

**Good News Only** by Doris Brosnan

When one walks a nine-year-old melancholy collie, the pace is s-l-o-w, so stepping aside to let Petra Payne and Janelle Ellis jog by on the sidewalk was a courteous gesture, as was the second stepping aside when they reversed directions. Petra announced, as they passed, that they were planning a six-mile run that day. Impressive young women: they and friends also training as they are work outside their homes fulltime, they work the requirements of being wives and mothers, and yet, all of them find the time and energy to work at training for a half-marathon next month in Portland. Joining their effort are Kathleen Greenup and Jaci Hughes Drigen, and training for the full marathon are Amber Peck Gregg and Annie Hisler Weygant. With an app, they check on one another's weekly training progress and encourage one another.

How great to be talented and to share that talent with others. Last Friday evening, Terry Harper visited the Willow Creek Terrace with his guitar and played an impromptu concert on the front porch for the several residents who came out to enjoy the entertainment.

Archie and Diana Ball enjoyed a visit last Sunday with Bob and Pat Fetsch, who came over from Pendleton. Bob was a classmate of Archie's. He and Pat come every September from Montana for the Round-Up and stay for several days with Bob's sister, Marlene and her husband, Tom Currin. A great afternoon visit on Balls' deck included refreshing Klondike bars that were a gift for Balls' 58th anniversary, which was the following day.

The Drake Family's reunion last weekend was a huge affair that spanned a few days and a variety of activities. Usually a gathering every two years, this one had been postponed because of Covid, so many family members hadn't seen one another for four years. What a great happening.

Many more feel-good moments must be waiting to be shared. Please, send yours to dbrosnan123@gmail.com or call 541-223-1490. Please, share.

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

**Spiritually Speaking**

**God's Mercy & Compassion**

Chapter 15 of Luke's Gospel has been called "the Gospel within the Gospel" because it tells the good news about our forgiving Heavenly Father's mercy, the "Parable of the Lost and Found," with three illustrations: the stories of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. They remind us that we have a God who welcomes sinners and forgives their sins whenever they return to Him with sincere repentance. For today's discussion, we focus on the parable of the lost son.

The Caring and Compassionate Father, like a modern father, gives to his sons out of love. When the younger boy demands his share of property, the father gives it, knowing home would become a prison if the son were forced to stay. But the father knows his son is immature and knows not what he is doing. The father waits on the front porch every night, watching the road from the city, hoping the son will recognize his mistake. After many years, one evening, he recognizes his son coming down the road. The father runs to him, his heart pounding, his eyes filling with tears of relief. Sobbing, he hugs his boy tightly. The boy says something about not being worthy to come home, asking only to hire on as a field worker. The father hears nothing of this. His heart says: "I don't care where you've been or what you've done. All I care about is that you are home and I love you!"

The Older Son: How wonderful it would have been if the older son had said, "O how glad I am! The fact that my brother has come home shows that he has changed. I've missed him so much. I have prayed for his return. I've shared with Father concern for his safety. I must hurry to embrace him." Instead, his deeper feelings prevail: The way my father treated my younger brother was a slap of my face. Maybe he could have taken him back after a good telling off. Taken him back as a servant, not as a son, and given him the heaviest and dirtiest jobs. But instead, he runs to meet him, and before the waster even had time to say he was sorry, Father throws his arms around him and hugs him. He orders that my brother be dressed in finery, and gives a feast in his honor. He was acting like someone who has lost his senses. The Older Son has the following defects: He is self-righteous; the personification of pride and arrogance; is over-confident and judgemental towards everyone; especially of his younger brother; and could not forgive. I think these are what the Lord demands we get rid of.

The Prodigal Son: The younger son feels that he has outgrown his father and or his father's life-style or home. He asks his father to give him the portion of his inheritance, thinking he would be happier away from home, no longer under parental control. The far country apparently promised freedom but actually enslaved the young man. While his money lasted, he had some fair-weather friends, but when the money gave out, he was reduced to destitution. He hired out to a gentile to feed his swine and ended up eating animal food. It was under such misery that he thought of his father, mother, and home. To come back home was not easy. It called for a lot of humility and courage. He knew what people were thinking of him. The prodigal son shows us the way to the Father's house. He tells us, "I will arise and go to my Father's house, and I will say to him...." Millions have heard these words and, inspired by them, have come in from the dark and found welcome and forgiveness from God.

Some people are lost like sheep who miss the way by careless drifting; some, through life's circumstances, are misplaced like a lost coin. Others, like the young son, are lost through willful rebellion. Still others are lost as the older brother was - at home yet far from the father, in church but full of hate, self-righteousness, prejudice, envy and unforgiveness. God is seeking lost persons, as a shepherd in the night, as a woman sweeping diligently, as a father earnestly watching. When a sheep is found, the shepherd rejoices; when a coin is found, the woman rejoices; when a son is found, the father rejoices; when a sinner repents, God rejoices. Now is the day of salvation.

**Heppner AWANA Club starts program next Tuesday**



Heppner AWANA Club will begin its 2022-23 club year next Tuesday, Sept. 13, with registration and an ice cream social for club members and their parents. The club will meet at the Christian Life Center ("dome church") in Heppner.

The evening will begin at 6 p.m. with club

registration and ice cream for everyone attending. The event will also include games and a short welcome from AWANA Commander Dale Bates.

Meetings will be held from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on Tuesdays throughout the club year. Every week includes a different theme; club members can start



Enjoying activities at AWANA Club

planning now for "Bring a Friend" night on Sept. 20, "Cowboy Night" on Sept. 27 and a family barbecue for "Parent Night" on Oct. 4.

The Heppner AWANA program is the combined effort of local churches to teach children what the Bible is all about. AWANA stands for "Approved Work-

men Are Not Ashamed," based on II Timothy 2:15. Games, songs and a Bible lesson are included during a typical club meeting.

The Christian Life Center is located at 535 W. Morgan St. in Heppner. For more information, contact AWANA Secretary Andrea Di Salvo at awana.heppner@gmail.com, 757-285-5792, or via Facebook Messenger.

**Irrigon Junior-Senior High Prepare new track for School Year**



One big improvement is the new track currently under construction at Irrigon Junior-Senior High.

Students and staff returning to Irrigon Junior-Senior High School will notice some upgrades when they return to classes. One big improvement is the new track currently under construction at Irrigon Junior-Senior High. Athletic Director Mike Royer stated, "This is something that our school and community can take pride in. The track facility will provide an opportunity not only to our junior high and high school athletes, but to our youth and community in general."

Construction began on the project in June, removing the gravel and dirt track to make way for the new surface being installed by Beynon Sports of Tualatin, a fabricator for track and field facilities. Much of the heavy lifting has already been done, with the Port of Morrow donating over \$85,000 in labor and engineering. Currently, there is a three-inch deep base layer of asphalt, which will be covered in the next phase with a synthetic rubberized surface. The final track will be red, with the finishing lane stripe painting slated for early September. The fresh surface is expected to make its debut in mid-September.

Originally built to support a middle school, the old gravel track's functionality had become limiting for the track and field competitors. According to Royer, as the school has grown the need for a better surface has become increasingly apparent. In past years the track team bussed to Umatilla to have a more professional surface to practice on. The new surface will allow students to have an appropriate facility for practices and track meets. Royer noted that Irrigon's track and field team has consistently been

competitive in previous years, and this improvement will increase safety for runners and allow for home track meets.

Irrigon Junior-Senior High School Principal Rose Palmer noted that the improved facility will be safer for everyone, with lighting in the evening that will provide "an opportunity for the community to expand their recreation options." She also pointed out broad community support with helping to fund this major improvement, which includes funding from Morrow County School District, the City of Irrigon, Morrow County Unified Recreation District, Columbia River Technologies, Boardman Community Development Association, CREZ Board, and the Port of Morrow.

Royer has enjoyed watching this process unfold, stating, "It was impressive watching things come together this past year to make it a reality. And I

want to extend a big thank you to the Port of Morrow and all our supporters for

photos by Mike Royer everything they provided in making this project happen."



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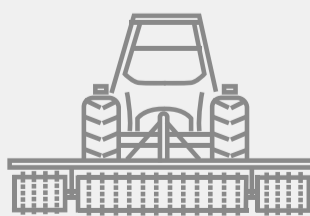
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