

Letters to the Editor

Dysfunctional board

The ongoing drama which has overtaken the Three Rivers School District board has distracted members from their real work for over a year. Here are some real issues I think the school board should be addressing instead:

Class Size Reduction: When class sizes get too big, student learning suffers. Every avenue should be explored for reducing the number of students each teacher must instruct, document, and plan for in each classroom. The board should be strategizing for how to accomplish this relief.

Retention of Talent: Because TRSD's budget has been constrained by lowered enrollment and reduced state payments, compensation of employees is too low at almost all employment levels. Not only do our personnel deserve more, but the district risks the loss of experienced staff as they seek better compensation elsewhere. The board should be working to identify solutions to this problem.

Transportation Costs: TRSD is geographically huge, and the cost of transportation is crippling. Rearranging busing schedules may offer some relief, but the board should be making efforts to change the compensation structure at the state level.

Facilities: Our buildings are aging and major renovations or rebuilds will be required. The board should be working towards identifying

these needs and securing bonds for funding. Tragically, this board has dramatically undermined community confidence, making public support unlikely.

Waste Water Treatment: When schools were built in the 1970's, Josephine County's infrastructure could not support their waste water, and several schools had to supply their own treatment capacity, most notably in the north valley areas. Now those treatment plants are aging out of use. Fortunately, the county is ready to pursue infrastructure development using state and federal grants (for which school districts are ineligible.) Now is the time for TRSD to be at the table working to move its waste water treatment needs over to systems to be built by the government. Alarmingly, several TRSD board members actually think the district could make money from waste water treatment (which might make us the first ones ever to do so.) Efforts to shift this burden off the schools are being blocked. It is my belief that part of the motivation for this ill-advised position is an attempt to micromanage the district maintenance department for the specific benefit of a personal friend of a board member. Although I have no written proof of this suspicion, I strongly encourage public investigation into the matter. The district does not belong in the waste water treatment business; it is not about teaching

and learning and does not belong in our business plan. Now is the time to get out.

Literacy Plans: When students cannot read well, they cannot learn. The board should be looking at policies and strategies that strongly support early literacy and intervention where difficulties exist. There has been little to no discussion of this, the most basic work of a school board.

Digital Literacy Skills: As we move into the digital age, students must learn how to do research using online resources. (Just because kids know better than adults how to use electronic devices does not mean they are using them well or wisely.) Comprehensive strategies for how to incorporate modern tools into both teaching and learning is the work of the school board. It is not being done.

Public Relations: Our school district has wonderful students and staff, doing many things brilliantly. The board should be helping publicize the successes and inviting local businesses and organizations to participate in our children's success.

Communication: There is no central district events calendar and school calendars are often poorly updated. This is because staff lacks the capacity for one more thing. It should be addressed at the district level, with strategic and IT support for each school, so that students, staff, parents,

and community members can easily find information about all school events and initiatives. The board must indicate that this is a priority and direct personnel to pursue it, as well as provide the capacity (funding,) for the work to take place.

Increasing Vocational Opportunities: Not every child aspires to an academic future, but even those who do will benefit from well-rounded experiences. The shift away from vocational skills training we saw in past decades has had poor results. The board should be working to identify grants for innovative programs preparing our kids for success in the trades, as well as helping our academically gifted students become capable of building and fixing things. STEM classes and trades preparation will make our kids far more employable. We should be pursuing robust partnerships with workforce development agencies and private enterprise to strengthen what we offer our students.

Trust Building: Alas, we are currently doing the opposite! Our school board should be working strategically to help build trust, engagement, and buy-in at every level of our district.

Strategic Planning: The board should be identifying priorities and creating work plans to achieve district goals. There is currently little agreement and no road map to get the district to a better place.

Empowerment: TRSD enjoys a

tremendously skilled staff of professionals. The school board should be working to recognize our exceptionally talented people and allowing them to do their jobs unimpeded. Unfortunately, there is a history of micromanagement from the board which undermines morale, blocks productivity, and creates fear. I would like to see a board that recognizes excellence and lets people do their jobs.

Board Learning: Each and every board member should be aware of current educational policies, key legislation, and the roles and activities of major people in education at the state and federal levels. This requires a commitment to broad reading and a willingness to learn things outside the bubble of one's own confirmation bias. An effective board member must be willing to learn a great deal before making decisions, NOT arrive with a petty agenda. This board seems to lack an interest in the broader issues and policies facing educators today.

Other Issues: I am personally interested in funding art and music programs, developing our neglected school libraries, and improving our school food plans, but none of these things has had strong attention despite their importance, because the board is so deeply divided and distracted.

Kate Dwyer
TRSD Board, Zone 1

Reader touts expansion

As a local business leader representing over 50 businesses here in the Illinois Valley, we want to express our thanks to Rep. Peter DeFazio and Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley for their continued support for the Oregon Caves National Monument Expansion bill (S354) and their continued work to see this through. They and the rest of America understand the importance of this economic engine that this provides to both gateway communities and the surrounding regional economies.

Additionally, this also protects the Lake Creek watershed above the caves and gives us the opportunity to showcase to the world a nationally outstanding glacial cirque known as the Bigelow Lakes Basin and the cave network itself which is found to be more extensive than what the original 480 acre monument could protect for our visiting public.

Thank you all!

Greg Walter
Jefferson State Financial Group

Free your self from pesticides

If you're concerned about the threat GMOs pose to our Food, Farms and Future, consider what the toxic chemicals required to grow them, along with poisons sprayed throughout our county are doing. The Freedom from Pesticides Alliance (FPA) is taking the recent GMO ban to another level. FPA is wanting to stop the pesticides directly linked to GMOs and more. Truth is the same chemicals from the same chemical companies are causing harm not just to our food and farms but our air, water soil and bodies. Chemicals such as Glyphosate/Roundup, Atrazine and 2,4-D are all sprayed within Josephine County by both Corporate and Governmental entities, exposing citizens to chemical trespass year after year. Their 'fast, cheap and easy' method of killing pests is threatening the health of our county.

Join the FPA effort to put this issue on November's ballot. Sign the Freedom from Pesticides Bill of Rights initiative petition at the following locations:

The Herb Shop , Grants Pass, The Grants Pass Growers Market FPA Booth, Diggin Livin Farm & Apiary and The Farmers Market- Cave Junction.

Audrey Moore
Selma

Political science questioned

The huge loss of honey bees the last few years has been of immense interest to me. Until I read Bennie Fishal's letter (25 June) I've not read anything that stated the cause or causes of same. He named six different ingredients of insecticides responsible. Two days later, that 'other' paper had an article saying Oregon has 'temporarily' restricted use of two of these. Why not all six?

I've had several science classes, and the hard sciences (not political science where the EPA facts are found) always base statements on facts leading to the Scientific Method where these facts can be proven.

Obituaries

Austin Lee Reynolds, infant son of Clifton Reynolds & Brenna Janoski, died Friday, June 27, 2014 at Three Rivers Medical Center.

Family services are planned. Hull & Hull Funeral Directors are in charge of arrangements.

Please sign the family guest book at www.since1928hull.com.

Austin was born June 27, 2014 in Grants Pass at Three Rivers Family Birth Center.

Survivors include his parents, Clifton Reynolds & Brenna Janoski; maternal grandparents, Kevin & Julie Janoski of Cave Junction; paternal grandparents, Terrel Lee Reynolds of Cave Junction and

Irene Guerrero of Cave Junction; maternal great-grandparents, Pat Janoski of Reno, Nevada and Genie Carwitz of Cave Junction; paternal great-grandparents, Daniel & Iris Clark of Cave Junction and paternal great-grandmothers, Grandma Clark and Grandma Luna.

Russell Richard "Rusty" Brummett, age 42, of Cave Junction, died Friday, June 20, 2014, in Cave Junction.

A memorial service will be at 11:00 a.m., Saturday, July 5, 2014, at Immanuel United Methodist Church in Cave Junction with Pastor Charles

Chase officiating. Hull & Hull Funeral Directors are in charge of arrangements.

Rusty was born October 2, 1971 in Long Beach, California and had lived in the Illinois Valley since age two.

He was a member of Immanuel United Methodist Church since the age of 13.

His hobbies included camping, hunting, fishing, cutting firewood, spending time with his friends, and helping those less fortunate.

Survivors include two daughters, Brittanie O'Grady and Skylie Brummett both of Grants Pass; a son, Tyi Brummett of Cave Junction; his mother, Karen Thomas Brue of Cave Junction; two sisters,

Lona Gutierrez of Grants Pass and Robin Paulson of Cave Junction; and two grandchildren.

Mary Marie (Parmley) Layman, 68 of Cave Junction passed away Sunday, June 22, 2014 at her residence in Cave Junction.

A public viewing will begin at noon on Saturday, June 28th at Stephens Family Chapel. The funeral service will begin at 1 p.m. A graveside service will follow at Laurel Cemetery in Cave Junction.

For online condolences and tributes please visit stephensfc.com.

Arrangements by Stephens Family Chapel, Grants Pass, Oregon.

Survivors include her husband, Fred David Layman Sr. of Cave Junction; daughters, Sandra Lee Gonzales of Grants Pass and Kandy Lynn Layman of Grants Pass; son, Freddie David Layman Jr. of Cave Junction; 14 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

Mary was born on June 22, 1946 in Santa Rosa, Calif. to Clifford and Mary Parmley. She spent most of her childhood there and graduated from Montgomery High School in Santa Rosa, Calif.. She married Fred David Layman Sr. on June 26, 1966 in Reno, Nev. and they moved to Grants Pass. Mary had 3 children in Grants Pass and then moved to Cave Junction in 1974 where she raised her family and spent her remaining years.

She was a housewife to Fred and enjoyed camping, fishing, gardening, bingo, rock hunting, crocheting and sewing.

She was preceded in death by her father, Clifford Andrew Parmley of Santa Rosa, Calif. on October 29, 1975, her mother, Mary Claire Parmley-Higgins of Santa Rosa, Calif. on October 26, 1993 and brother, Robert Andrew Parmley of Santa Rosa, Calif. on August 27, 2009

Survivors include her husband, Fred David Layman Sr. of Cave Junction; daughters, Sandra Lee Gonzales of Grants Pass and Kandy Lynn Layman of Grants Pass; son, Freddie David Layman Jr. of Cave Junction; 14 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

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ILLINOIS VALLEY FUNERAL DIRECTORS
WWW.SINCE1928HULL.COM 541-592-4110

Save The Date

July 4, 5 & 6

Reunion Mania, Various locations around the Valley. Check this week's paper for details on your class.

July 6

The third annual Ice Cream Social will take place at Kerbyville Museum Sunday, July 6 from 1:30 to 4 p.m. Live music will be provided by Dale and Sherry Hopper and the \$5 charge will include a complimentary tour of the museum grounds and exhibits. Call 541-592-5252 for further information.

July 12

The Kerby Museum and History Center present: A World War II Era Canteen and Dance, All Veterans in attendance will be recognized and honored! Dance to the sounds of Glenn Miller, Doris Day, The Andrews Sisters, Bing Crosby and many more! Illinois Valley Senior Center, 520 E. River St. Cave Junction 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. \$8 per person, \$15 per couple. Refreshments will be available!

July 20

The Rusk Ranch Nature Center will offer a free Nature & Art Festival.

For more listings go to www.ivcalendar.org

Reservation Deadline is August 12, 2014. Last day for refunds is August 14, 2014.

Contact Hazel Griffith 541-592-6433 Or Jean Shubert 541-592-6150

Aug. 16

Join us along the 80 mile stretch of US Highway 199, from Highway 101 to I-5, featuring yard sales and special events on the third weekend in August, 2014.

There's no charge to participate, just set up your yard sale in a safe place!

For more information, go to our blog at <http://hwy199yardsale.blogspot.com> or call 707-720-9379 and leave a message. Held on the same weekend as "It's the Berries" at the RCC/Belt Building, 24353 Redwood Hwy Kerby, OR

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