

THE HEPPNER GAZETTE-TIMES

MORROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER
PHONE 676-9228

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The Thinking Behind Recreational Facility

In the months since the Star Theater was destroyed by fire this community has become increasingly concerned about the need for local recreation and entertainment, particularly for young people. Since the announcement a month ago that the theater would not be restored, strong feeling has been apparent that something must be done.

This feeling resulted in coordinated action last week when a committee composed of representatives of most local civic and service organizations met to discuss the matter.

There was a surprising unanimity of thinking at this meeting. It was proposed that the committee begin at once to explore the possibility of securing property as a location for a community recreation building which would house, in particular, a motion picture theater and bowling lanes. A sub-committee was appointed immediately to proceed with investigation, study costs, seek a location and determine the feasibility of the proposal.

Consensus of those present was that the most practical method of financing such a project might be through a municipal bond issue. If preliminary work shows this method to be feasible, it may be expected that the committee will go to the city council in the not-too-distant future and ask the council to propose the bond issue to the people. This, of course, must be submitted to a vote of the people in the city because the bonds would be paid off by taxes over a period of years.

C. E. McQuarrie and Earl Ayers have done considerable exploration of the project among local businessmen, and they report strong interest and support of the idea. They canvassed virtually every place of business in the downtown area and said that none of those contacted disapproved of the idea.

The proposal to use the bond issue as a method of financing this project is offered for several reasons. Among them are these:

1. It is extremely difficult to attract interest of private operators to an area of small population, such as this, because of the investment required. Several have been keenly interested in starting a bowling alley here, and one such project almost reached culmination, but the interested party backed off when it came down to the wire on financing.

2. Through a bond issue and placing the matter on the property tax roll, every property owner in the city would have a share in financing the project. It is assumed that virtually everyone in the community would stand to benefit from the recreational facility and so everyone should share in the cost. Because of the fact that the facility would attract visitors from surrounding areas and make Heppner a more desirable center of interest, it would stimulate some business here. Within the city, businesses carry a major part of the tax load, and under a bond issue, they would pay a major part of the cost of the facility.

3. Having once secured the building and part of the equipment, the city could lease the facility to a private operator. Some believe that the lease payments would eventually pay off the cost of the building. This may or may not be true, but in any event, the income to the city from the lease would help defray the cost and thereby cut down the taxes that property owners would pay for the structure.

The matter of cost will be fully explored before the project is presented to the council for consideration. Tentative thinking is that a 10-mill tax levy might be sufficient to do the job. This is the same amount that was taken off the city tax roll two years ago when the special sewer assessment was completed. Present bonded indebtedness of the city is \$27,000 for sewer and water improvements, which is not a large debt for a municipal corporation, and this will be retired at the end of the fiscal year 1973-1974. Much of the present indebtedness is being paid off by monthly water and sewer charges and is not assessed directly against the property. For the fiscal year 1962-1963, payment against the debt that is assessed to property is \$5620, representing only about 3 1/2 mills in taxation that is charged to property on bonded indebtedness.

There are those, including the editor, who say with good reason that our young people have plenty of constructive things to do. We believe this to be true. On the other hand, they need some additional entertainment activity. As one woman put it the other day, "Where does a young man have to take a girl on a date here?"

Using a simile, a person can thrive on a good balanced diet of meat and vegetables, but unless he gets dessert once in a while, eating becomes pretty drab. Our young people need a little dessert in entertainment, and our adults do, too.

It is a certainty that if the community does not offer such an outlet, our young people are going elsewhere to find one, as they are now. We are among those parents who would like to see this offered at home where the youngsters are not required to drive long distances with some potential traffic risk involved, as well as additional expense.

The plan formed by the new committee is deserving of enthusiastic interest and thoughtful consideration. It is expected that an architect will be consulted and that ideas will be well worked out before they are presented to the council and then to the citizens for vote. At that time the public will make its decision.

There are many matters to consider: Who should equip the building? Who would operate the theater and bowling alleys? How much capital would he put in? Should the structure include a room for community meetings? These, and many others, will have to be worked out.

If recreational facility is built, it should be one that would be a source of pride to the community and help this become a more pleasant and attractive place to live. It should be adequate to serve the community for many years to come.

Among those who are falling into line to support this proposal are those who feel also that something must be done at once for a more rounded social life for our youth and that the community should act to take inventory on present resources. Is there some way that the fair pavilion might be used as a skating rink? Can the churches provide youth nights with games and recreation? The Arbutle ski course offers some help in the winter, too.

At the present time most of the burden falls upon the schools, and Principal Gordon Pratt said rather wearily the other day, "We just aren't geared and equipped to take full responsibility for social activities of our young people." He is right. This is too much of an extension of the schools' purpose.

It would seem practical that while the one committee is working towards a recreational building, which couldn't be in operation for probably a year or more, another committee might be working for immediate goals.

ASCS Ballots Needed By Dec. 7 Deadline

Every eligible farmer in Morrow County has a responsibility to cast his vote for community Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation committee members in the election now being held, points out N. C. Anderson, county extension agent.

Ballots for voting on community ASC committee members have been mailed to farmers in the county and must be returned to the county ASCS office by December 7, the agent reminded. Any eligible farmer who did not

receive a ballot may get one at the county ASCS office in Heppner.

Farm income and plans are often directly affected by programs administered by the elected ASC committee members, the agent pointed out, which is a big reason why all those eligible should vote to insure the possible representation of their community in ASC programs.

Yes, the Gazette-Times can print the form you need for business or ranch use. Phone 676-9228.

Chaff and Chatter

Wes Sherman

MR. AND MRS. Jerry Nielsen and their three young children, the oldest about three, had a harrowing experience in the mountains Sunday that might have resulted in disaster. It was had enough as it was, but would have been worse if it had not been for Nielsen's father, John Nielsen, and Tom Howell who came to the family's rescue.

The family started through the mountains headed for Ukiah, leaving about noon Sunday. Some six inches of snow was on the ground, and their pickup truck slipped off the road about three miles from the Ellis Guard station. In trying to get out, Nielsen burned out the clutch on the rig, so the couple started out on foot, carrying the three young tots.

They knew the guard station was not too far away and so headed for it. Shortly after they started on foot, Mrs. Nielsen lost one of her shoes in the snow but her feet were so cold she did not realize it until sometime later. Then they retraced their steps and found the shoe. Some time later they crossed a cattle guard, and Mrs. Nielsen slipped, wrenching her ankle.

Finally they made it to the guard station and broke in for shelter. They built a fire in the stove, but it had been oiled by

foresters to prevent rusting through the winter, and the place immediately filled with smoke. Breathing the smoke made their throats and chests raw, but they left a door open and endured it. They found some flour and some frozen onions. Using snow for water, they mixed up the flour to make something resembling hot cakes and prepared a meal with what they had at their command. They had blankets for the children and kept them warm through Sunday night.

Meanwhile as the night came, Nielsen's parents here became worried and nearly distraught when the family did not return from the junket. They called Ukiah and learned they had not arrived there.

The elder Mr. Nielsen called Tom Howell about 3 a.m., and Tom responded with his 4-wheel drive Jeep. Accompanied by a grandson of Nielsen's visiting from Hermiston, they struck out for the mountains.

The trio found the going pretty rough, too, in the middle of the night but eventually came upon the disabled pickup, then followed the tracks in the snow to the guard station.

It was a mighty welcome sight for the young family when the rescuers came in, and it was a relief for the older folks to

Hearing to be of Vital Importance

A public hearing on the Willow Creek dam project, tentatively scheduled for early January, is of vital importance. In deed, it may be one of the most important meetings in the history of the city of Heppner.

This paper has been following progress of preliminary studies and work being done towards the dam, and it is hoped that everyone has been following the matter because every resident in Heppner and southern Morrow county will be affected by the project.

A story in last week's paper gave the most recent statistics on the proposed project. Unfortunately, because of mechanical error (properly attributed to "gremlins" in the newspaper game!), part of the story was misplaced on the breakover from the front page. The part that was "lost" explained that the Willow Creek reservoir, formed by the dam, would provide 17,000 fishermen days annually as well as 17,000 recreation days. The Army Corps of Engineers would construct boat launching ramps, picnic areas, tables, rest rooms, garbage cans and maintain these areas at no local cost. It would also provide for relocation of roads and utilities in the reservoir area.

Primary goal of the dam would be flood control, to prevent a recurrence of the 1903 flood that remains as the greatest catastrophe in loss of life ever incurred in the State of Oregon. While 1903 was a long time ago, there have been lesser floods, and there is no assurance at all that at sometime a similarly disastrous flood, or a worse one, might come.

But with the current study, other features of the multi-purpose dam are becoming increasingly attractive to the area for what they would mean to the economy and recreational facilities of south Morrow county. Interest in irrigation among ranchers along Willow Creek has been found to be near unanimous. The recreation feature, mentioned above, is a crying local need. Other benefits include wildlife refuge, pollution abatement, probably some soil conservation, and a potential supply of water for any future industrial or municipal needs.

As explained to date, virtually all of the estimated \$5,250,000 cost would be borne by the Federal government. Only securing of some rights-of-way for the channel through Heppner and moving utilities along the channel would require financing from local sources.

It is true that it may not matter which pocket the cost comes out of—local property taxes or taxes to the Federal government—the burden is still on John Q. Citizen. However, in the latter instance, people elsewhere will help pay for this project just as every income tax payer here has helped those elsewhere around the nation with their projects and problems.

It can hardly be said that there is any greater need elsewhere in the state for a flood control project in view of the history of Heppner, and it is reasonable that we ask for a Federal appropriation for this purpose. Aside from this, the dam could be of inestimable value to our future economy through the recreation and water supply it would afford.

It must be stressed that if the project is to "get off the ground" and come in for serious consideration by government officials and Congress, beyond the preliminary study stage, there must be strong local support. All groups should be girding themselves now to appear at the forthcoming hearing to give this proposal the attention it deserves. Let there be no misunderstanding—this project has a long road ahead between now and culmination, even with the strongest and most unanimous local support.

The definite date of the hearing is yet to be announced, but when it is told, it should take priority over anything else going on in the area at that time.

Lights Will Make a Pretty Christmas

You know, if every resident and every business did just a little bit of Christmas lighting and decorating, Heppner would be as beautiful as a Christmas card for the holiday season. If every family just took a single string of colored bulbs and stretched them along the front porch it would contribute a great deal.

The Christmas decoration contest deserves better support than it has received in recent years. Fine cash prizes are offered. Everyone enjoys going around to look at the lights of those who participate, but many do not participate themselves. Why not plan to take part this year?

Entries, as explained in a news story, are open in three categories—business, inside residential, and outside residential. Mrs. Arnold Melby, chairman, has lined up a good corps of out-of-town judges.

A number of our merchants have done a wonderful job of decorating their store windows. Stop by and take a look at the one at Ron's Flowers, for instance. The owner, Ron Reid, has a wonderful talent for decorating, and his window is beautiful. Others are, too. Merchants should keep their windows lighted through the night at least during the Christmas season. It certainly makes a difference in the appearance of the town.

There is still plenty of time to work out decoration plans, but everyone is asked to register as soon as possible at the Gazette-Times. What you do will make a happier and more enjoyable Christmas time for everyone.

More About Letters to the Editor

Not long ago, we published our "ground rules" on Letters to the Editor. But it seems necessary to make our position clear once more.

We like 'em, and we want 'em. We enjoy having our readers express their opinions, pro or con, and whether they agree with us or not. They comprise one of the most interesting parts of the paper.

But please! When you write a letter, remember that there are many other things that have to go in the paper, too. We cannot run as many pages as a large daily, and must insist that letters be restricted to not more than 500 words at most, preferably 300. In the future, long letters will have to be edited down to fit space requirements, something that we have not done to this time.

Another important matter is that all letters must be signed. There is one in this paper this week that is not signed but carries only initials. Because of its public-service nature, we are making this exception this time, but this is the last. No more unsigned letters will be used. In rare instances, we will withhold a name if it is requested but it must be on file in this office.

—And finally, preference will be given to letters that have not previously appeared in another publication. We have enough pride in our paper to want to use fresh material and not go to the trouble of printing letters that have already been widely distributed in other publications coming to our area.

So, with these ground rules, folks, let the fur fly!

find them safe and sound despite the harrowing experience. The party got back to Heppner about 7:45, and fortunately it appears that none of them will suffer any permanent ill effects from the experience.

THE GAZETTE-TIMES has acquired a severe critic on its staff in the person of Ricky Gimbel, 12-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Gimbel, who comes down to help wrap papers, work on mailing and assist young Jim Sherman with printer's devil chores.

It isn't uncommon for Rick to call the editor an hour or so after the paper has been put to bed to report severely that he has discovered a misspelled name, a transposed line or some incorrect punctuation.

But last week he kind of outdid himself. He was helping check the page proof of the final run on press day, and noticed the ad about the Episcopal church bazaar.

"Since when," he demanded, "did the Episcopal church start selling brassieres?"

MRS. O. A. DEVIN noticed evidence of a mouse around her house one day recently and promptly set a trap to catch the unwanted intruder. She was surprised with the results. When she went to check the trap on the back porch, she found that she not only had one mouse but also its companion in the trap. It had caught two with one snap.

JACK AND Shirley Loyd declare they read the paper last week telling that the power would be off between 3 and 5 a.m. Sunday, but they failed to take into account what that would do to their electric clocks.

They got up and went to early service at the Episcopal church arriving just in time for the 7:30 service. But lo and behold, no one else was around. They thought this strange but waited a few minutes and then their fellow churchmen began to appear. However, the arrivals were for the 10 a.m. communion instead of the 7:30 service. But the Loyds did get to church despite the power outage.

WOULDN'T be at all surprised if some day the employees of the post office didn't start calling the editor "Dagwood" for Dagwood Bumstead. Those who don't

follow the comic strip characters might be informed that Dagwood is the character who waits every morning until the very last minute before tearing around to get to the office on time. He takes his last gulp of coffee at the breakfast table while he starts a mad dash for the door, perhaps putting on his tie at the same time. His wife is waiting with the front door open to give him a peck of a kiss and has his hat extended for him to grab as he speeds by. Usually he collides with the paper boy or the morning postman as he races to the bus just as the driver starts to close the door.

With us, however, it is making the 6 p.m. deadline on outgoing mail. Often we have films that we get developed late in the day. We race into the bathroom, (doing double duty as a darkroom), develop the films with a rush, come out and grab an electric heater to dry them. It takes three days to get our pictures back as engravings for publication and so we have to make the mail. We'll run out of the office, skitter diagonally across the street and race up to the post office. The jewelry store clock is an invaluable aid. The hand may show one minute to six as we pass, and sometimes Randall Peterson is just locking up. He might glance up at the clock and assure us, "You're early. You still have 15 seconds."

Finally we get in the P. O. and slip the envelope through the slot with a feeling of triumph. But sometimes we suspect we hear a groan or a mumble behind the partition as if someone has just closed up the last sack when up comes this late yardbird with another letter. So far, though, we have not heard any profanity, and so figure we are still in reasonably good grace there. And we have never failed yet to get our pictures back on time.

Last year we took pictures of the lone basketball team, left there at 5 p.m., stopped and took pictures of the Heppner high team, made it home, developed the pictures and had same in the mail by 6 p.m.—And as yet we have not collided with the paper boy.

Boxboard for making signs and decorations at the Gazette-Times, available in white and colors.

Municipal and Justice Court News

E. J. Doherty of Pendleton, arrested November 29 and charged with being drunk on a highway, free on \$25 bail. Denward Bergevin, arrested November 29 and charged with being drunk on a highway, fined \$25.



Coming Events
LEGION MOVIES
Friday night, 8:00 p.m.
Legion Hall
This week "Stagecoach War," Starring Hopalong Cassidy. Plus one-half hour cartoons.

FREE CHRISTMAS SHOW
Saturday, 2:00 p.m., Legion Hall.
"All Mine To Give," full length color.
"Woody Woodpecker Plays Santa."
"A Visit to Santa's Workshop."

ARBUCKLE SKI CLUB
Work days, Saturday and Sunday at Arbutle. All members needed to get hill in shape. 6" snow at ski area, and still snowing.

LEXINGTON GRANGE GIFT BOX
In Ruggles office window. Leave gifts here for Oregon State Hospital patients.

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