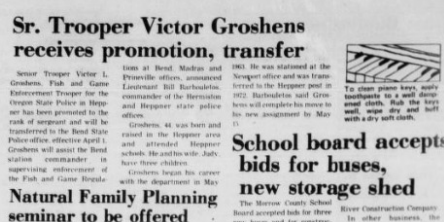


-Continued from PAGE ONE

Great Green Parade



Many celebrate St. Patrick's Day in Heppner



The Heppner Jr. High band performed under the direction of Jim Akeley



Many in green crowded in and outside Farley's showroom



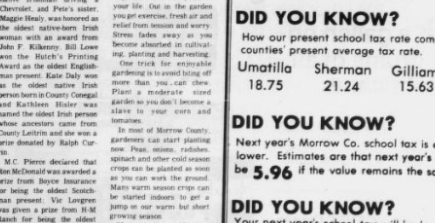
Ron McDonald entertained the crowd with Irish songs



A leprechaun, alias Donna Moller



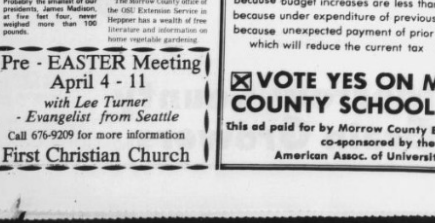
Local Irish families were represented at the parade



Get that garden started



Vote Yes on Morrow County School Budget



Pre-EASTER Meeting April 4 - 11 with Lee Turner - Evangelist from Seattle



Decorators for interiors at Coast to Coast

The Heppner Gazette-Times from 1982



Sheryll Bates

Claudia Hughes and her legion of leprechauns as soon as we touched Heppner soil, I think," Brosnan says of getting involved as an organizer.

"I rarely say 'No,' and I like being involved," added Brosnan. "There was always a need for more heads and hands."

Sheryll Bates has lived in Heppner nearly 17 years, and says she became involved through her role as the executive director of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce. That was 2008.

"I stepped into the planning and had great help with volunteers to make it work," says Bates.

"Although it was part of my job, I wanted to make sure the event was successful, become a part of the community and put in the hours and dedication to make it that way," she adds.

Judie Laughlin was not able to share her stories with the Gazette-Times, but others shared stories of her involvement. Many remember her artistic ability.

"Judie and Phyllis Piper, being the artists that they are, stepped up and got busy painting some more wooden leprechaun signs for us to distribute around town," recalls Bates.

Ball says Laughlin was elected to create the commemorative buttons, which were started in the fifth year of the celebration and mostly hand designed from 1987 to 2008.

"Judie bought a button machine and spent an enormous amount of time making hundreds of these," says Ball.

"Judie's artwork for posters and especially for the collectible buttons was always so impressive," adds Brosnan. "She is very

Sr. Trooper Victor Groshens receives promotion, transfer

Sr. Trooper Victor A. Groshens, Fish and Game Commission, Oregon Department of Fish and Game, has been promoted to Major Trooper and transferred to the Heppner area.

Natural Family Planning seminar to be offered

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is a safe, effective, and permanent method of birth control that can be used by all couples.

Farmers respond favorably

Morrow County farmers are responding favorably to the BCCM registration set for the Morrow County School Budget.

Vote Yes on Morrow County School Budget

Table with 4 columns: Name, Amount, Name, Amount. Includes Umatilla, Sherman, Gilliam, Morrow.

Why? Because budget increases are less than last year.

Because under expenditure of previous year fund, because unexpected payment of prior year's tax which will reduce the current tax.

Vote Yes on Morrow County School Budget

This ed paid for by Morrow County Education Assoc., & co-sponsored by the American Assoc. of University Women

"all of it," with the general good feeling everyone had during the celebration. One memory that stands out for her is dressing up in the duck costume for the O' Ducky Race.

"I was teaching at the grade school at the time, and saw lots of the students," she says. "One of my students was afraid of the duck and did not hold back in telling me so! It was interesting the following Monday back in the classroom when we all had a discussion about the duck."

She adds that, as the duck, she did not talk. "Seeing all the people come and enjoying themselves during the celebration," Sykes says. "It was usually the first celebration after the winter months and people really liked getting out, having fun and renewing friendships and starting new ones."

Sykes says his fondest memory was watching how the KUMA Coffee Hour grew over the years. To Hughes, the best part of the KUMA Coffee Hour was Father Condon, Dom Monahan and Congressman Greg Walden bantering back and forth—a priest, a lawyer and a politician, she notes.

"(They) would have been a sensation on any comedy hour or late night show," she says.

Also especially memorable was the visit from the true Irish singers and dancers who came all the way from Ireland in 1991. Families in Heppner stepped up



Bill "Hutch" Hutchinson

to host them in their homes and long-term correspondence resulted.

That year was also a favorite for Hutchinson, who was visiting the celebration decked out in his traditional leprechaun garb.

"I was walking down the street after the coffee hour and one of those Irishmen chased me down and said, 'Wait, wait, wait! I want to take your picture and send it back to Ireland!'" Hutchinson recalls.

"That made my day." Brosnan also enjoyed being a leprechaun, though her outfit sported the huge, paper mâché head created by Marti Mitchell, Georgia Van Winkle and Judie Laughlin.

"Being incognito, seeing the little kids' expressions," says Brosnan. "Only once did a naughty boy who was probably about 12 harass me by pulling on my jacket and insisting that I tell him where my treasure was!"

Ball's fondest memory involved the sheep dog trials, which were held at the fairgrounds at the time. "I was lucky enough to encounter a small, jolly little Scotsman from Victoria, B.C., by the name or nickname of Scotty," says Ball.

Scotty and wife Winnie had brought their dogs for the sheep dog trials. Scotty took a liking to the inexpensive little "tam" Ball was wearing and wanted to trade hats.

"It took some convincing to get me to trade, as Scotty's was a real wool Scottish tam from Scotland," Ball adds. "He told me it has 'spent the night in a real Scottish castle.' I tried to refuse, but he wouldn't hear of it."

The craziest of times Some of the craziest memories also involved the sheep dog trials. Hutchinson said he always enjoyed watching the talented dogs and their workers. "There was a guy at the sheep dog trials that came down from B.C. and had a dog that was about ready to drop pups," says Hutchinson. "That dog was still a working dog. That dog would want to go out and work those sheep when it wasn't her turn. She'd start to sneak out and he'd call her back."

Hutchinson also recalls a year when there was a sheep dog in the parade, herding six or seven geese down the parade route. Brosnan recalls the year she drove committee heads Hughes and Osmin in her MG convertible. The pair rode on the back. "Thing was, it was raining," adds Osmin. "So we had to get plastic tarps with our heads poking out of the tarp, and holding umbrellas. It was quite the sight!" she says, adding that she wouldn't mention what Hughes's son said about the ride.

One of Bates's craziest memories was of a late snow that left mounds of snow downtown and in side streets where they planned activities.

"Our great public works team started loading snow into dump trucks and dumping it elsewhere so we could safely have our annual event," says Bates. "Needless to say, we had another successful St. Patrick's Celebration weekend!"

Several of the organizers share memories of being leprechauns both during the festivities and to promote them—some crazier than others. Hughes and Brosnan share a memory of...well, of being kicked out of Wildhorse Casino or stopped at the door, depending who you ask.

"My fellow leprechaun and I—we went after donations in costume—went to Wildhorse Casino to ask for a donation," says Brosnan. "Little did I know the big head was considered a mask and not allowed within the casino," adds Hughes.

Ball remembers stepping up to host the coffee hour for Claudia Hughes one year, since Hughes had a previous engagement. "I announced myself as Claudia Hughes," says Ball. "I received some strange looks, like I had lost my mind. At that point, I may have."

Other memories include the parade and events surrounding it. Ball remembers being "coerced" into the O' Planky and O' Bed races...perhaps the instance

Sykes also remembers? "The Gazette-Times entered the bed race. We got a baby crib, I attached wheels to the bottom and our newspaper editor at the time got inside with a baby bonnet holding a large calf milk bottle for effect and we raced," says Sykes. "We did not win but had a lot of fun doing it." (Editor's note: The Gazette-Times editor will not be participating in the bed races this year.)

"So many crazy memories, and some cannot be told," Hughes adds.

Where we go from here

Over the years, the celebration grew from a stew feed, to a radio coffee hour, to a four-day event that has included the Great Green Parade, Cruz-In car show, motorcycle races, kids' activities like the Leprechaun Run and O' Ducky Race, Irish Smoker boxing, Remembrance Walk, dances, a Ceili and other live entertainment, and even bull riding.

"All in all, wonderful memories of the Wee Bit O' Ireland Celebration," says Osmin. "I just hope it continues for years to come so others can have fond memories!"

"Not one person or group can make this event happen," says Bates. "It takes a community to pull together to make it happen, and I have been fortunate to see a great community in action. Thanks for the memories and the opportunity to organize this event for about 13 years."

"My hair and beard are not as red as they were back then," Hutchinson admits, but says he hopes to don his green suit and show up again this year as Heppner's leprechaun. "I just gotta make sure it fits. We might have to do some alterations on it."

"Thank goodness younger people and new people to our area started to take over the 'business' so some of the 'oldies' could retire," says Ball. "I hear often how people are 'too busy' to work on the committee, but guess what...when this celebration first began, all of the committee members were working full-time jobs, had kids, etc. It's just a matter of priorities."

"Heppner should be proud of the St. Patrick's Day celebration they've created," she adds. "It surely takes a village."

"It takes a village and two counties to celebrate a Wee Bit O' Ireland in Heppner," concludes Hughes. "Top o' the morning to all of ye Irish and Irish-for-a-weekend. See you St. Patrick's Day!"

Real estate advertisement for a house at 635 E Cowins St Heppner. Price \$250,000. 4 bd | 2 / 0 ba | 2536 sqft. Features include large spacious rooms, wood stove, fenced back yard, etc. Contact Chris Sykes at 541-215-2274.