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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 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.

# Doherty Clan was led to Morrow County by strong women



A few of the Doherty clan's female forebears: Mary Doherty, Catherine Grant Doherty, Sara Kenny Farley, and baby Mary Farley Clark. -Contributed photo

Over a century ago, Irish settlers came to Morrow County and converted virgin grassland to modern agricultural husbandry. Overwhelmingly the stories of this settlement perpetuate the names of men. Lost or ignored are the stories of the many Irish women who led their families, relatives and descendants to this countryside.

Descendants of some of the strongest women in Morrow County's history will soon have a chance to learn more about the lesser-known female heroes of our past.

In his 1968 *Shamrocks and Shepherds: The Irish of Morrow County*, John F. Kilkenny credits his father for encouraging him to document the names of early Irish settlers in Morrow County. His list, published in June 1968 by the Oregon Historical Society, is a gathering of important family names of the Irish who settled here, but is not a chronology.

Kilkenny lists 156 family names—mostly a list of Irish boys and men. Kilkenny says that some 85 percent of this Irish influx were boys and that 15 percent were girls. There are descendants of those Irish women who would say that, though there were less of them, Irish women

and girls had just as much of an impact here.

The very large and dispersed Doherty Clan of Morrow and Umatilla counties, for instance, claims its share of Amazonian women. No disparagement to Doherty men, but the Doherty women at the forefront of Irish immigration to this area take no second place.

Catherine Newman Doherty, granddaughter of John Doherty of the Isle of Doagh and the oldest child of John's son James, charged into this country when she left Ireland in 1844 on a three-month journey that took her to the California gold fields.

She was joined in early 1860 by her brother Daniel (later "Tutuilla Dan"). There in Yreka, Catherine married Ebner Nelson, a Swede, and previously a seafaring man. She, Dan and Ebner traveled north to Canyon City in Grant County, OR where they continued to mine. In 1869, the Nelsons and Dan Doherty moved to Umatilla and settled on Big Butter Creek, upstream and south of Vinson.

Catherine was part of a very large Irish family, and she wrote them frequently, sometimes advising them of opportunities for land and livelihood in

the area. Countless numbers of Dohertys passed through Catherine Doherty Nelson's door and hospitality until they were settled and independent here.

In the Bannock War, Ebner Nelson sent his son James to Pendleton with the women of his ranch, for safety. On July 6, 1878, a small band of Native Americans raided the Nelson ranch, killing Ebner Nelson and a hired man. Afterward, Catherine Nelson managed the ranch by herself, aided by her son, James.

The widow and children of Francis Doherty from the township of Crockglass near Quigley's Point on Loch Foyle, Inishowen, were among those who were welcomed by Catherine Nelson. After Catherine Grant Doherty's

husband, Francis, died in 1883, Catherine sent her oldest daughter Sarah, age 25, to Oregon.

Sarah first went to Catherine Nelson's and soon met an up-and-coming sheepman who had emigrated from County Galway in 1864, served on the Union battleship Galena toward the end of the Civil War, was wounded in the Battle of Mobile Bay, and then found his way west to Oakland, California. After four years, Charles Cunningham traveled north, ending up in Umatilla County, and entered the sheep business.

In 1883 Cunningham settled on Butter Creek, inside of Morrow County. Cunningham was a downstream neighbor of Catherine Nelson.

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## Death Notice

**Alice Vance**—Alice Vance, 95, of Hermiston, died on June 6, 2023. She was born on July 7, 1927, in Condon, OR. At her request, there will be no service.

Please share memories of Alice with her family at [burnsmortuaryhermiston.com](http://burnsmortuaryhermiston.com). Burns Mortuary of Hermiston is in charge of arrangements.

## Work to begin on Blue Mountain Scenic Byway

Morrow County Road Department has begun prep work to chip seal 22 miles of the Blue Mountain Scenic Byway on both the Heppner and North Fork John Day Ranger Districts, Umatilla National Forest staff announced Monday. This partnership between the Umatilla National Forest and the Morrow County Road Department was funded through the Great American Outdoors Act to improve public access on this main scenic route.

Work will be ongoing for approximately two weeks and includes cleaning the road surface, sealing cracks in the road and patching potholes, followed by chip sealing the entire roadway.

Morrow County Road Department crews are moving equipment on-site and stock piling chip rock. The chip seal is anticipated to begin on July 10.

The construction work will require that the full length of the Blue Mountain Scenic Byway will periodically have delays. Traffic will be managed by flaggers and pilot cars from July 10 until approximately July 21. Construction signs will be posted at each end of the project and as needed in work zones.

The Blue Mountain Scenic Byway is a popular 145-mile route that travels from near Arlington to Granite. This road is also a major portal to both the Umatilla and Wal-

lowa-Whitman national forests, offering numerous opportunities for scenic views and recreation. In 2022, contractors chip sealed the portion of road that crosses the North Fork John Day Ranger District (33.6 miles). These chip seal projects reduce risk to public safety, protect the roadway and extend the life of this scenic route for 10-20 years.

This project is part of the investment of more than \$100 million for projects on National Forests in Oregon and Washington through the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), intended to address critical deferred maintenance and improve transportation and recreation infrastructure. Nationally, the funds will allow the Forest Service to implement more than 500 infrastructure improvement projects essential to the continued use and enjoyment of national forests lands this year.

In addition to the Blue Mountain Scenic Byway chip seal project, the Umatilla National Forest received funding to replace the Crooked Creed Trail Bridge on the Pomeroy Ranger District, which is anticipated to be installed later this year. The forest will continue to share updates on these GAOA projects as construction begins.

Additional information about the Umatilla National Forest is available at [www.fs.usda.gov/umatilla](http://www.fs.usda.gov/umatilla).

## Local students inducted into honor society



Heppner High School National Honor Society members Arianna Worden, Irelynn Kollman, Cameron Proudfoot, Mason Orem, Katie Spivey, Morgan Cutsforth and Caden George. -Contributed photo



Honor society inductees Mason Orem and Katie Spivey. -Contributed photo

On Tuesday June 6, the Heppner High School held its National Honor Society induction ceremony. The National Honor Society's goal is to create enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote leadership and to develop character in the students of secondary schools.

This year Katie Spivey and Mason Orem were inducted. Current members are Arianna Worden, Irelynn Kollman, Cameron Proudfoot, Morgan Cutsforth and Caden George.

## Red Cross says blood supply facing stress, donors needed

Help celebrate World Blood Donor Day June 14

A concerning shortfall in blood donations last month could stress the American Red Cross blood supply, the organization has announced. The Red Cross collected more than 26,000 fewer blood donations than needed in May to meet the needs of patients.

The need for blood is constant, with someone needing a blood transfusion in the U.S. every two seconds. Platelet donors are especially needed at this time. The public can help ensure continuity for patients by making an appointment to give blood or platelets now and in the weeks ahead.

An opportunity to give in Morrow County is coming up in Boardman June 26. The Red Cross will be at Boardman Pool and Recreation Center, 311 N Olson Rd., from noon to 5 p.m.

Those who can't make it to Boardman will have two chances to donate in Hermiston—June 19 from 12:45-5:30 p.m. at Good Shepherd Medical Center and Jun 22 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Umatilla Electric Cooperative.

### World Blood Donor Day, gifts for donors

June 14 is World Blood Donor Day, a day meant to raise awareness of the need for a safe, diverse and stable blood supply and to recognize volunteer blood donors. This is the perfect time to give, especially for those who haven't given in a while, or who have never given before.

In thanks for taking time to help, all who come to give blood, platelets or plasma June 1-30 will receive a \$10 gift card by email to a merchant of their choice. Those who come to give throughout June will also be automatically entered for a chance to win a backyard theater package. Details for both offers can be found at [RedCrossBlood.org/June](http://RedCrossBlood.org/June).

Help the Red Cross celebrate World Blood Donor Day and meet the critical needs of patients. Download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to schedule a time to give now.

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