

Good News Only

By Doris Brosnan

“...busy sidewalks dressed in holiday style, in the air there’s a feeling of Christmas. Children laughing, people passing, meeting smile after smile...” Yes, the Christmas atmosphere enhanced by the new, colorful decorations and the songs broadcasted on Main Street is delightful. And we can fill our calendars with so many holiday-related activities.

Call or watch the Gazette for information, and with internet access you can send email to heppnerchamber@gmail.com or call 676-5536 to learn what events will welcome us this month. Tomorrow, the Heppner Community Church is holding a painting party; Saturday, the 11th, the Artifactory Bazaar at the Gilliam and Bisbee Building, sponsored by Heppner Daycare; Sunday, the 12th, from 5 to 7 p.m., the “Searching for Christ in Christmas Wise Men Scavenger Hunt,” sponsored by Home Hospice of Morrow County; Monday, the 13th, “Christmas Trivia Night” at Flood Town Books; and on Tuesday, the 14th, the “Merry Grinchmas Party” at Flood Town Books; Wednesday, the 15th, the Wine and Design event at Murray’s Drug; Thursday, the 16th, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the fairgrounds the “Celebrate Heppner Christmas Event” with the chance to win wonderful gifts with your reward cards, and with Santa and Mrs. Clause, all-ages coloring contest, rewards card raffle, Parent Teacher Club bake sale; Saturday, the 18th, the Nightlight Parade and Snowball Drop at Thomson Square, sponsored by the Heppner Outreach Council, and the City of Heppner dedication ceremony for Thomson Square where Mexican Chocolate will

be served, courtesy of Tacos Hometown; Christmas Decorating Contest with three categories (three winners) sponsored by Ellsworth Real Estate Fund LLC, and all-ages coloring contest with a chance to win awesome art supplies, sponsored by TREO and Wilkinson Ranches.

Our local library also has activities for all ages: TumbleBookLibrary is an online collection of e-books for children. “They are a great way to encourage tech-savvy kids to enjoy reading.” Use a computer, tablet or mobile phone, all you need is an internet connection. There are no downloads as the books are streamed right to your device at the click of a button. Tumblebooks also has a downloadable app for android and iOS; choose Oregon Trail Library District as your library and log in with your library card number. There are over 250 animated, talking picture books, Spanish and French books, read-along chapter books, non-fiction books, and exciting games and puzzles. The library also has a program for adult crafters with limited space, so registration is required. Go to the website now to reserve your spot. The Heppner branch will have make-and-take bags you can assemble at home, but you will still need to register to pick up your bag as supplies are limited.

Cara Osmin and Claudia Hughes attended “A very Mixed-up Christmas,” the Sage Garden Preschool performance because “we needed to share the excitement of three-to-five-year-olds as we prepare for Christmas,” reports Claudia. The performance of the 21 little stars on the beautifully decorated stage “did not disappoint.” Hot chocolate and cookies fol-

lowed for everyone. “Good job, Mrs. Chick and Mrs. Brannon,” says Claudia.

David and April Sykes visited their daughter Allison Hayes and her family, husband Matthew and sons August and Sebastian, in Cary, North Carolina, over the Thanksgiving weekend. In addition to enjoying a traditional Thanksgiving dinner prepared by Matthew and Allison, they were also treated by the boys to a guided tour of the family’s new neighborhood in Cary, including a nearby lake and playground. The city has lots of trees, which were all turning with the autumn colors. Later they went to Durham for a look at Matt’s workplace, as he is the new Japanese and Asian-American-Studies Librarian at Duke University. Everyone also went out and enjoyed lunch and dinner at a couple of the local restaurants before returning home Monday.

Diana Ball and Becky Cannon took a drive to Condon last Saturday to visit Virginia Durfey, a long-time friend of their mother, Betty Fulleton. Virginia lives at Summit Springs, where she recently celebrated turning 102. Too long had passed since the women’s last visit, so they had many years’ worth of news to share with one another, and they all hope to chat again before long.

The respite offered by these tidbits that just brought smiles to our faces is so inviting, so we thank the contributors. Your pleasurable moments can also bring readers some pauses for smiles, so please, send your good-news tidbits before Monday afternoon to dbrosnan123@gmail.com, or call 541-223-1490.

Here’s hoping that some good news comes to everyone reading this.

Neighborhood Center giving Christmas food boxes

By Hannah Finch

Providing food for those who need it is on the list of the many things that the Neighborhood Center does. Throughout the year, the Neighborhood Center distributes personalized food boxes, and they always have some special ones set up for the holiday season. This December, they will be giving out Christmas food boxes that include a Christmas ham and other fixings to prepare a Christmas dinner, along with other pantry staples, like canned goods, frozen foods and dairy products.

“We’re doing more food boxes now than we ever have in the history of this place,” says Lisa Patton, the Neighborhood Center’s coordinator.

Just last month, the Neighborhood Center was arranging Thanksgiving food boxes. Each box was personalized for the family who would be receiving it. For families of one to two, the box included a good-sized turkey breast, while for families with three or more, the box included a 10-12 pound turkey. The families were then able to choose Thanksgiving-type food, like stuffing, gravy and mashed potatoes, along with additional pantry staples.

The Neighborhood Center is considered the main food pantry for south Morrow County. “We have 10 freezers, a couple of refrigerators and shelves full of boxed food,” Patton says.

The miniature grocery store inside is client-choice, where people can come in and use a shopping cart to hold the food that they get to hand-pick themselves. According to Patton, most food pantries don’t allow you to pick out the items yourself, but Heppner’s does. To quote her, Patton says this “gives the power back to the people.”

“We want people to be comfortable coming in,”

Patton says. “Especially now, with everything going up in costs... The price of food has risen so high lately. More and more people are going to pantries, and it’s a much needed service.”

The Neighborhood Center also delivers boxes of food weekly to the elderly that have been pre-packaged by CAPECO, or the Community Action Program of East Central Oregon, a non-profit organization that provides programs for individuals in counties across eastern Oregon, including Morrow. CAPECO provides food that the Neighborhood Center can then place in its grocery store and distribute to people who need it in Morrow County.

In addition to those food boxes, the Neighborhood Center also assists people in signing up for the Fresh Produce Program, provided by CAPECO. Patton says, “We help people get signed up by going through the application process and getting everything submitted.” Along with this, the Neighborhood Center helps get additional funding for people through CAPECO and connects them to other supportive services.

If you would like to help, you can purchase a Holiday Meal Voucher at the grocery store for someone who could use it, or you can donate directly to the Neighborhood Center.

“We could use food donations for the holiday boxes,” Patton says. Expired food or food without a nutrition label (including home-prepared food) is not an acceptable donation. It should also be noted that any meat that has been gained through hunting must be processed and USDA approved before it can be donated.

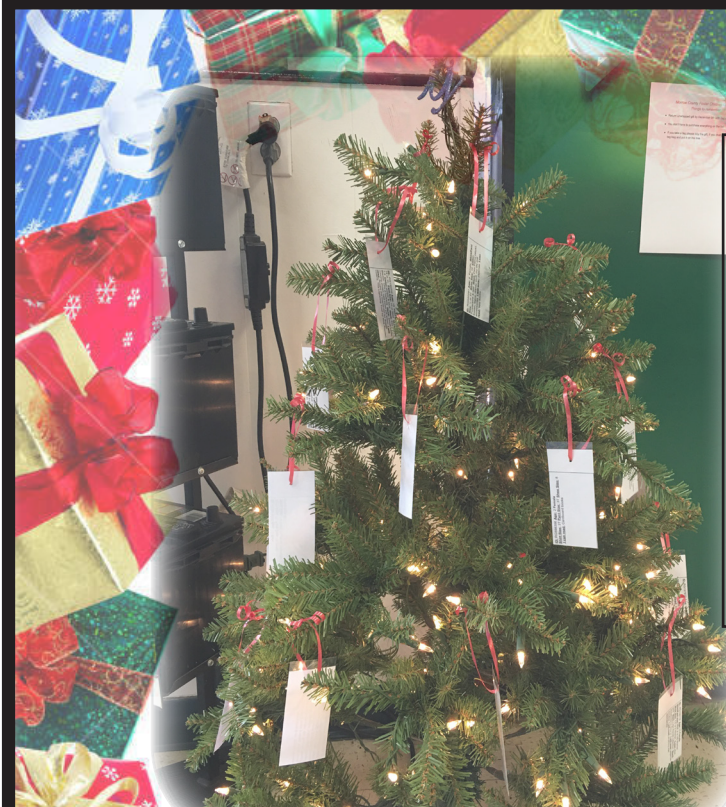
When asking how someone could qualify for these food boxes, Patton said that one’s income level would play an important part. “A lot of people around here work in the local area, but don’t get paid above minimum wage. Even though they have a job, they still financially qualify.” To find out if you qualify, you can go into the Neighborhood Center and check with Patton.

“Nobody should have to go hungry in south Morrow County, or not have food in their cupboard, or not have a Christmas,” Patton says. “That’s why we do all of this.”

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**Does your business or organization have a holiday event planned?
Do you just want to wish the community good tidings?
Contact Giselle at the Heppner Gazette-Times to have your advertisement included.**

Deadline for the December 15th issue is Monday, December 13th at 5pm
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