

The Official Newspaper of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

Heppner

GAZETTE-TIMES

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Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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For Obituaries: Obituaries are published in the Heppner GT at no charge and are edited to meet news guidelines. Families wishing to include information not included in the guidelines or who wish to have the obituary written in a certain way must purchase advertising space for the obituary.

For Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor MUST be signed by the author. The Heppner GT will not publish unsigned letters. All letters MUST include the author's address and phone number for use by the GT office. The GT reserves the right to edit letters. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

Obituaries

Marvin Dean Way Norma Rae French

Marvin Dean Way passed away peacefully at his home in Stanfield, Oregon on January 20, 2022, at the age of 92. He was born November 30, 1929, in Heppner, OR. He was the ninth of ten children born to Daniel and Iva Vinson Way of Lexington.



Marvin Dean Way

Marvin enlisted in the Army after high school and was an MP in the Korean Conflict.

Marvin took over the Way family farm in Lexington after returning from active duty where he grew hay and raised cattle. He married Norma Ann Robinson on September 1, 1961, and their family grew. They raised their three children on the farm in

Lexington; a daughter, Lou Ann and two sons, Bruce and Mark.

He worked at the Kinzua Corporation lumber mill in Heppner and for ODOT until his retirement. Marvin was a member of the Odd-fellows IOOF lodge and the VFW.

Marvin enjoyed the outdoors throughout his life and many a family member has a wooden clock that he skillfully crafted just for them. He was an avid fan of youth sports and could, more often than not, be found attending a local high school sporting event. He excitedly looked forward to the yearly Vinson/Way family reunion, where one could hear his boisterous laugh and many a reminiscent tale about some member of the family's exploits. He never met a stranger he didn't already know.

Marvin was preceded in death by his parents; his wife and his brothers and sisters, June, Stanley, Maxine, Zelma, Joseph, Claude, Bertin, Kenneth and Asa.

He is survived by his daughter, Lou Ann Way of Vancouver, WA, and her son, James; and his two sons, Bruce and his wife Charlene of Boise, ID and their daughters, McKenzie and Morgan; and Mark and his wife Robin of Stanfield, OR.

As per Marvin's wishes no funeral services will be held and any gathering in his memory will be withheld until Covid restrictions are relaxed. Because of his love of the outdoors his family suggests that you plant a tree in his memory.

Please share memories of Marvin with his family at burnsmortuaryhermiston.com. Burns Mortuary of Hermiston is in care of arrangements.

Norma Rae French was born May 29, 1926, to Nettie (Crawford) and Edgar Denton at home in Promise (Wallowa County), Oregon; the tenth of eleven children. She died on January 13, 2022, at Pioneer Memorial Nursing Home in Heppner, OR.

Heppner and she enjoyed learning and playing golf, attending the morning coffee sessions downtown, and becoming involved in community activities.

Norma had a beautiful soprano voice and loved to sing, which led her to become a member of the Condon High School Glee club, St. Patrick's church choir and a singing group in Heppner known as the Sentimentalists. She was also a member of St. Patrick's altar society and taught youth religious instruction for many years.



Norma Rae French

Norma spent her early childhood attending the country school in Promise. Her family moved to Milton-Freewater, then to Condon, OR where she attended high school graduating in 1946. She was a cheerleader in Condon, met a football player named Raymond from Heppner and they began dating. Raymond graduated, enlisted in the US Navy; and their romance continued while he was serving his country. Raymond was discharged from the service, returned home and they were married October 26, 1946. They were preparing to celebrate their 75th wedding anniversary when Raymond passed away. They did however receive a Papal Blessing from the Pope and a certificate from the Vatican acknowledging their dedication and devotion to each other.

Norma and Raymond spent their first year of marriage at Vinson, OR before moving to his childhood home on Big Butter Creek for the next 33 years building a cattle ranch and raising their three daughters. During this time on the ranch, Norma became famous for her homemade yeast rolls and pies fresh from the oven. Many men crossing her table at branding time were privileged to enjoy her cooking and hospitality. She became a self-taught, experienced seamstress, making everything from curtains to prom dresses for her daughters. They eventually retired from ranching, moved to

Norma dedicated time to serving the livestock industry, becoming president of the Morrow County Cowbells and a district vice president in the Oregon State Cowbells, an organization later known as Oregon Cattlewomen.

Norma enjoyed social gatherings and loved visiting with relatives, friends and neighbors earning her the honor of a Proclamation on her seventieth birthday declaring May 29, 1996, as "Norma French Day" in Heppner. She, along with Raymond, received a second honor being named grand marshals of the annual St. Patrick's Day parade in 2020.

Norma is survived by her three daughters, Karen Wood (Joe) of Tigard, OR; Verina Schiller (Tony) of Round Rock, TX and Susan French (Matthew Greenup) of Heppner; sisters-in-law, Dorothy O'Rourke of Pendleton, OR and Francine Evans of Irrigon, OR; nine grandchildren; thirteen great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. She is preceded in death by her husband, Raymond; parents, Nettie and Edgar; four brothers; six sisters and brother-in-law, Joe French.

A joint funeral service for Norma and Raymond is planned for later this spring. Condolence messages may be sent to the Norma French family, c/o Susan French, 84176 French Lane, Heppner, OR 97836.

Memorial contributions may be made to Pioneer Memorial Nursing Home, PO Box 9, Heppner, OR 97836 or St. Patrick's Church, PO Box 633, Heppner, OR 97836.

Washington man relates problems with living under high voltage power lines

By David Sykes

Leonard Van Buren owns property in the Buttercreek area of Morrow County, and he is adamant about not wanting high voltage power lines from the Boardman to Hemmingway project (B2H) being placed over his property. He has negative experiences living under similar power lines in Washington to back up that opinion.

Van Buren lives on land outside Pasco, Washington, that already has similar high-voltage power lines, and he says they are nothing but trouble. "When the wind starts blowing those lines will arc," he says. "And when they arc they start fires a couple of times a year" on his property under the lines. "The wind doesn't have to blow much to cause the arcing," he adds. He also says once the volunteer fire department gets on the scene to fight the fires, they have to stay a certain distance away to keep the firemen from getting electrocuted.

Currently leasing out his Morrow County farm ground, last week Van Buren attended a meeting of the Morrow County Commissioners called to discuss the 290-mile long B2H

power line scheduled to begin construction next year. (See related story, pg.1) Idaho Power, along with two partners, is behind the new power line, which the company says is needed not only to service its customer base but also collect and distribute renewable energy being generated in the western states.

Van Buren, who has ranch land outside Pasco under similar power lines is against the route in Morrow County that would see similar power lines built over his property. He says when working on his Washington cattle ranch the fences below the lines become so charged with electricity he can't touch them without getting shocked. "I sometimes have to stand in plastic buckets to keep from getting bit," he says. A lot of his fencing was put in before the power lines went up.

Around his place, anything that is metal can get "hot" and produce a shock, including irrigation pipe, which he says will act as a lightning rod, and farm equipment. If equipment is too close to the lines, he says they will drain the batteries in the vehicles. Van Buren says it's around

100 feet on either side of the power lines that can cause problems for property owners. "The power companies will tell you they have a discharge ground to take care of the problem, but they don't put them in," he says.

Van Buren says another problem with power lines over the property is when crews come out to check or work on the lines, they drive ATVs that bring in noxious weeds. "People are bringing in yellow star thistle on their 4x4s, and we didn't have that before," he relates.

Another knock against the proposed B2H power line location, Van Buren says, is yes, landowners will be paid a one-time easement fee, but if a wind company wants to locate on your property they can't because the lines will be in the way. He says there is currently a MET tower on his property and maybe a potential windmill site he could miss out on if the power line is located there. Wind measuring towers, sometimes called meteorological evaluation towers (MET) are used to verify the wind characteristics at a potential site for a wind farm.

MCS D celebrates graduation growth

On Thursday, January 20, the Oregon Department of Education released graduation rates for the 2020-21 graduating class.

Over the past 11 years MCS D has seen a 20 percent increase in graduation rates going from 76 percent in 2011-12 to 96.32 percent for 2020-21. The most recent rate is more than 15 percentage points higher than the 20-21 Oregon state rate, which is 80.63 percent. Superintendent Dirk Dirksen attributes the continued improvement in graduation rates to a shift in culture and a commitment by the adults in Morrow County to support students in innovative ways. This can be seen with commitment from families, wraparound program support, STEAM programs, internships, and early college programs.

For the graduating class of 2021 in particular it is important to highlight that MCS D was able to maintain either limited in-person or in-person learning in their high schools for the majority of the school year last year. In-person

learning provided students continued opportunities to connect with teachers and move forward with their graduation requirements.

Graduation rates broken down by individual MCS D high schools included Irrigon Jr/Sr High, 98.21 four-year rate and 100 four-year completer rate; Heppner Jr/Sr High, 100 for both four-year rate and four-year completer rate; Morrow Education Center, 87.5 four-year rate and 93.75 four-year completer rate; Riverside, 100 for both and district, 96.32 four-year rate and 97.55 four-year completer rate.

Superintendent Dirk Dirksen said that graduation is always the goal for each student in Morrow County School District. "I know that the staff in all the buildings have put in a lot of effort over the last three years in particular, working with students and families on an individual level to help them succeed while dealing with the challenges we are facing with COVID," Dirksen said.



- ADVANTAGE DENTAL AFFORDABLE FAMILY EYEWEAR ALLSTOTT CONSTRUCTION AMAZON AMERITITLE APEX OUTDOORS B.P.O.E. BAILEY HEAVY EQUIPMENT REPAIR BALM FORK LODGE BANK OF EASTERN OREGON BMCC BLUE MOUNTAIN INVESTMENT BRANNON'S AUTO REPAIR BREAKING GROUNDS COFFEE BROWNE HOUSE COFFEE BUCKNUM'S BUCKSHOT BUTTER CREEK CATTLE COMPANY CB'S PORTABLE RESTROOMS CELL FIX CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER CIRCLE K-DEVIN OIL CITY OF HEPPNER CMG FINANCIAL COLUMBIA BASIN ELECTRIC COLUMBIA BASIN HEATING/COOLING COLUMBIA DEVELOPMENT AUTH. COMMUNITY COUNSELING SOLUTION CONNECTED PROFESSIONALS CPA CRAIG MILES FARM CREEKSIDE RANCH DALE & SHERYLL BATES DANIEL VAN SCHOLACK CPA DENNIS WISER TECHNOLOGY DICKENSON CHIROPRACTIC DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES DORIS BROSNAN EAST OREGONIAN EAST OREGON BUSINESS SOURCE EAST OREGON WORKFORCE BOARD ELLSWORTH REAL ESTATE FUND FINLEY BUTTES LANDFILL FLOOD TOWN BOOKS FRANK & CARA OSMIN GAR AVIATION GATEWAY CAFE GENTRY HOMES GORGE NETWORKS GREEN FEED AND SEED GRIEB FARMS HAIGH HEATING & COOLING HAIR EXPRESSIONS HEPPNER AUTO PARTS HEPPNER CHRISTIAN CHURCH HEPPNER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION HEPPNER DAYCARE HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES HEPPNER MARKET FRESH HEPPNER SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST HEPPNER UNITED METHODIST HERMISTON LUXURY BUS HOPEFUL SAINTS MINISTRY HORSESHOE HEREFORD RANCH HUGHES RANCH INTERMOUNTAIN ESD JAG JOURNEY JAY COIL FABRICATING JOHN & PAT EDMUNDSON KILKENNY RANCH KUHN LAW OFFICES LES SCHWAB LEXINGTON PUMP LIFE DEFINED BY LIGHT LINDSAY RANCH M TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS MID COLUMBIA BUS MID COLUMBIA TITLE CO. MILLER & SONS EXCAVATING MORROW COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT MORROW COUNTY MORROW COUNTY FAIR & RODEO MORROW COUNTY GRAIN GROWERS MORROW COUNTY HEALTH DIST. MORROW COUNTY PARKS MORROW COUNTY MUSEUM MORROW COUNTY SHERIFF DEPT. MORROW COUNTY VETERANS MORROW DEVELOPMENT CORP MORROW LIVESTOCK GROWERS. MORROW SWCD MURRAY'S DRUGSTORE NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER NORTHWEST FARM CREDIT SERVICES NORTHWESTERN MOTEL O SO KLEEN OREGON TRAIL LIBRARY OREGON TRAIL PRO RODEO OSU EXTENSION PERK & BREWS PETERSONS JEWELERS PETTYJOHN'S SUPPLY PIONEER MEMORIAL THERAPY PORT OF MORROW PORTLAND GENERAL ELECTRIC SAGE CENTER SHARON HARRISON SILVERCREEK CONTRACTING SLIM'S PLACE AIRBNB ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH STATEWIDE PUBLISHING STEVE'S GUIDE SERVICE STUDIO 6 DESIGNWORKS SWEENEY MORTUARY SYKES PUBLISHING SYKES REAL ESTATE TAGOS HOMETOWN THE CELL FIX THE HEN HOUSE AIRBNB THE LUBE SHOP THE SWANSON INSURANCE GROUP THE WOOLERY PROJECT THOMAS F. WOLFF CPA TOM DENCHEL FORD TRAINING & EMPLOYMENT CONSORT. TREGO RANCHES TRIANGLE RANCH TURNER RANCH UPPER PLACE CONCESSIONS USFS- HEPPNER WHEATLAND INSURANCE WHEATBRIDGE WIND WILDHORSE WILKINSON RANCH WILLOW CREEK ASSISTED LIVING WILLOW CREEK COUNTRY CLUB WILLOW CREEK ENERGY/ INVENERY WILLOW CREEK PARK DISTRICT WILLOW CREEK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP WINDWAVE COMMUNICATIONS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD 2022 ANDY FLETCHER-PRESIDENT KIM CUTSFORTH- FIRST VICE PRESIDENT MATT COMBE-SECOND VICE PRESIDENT TAWNY MILES -TREASURER JEFF BAILEY-DIRECTOR KRAIG CUTSFORTH-DIRECTOR JOHN GOULD -DIRECTOR AMY WOLTERS-DIRECTOR

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