

Happy Christmas to All
and to All a Good Night!



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A Quick Look Back at 2011

It's that time again... Time for a look at what happened last year.

So, let's get started.

In January, plans were unveiled for the city's new, 12 acre Majestic Park to be developed at the eastern end of Majestic Avenue under the water tower. A pair of softball fields, tennis courts, a splash park, extensive playground equipment, picnic areas, sidewalks, bike and walking trails are planned for the park – scheduled for four phases of construction.

For the most part, the park will be financed through construction impact fees – not public monies.

Bids were being taken for the Northern Lakes Fire District's proposed \$2 million new fire station across Highway 53 from the post office.

Invited guest speaker, historian Mark Waedick told members of the Rathdrum/Westwood Historical Society how early Indian tribes used the Seneacquotteen Trail as passage across the Bitterroot Mountains. As the years passed, early railroads and homesteaders used the trail as it proved the best way through the rugged mountains.

Much in the life of Rathdrum's newest millionaire, Holly Lahti, remained a deep mystery as the 29-year-old's winning Lottery ticket earned her a cool \$190 million – some \$80.7 million after taxes.

Family members confirmed the woman has returned "off and on" to the Rathdrum area, while maintaining a tight hold on her winnings.

In his annual State of the City address, Mayor Vic Holmes told how the city is "bigger, stronger and faster" that it was a year ago. Bigger, he said, in that Rathdrum has grown by 56 percent over the past 10 years.

Stronger and faster, Holmes said, largely because the city is functioning "quite well with three less employees than we had two years ago."

The city employs 35 full time positions – one employee per every 1,000 residents.

Twin Lakes Elementary third grader Hanna Mendenhall and her invention, the Whescalator, was judged Best of Show in the 1-4 grade category in the North Idaho Regional Invent Idaho competition. Holley Cass and Tyler Carlock, both from Garwood Elementary, won a first place honors in their respective class categories.

Historian Art Randall had the members of the Rathdrum Historical Society on seats' edge in his tale of how notorious gunslinger Wyatt Earp "passed through" Rathdrum on his way to his mining interests in Murray, Idaho.

Earp, so the story goes, came to Rathdrum in 1881 on a train from Dodge City, Kan., hired his own mule team and off he went to Murray.

The city's seemingly ongoing issue of quieting the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway's diesel horns through the city was getting closer to reality.

City crews followed an initial set of conditions only to be confronted by a second, then a third set of requirements before the "no horns" rule could go into effect.

One of Rathdrum's more noticeable links to its history, the former Milwaukee Road Railroad depot on Post Street, was back on the real estate market. The building's current owners, James and Helen Loer, did extensive improvements to the 1910-era structure – before deciding their interest in the property was no longer valid.

The Rathdrum Chamber of Commerce launches the highly successful Buy Local campaign in a noteworthy attempt to direct local buying dollars to stay in Rathdrum.

At one point, close to 30 local merchants became involved in the campaign – a number that held constant throughout the year.

In March, Hauser's Icebreaker Run attracts a record 239 runners. Last year, 130 participants turned out for the competition. Jim Rucker of Spokane was the overall men's winner with a time of

32.15.93.

Lakeland High School senior Brian Hann was crowned Mr. LHS in the school's first annual all male competition. Brian won the "talent" competition with his uncanny ability to stuff 50 grapes in his mouth at one time.

Spirit Lake receives the green light on its application for a \$1 million grant to rehab Maine Street complete with new water lines under new asphalt, sidewalks, benches, planters and, eventually, new street lights. The project was completed – right on time – earlier this month.

As plans for the new \$2 million Northern Lakes Fire station began taking shape, concern over the 120-year-old fire bell came of issue. The Rathdrum Fire Department apparently purchased the bell – for \$133 – from its builder, Meneely Bell Co. out of Troy, N.Y.

Over the years, the bell wound up in City Park, largely through efforts of the 20th Century Reading Circle. So, with permission of three of its members, it was agreed to relocate the bell in front of the new station.

A first-in-a-long-time, traveling circus puts on a two-show performance at Stub Myer Park. Lions and tigers, daring high-wire acts, jugglers and a clown or two were featured under the "big top."

Huge crowds attended which brought a promise from the circus people to return in a couple of years.

Popular Spirit Lake Elementary School Principal Steve Razor announces his retirement after 37 years in education, 17 years as the head of SLE. Patty Morrison moved into the vacant office.

The largest graduating class in the history of Lakeland High School – 205 seniors – received diplomas while 140 Timberlake High School seniors took their final walk as high school students.

The city's much anticipated Annual Fishin' Derby took

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Christmas Shopping!



Garwood Elementary School "shoppers" (from left) Hailey Farley, Rachel Moen, Avery Moulding, Charlize Crowe, Lauryn Cooper and Makena Barnett get in on some last minute holiday shopping at the school's annual Christmas Store. The young shoppers select their gifts and count out the correct money which, Principal B.J. DeAustin explains, teaches both "shopping skills and the value of money."

Fr. Scarcello Loses Home to Fire

The Rev. Michael "Father Mike" Scarcello suffered serious injuries last Wednesday when fire engulfed his long-time home at 3427 Scarcello Road just north of Rathdrum.

According to what Scarcello was able to provide fire personnel, a hot ember popped out of his wood stove and landed in a nearby chair. Alone in the home at the time, he attempted to extinguish the fire, but was unsuccessful. The fire destroyed the 1,000 square foot home and damaged several adjacent outbuildings.

Firemen from Northern Lakes, Spirit Lake, Hauser Lake and Timberlake Fire Districts responded to the 12:35 p.m., two-alarm blaze.

Other than suffering from smoke inhalation, the extent

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City Honors Employees for Years on the Job

Rathdrum Public Works director Joe Hogan was named Employee of the Year for 2011 following a vote of all city employees last weekend.

The personable Hogan has 26 years with the city, the majority of which has been with the public works department. It's often been

City Seeking Grant for Eight Pedestrian Safety Devices

Improved pedestrian safety in and around Lakeland's public schools is behind the city's application for a \$50,000 grant to purchase eight lighted warning devices.

The devices would be installed – two to a crossing – at four locations. Two crossings along Highway 41 at Lakeland Jr. and Sr. High Schools, a third set at Wright Street and the highway and the fourth, at the Highway 53 crossing adjacent to the railroad underpass.

The devices operate using solar power and therefore do not require hooking into an electrical source.

A push button on each device activates a set of flashing red lights, warning approaching motorists to stop.



The Star Ends Publication - Editor Retiring

All good roads have an end; sometimes it's way down the line...sometimes it's not so far away.

On Oct. 13, 2004, we announced the birth of Rathdrum's first hometown newspaper in many a year. Today...today, we've reached the end of our road. This old, 70-year-old journalist has decided through hours and hours of often tearful deliberations...to retire...which means the demise of The Rathdrum Star.

This issue and next week's will end a beautiful

Main Street 83858

By TOM BURNETT
editor
The Star



marriage of eight years between a guy with printer's ink in his blood and a little northern Idaho with

no real connection with its citizens. Small town, community journalism was – and is – the answer; always has been, always will be.

Rathdrum needed a com-

munity newspaper – it still does, maybe now more so than ever.

It just won't be us putting in the long hours and facing the crippling financial burden each week.

The Star has, for sure, been a dream come true, an ambition and a challenge.

Big city newspapers have staffs of, oh, upwards of 10-15 reporters, correspondents

and photographers and an advertising sales staff of 20-25 or more.

At The Star, it's been myself and two dedicated part timers...long hours, no holidays, no vacations.

Trade jobs with anyone - not a chance!

The Star's been a goal - a goal we have achieved.

To see it shut down is truly a heart-breaker.

To those daily, and we mean daily, people who visit our office to say how much they enjoy The Star...

Anyway, year's end brings the end to my 51 years in journalism, from copy boy in Stamford, Conn. through reporting for newspapers from Pennsylvania to Oregon and half way back...including 14 years at The Spokesman-Review.

When the idea of a newspaper for Rathdrum came to light, I seized the opportunity - to give it a go!

The rest...is history.

For the life of me, I cannot envision a more rewarding endeavor than publishing

a weekly newspaper. It's truly been a fabulous ride!

There is no equal to being able to bring the news of a community to the community - nothing!

I'd gladly give what few pennies I have left to see The Star continue.

To continue down the road we've paved.

I'd, of course, be willing to pass The Star on to another aspiring journalist. - should one come forward.

In the meantime, it's

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