

# Heppner Gazette-Times

MORROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER  
PHONE 676-9228

The Heppner Gazette, established March 30, 1883. The Heppner Times established November 18, 1897. Consolidated February 15, 1912.

WESLEY A. SHERMAN  
Editor and Publisher

HELEN E. SHERMAN  
Associate Publisher



Subscription Rates: Morrow and Grant Counties, \$4.00 Year; Elsewhere \$4.50 Year. Single Copy 10 Cents. Published Every Thursday and Entered at the Post Office at Heppner, Oregon, as Second Class Matter.

OFFICE HOURS: 8 a. m. to 6 p. m.; Saturdays, 9 a. m. to 5 p. m.

## The Increasing Need to Know

Complexities of government, becoming more intricate with an acceleration of complicated laws and regulations that are designed to meet the stresses of an expanding population and the needs of a society traveling at a space age pace, evermore emphasize the need for better communication between the public and the governmental agencies that serve it.

It becomes harder and harder for a person to be a good citizen as the number of laws increase, simply because it is proportionately more difficult to keep informed and to keep abreast of the times.

Communication between government and the individual is not keeping pace, and the average man becomes more confused and bewildered. The result is that his hand in government is becoming less effective.

Consider the thousands of laws that face the citizen of today relative to all phases of his endeavor that were not on the statute books 25 years ago. It seems next to impossible for a person working at a full time job to become aware of the facts on all governmental matters of vital concern to him and his welfare.

Often he expresses his bewilderment at the polls—in the cases that he has the privilege of exercising his voting franchise, the ones not pre-empted by rulings of boards and commissions. Many times he votes in the negative simply because he does not understand.

One community in another part of the state recently held a school budget election. This budget called for no increase in taxes, asked for virtually no additional expenditures over the previous year. In the past, the school budget in this community had been approved with no trouble. But this year it was defeated, 120-114. School officials were perplexed.

They felt they had done the best job they could and immediately called another election. On the second try, the identical budget passed overwhelmingly—249 to 41! Why?

Part of the answer may be that the school administration took too much for granted the first time. Apparently it had been assumed that the people knew the facts and perhaps little effort was made to "reach" the voters. The budget wasn't "sold." Stopped short by the negative vote, the responsible persons undoubtedly took steps to see that the voters in the district had a better understanding on the second round.

It has always been taught in this country that each citizen has a responsibility to keep informed. He still has this obligation if he wishes to preserve our free way of life. But the time is here when he has to have some real help from conscientious public agencies who make their proposals in good faith. These agencies must be sure that their proposals are interpreted to the citizen so that he understands—and he has a right to this understanding.

A news article from the Oregon Education association recently bemoaned the fact that 27 school budgets had been defeated around the state this year and said that the future of education is therefore jeopardized. This is not necessarily true. It may simply mean, assuming that the budgets were sound proposals, that the facts were not interpreted properly to the people.

School administrations in some cases apparently have not realized that as costs have increased, as new laws have been imposed and as school operation becomes more complex, budgets and other matters have become increasingly difficult for a layman to understand. Very few persons, indeed, can honestly say that they understand all facets of these budgets. Many of the affirmative votes that are cast for them are votes of trust and faith in a school board and administration rather than votes of understanding.

Yet it is not fair to impose the whole burden of getting the information to the people upon shoulders of overworked volunteer public servants, such as school directors, who often give more of their time and resources in service than they should reasonably be asked to contribute.

City and county governments rarely exceed their constitutional six per cent limitations in this state, and thus the budget election is a particular affliction that faces schools. If cities and counties were caught in a similar bind, they, too, would undergo the rigors of the annual election and face the same problem of communicating with the public at budget time.

Mr. Citizen may not understand a city or county budget, but since he doesn't vote on it when it stays within the limitation, he is inclined to accept the estimates without much protest. In fact, in some cases, with all too little protest.

Thus, schools have a particular problem on this matter of communication. One can find few persons who are opposed to our educational system. Fewer still are those who would say that any youngster is not entitled to the best education that we can afford to provide. Isn't it conceivable that a person may vote against a budget or a school matter, not because he is disinterested and not because he doesn't believe in good education, but merely because he questions the merit of a proposition or does not understand? This, provided he has done all in his power to become informed, is in the best tradition of democracy.

It is our conviction that when the citizenry actually understands a sound proposal that is based on the premise of the greatest good to the greatest number of people and when the proposal is within the public's means of providing without hardship, it has every chance of being approved at the polls. This is true even though there are voters whose objectivity is sometimes blinded by petty prejudices.

In another area of government, consider the example of the ambulance law that was passed by the 1961 legislature. At the end of the session, relatively few persons were aware that it had been passed, or even that it had been considered. Pitifully few in communities like Heppner had any realization of the impact of this law because of the poor communication between the legislature and the citizen. Oliver Creswick was the first to become concerned here (the operated the ambulance then), and through him, the Gazette-Times probably was one of the first weekly newspapers in the state to editorialize on the matter (last July). But it wasn't until several months later that the word began to get around the state that ambulance service in small communities would be imperiled as a result of the law. Then the storm of protest started—belatedly—to arise. Virtually every newspaper in communities affected then carried indignant editorials. Chambers of Commerce took it up; public hearings were held. But it was nearly too late, and the outcome still is in doubt.

Here was an example of ill-advised legislation that obviously did not meet approval of thousands. It was approved simply because many were totally unaware of it and many others did not understand its impact.

There probably are some persons in offices of public trust who remain so immoral in their conception of responsibility that they seek to hide and disguise facts from the public. This is not the democratic way. Such persons are afraid of the scrutiny of truth and have no real right to hold office.

Dedicated news media—newspapers, radio, television—seek to fill a major role in communication to keep the public informed on the cherished principle of "the people's right to know." But theirs is a monumental task. They are submerged on all levels—all the way from local school districts to the federal government—with matters that touch all forms of human endeavor. They simply do not have the time and space to do the full job.

Ex-Governor Charles Sprague, publisher of the Oregon Statesman, brought out the point in a recent address at the Oregon Newspaper Publishers convention: "Integrity in news columns is a well-established principle, and along with it a higher level of integrity in editorial columns. But the challenge to newspapers as purveyors of information and opinion is greater than

ever. The volume of local, state, regional, national, world—and space—news is so staggering that selecting, weighing and displaying news for a paper's readers is taxing. In a world as complicated as that of today even a Harvey Scott would be hard pressed to fashion convictions out of past experience."

What, then, is the answer? First it is important to recognize that need for better communication is a real problem. Governmental agencies at all levels should do all they can to inform the public accurately and honestly. The mere knowledge that this is an acute need will help a dedicated official achieve better communication.

On the other hand, the citizen should attempt to do a better job of keeping himself informed and avail himself of opportunities to seek the facts. Consider the incongruity of the fact that only 13 of the county population of nearly 5000 attended the Morrow county school budget hearing this spring, but the budget passed by a mere 23 votes.

When agencies make an honest endeavor, through all means at its command, to inform, and when the citizen makes a concerted effort to avail himself of opportunities offered to become informed, a large part of the problem may be solved.

The trend to shortcut said publication of budget, legal notices and public documents on the theory that "no one reads them anyway" should be halted. Emphasis, rather, should be on presenting information for understanding and not merely to satisfy legal formality. Indeed, some new budget forms make it difficult for even the most careful voter to determine how his money is being spent.

There remains a void in bringing to the public's attention the myriad of new laws passed each biennium by the state legislature and at each session by the national Congress.

Can a state representative serving five counties, as is true in our district, remotely begin to reach the people he seeks to serve with information of importance to them?

Here is a matter that needs sincere attention. Perhaps skilled persons should be employed to act as objective reporters to the people on laws being considered—Liaison between the legislature and the people.

The voters pamphlet gives information at election time to keep the public posted on candidates and measures. Maybe some similar idea could be worked out in presenting to the people synopses of laws being proposed in the legislature, telling of public hearings on bills and other pertinent facts. True, copies of bills that are proposed are available for perusal, but they are phrased in language that is difficult for a layman to understand and they lack explanations and interpretations.

Perhaps there are better answers. But this is an area that needs dedicated study. The communications breach is narrowed, democratic government will become increasingly more difficult. More and more school budgets will be defeated. There will be more consternation and indignation at laws passed without general knowledge, and smooth functioning of government on all levels will be jeopardized.

## TO THE EDITOR...

To the Editor:

I hope that the voters will approve of the proposed county road budget on July 2, so our fine road program can be continued. The County Court deserves our vote of confidence.

W. C. Rosewall, President  
Morrow County Farmers Union

Dear Mr. Editor,

During the months of July and August, a group of college students from the lone area will be calling in homes to find out more about people.

These students realize after some study and thought that they would like to know and understand basic attitudes and feelings that are expressed by people in our community.

I personally hope that the community of lone and Valley will receive these students with interest and help them with their study.

Rev. J. R. MacKenzie

To the Editor:

We may be a little mite backwoods in the foothills of Morrow county out Hardman-way but when we go to the polls in an election, and especially one in which the raising of money by taxation is involved, we are given the privilege of a secret ballot out here. Seems as though they do things differently in the county seat at Heppner. In the recent election for the establishment of a Junior college to serve Umatilla and Morrow counties, we were required to vote at Heppner in the grade school instead of at Ruggles where our precinct for school elections had been moved from Hardman.

Having always considered voting a privilege, not an obligation or duty, we hurried through supper and traveled the 22 miles to Heppner so as to arrive before the 8 o'clock deadline.

After signing the registration blank as the 96th voter, was given the ballot with the number 96 written on the tab. My husband, following the same procedure, received ballot number 97. As we were marking our ballots, a lady entered and was given ballot 98. Giving our completed ballots to the members of the election board, we started to leave, and it was then we noticed they had not torn off the tabs with the numbers 96 and 97 written on them, as they were deposited in the ballot box. As we went through the door, we questioned each other to see if each had noticed the same thing. Believing we had, it was decided to return and ask. Which we did. No, they had not removed the tabs on any of the ballots cast and now in the ballot box. Perhaps that is a small

thing—or it it?

Because our ballots and all of you who voted did not vote a secret ballot, our number on the registration blank and your number on the ballot being the same, when the votes were counted it would be a simple matter to determine exactly how Smith or Jones voted by comparing the number on the tab of the ballot with the number on the registration blank. Just as simple as that.

After questioning the legality of the procedure being used; one of the ladies on the board said she would telephone the district attorney and ask him his opinion. This she did. On returning to the voting room she informed us that what they had done was quite illegal and that it would be necessary to secure another person besides the board members as a witness and the following steps be followed to correct this mistake: 1. seal the registration blank in an envelope. 2. open the ballot box and remove the numbered tabs from the ballots. 3. seal the tabs in an envelope and then the ballots could be counted in the regular manner. We believe this was done, though we did leave, as it was then two minutes after eight with 22 miles home and another work day ahead.

This raises the question as to why this was allowed to happen. With so few countries in the world having the privilege of a

secret ballot, is it something to be regarded so lightly by us? This privilege by the educational Surely we are not to be denied segment first? Another question follows: if the school administration is so lax in instructing the voting board in the proper procedure to be used in an election, how much confidence can the taxpayer have as to the proper handling of the monies collected by taxes and spent by them? Then this question bothers most of all. Were the other school elections held in Morrow county this spring conducted in the same way in Heppner? There were some very close ones that if so conducted were definitely illegal.

Well, it is something to think about—if you want to think.

Dorris L. Graves  
Hardman Rural Station

# NOTICE

OF

## CLOSED FIRE SEASON

THIS NOTICE IS TO REMIND EVERYONE THAT NO BURNING IS NOW PERMITTED AT ANY TIME WITHIN THE CITY OF HEPPNER.

BY ORDER OF  
FIRE CHIEF  
C. A. RUGGLES

## OUR SINCERE THANKS ....

... goes to all fine friends and good neighbors who rallied to our aid Saturday and fought lightning-set range fires which threatened our farms and range lands. Their good work prevented serious losses.

So many responded with equipment and help of all kinds that we are unable to name them all. Their assistance was wonderful, and we want to take this opportunity to express a word of appreciation.

Delwin and Delpha Nelson  
Rosella Lindsay  
Larry Lindsay  
Andy Van Schoiack

## Chaff and Chatter

Wes Sherman

OPERATION SIGNBOARD was underway at Wilson's Men's Wear last Thursday evening as a crew headed by Bill Blake, owner, took down the old board sign that has been over the front of the store for years and replaced it with a modern new sign that was made by Jack Loyd. In the process, though, a family was left homeless.

Hidden behind the old sign and extending into a vent of the Masonic lodge hall was a big sparrow nest that contained a number of sparrow fledglings. The bits of grass, straw and hay that the birds had accumulated over the years must have added up to nearly a quarter-bale. The industrious little birds had placed it all there, a single piece at a time over a long period of time.

But the sparrows yielded to progress, the cozy nest came tumbling down and the bright new sign now replaces the old one.

AMONG THOSE coming here for the Janet Wright-Ralph Litchfield wedding were Mr. and Mrs. Hugh McGilvra of Forest Grove. This was a nice surprise for the editor and family because the McGilvras have been long-time friends of the Shermans. Mr. and Mrs. McGilvra own and operate the Washington County News-Times and have interests in other papers. Hugh, we note by the last edition of the News-Times, has now been editor of the News-Times for 34 years, having started just after graduating from college in 1928. This makes him sound like an old man, but he isn't.

In several ways, Hugh was responsible for us getting into the newspaper business. He taught us journalism at Pacific University and later on referred us to Earle Richardson at Dallas, editor of the Hemizer-Observer, where we started in the business in earnest.

It was good to have the McGilvras here—even though it was only a short time.

secret ballot, is it something to be regarded so lightly by us? This privilege by the educational Surely we are not to be denied segment first? Another question follows: if the school administration is so lax in instructing the voting board in the proper procedure to be used in an election, how much confidence can the taxpayer have as to the proper handling of the monies collected by taxes and spent by them? Then this question bothers most of all. Were the other school elections held in Morrow county this spring conducted in the same way in Heppner? There were some very close ones that if so conducted were definitely illegal.

Well, it is something to think about—if you want to think.

Dorris L. Graves  
Hardman Rural Station

APPARENTLY, but unintentionally, we did an injustice to Dave Barnett of Heppner Ford last week in connection with the story on the car that was stolen from the Ford lot. The story reported that the keys were found in the car after it was abandoned and that Dave apparently had left them in after showing it to a prospect earlier in the evening.

However, Dave says he didn't leave the keys in the car and had not shown the Galaxie that evening. His version is that the thief apparently walked into the garage building and took the keys off the board while a member of the firm was working late.

Dave was nice about it and did not ask for a correction, but we feel that we owe it to him to get the story as straight as the facts can be reconstructed.

YOU MIGHT say there were Five Cats on a Hot Tin Roof at the G-T Friday and Saturday when our crew undertook the job of fixing the roof. Only instead of tin, it was aluminum. We have taken some ribbing at putting on a new roof while the weather is good, because, they say, you don't need it now. But we trust that raindrops will fall again sometime.

We're trying something fairly new on this roof, using rolled aluminum foil of rather heavy gauge, after Irv Anderson steered us on to it. It goes down on a gooey black cement that smells just like tar (ask Jim Myers whose new air conditioning unit inhaled it with all its pungency through his Phil's Pharmacy Saturday).

The claim is that the aluminum roof will keep the building 10 degrees cooler inside (we won't need to hitch a branch duct from Jim's air conditioner that is right in our back yard to keep cool). But when you apply the aluminum in the sun, the reflection is searing and blinding. Arnold Raymond, Avery Taylor and two boys who helped with the job, Rickey Gimbel and Jim Sherman, didn't find it too appealing—particularly, the matter of getting the "tar" off their clothes.

But I am a-peeling now from the job—all around the neck and back where the sunburn dug in good.

Anyway, this winter we should

have quite an assortment of pails and buckets for sale, since we shouldn't have any more leaks.

DEDICATED to the many who feel that taxes are too high is this little anecdote: A Congressman, speaking on the floor of the House, orated, "And now gentlemen, I wish to tax your memories."

A member of the opposition party turned to one of his colleagues and declared, "Good heavens, why haven't we thought of that before?"

## COMMUNITY BILLBOARD

### Coming Events

HEPPNER SWIMMING POOL  
Open daily, except Mondays  
Swimming lessons daily  
from 9:00 a. m.

LEGION MOVIES  
Friday, 8 p.m.; Legion Hall  
"Jalopy" starring the Bowery Boys  
Plus one-half hour Cartoons

FIREWORKS DISPLAY  
lone High School Memorial Field  
Saturday, June 30, 9 p.m.  
Followed by dance, Legion Hall

SOROPTIMIST  
INSTALLATION DINNER  
Saturday, June 30  
6:30 p.m.  
Episcopal Parish Hall

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

SPONSORED AS A PUBLIC SERVICE BY

C. A. RUGGLES  
Insurance Agency  
Heppner  
P. O. Box 611 PH. 676-9625



# July SPORT SHIRT EVENT

Come and get 'em! Cool, half-sleeve sport shirts in cottons and blends . . . plaids, patterns, stripes and solids . . . priced right, just when you need 'em most!

\$2.95 TO \$5.95

Wilson's Men's Wear

"THE STORE OF PERSONAL SERVICE"  
Heppner