

Ellis organizes St. Pat's 5K walk/run again this year



Janelle Ellis By Bobbi Gordon

Janelle Ellis of Heppner is preparing for her 12th year participating in the St. Patrick's 5K walk/ run. She participated in the walk the inaugural year and then helped coordinate the event as a walk and 5K run starting the second year. Ellis told the Gazette she had never done anything like that before when she was asked to add the run component to the already successful walk event.

Her first step to turn it into a 5K run was to map out different routes around town. She wanted to come up with a route where visitors could see the sites of Heppner while running and know what the weather will be like mid-March."

difficult unless you head out rather than feel like they are one of the highways, which I did not want to do for safety reasons." She ended Helping Friends commitup taking out the long hill that heads up to the high school and incorporated a to keep the event going loop below the dam to gain each year. "She understands back some ground. "There's the importance of the St. since.'

not sure of the number of people who participate each year, but she thought they have had as many as 50 runners, alongside a lot of walkers. The group usually consists of out-of-town visitors and locals as well as the track and cross-country team runners. She reported, "It's a nice little achievable run for those coming out of winter who are trying to get back in shape, an ice breaker event for the high school athletes participating in spring sports or an active event for people to participate in before the rest of their busy day begins."

Friends committee began the event at first as a tribute to Donna Schonbachler, a donating to the cause. She much-loved Heppner womsaid, "I mapped out and an and home health nurse, ran different routes around who passed away from runs in and out of town." town." After finding a route cancer, and each year the she thought would work she proceeds are donated to a raised in Heppner, attended get some miles in when I ignates violations to be a begin the budgeting process crafted route signs and lam- different cause. Ellis re- MHCC and graduated from can. As my co-workers hear civil offense and a Class inated them "as you never ported there are not many Portland State University. me say constantly, 'motion A violation with a maxeach year as the committee meet new people and learn She said after a year has agreed to keep the event and experience different rick's celebration will be or two of feedback, she as simple as possible. The cultures. She noted she was held March 13-15, with the changed the route. "Trying volunteers work hard to fortunate enough to spend a to map out a 5K (3.1 miles) make the event happen but couple of years in the Do-

Heppner without a hill is their family and friends "working."

According to Friends tee member, Susan Hisler, Janelle brings a willingness been positive feedback ever Patrick's celebration as she has Irish Healy genes," Ellis indicated she is Hisler said. Hisler said

its entirety.



Leah Sommers (left) and Janelle Ellis wear their inaugural St. Pat's Day "Donna Schonbachler Remembrance Walk" T-shirts.

she coached Janelle in Jr. Spanish between schools. The Friends Helping High track and running After multiple jobs, she wasn't everything to her back then. "In later years she developed a conditioning program for herself and softball and volleyball as continues to be involved in well as spending time with prohibit the ownership or

changes made to the event She said she loves to travel, route around the town of like to enjoy the event with minican Republic learning

has now started a career at Columbia Basin Electric. She coaches high school her firefighter husband and use of firearms. Ellis was born and one-year-old son. "I try to

Lexington a Second **Amendment Sanctuary**

Council votes unanimously: 'Right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed'



Juli Kennedy is sworn in as Lexington's new mayor by Town Recorder Denis Lien. -Photo by David Sykes.

By David Sykes Concerned that state would pick this up and do government may be moving this," Councilmember Bill to take away Oregonians' Second Amendment rights been watching the news to keep and bear arms, the Lexington Council last government," Kennedy exweek voted unanimously plained. "They are against to designate the town a our Second Amendment Second Amendment Sanc- rights. We are a small town tuary. "The state of Oregon but to have an ordinance is coming after your guns," newly appointed Mayor Juli start. Yes, we are small but Kennedy said after reading more and more towns are the three-page ordinance in While admitting that said in explaining the need

Lexington is just a small town, councilmembers said the people must start somewhere to stand up for their constitutional rights. "We

would hope other towns Beard said. "We have all with what is going on in our if the state comes in, it's a going toward this and there is power in numbers," she for the new law.

Others in the audience said the Oregon Legislature, which is controlled by liberal Democrats from the Portland metro area, will probably begin passing anti-firearms laws in the upcoming legislative session, and they were glad Lexington was preparing. Others thought the ordinance would do no good and the state would just come in and take firearms anyway. Others pointed to what is going on in Virginia, and that state government's efforts to restrict its citizen's gun rights.

The three-page ordinance respects existing federal firearms laws but pushes back against any new laws that, among other things, would tax firearms or accessories, register or track firearms or their owners, forbid the use of firearms or confiscate and in Lexington. -Photo by David

ty governments in Oregon that have created either ordinances, resolutions or letters defending Second Amendment gun rights. They include Baker, Clackamas, Coos, Crook, Curry, Douglas, Grant, Jackson, Josephine, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Lane, Linn, Malheur, Marion, Polk, Sherman, Tillamook, Union, Wallowa, Wasco, Wheeler and Yamhill. There are also six cities, including Canby, Molalla, Myrtle Point, Myrtle Creek, Port Orford and Turner that have moved to protect Second Amendment rights. Lexington can now be added to the list.

In other business at last Tuesday's meeting newly appointed mayor Juli Kennedy was sworn into office and presided over her first meeting. The council also appointed Will Lemmon to the council filling a vacant position. Lemmon will be sworn in next month.

The council heard a report from Fire Chief Charlie Sumner who said he was going to approach new Heppner Fire Chief Steve Rhea about asking if Lexington might be able to join the rural fire district. Lexington's fire department is all volunteer and has been severely short of people for quite some time. There are currently only two volunteer firefighters on the force and the town is concerned about its ability to respond to fires.

In other business the council reviewed a pro-



Scott Lamb has been hired for the maintenance position Sykes

posed budget calendar for The new ordinance des- the budget committee to

is the lotion'."

This year's St. Patwalk/run taking place on the 14th. Registration and social hour will begin at 8:30 a.m. with the run/walk starting at 9:30.

in the area, having visited

imum fine of \$2,000 for an individual and \$4,000 for a corporation. It also states that any of these new state or federal laws "shall be considered null, void and of no effect in the Town of Lexington." The ordinance exempts persons who have been convicted of felony crimes or who are prohibited from possessing firearms under federal law. The ordinance also does not permit or allow the possession of firearms in a federal building. Neither does the ordinance prohibit individuals from voluntarily participating in permitting, licensing, registration or other processing of applications for concealed carry permits.

According to a webof India is warm and that site run by an organization called Oregon Firearms Federation, there are currently 24 out of the 36 coun-

for the upcoming year. The council recently had County Assessor Mike Gorman at a meeting to talk over the budgeting process. Gorman let the council know that if they needed help in the process to contact him. There are five members on a typical budget committee, and the council talked about finding people, including those who have served in the past, to be on the committee for the coming year.

The council heard a report from new city recorder Denis Lien who gave a positive report and said he is getting a feel for the job and getting a handle on the city's financial systems and bookkeeping.

In other business Councilmember Bobbi Gordon introduced the new town maintenance man, Scott Lamb of Heppner, who recently moved to the area from Irrigon.

New Catholic priest arrives

By David Sykes

Saint Patrick Catholic Church in Heppner and St. Williams in Ione have a new priest, Fr. Thankachan Joseph. Fr. Joseph, 47, comes here most recently from Hood River where he was a priest for the past five months.

Fr. Joseph was born in India and had been a priest there for 17 years. He said he knew since he was nine years old and started attending church with his grandmother that being a priest was his life's calling. This is his first time in the United States and our recent snow was the first time he had seen the white stuff in person. "It is very nice here and I like it very much," he says.

Fr. Joseph has three degrees, in education, psychology and world history, and his special areas of interest are counseling young people and visiting and talking with people. He says his training with teenagers has given him skills in helping young people deal with awareness, responsiveness, life's con-



Fr. Thankachan Joseph

social media and peer pressures. "I like to help them with time management," he says pointing out that young people often have only short-term memory calling to visit people who and can daydream and not concentrate. "I help them learn to focus," he says. Using a method called mind mapping, he helps students people through care and develop a blueprint to better studying for lessons you to the end of time'," and tests. "I want to help he says quoting Matthew them improve," he says. Fr. 28:20. He says elderly peo-Joseph says over the years ple sometimes just "want he has given training to between 15 and 20 thousand young people in India.

the things he has learned over the years in counseling young people is they sometimes do not feel appreci- in the US and Heppner but ated. He says it is parents and teachers who ultimately help mold a young person by video conference, so that fusions, and dealing with to their goals in life, but helps. Fr. Joseph has also

sometimes they feel unap- jumped right into meeting people and volunteering preciated, like they are not doing good enough.

Fr. Joseph has known the Lakeview Heights Sesince he was a small boy that he wanted to be a priest. He started attending church with his grandmother when he was nine. "I felt drawn to it," he says. He is from a large family of eight children and his father was a farmer in the southern state of Kerala city of Kottayam.

Fr. Joseph also has a may be lonely, especially the elderly. "I want to bring to them God's experience of being together with other comforting. 'I will be with to be heard," saying they want to talk to someone. Fr. Joseph adds that anyone, Fr. Joseph says one of regardless of religion, is welcome to contact him and come by for a visit.

> He says he likes being does miss his family. However, he does contact them

cure Residential Treatment Facility and offered his visitation services. He also likes to play chess and has been volunteering with the school chess club. "I've been meeting people and getting to know everyone and like it very much here," he says. But adds the area he came from in the south

he is going to have to get some different clothes for the colder weather here.

