

IN BRIEF

Banquet shines on Irrigon

The Irrigon Citizen Recognition Banquet honors the people and businesses that make the town a special place to live and work.

People are invited to help celebrate during Time to Shine. The event is Friday from 5-8 p.m. at Stokes Landing Senior Center, 195 N.W. Opal Place, Irrigon. Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door. A social hour at 5 p.m. features appetizers and no-host wine and beer. Dinner, prepared by chef Donna Eppenbach, is at 6 p.m. and the awards ceremony starts at 7 p.m.

For more information or tickets, call 541-922-3857. They also can be purchased at the Bank of Eastern Oregon in Irrigon.

Student performance to fund field trip

The Awesomely Creative Theater, a group of talented Irrigon High School students, will present the "Diary of Anne Frank."

Entirely staged and directed by students, the production is Friday and Saturday. The curtain time is 7 p.m. each night in the school's Cafetorium, 315 E. Wyoming Ave., Irrigon.

The play is based on writings by Anne Frank, a young Jewish girl. She received a diary on her 13th birthday and began writing about things typical teenagers would — daily events, her thoughts, school and boys. Within a month, her entire life changed.

The diary chronicles the next two years as her family is in hiding to avoid being captured by Germans. The diary was retrieved and later returned to her father when he returned from the war. Several years later, her father had it published.

There is no admission charge for the performances, but donations will be accepted. The drama club members are raising money to be used to attend a performance of "West Side Story". For more information, contact Linda Pedro at 541-922-5551 or linda.pedro@morrow.k12.or.us.

Parking lot sale benefits Agape House

A variety of items are available for purchase during a parking lot sale at Agape House.

Clothing is five items for a dollar, a selection of furniture and bicycles are priced as marked and more than 25 bins of knick-knacks are you-name-the-price. The sale is Saturday from 8:30-11:30 a.m. at 500 Harper Road, Hermiston. Donations are welcome through Friday.

Agape House serves individuals and families in need. For more information, to volunteer or make donations to Agape House, contact Dave Hughes at 541-567-8774.

Former hardware store 'ace' retires

Retirement event features 'Hug Specials'

By TAMMY MALGESINI
Community Editor

Despite not possessing the last name of Smith, a longtime store manager at Smitty's ACE Hardware, was one of the family, said Randy Smith, who has owned the store with his wife, Tammy, since 2009.

Randy's parents, Bob and Vickie Smith, hired Mike Hug as the assistant manager in 1992. Several years later, he received a promotion.

"I remember Vickie gave me some business cards and it had 'manager' on them," Hug said with a laugh. "That's how I knew I was promoted."

Hug, a 1971 graduate of Imbler High School, came to Hermiston for a job at Down's Supply. After working there for a handful of years, he worked at Cycletown for a year. His tenure with the Smiths came when they had an opening at Coast to Coast, the store's franchise name prior to becoming an ACE Hardware store. Hug worked a month shy of 25 years before retiring in December.

The store is hosting a retirement barbecue, inviting customers to come in and



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

The public is invited to a retirement event for Mike Hug, who retired as store manager after nearly 25 years at Smitty's ACE Hardware in Hermiston. The Friday, April 28, event will feature free food and 'Hug Specials' throughout the store.

wish Hug well. The event will be held Friday, April 28, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at ACE Hardware, 1845 N. First St., Hermiston. Free hot dogs, soda and cake will be served. In addition, there will be "Hug Specials" throughout the store.

Vickie Smith said Hug jumped right in and was willing to do what was asked of him. His detail-oriented personality, Vickie said, was

a great fit in helping run the business.

"Shortly after we hired him, he said, 'So, what am I supposed to be doing?' I said, 'Well, I want you to make Bob's job easier.' And, he did that," Vickie said.

Bob Smith, agreed, that it was great to have Hug as part of their management team. Hug's past retail experience, work ethic and genuine interest in the success of the

store made him a valuable employee, Bob said.

"He was truly a people person," Tammy Smith said. "He wanted to do right by the people, whether it was the store staff, the customers or whoever he came in contact with."

Another longtime employee, Carla Hoyt, human resources and floor manager, worked with Hug throughout the years. She said he took

time to train and work individually with new employees to ensure the shopping experience for customers was a positive one.

Hoyt said Hug's commitment to the company overflowed into the community. She said he placed genuine importance on donation requests from community organizations. In addition, she said Hug participated in community activities such as the Cowboy Breakfast, Hermiston Rotary and Relay for Life.

Hug said the Hermiston community has been a great place to live. He's impressed with how the business community, farmers and individuals pull together for the greater good.

"I've just enjoyed being a part of that," he said.

As far as retirement, Hug has enjoyed spending time with a pair of granddaughters. In addition, he enjoys golfing and is looking forward to camping and four-wheeling in the mountains.

Bob and Randy recalled fishing over the years with Hug. One trip in particular, Bob said Hug taught them how to catch kokanee on Wallowa Lake.

"He was part of our family," Vickie reiterated. "We worked together a long time. And we've been friends — it was more than him just working for us."

Fundraiser hits the streets of Heppner for MS research

By TAMMY MALGESINI
Community Editor

A regional effort to raise awareness and research funding for multiple sclerosis is planned in Heppner.

The Eastern Oregon MS Walk is Saturday, April 22. Registration and check-in starts at 9 a.m. at All Saint's Episcopal Church, 460 N. Gale St., Heppner. A continental breakfast is available before the walk. The well-marked 5K walk, which is wheelchair accessible, begins at 10 a.m. There's also a route map for a

10K walk. A lunch follows at the church.

The tiny town has a big heart when it comes to supporting events, said co-chair Merilee McDowell.

"Whenever you have a worthwhile cause in this area, everyone steps up to help," she said.

The 2016 walk brought in a record amount for the regional event, which has been held in Heppner for all but one year. More than \$14,000 was raised for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society Oregon Chapter, said committee co-chair Barb Orwick.

McDowell, who was instrumental in spearhead-

ing the fundraiser 19 years ago, has lived with the disease for 40 years. Over the decades, she has seen the benefits of raising money to fund research.

When first diagnosed, McDowell said there were no therapies for the disease. Now, there are more than a dozen FDA therapies for people with relapsing/remitting multiple sclerosis, she said.

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic disease that affects

the central nervous system. Symptoms vary, including changes in sensation, visual impairments, muscle weakness, coordination problems, speech difficulties, fatigue and pain. In severe cases, MS results in impaired mobility.

There is no set registration fee — donations of any amount are welcome. Participants raising \$100 or more can earn prizes.

Those unable to participate on April 22 can still

help by registering as virtual walkers. Virtual participants can walk on their lunch break, to and from work or with other people on another day.

People are encouraged to pre-register at www.walkms.org or by calling 855-372-1331. Also, walk-ons are welcome and can register at the event. For more information, call McDowell at 541-571-5853 or Orwick at 541-256-0455.

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