

# Heppner Gazette-Times

MORROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER  
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## Bond Issue Designed to Meet School Needs

After spending considerable time checking schools around the county and conferring with many persons about them, we are convinced of the need for school construction to serve all parts of the county. We feel that the bond issue proposed by the directors of district R-1 is a sound and logical way to meet this need and that there will be no better time to accomplish the objective than now.

Construction of a new high school to serve the northern part of the county must be done, of course, because of the fact that Riverside school is in the relocation area. The Federal Government will pay 80% but the local district must stand the remainder of the cost.

We found that conditions at Irrigon, though perhaps not critical, are not good. Seventh and eighth grade classes are meeting in a building 41 years old. Its lighting and ventilation are of a bygone era. Built on three levels with a huge staircase in the center of the building, the structure poses something of a fire hazard. We wouldn't use this latter factor to cry "wolf" but every parent should seriously consider it.

Situation is growing acute for schools serving Lexington and Heppner. At present grade schools are split up piecemeal in four buildings, and growth of the high school will mean that elementary students now using three rooms there must move out next year. To take care of lunch, physical education and band needs, a bus shuttle service is provided between Unit-A and the high school and elementary school, requiring 20 round trips per day. This is costly and time-consuming. Pupils lose as much as an hour per day going back and forth and it poses difficult problems of coordination and administration.

Construction of a new high school building would free the present high school for elementary use.

At the high school in Heppner, some teachers are "nomads." They don't have a desk to call their own, no place to correct papers or keep materials. Biology must be taught without a laboratory, the homemaking room will accommodate only 16 students. The physical education plant is inadequate.

It is rather ironic that school population has grown when the total county population has remained steady, but such is the fact. At present there are 1600 children in the school census, but 10 years ago there were only 1200. The crest of the wave has hit, and it will continue to roll through the schools for several years.

Building needs at Irrigon and Boardman could be met by the serial levy that was approved three years ago, but this does not take care of the acute need in the southern part of the county. The need is here. It must be met sometime. Costs are rising up continually, and there will be no time at which the job can be done cheaper.

We have thoroughly examined the school board's proposal on the bond issue which would encompass the serial levy. By including the levy and spreading the \$870,000 debt over 20 years, tax levy for the next two years will be down around the county. Any increase in valuation that may come from development of the county will help pay the debt, thus reducing the levy for all taxpayers.

It is good to bear in mind, too, that by spreading the debt over a longer period, newcomers will assume their fair share of the obligation when they buy property in the county. When buildings are paid for under a serial levy, new families may use them without assuming a dime of debt. For example, any one moving to Heppner or Lexington now can send his children to the new Unit-A, which is all paid for by serial levy, without paying a nickel on the construction cost. This would not be true had the building been financed by bond issue because amortization of the debt would be included in the annual school budget through the 20-year period.

Some problems must be faced and answered before construction is started, such as the location of Riverside school and the design of the school. We believe that rooms of the school for grade children should be separate and apart from those for the high school, but we have been assured that the final design is yet to be worked out.

A debt of \$870,000 is a large one, there's no denying that, but the proposal is designed for needs that must be met, sooner or later. The school board has developed a sound plan, one that merits support and one that imposes a minimum burden on the taxpayer.

Public education today faces a severe challenge. School children need the best training possible to be ready for their careers in this fast-moving world. They face stiff competition in colleges from those being funneled from schools that offer top curricula. We can't afford to offer our children less than the best we can do.

## Error on the County Road Serial Levy

One of the county's biggest property taxpayers, Union Pacific, has called attention to the fact that Morrow county's serial road levy of 10 mills, voted by the people in 1958, will bring in taxes for this year, 1961-62, in excess of the statutory limitation. Therefore that part above the limit was illegally levied.

Investigation has found that Union Pacific is correct. However, the error was made because a change in assessment ratio increased the county valuation over that of 1960-61 by some \$2,500,000, and it was not because of any intent or connivance on the part of our public officials.

The last legislature passed a law that established the assessment ratio uniformly among counties at 25%. In the case of Morrow county, this was an increase from its previous 22% ratio, causing the increase in valuation. Thus, the 10-mill levy voted by the people in 1958, to be levied annually for a 5-year period, would bring in \$17,430,292 more than the law allows. The statutes provide that in the case of a serial levy, not more than six per cent above the previous year's total can be levied.

This was overlooked by those who prepared the budget and was not caught at the ensuing public hearing. Only when the scrutinizing eyes of Union Pacific officials noticed it, was it brought to the county's attention.

It is difficult to fix blame in an instance such as this, and there is little reason to attempt it. Laws are being changed so fast and so often that it is easy for a public agency to get trapped, especially in a county of small population where no one can devote full time studying these matters.

The county court, county assessor and district attorney acted wisely by releasing a story calling attention to the error. The county court also has acted promptly by setting aside a fund equal to an amount over the legal limit to provide for refunds.

Although larger taxpayers will be entitled to substantial refunds, many smaller taxpayers will be entitled only to refunds perhaps smaller than the expense involved in returning them. At the present time officials are considering the best legal method of attempting to rectify the error.

In the meantime, taxpayers could serve a good purpose by being patient on this matter. To deluge the officials with queries and applications for refunds at this time could only add confusion and create additional expense to the county. They have shown their good intent. It now behooves the public to give them a chance to work out an orderly method of handling the situation.

## Creamery Owners Attend Convention

Mr. and Mrs. Claude Cox, owners of Morrow County Creamery, returned Monday after spending a week in the Willamette Valley, highlight of which was attendance at the convention of Oregon Dairy Industries at Corvallis. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and heard professors and speakers "from all over." They also took a trip to the beach and on the return trip stopped at Project City, Wn., to visit their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. George (Nancy) Holden.

## The Helpful Sideline Firefighter

A recent AP Wirephoto shows a Chicago fireman tussling with a citizen who thought he could do a better job combatting the blaze than the man trained for the job.

In the Burns Herald of last week we noticed an article, issued after a blaze that took the life of a child, pointing out that would-be helpful citizens had hampered the work of the fire department. It cited a city ordinance that provides for stiff penalties for interfering with the firemen and meddling with fire equipment.

At the most recent fire in Heppner, we understand, our volunteers had the same trouble. The complaint was made by firemen that so many persons got in the way that they sometimes had difficulty getting in and out of the burning building. Some hooted at the men when a truck went some distance away to hook up to a second hydrant. Many cars drove over fire hoses in violation of state law. A responsible motorist should never do this.

At any football game there is always a sideline quarterback who knows just how the ball game should be played, but he might not be so glib if he were actually in the contest calling the signals.

There is something about a fire that brings out an over-powering instinct in some persons to take command and give orders, apparently on the ground that they can figure out the situation better than anyone else, including the trained firemen.

True, there are some fires where the volunteer firefighters need and want help. But the offer should be made to the chief or the man in charge at the fire. If he says no help is needed, the helpful person should get clear back out of the way if he is honestly interested in seeing the blaze extinguished.

Those who are not satisfied with this have an alternative. They can join the department, go through the drills and training sessions, roll hose and clean equipment. There is room for more trained men. But for every minute of excitement in the life of a fire fighter there are many hours of drudgery and wearying work.

The public should be grateful to these men who volunteer to protect life and property from fire. Whatever compensation they get is only a pittance for the effort they have made and the risk involved.

At a fire, none of the volunteers can spend his time acting as a policeman, and the city officers generally are too busy directing traffic of the curious to handle the crowd right at the fire.

The least one can do is to be courteous and keep out of the way. The untrained person is to observe something that the firemen do which doesn't make sense to him. But it must be borne in mind that the fire fighters have good reason for every move they make, and they combat fires with a good background of study and training.

Let's give them a hand by keeping clear. Instead of criticism, give them a pat on the back. The next house that catches fire may be yours, and you can count on them to respond when the call comes in.

—And, incidentally, one nice gesture right at this time would be to buy a ticket to the Firemen's Ball coming March 3.

## Boardman News

By MARY LEE MARLOW

Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Nelson and son David of Hillsboro were visitors at the home of Nelson's brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Earl McQuay last week.

Clifford Pool of Portland spent the week-end here at his farm. Mrs. Earl Briggs, Mrs. Walter Wyss and Mrs. Charles Anderson went to The Dalles one day last week to visit Mrs. R. S. Wilson and Mrs. Bessie Nickerson.

Transfered To LaGrande

Pat Miller, 15-year-old daughter of Mrs. Russell Miller, who has been a patient in the Good Shepherd hospital in Hermiston, was taken to the St. Joseph's hospital in La Grande last Thursday for further treatment.

Mrs. Miller went to La Grande Sunday to visit her daughter, and stayed overnight at the home of her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Vern Carpenter.

Mrs. Armin Hug left Monday for La Grande to visit a week with her mother, Mrs. Katie Bickford.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Higuera and children Susan, Karen and Jeffrey of Kennewick, Wn., spent the week-end here at the homes of Mrs. Higuera's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Guy Ferguson, and her brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Bedford.

Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Carpenter and children, Johnnie and Anna Marie of Seattle, Wn., were week-end visitors at the home of Carpenter's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Carpenter.

Mrs. Louise Earwood accompanied her brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Steinke of Arlington, to The Dalles last Friday where they attended the birthday celebration of their father, Herman Steinke.

Robert Harwood is a patient in St. Anthony's hospital in Pendleton receiving treatment for an injured back. He is in traction.

Mr. and Mrs. Don Downey and sons Wayne and Jerry visited in Prosser, Wn., last Friday at the home of Downey's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Downey.

Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Houston and son Leo of La Grande were week-end visitors at the home of Mrs. Houston's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Potts.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Parker and Mrs. Evelyn Smith of Portland visited friends here Sunday.

## Student Activities Occupy High School

Heppner High school student body held class meetings Tuesday morning. Seniors were occupied in the selection of their graduation announcements. Committees were organized in the junior class for the spring prom and banquet.

Class rings were selected by the sophomore class members, with delivery planned for this fall. Freshmen discussed their spring activity program.

The high school band, under direction of Arnold Melby, presented a concert before grade school students, grades one through eight, on Wednesday afternoon.

## Crouch Farm Sold

BOARDMAN—Mr. and Mrs. Roy Philippi of Arlington have purchased the farm and leased land of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Crouch in Boardman. The ranch and leased land totals some 3,000 acres. Price was approximately \$200,000. Philippi will take possession April 1. Mr. and Mrs. Crouch have not announced their future plans.

# Chaff and Chatter

Wes Sherman

S. J. (JACK) Hughes is back to stay. He spent 73 years in the Heppner area and 14 months ago went to Ridgefield, Wn., to live with a nephew, Paul Bellows. But Jack couldn't hack it there. "Too wet," he commented when we met him as he was talking to Bill Siewert in the bank the other day. He is now living with the Austin Devins. Jack's memories go way back to the early days here. "We had to shoot somebody to start the cemetery," he commented.

MR AND MRS. Herbert Ekstrom, Sr., of Lone (Herb and May) who were married February 17, 1932, observed their 30th wedding anniversary last week. The groom of three decades ago bought his bride of a score and a half ago a gift that to her was the ultimate. She was thrilled and delighted. A diamond ring? A new car? A mink coat?

No, it was none of these. He bought her a champion horned Hereford cow at the Blue Tag sale, one of a much sought after blood line, going back to sire H. H. Real Onward of the Hull Dobbs ranch.

Three years ago Herb also bought May a champion cow on their anniversary, and she couldn't have been more pleased.

"It is getting to be an old custom for me to get cows for my anniversary," she said. But when one sees the stock that the Ekstroms have and notes the champions they raise and the honors they win, he can well understand this pride in a fine animal.

—And congratulations on the anniversary!

HAVE YOU noticed the new arrangement of tables and counters in the J. C. Penney store?

One young lady declared, "It's the best thing that has happened to this town." Well, certainly it does allow for easier movement and less congestion in the store. Mike Whitesmith, manager, confesses that he didn't particularly plan to rearrange the whole inside, but one thing led to another until the whole place was rearranged.

WITH THE running of the jury panel in this issue of the paper a lot of personal secrets in regard to names are revealed, we'll bet. In reading proof on them, we notice quite a few who have refused title to their first names in preference to a better sounding middle name in common use. Others have been getting by through use of a nickname when they didn't like their fancy moniker. But the truth is in print now for nearly one-quarter of the county's registered voters.

Surprisingly enough, the list makes pretty interesting reading!

WHEN ARLINGTON residents say "There will be a hot time in the old town on March 3 and 4," they are not just wooing. At least eight of the town's oldest buildings will be burned in one of the largest fire drills to be conducted in the state.

State Fire Marshall Cecil Dill will be in charge of operations and departments across Oregon will be invited. Among buildings to go up in flames will be the old Methodist church, making it a little hotter than any fire and brimstone sermon ever preached in it.

This is part of the job of relocation. Buildings to be burned are among those which will not be moved.

Arlington neighbors could make quite a festive occasion of these. Should be a real show for any who would care to watch, and a fellow might find a spot for a wiener roast if he looked for it.

MANY FRIENDS of Harry Dinges paid respect to his memory at funeral services in Lexington Tuesday, and an incident happened at the time of interment in the Lexington cemetery that brought some comfort to the bereaved family.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Acklen of Grants Pass told us after the funeral that Harry, father of Mrs. Acklen, was a great lover of horses and they seemed to return this affection. In the old days, when he went outside, some of the horses would come up to the fence and extend their heads towards him, across the top rail.

When the procession went up to the Lexington cemetery Tuesday, the mourners observed three horses moving curiously towards the fence that surrounded the cemetery. As Harry Dinges was laid to rest, the horses watched silently and seemed to bow reverently in respect to a man who loved their kind.

AT THE Oregon Press conference in Eugene Friday and Saturday, we had the joy of watching venerable L. H. Gregory, sports editor of the Oregonian, receive the Amos Voorhis award for outstanding service to journalism. It was an experience that we would not have missed for anything.

Like thousands of Oregonians, we have read his sports column for many years. Some consider him crusty and crochety, but we suspect that his vengeful sides one of the finest and biggest hearts in the business.

Greg spoke at an earlier session of the conference, and pounding his fist on the podium, demanded that journalists return to fundamentals of grammar and good English. In Methodist tradition, and as our readers may have noticed in an editorial two weeks ago, we would give this a hearty "Amen!"

Greg looked like a dog that had been whipped when they insisted on taking his picture, something that he seldom permits, but the honor was well-deserved and received the overwhelming acclamation of his colleagues in the business.

We only wish that there were more like him to insist upon attention to details in writing. After all, the little things make good newspapers.

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N. MAIN

## TO THE EDITOR

There are four reasons why I am going to vote for the proposed bond issue to build new school facilities now.

1st: Perhaps a selfish one, because of the children in my family and my children's families who are going to be using this new school for a long time. And because of a possible build-up in the north end, I feel that this may be our last good chance to get a good school in the south end, yet provide for such a build-up there.

2nd: The course of study that will be offered in the new school will be such as we have never been able to offer our children in this county before.

3rd: The building committee has been able to whittle about \$60,000 off the cost in spite of (I think) a disadvantageous site. However, we're stuck with it. Also the fact that we have to have this school and as costs are going up to 10 to 15% per year, the longer it's put off the more it will cost.

4th: The plan for financing this school is well thought out. With the cooperation of other taxing groups our taxes will be a little less than they were last year. The bond issue will cost 4 1/2 mills. The serial levy has been 7.9 mills, so we should get a saving of a few mills by eliminating that for the next two years. Then we reduced enough that the cost in overall taxes should not increase at the end of that two year period.

Personally, I cannot see how old-time residents with families can hope to use the present facilities forever.

I wonder if this is dangerous thinking?

O. W. Cutsforth

## COMMUNITY BILLBOARD

### Coming Events

#### BENEFIT FOOD SALE

Red and White Grocery By American Legion Auxiliary, Friday, February 23, from 10 a. m. to 5 p. m.

O.E.S. SOCIAL CLUB Card party, Saturday, March 3, Masonic hall.

DANCE AT HARDMAN Saturday, February 24. Roy's western band.

HEART FUND CAMPAIGN House to house calls, week of February 24—March 3. "More Will Live — the More You Give!"

This space will be used each week to announce coming events of a public service nature at no charge.

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