

**Obituaries**

**Guest Editorial**

**Robert H. (Bert) Snyder**

Robert Harry (Bert) Snyder died Monday, March 2 as the result of a motor vehicle accident. A memorial service will be held on Friday, March 20 at 4 p.m. at the Condon Elks Lodge with a potluck meal to follow.



**Robert H. (Bert) Snyder**

Bert was born April 9, 1967 in The Dalles, OR, to Larry and Susan Snyder. He spent his younger years on the Snyder Ranch southwest of Condon with his older sister Thirza, older brother Joe, and younger brother Chuck. He attended Condon schools for all 12 years, graduating from Condon High School in 1985. In September of that year, he enrolled in the Wyoming Technical Institute Diesel Mechanic program. On June 24, 2000, he married the love of his life, Lori Cecil, of Heppner. Bert's love for Lori was only surpassed by his love of taking her on adventures. Lori and Bert raised four kids together, Kasandra, Skylar, Jeris and Kendra. Bert's love for his children was endless. His example of hard work, compassion and love will live on through them.

Bert had many jobs throughout his life, not only touching the people he worked with, but the land he worked. Bert joined a partnership with his parents in the Snyder Ranch operations. He was currently employed by the Oregon State Highway Department.

Bert loved anything with wheels, going so far as to volunteer to pick rocks in the fields as a young boy in order to be able to drive a vehicle. Starting at age six, he was involved in all aspects of the ranch, including the cattle and branding, driving tractors, combine and any type of truck. He loved to hunt and camp. He was an animal lover. As a boy, his favorite

dog was a Springer Spaniel named Sugar. In the last 10 years you never saw Bert without his border collie companion, Biscuit. Their journey together continues even in heaven.

Bert never met a stranger. He was extremely loyal to his family and friends. He was always ready to help anyone in need. Bert was a member of the Condon Elks Lodge #1869, serving as an officer and on several lodge committees, including Trustee.

Bert is survived by his wife, Lori; daughter, Kasandra Kennedy (Nathan) and granddaughter, Olivia, of Lexington; sons Skylar and Jeris of Condon; daughter Kendra Snyder (Kyle Richie) of Bonney Lake, WA; his parents Larry & Susan Snyder of Condon, sister Thirza Kilgore (Pat) of Boardman, brother Joe (Kim) of Condon, brother Chuck of Salem as well as 15 nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Harry and Mary Myers, Condon, Charles & Lyda Snyder, Klamath Falls and Bill & Thirza DeCew, Beaverton.

Memorial contributions may be made to Condon Scholarship Foundation, PO Box 384, Condon, OR 97823.

Arrangements are under the care of Sweeney Mortuary of Condon. The online condolence book is available at [www.sweeney-mortuary.com](http://www.sweeney-mortuary.com).

**Eugene Anthony "Gene" Doherty**

Eugene Anthony "Gene" Doherty passed away Sunday, January 12 in Hermiston. A memorial service will be held Friday, March 13 at 11 a.m. at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Heppner. Concluding service with military honors will follow at the Heppner Masonic Cemetery. Following the graveside service, a light meal will be served in the St. Patrick Catholic Church Parish Hall.

Gene was born May 8, 1932 in Heppner, the fourth son of William Thomas "Bill" Doherty and Rose Doherty. Gene and his brothers Pat, Ross and Tom grew up on the family farm north of Ione, which Gene farmed until a few years ago.

Gene attended school in Ione and then served in the Korean Conflict. He worked at the Kinzua Mill in Heppner for many years. Gene was a member of the Elks Lodge #358 of Heppner and the American Legion Post #95.

He was a strong supporter of Ione and Heppner sports and children in general and was always an easy mark for kids trying to raise money. Gene touched and helped so many people in his life; they couldn't all be mentioned here. Seeing his children, grand-children, and great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews would always bring a smile to his face and he loved visits from just about anybody.

Gene also liked to go on "road trips" with many of his lifelong friends to sporting events and assorted rowdy establishments.

Some of his family's favorite memories with their dad were attending the Heppner St. Patrick's Day festival and Morrow County Rodeo each year. The small Doherty house on Water Street swelled to 20+ people during those events, and Gene loved being at the center of it all. "He will be dearly missed by all his family and friends," the family stated.

Gene was preceded in death by his parents, Bill and Rose Doherty and brothers, Pat Doherty and Ross Doherty. He is survived by his brother, Tom Doherty, Payette, ID; sons, Ron (Sherry) Doherty, Spokane, WA and Steve (Kim) Mitchell, Meridian, ID. He was blessed with grandchildren, Matt (Megan) Doherty, Megan Doherty, Andrea (Rian) Contonio, Brandon (Kaila) Engfer, Kristy Mitchell, Scott Mitchell and Brittany Mitchell; and great-grandchildren, Tucker, Piper, Jayden, Olivia, Hazel, Damien, Jackie and Adrian.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Heppner Booster Club, PO Box 917, Heppner, OR 97836.

Sweeney Mortuary is in care of arrangements. The online condolence book is available at [www.sweeney-mortuary.com](http://www.sweeney-mortuary.com).

**Death and Funeral Notices**

**Reverend Gerald W. Condon** – Reverend Gerald W. Condon, 92, of Heppner died Saturday, March 7 at Pioneer Memorial Hospital. He was born Sept. 8, 1927 at Dublin, Ireland. A Vigil Mass with Rosary will be held Thursday, March 19 at 7 p.m. at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Heppner. A Mass of Christian burial will be Friday, March 20 at 12 noon, also at St. Patrick Catholic Church, with burial service to follow at Heppner Masonic Cemetery. Sweeney Mortuary of Heppner is in care of arrangements.

**Colleen Ployhar** – Colleen Ployhar, 88, longtime Heppner resident, died January 23 at Avamere Assisted Living Center in Hermiston. A graveside memorial service will be held Saturday, March 21 at 11 a.m. at the Heppner Masonic Cemetery. Sweeney Mortuary of Heppner is in care of arrangements.

**Deanna Nadine Peck** – Deanna Nadine Peck, 42, formerly of Heppner, died Friday, February 10 at Portland, OR. A memorial service will be held Saturday, March 21 at 2 p.m. at the Rebekah Lodge in Lexington. She was born October 15, 1977 in Heppner, Oregon. A full obituary will follow in next week's edition of the Heppner Gazette-Times. Sweeney Mortuary of Heppner is in care of arrangements.

**Shannon L. Boor** – Shannon L. Boor, 46, Heppner, died Sunday, March 8 at her home. She was born February 21, 1974 at Girard, KS. A memorial service will be held, Saturday, March 21 at 5 p.m. at the Heppner High School Gymnasium. A reception will follow at the Morrow County Fairgrounds Building. Sweeney Mortuary of Heppner is in care of arrangements.

**Capitol Investment**

**By Jim Doherty, Morrow County Commissioner**

It was four o'clock in the morning east coast time, one o'clock here at home. I had not yet adjusted to the jet lag but they were going to start letting commissioners into the conference hall at 7:30 and I was bound and determined to get as close to the stage as I might. Our president, President Trump, was scheduled to address the 2500 commissioners, judges and supervisors assembled from around the country. It worked, I briskly stepped to the front of the line and within an hour some 1000 lined up behind me. He would speak in a mere eight hours.

No bus or train this time, I was leading the Oregon contingent as their president so I swallowed my earthbound preference and boarded the big jet plane. NACo, the National Association of Counties, was having its annual legislative conference. I had intended to go in 2019 however the weather of last February nixed those plans.

There were summits on health, transportation, public lands, agriculture and rural affairs, money matters and justice reform, all before lunch on day one. All of the various committee meetings and sponsored breaks were to varying degrees consumed by discussions of the Corona virus. On day two the commissioner representatives from King County WA and Umatilla County to our east caught a "red eye," home. It was interesting to try to strike the right balance. As the local public health authority there was little doubt that this is our foremost concern. Not an hour passes that I don't reassess our approach. The Morrow County Healthcare team is working tirelessly. Commissioner Murdock of Umatilla County relayed that their patient is recovering. Thank God.

There were counties that didn't send a representative back to DC for fear of returning with the dreaded virus. The danger in throwing up the castle walls and discontinuing necessary interactive work has to be paralysis of their citizens. At the same time preparation, precaution and prevention are paramount.

I visited with my sister, who is a nurse on the frontline of the fight, and asked her what her plans were. She said she intends

to "get up, show up, go to work." I called her to visit about the virus but she preferred to inquire about anything and everything else I was working on. She said it lent a certain degree of comfort to know that we, the commissioners, were working on a plethora of other things, as "this too shall pass."

Day three brought visits to the congressmen and women on Capitol Hill. I sat down with Greg Walden, Peter DeFazio, Ron Wyden, Jeff Merkley, Kurt Schrader and Congresswoman Bonamici. I was joined by a fair cross-section of Oregon elected officials, from eastern, western and metro Oregon. We set aside our big R's, big D's and big egos and leaned on our senators and representatives do what is best for Oregon.

I promised Jerry McElligott, Kyle Robinson and my fellow commissioners that I would meet with the Department of Defense and discuss the entirely incorrect and abysmal stance that the Navy has taken in response to our repeated suggestions that they could treat Morrow County with some degree of respect given the cost we have allotted to the Bombing Range. Look for a re-dress of the Navy's letter bemoaning the use of livestock to enhance the conditions on the range. I will sit down with Kyle, OSU and others on my return.

I visited with the Department of Energy and Congressman Walden about the radiation exposure that we have been unknowingly subjected to. They promised to leave "no stone unturned" in their effort to understand how this occurred, the consequences and future assurances that it never occurs again. There is a lot to "unpack" as I return home. I need to meet with the federal forest permit grazers, Kimberly Lindsay of Community Counseling and those constituents affected by the possibilities in Washington.

By 7:30 I was asleep on my feet. Sure I was first in line but at a cost. Just prior to the security folks letting us through the doors, John Losh a staff member of NACo happened by. He stopped and quizzically asked me why, for heaven's sake, was I standing in line? It turns out that all the state presidents were afforded passes to a roped off section, feet from the podium. Rest assured I was the first one into that section. Those brave souls who joined me in the wee hours of the morning found great mirth in the predicament, they also gave your Morrow County commissioner some "street cred." There can only be one first in line. Forgive me, I need a nap.



**Jim Doherty**

**Wind Challenge canceled**

In what should have been its seventh year, the Gorge Technology Alliance (GTA) announced that the 2020 Wind Challenge has been canceled in relation to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) situation. The event brings over 200 middle- and high-school students and dozens of volunteers from across six counties together for a one-day competition to build the best wind turbine. This event had been planned for March 14 at Fort Dalles Readiness Center.

"We did not take cancellation of this event lightly," said GTA Executive Director Jessica Metta. "While Wind Challenge has been a beloved staple for STEM education in the gorge for many years, the safety of the students

and volunteers is our top priority. We have been monitoring the COVID-19 concerns very carefully and felt it was best to cancel this year's event based on our most up-to-date assessment and in consideration of general public health and safety."

The planning team behind Wind Challenge will reconvene in a few months to consider rescheduling the event for fall 2020. All previously registered student teams, volunteers and the community will be informed if the event is rescheduled.

For more information about Wind Challenge, visit [windchallenge.org](http://windchallenge.org) or contact Jessica Metta at 541-296-2266, [jessica@crcta.org](mailto:jessica@crcta.org).

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**CORRECTION!**  
**OLD TIMERS' NIGHT**  
**THE HEPPNER GAZETTE-TIMES**  
**PUBLISHED THE WRONG DATE**  
**FOR THE ELKS OLD TIMERS'**  
**DINNER. IT WAS ON MARCH**  
**5TH. OUR SINCERE APOLOGIES**  
**FOR ANY CONFUSION.**

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