



Alex Wittwer/The Observer, File

Gerald Hopkins, president of the Elgin Historical Society, pauses for a moment under a lantern Saturday, May 1, 2021, within the former Elgin Jail at the Elgin Museum. A retired educator, Hopkins is also the author of two volumes of "Humor in the Class, or Why Christopher Columbus Sailed Away from His Wife."

New book includes priceless gems from children

BY DICK MASON

The Observer

ISLAND CITY — Gerald Hopkins retired as an educator about five years ago, but he has not stopped sharing the joy he experienced while serving as a teacher and a principal for 33 years.

Book two of his series "Humor in the Class, or Why Christopher Columbus Sailed Away from His Wife," is proof. Volume 2, like volume 1, is filled with quotes from children in the schools where Hopkins worked, which are as humorous as they are heartwarming and enlightening.

Volume 2 features many gems teachers at Hopkins' schools passed on, such as the answer a teacher received from a child asked to name the four seasons: "Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar."

Participating in such exchanges or hearing them brought delight to Hopkins' career.

"Trying to see and hear the world through the eyes of a child adds zest and enjoyment and keeps all of us feeling young at heart. Seeing these special individuals share their lives and humor often brought a tear of happiness to my own life," Hopkins wrote in the introduction of his new book.

Hopkins wrote down comments from students as soon as he heard them. He would grab anything available to record them.

"Sometimes I would even write on napkins," Hopkins said.

He said that such steps were critical because memories can be fleeting.

Kids say the darndest things

Some of Gerald Hopkins' favorite quotes from children in the new second volume of his "Humor in the Class, or Why Christopher Columbus Sailed Away from His Wife":

Teacher: How can you delay milk turning sour?

Student: Keep it in the cow.

Teacher: What does varicose mean?

Student: Nearby.

Teacher: What is a seizure?

Student: A Roman emperor.

Teacher: Why don't ants get sick?

Student: They have antibodies.

"Often I would hear my fellow educators laugh and share what one of their students might have said, and remark that they would never forget that special moment," Hopkins said.

But, he noted, "Time takes its toll, so I have attempted to record another collection of these comments in my second book."

Most of the student comments in Hopkins' new book are ones he heard personally, but there are others that were shared with him, including by his wife, Mary, also a retired educator.

Hopkins gathered the comments in his books during his time serving as principal of Huntington Elementary School and North Powder Elementary School.

Local Briefing

County commission candidates debate April 23

All five candidates for the Baker County Board of Commissioners have confirmed they will participate in a debate on Saturday, April 23, at 6 p.m. at the Sunridge Inn, 1 Sunridge Lane. The public is invited to attend the event, which is sponsored by Baker County United. The primary election is May 17.

Candidates will be responding to questions submitted in advance, and also taking questions from the audience.

Three candidates are vying to replace Bill Harvey as commission chairman, the only full-time position — Shane Alderson, Dan Garrick and Joe Johnson. There are two candidates for commission position 2, a part-time position held by Mark Bennett — Kody Justus and Christina Witham. Neither

Bennett nor Harvey is seeking reelection.

In both commission races, if one candidate receives more than half the voters, that person would be elected. If no candidate receives at least half of the voters, the top two candidates in both races would advance to a runoff in the Nov. 8 general election.

The Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal service organization with an active chapter in Baker County, is supporting efforts to help Ukrainian refugees. To learn more, go to kofc.org/Ukraine.

Workshop on lawn care set for April 23

A three-hour workshop on growing and maintaining a lawn is set for April 23 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Baker County Community Events Center, 2600 East St.

Participants can register by calling the OSU Extension Service at 541-523-6418 and

pay at the door. Cost is \$10 per person.

David Cowan, an OSU Extension master gardener since 2005, will conduct the workshop. Topics include the role turf can play in a sustainable landscape, tips for proper installation and revitalization, sound cultural practices for maintaining a lawn, minimizing the risk of pests, and suggestions for selecting useful turf care tools.

BHS baseball 'Pink Night' for breast cancer awareness

The Baker High School baseball team will have its Pink Night, to raise awareness about breast cancer and honor those affected by it, on Monday, April 25, when the Bulldogs play Heppner/Ione at 5 p.m. at the Baker Sports Complex.

Baker players will wear pink uniforms and hats. Everyone is invited to attend and to also don pink clothing.

Hells Canyon Clean Up set for April 30

OXBOW — Idaho Power Company is looking for volunteers to help with its annual Hells Canyon Clean Up event on Saturday, April 30.

Volunteers will meet at the Oxbow School before 9 a.m. PDT, rain or shine. They will then head out to pick up trash along the Snake River, roads and campsites. Volunteers should wear sturdy walking shoes and bring gloves, sunscreen and water. A free barbecue for volunteers will take place at Idaho Power's Copperfield Park following the clean up, which commemorates Earth Day.

"Conditions are great for camping in the canyon right now," said Jared Farrens, a resource professional for Idaho Power. "To reserve a spot, visit idahopower.com/recreation, and then join us for the clean up Saturday morning."

Resolution

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Commission Chairman Bill Harvey and Commissioner Mark Bennett voted in favor of the resolution.

Commissioner Bruce Nichols, who said he agrees with most of the sentiments in the resolution, voted no because he disagrees with the way Baker County United initially presented its version to commissioners in December 2021.

"I agree with the Second Amendment, I agree with not having vaccine mandates and almost everything else (in the resolution)," Nichols said. "The way this was portrayed initially to me was the main reason that I will not sign this resolution."

"I felt you were trying to force this on this commission, and that's what makes me get angry about it," Nichols said.

Harvey said he thinks the resolution is beneficial to county residents.

"I believe this is a good position and stance for the county and to strengthen our position as far as saying to the public that we will not come after you for something that you believe is unconstitutional," Harvey said.

Harvey said that as a governing body, the commissioners are "here not to enforce anything that offsets the Constitution."

"We already have never enforced anything on a citizen that is against their conscience, based on the Constitution of the United States," Harvey said. "This is just reaffirming our position as a county government that Baker County will not go marching into the stores and say, that person is not wearing a mask, we'll put them down, shove a mask on their face just to enforce a law or whatever it might be. That's not our role nor is it our authority."

When Baker County United submitted its proposed resolution to commissioners in December, an executive order issued by Oregon Gov. Kate Brown requiring people to wear masks in most indoor public settings was still in place. That requirement ended March 12.

Jake Brown of Halfway, a member of Baker County United, said he was disappointed by the deletions and other changes that commissioners made to the original proposal.

Brown said he and others who brought the original resolution to commissioners do not support the version commissioners passed, and do not want their names associated with it.

"It was our hope that we could have a local government that would stand up and ally with us," Brown said.

Both resolutions have a list of activities that are "not allowed or tolerated within Baker County."

Baker County United's proposal has 12 such items, whereas the version commissioners approved has 10. The latter version combines two parts from the former into one section, both of which deal with gun rights.

The combined section in the resolution commissioners approved reads: "Expanding requirements regarding registration of personal firearms, contrary to 2nd Amendment protections, nor the confiscation of firearms without probable cause, due process, and Constitutionally compliant warrants issued by an authorized jurisdiction."

There's also a difference in the wording preceding the list of prohibited activities. Baker County United's version refers to these as "abuses," while the county's version calls them "acts."

Brown said each section in Baker County United's (BCU) original resolution was closely linked to an amendment in the U.S. Constitution.

He objected to the county's version dealing with the use of "Force, threaten, coerce or deceive, a citizen to receive any medical treatment against their will."

The county's version says this is guaranteed in the 14th amendment, while BCU's cites the 13th amendment.

"Changing that from the 13th amendment to the 14th, gives it the opposite effect of what we intended," Brown said.

The 13th amendment, ratified in 1865, abolished slavery in the United States and provides that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

The 14th amendment, adopted in 1868, has five sections, one of which granted citizenship and equal civil and legal rights to African Americans and enslaved people who had been emancipated after the American Civil War.

That section of the amendment states: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States,

and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

County counsel Kim Mosier explained why she changed the reference from the 14th amendment to the 13th.

"That medical treatment piece, I did some research on that, and in the original it references the 13th amendment," Mosier said. "I did find some case law regarding the 13th amendment and coercive medical treatment and the cases that I see that relate

to the 13th amendment are Supreme Court cases that say that you can't require medical providers to treat and that is a violation of the 13th amendment."

"The 14th amendment, there is a 1905 case that says the government cannot force, threaten, coerce, or deceive a citizen into receiving medical treatment against their will. So, that is counter to the Constitution under the 14th amendment," Mosier said.

BCU's original resolution included a clause stating that "Baker County Commissioners proudly join the Constitutional Sheriffs and Police Officers Association and that the undersigned commissioners do hereby denounce any acts or agencies that promote the aforementioned practices."

Brown said earlier this year that BCU deleted that clause from its proposed resolution.

Nichols, responding to previous questions from BCU members who asked commissioners to reaffirm their oath of office, said he believes he does that every time he recites the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of a meeting.

Nichols also asked supporters of the original BCU resolution to recognize that although many people support that document, other county residents have different opinions.

"We're supposed to be representing all of the people," Nichols said. "Whatever we do, there is always somebody that disagrees with us. I don't care what it is, there's always somebody that disagrees."

Bennett pointed out that although the resolution states that "no agency established by the U.S. Congress can develop its own policies or regulations which supersede the Bill of Rights or the Constitution," county commissions do not determine whether or not an action is constitutional.

That task, Bennett said, is delegated in the Constitution to the judicial branch of government.



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Reelect David Baum

Oregon Trail Electric Board, Position 8

STATEMENT TO VOTERS: The electric utility industry is seeing significant changes due to increased demand, new technologies, government mandates, high prices of natural gas and oil, and weather renewables (solar and wind). Weather renewables work only when the Sun is shining and the Wind is blowing.

Currently OTEC purchases 100% of its electrical power from Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and some of the lowest electrical rates in the country. But BPA is being challenged with increasing costs, reduced revenue, and threat of the removal of the four lower Snake River dams. As the board member involved with the Wildfire Mitigation Plan, we have aggressively pushed forward with the drafting and finalization of a Wildfire Plan.

As we negotiate a new contract with Bonneville (BPA), my legal experience is a valuable evaluation tool. My focus will be to continue to work diligently in areas of Power Supply, Transmission and Distribution. I will strive to keep your electrical rates low.

Our CEO, Les Penning and staff with board support will not be raising your electrical rates for 2022.

It's been a pleasure and a privilege to serve as your representative on the board of Directors. I have gained significant knowledge and experience about cooperatives during this time. I will continue to work hard at keeping electric rates low while providing safe and reliable electricity to our members along with excellent customer service. I have knowledge, experience, energy and time to serve.

I ask for YOUR VOTE and look forward to our future challenges.

Paid For By David Baum / The Committee to Reelect David Baum