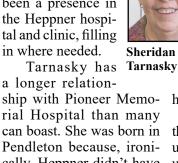
Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Tarnasky retires from a lifetime of healthcare

By Andrea Di Salvo

life-long ties to Heppner medical care is stepping away from her work at Pioneer Memorial and into retirement.

Sheridan Tarnasky, 68, retired officially from Pioneer Memorial Clinic July 29 of last year, though she has still been a presence in the Heppner hospital and clinic, filling in where needed.



ship with Pioneer Memorial Hospital than many can boast. She was born in Pendleton because, ironically, Heppner didn't have a hospital at that time. She returned to the community when she was 10 days old and has spent most of her life since then living in Heppner's city limits. She did spend a lot of time at the family ranch growing up, but says she was always a "townie."

"My cousins made fun of me because I was a town kid," she says.

Heppner from kindergarten started spending time at the June of 1972. While there, through her graduation in hospital.

Ione mayor sworn in

New Ione mayor Rod Taylor was sworn into office at the

Ione City Council meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 10.



three open

est or call city hall at 541-422-7414.

included a week in the people. hospital for cellulitis at age

> inn," she quipped broken arm at the say." age of six. She says she was kept overnight because they gave her ether for

"Back in those days they kept you in the hospital until you finished throwing up from the ether."

Her ties ran even deeper than those of a typical patient, however. Her mother, Ilene Laughlin, worked in the hospital's front office for several years and then spent several more years as hospital administrator.

office when I was a toddler and then went back could finish his education. to work when I was in She went back to Emanthe sixth grade," recalls uel as a nurse, where she She attended school in Tarnasky. "That is when I worked in surgery until

got my ears pierced sitting "Dr. Zimmerman did

She says she sat with her first patient at the age of 14.

"She was an OB with some postpartum complications, and they were shortstaffed," recalls Tarnasky.

Despite early exposure to hospital life, she says she didn't grow up wanting to be a nurse. Instead, admiration of a high school teacher gave her the goal of being a school counselor and drama coach. After she graduated from Heppner tion of going."

1966. As important as her morning in June and decid-A Heppner woman with school ties, however, were ed I wanted to be a nurse," her ties to the local hospital. she says. She says that, in She, of course, had a way, it was logical behospital experiences that cause both counseling and anyone might have. They nursing involved helping

> 'Dr. Carpenter told me five—"My crib was once that it made sense in the hall as they because a really good nurse had no room in the has to be a really good actress," she adds. "Not that and a night in the I'm a really good actress, hospital due to a but it was nice of him to

She applied to four different nursing schools and says it must have been "divine intervention" that got her accepted to three of them in a time when options for women were limited and competition for nursing schools was high. She ended up attending Emanuel Hospital School of Nursing, graduating in 1970. She began work as a graduate nurse at Pioneer Memorial that summer.

Then, in September of 1970, she married Edward "Mom worked in the Tarnasky and the couple moved to Portland so he she assisted with the first "I was up there a lot. I total hip replacement.

on my mom's desk," she and I was a scrub nurse,"

That medical milestone was only one of many that she recalls from her lifetime, she says.

"I've seen some interesting things occur," she says, giving administration of IVs as an example nurses commonly administer IVs now, but it used to be done only by doctors. "An MRI wasn't heard of. Ultrasounds were poor, poor quality. HIV wasn't even heard of," she says.

"One of my favorite day is hospice," she adds. "The care of the terminally

In 1972, with his graduation nearing, Edward Tarnasky was searching "Then I woke up one the newspaper for jobs; he

Smith takes home mirror ball trophy from area dance contest

State Rep. Greg Smith of Heppner took home the mirror ball trophy at the end of the fifth annual Dancing with the Hermiston Starts performance Saturday night.

Six local celebrities teamed up with professional dancers from the Utah Ballroom Dance Troupe to raise money for local charities in the event put on by the Desert Arts Council. Along with Smith, Hermiston-area celebrities included LuAnn Davison, Spike Piersol, Eva Swain, Bill Elfering and Clara Beas-Fitzgerald.

The stars practiced for a week with the professionals and then performed

called on one ad without

even realizing the number

had a Heppner prefix. They

ended up moving back

to Heppner, he to work

for Kinzua Corp. and she

to Pioneer Memorial as a

charge nurse and surgery

supervisor. She stayed at

PMH until 1977. During

that time, both of the cou-

Tarnasky in 1970, the year of

her graduation from nursing

nasky took a job with the

newly-formed Tri-County

Home Health agency. In

August, the new director

walked out and "that be-

came my job," she says.

"I had no idea what I was

doing, but I learned really

pital for maternity leaves,

medical leaves, meetings

and other needs during that

time. In 1985, she returned

to the hospital full time,

again as charge nurse. In

1989 she became director

of nursing at PMH and even

covered as hospital admin-

istrator for four months in

1992. During that time,

1987-88, she also worked

part time for Dr. Wolff for

a year when he came out of

portunity," she says. "When

you work in the office with

someone, it's very different

from working in the hospi-

school, entering the Oregon

Health and Sciences Uni-

versity Physician Assistant

In 1996 she returned to

tal with someone."

"It was a really neat op-

retirement.

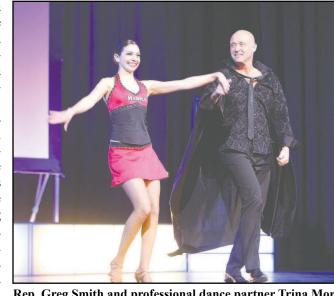
She stayed with Tri-

quick."

In July of 1977, Tar-

school. -Contributed photo

ple's children were born.



Rep. Greg Smith and professional dance partner Trina Morago claimed the mirror ball trophy at Saturday's Dancing with the Hermiston Stars performance. -Contributed photo

the program's second class and graduated in 1998 as a certified physician assistant (PA-C). She then returned to Morrow County and worked for a year and a half in the Irrigon and Boardman clinics until Pioneer Memorial Clinic had an opening. She has served as a clinic provider there since

Tarnasky says that, when she went back to school for her certification, her plan was to work until her certification expired when she was 70. Now, though, she says the needs of her family have required a change of plans.

"My family needed me to be available," she says. "I need to put my family first."

She says she will still be available to the health district if needed until her license expires, but it's nice to be free to spend time with her family without checking her work schedule. She says she has been doing some reading and spending time with grandkidsthough she admits she's not as excited about retirement as many people would be.

"That hospital has been my home away from home my entire life, and I miss it," she says. "It's an adjust-County until 1985, though ment. I don't know exactly she also filled in at the hos- what I'm going to do. I'll figure it out," she adds, saying she'll likely volunteer at church.

"I miss everything but paperwork," she says. "It has been a privilege and an honor to participate in the care of people in this community for so many years. It's humbling to see a family you've gone through hell in a handbasket with and see that they've survived and gone on.

"I've worked with some remarkable people during my lifetime, not only coworkers but patients and families. I miss my patients. I have patients I've taken care of as a nurse and as a provider, and I consider them part of my family," says Tarnasky.

"I thank the community Program. She entered in for always supporting me."

their dances to try and earn audience votes and money for charity. Every dollar donated to the charity counted as a vote for the star. The winner was decided based on a combination of votes from the audience, donation amounts and scores from the judges.

Smith and professional partner Trina Morago danced the paso doble to the Kongos' "Come with Me Now."

Smith, who described himself as having two left feet, said winning was a shock. Known for his support of area wrestling programs, he told the crowd of nearly 500 that there was no doubt which was more difficult.

"There's no comparison. Wrestling is so much easier than dancing," he said on stage. "This has been hard."

Despite the weather, the Hermiston High School's fine arts auditorium was nearly at capacity with a crowd of almost 500 spectators. The event raised around \$11,000 for local charities. Smith was dancing to support the Hermiston Warming Station.

McDowell retires from Wheatland

from Wheatland Insurance Center, Inc. on Dec. 31.

McDowell started her career in insurance with Bob and Marianne Kahl in the late 1990s, and continued when Wheatland purchased that agency in 2001. Her position was account manager for personal insurance (auto and home).

Nancy Snider of Wheatland says McDowell will be missed not only by the staff at Wheatland but also by the many clients she helped during her career.

McDowell herself wasn't available for an interview, as friends tell us her retirement is in full swing, with she and husband Ron on their way to Texas to spend some time with their son and his fam-

TERRAIN DOMINATION CHALLENGE

MORROW

COUNTY GRAIN

GROWERS

350 MAIN STREET

LEXINGTON, OR

High, she attended a year things about medicine topositions, and Ione resiat Marylhurst University, dents are asked to consider Portland, before being acserving their city in that cepted into the University ill today, it's amazing." capacity. Anyone interested of Oregon's theatrical arts can submit a letter of interprogram "with every inten-

Lindsay, Orem selected for

ington and Morgan Orem Vietnam War Memorial. of Heppner will act as student representatives for the ketball, track, FFA, FBLA, President and a member of Columbia Basin Electric art, culture club and 4-H. National Honor Society. Cooperative NRECA Youth Alex is also a part of the Morgan also enjoys vol-Tour in Washington, D.C. school's yearbook class. this summer, June 9-15.

D.C. trip

capital, the students will in the snack shack during counseling and many other have a chance to speak with sporting events and help-Oregon's state representa- ing with "Adopt-a-Family" tives, learn about electric during the holidays. Alex phy, traveling and taking cooperatives, listen to mo- also enjoys helping out care of animals. Morgan tivational speakers and tour on the family cattle ranch is the daughter of Eric and national landmarks includ- by branding cows. Alex is Brandi Orem.

Alex Lindsay of Lex- ing the Smithsonian and the the son of Kim and Barney

Alex is active in bas-While at the nation's his community by helping in food drives, 4-H camp

Lindsay.

Morgan is Junior Class leyball, basketball and 4-H, Alex has been active in as well as volunteering activities. In her spare time, Morgan enjoys photogra-





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