

Harmony Club still going after 80 years

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

Eighty years after the women living on Loop Road decided to form an official social club, the club is still going.

The Harmony Club, which had a high of 107 members, has only seven today, including its first non-Loop Road member. But during fall, winter and spring the ladies meet twice a month for at least two hours.

“The object was to get better acquainted with neighbors and be of benefit to others,” vice president Carol Pomeroy said, showing a piece of paper with official club rules and objectives. “There’s the constitution, so they did it legit.”

Pat Wagner, club secretary-treasurer, said she has all the minutes of each meeting going back to 1938. According to an account written for the group’s scrapbook in 1955, the Harmony Club was the brainchild of Agnes Harrick. She lived on Loop Road, which loops from East Highland Avenue in Hermiston all the way down to Stanfield, and wanted to get to know her neighbors better.

Wagner is the club’s member who doesn’t live on Loop Road. She felt like getting out of the house more, and club president Polly Van De Brake asked the group to take a vote on letting her in. Van De Brake said the club may be smaller than it used to be, but it is still something that its members enjoy.

“We’re keeping it going,” she said. “So many of the ladies on Loop Road now work, and so they’re not able. That’s what’s different now than 80 years ago.”

Meetings take place at 10 a.m. every other Monday, with summers off. Club members take turns hosting. They have snacks or dessert, read the minutes of the last meeting and do a “roll call” asking everyone to give an update on what has been going on in their lives since they last met.

“Some of us only pull weeds, that’s our highlight,” Pomeroy said, laughing.

To get to know each other better, they have also added a second question, which has ranged from “What’s the worst haircut you’ve gotten?” to “What are your pet peeves?”

There is plenty of time for more informal chatting — which the club’s officers said frequently includes recipe-sharing — but each gathering must



Polly Van De Brake, right, holds a scrapbook detailing the Harmony Club’s history with Pat Wagner (left) and Carol Pomeroy.

STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL.



This undated photo from the Harmony Club’s scrapbook show members in the club’s early days.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY THE HARMONY CLUB.

include a simple game presented by the host, usually along the lines of a current events quiz, guessing game or word puzzle. The winner gets a prize, which has shifted over time from a box of Jell-O or cake mix to more permanent household items.

Van De Brake said she would be fine with going back to food for prizes.

“None of us at our age needs a thing,” she said. “We’re all trying to downsize.”

While the Harmony Club’s current members try to adhere to tradition and the club’s bylaws, there

are a few that they have let slide by the wayside. Meeting minutes from the early years stated that the women decided to only wear print dresses to meetings.

“Well, we don’t do that anymore,” Wagner said.

The club’s scrapbook, which includes pictures and letters between members, was lost for a few years, but Pomeroy finally managed to track it down again. Despite dwindling numbers, they have hope for a future generation of Harmony Club members interested in the past.

“We just hang on,” Van De Brake said.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

James Shelton asks questions about changes to a noise control ordinance during the Echo City Council meeting in Thursday in the VFW hall in Echo. The hall has just reopened to the public after renovations this spring.

City renovates VFW hall

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

The old VFW hall in Echo is back in community use.

The hall was closed during much of the spring for extensive renovations, but was used for a city council meeting Thursday.

“It’s pretty well done except for a couple of minor things,” city administrator Diane Berry said.

The renovation has included laminate flooring to replace the worn-out carpet, an awning to keep rainwater from pooling outside the front door, a new sidewalk, interior and exterior paint and a remodel of the bathroom. A wall was also removed to expand the kitchen area.

No one knows the exact year it was built, but Berry said she knows it dates back to at least 1910.

“This is just another step in our efforts to rejuvenate and give new life to historical buildings instead of tearing them down and rebuilding something lesser in their place,” she said.

According to a history compiled on the city of Echo’s website, the town was settled in 1860, platted in 1880 and incorpo-

rated in 1904. The city provides a brochure outlining a walking tour of 23 historical sites that date back to the late 1800s or early 1900s. The building that houses city hall and the community center was built in 1916.

The city has owned the VFW building at 210 Bridge Street since January 2016, when the Echo chapter of Veterans of Foreign Wars consolidated with the Pendleton chapter and the group donated the building to the city. They have since used it for council meetings and allowed community groups like 4-H to meet there for free. The city’s library also stores the books it sells through Amazon there and uses it for children’s story time and activities.

“It’s kind of a library annex,” Berry said.

The project to update the building was paid for by grants from the Echo Community Benefit Plan, Kinsman Foundation and Wildhorse Foundation.

During Thursday’s meeting in the newly-remodeled hall, the council approved a request from Echo Ridge Cellars for three events in July, including Echo’s annual school reunion.

IONE’S 4th of July Celebration

FREE Concert*

2018
No Dogs Allowed in Park

*Bring your own lawn chairs or blanket. Grass amphitheater.

Saturday, June 30, 2018		
Dinner & Poker Tournament (plus BINGO)	Legion Hall, Ione	June 30, 5 pm
Free Movie in the Park: Ghostbusters	Ione City Park	June 30, Dusk
Sunday, July 1, 2018		
Volleyball Tournament	Ione City Park	July 1st, 9 am
Tuesday, July 3, 2017		
Golf Tournament	Willow Creek Country Club, Heppner	July 3rd, 9 am
IHS “All Alumni” Get Together	Route 74 Restaurant	July 3rd, 6-9 pm
Wednesday, July 4, 2017		
Fireman’s Breakfast	Ione Fire Hall	7:00 -10:00 am
Creative Care PreSchool 5k Walk/Run (\$10 Registration)	Ione City Park	7 am Reg./Walk starts at 7:30 am
Ken Turner Memorial Horseshoe Tournament	Horseshoe Pits	9:00 am
3-on-3 Basketball Tournament	2nd Street, In Front of Legion Hall	10:00 am
Vendors & Booths	Ione City Park	11:00 am
Fish Pond, Frog Jump, Bike Raffle	Fire Hall/Park	11:00 am
Altar Society Pie Sale	Ione Fire Hall (or Church Basement)	11:00 am
Parade (GRAND MARSHAL: GREGG & SHELLY RIETMANN)	Main Street	1:00 pm
Money Pile, Much More!	After Parade	
Free Swimming	Ione Swimming Pool	1:30-3:30 pm
WADE AYLETT	AMPHITHEATER STAGE	2:00-3:30 PM
Bingo	Ione Legion Hall	2:00-4:00 pm
Talent Show	Amphitheatre Stage	3:30 pm Reg./Show at 4 pm
CORY PETERSON BAND	AMPHITHEATER STAGE	4:30-6:00 PM
Game On! Video Game Trailer & Laser Tag	Ione City Park	5:00-8:00 pm
Featured Entertainment	Amphitheatre Stage	6:30 pm
THE JAMES MARLIN BAND (6:30 PM) BREWER’S GRADE (8:30 PM)		
Boat Trip Auction/Raffle Drawings	Amphitheatre Stage	8:00 pm
Fireworks Display	Visible throughout Ione	Dusk

All event, times and locations are subject to change.
www.CityOfIoneOregon.com/FourthOfJuly
Music funded in part by Morrow County Unified Recreation District

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