

# THE HEPNER GAZETTE-TIMES

MOBROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER  
PHONE 676-9228

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

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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.

## School Story Error Unfortunate

A story headlined, "Finances Pose School Closures" in the Tuesday issue of our good newspaper neighbor, The East Oregonian, gave an erroneous slant to discussion that took place at the regular Monday meeting of the Morrow county school board.

Superintendent Robert Van Houte was reported as having said that "lack of money" might result in further school closures in the county. He did not, however, make such a statement, and the story, apparently through no fault of the Heppner correspondent for the paper, gave the wrong slant on the proceedings.

A staff member in Pendleton edited the story, misinterpreted it, and the printed version came out with the wrong implications. In an endeavor to correct it, another story was printed Wednesday, but it could scarcely be expected to undo the impact of Tuesday's front page story.

This is not written to censure the East Oregonian, and it is not written as a defense of the school board, for the directors are accountable for their actions. What it did was done in open meeting with a sizeable audience attending. It is written merely to set the record straight so that those in the affected areas are not unduly incensed as a result of the misinformation.

The discussion on the Lexington school and the situation with the elementary schools in northern Morrow county came up first at a budget meeting last week. Some of those present, including citizen members from all parts of the county, suggested that it might be well to consider the possibility of closing or curtailing the Lexington school in the interests of economy to the district.

The matter of shifting the grade school students to Irrigon was also brought up. This probability was really not new since at the time the board reached its decision several weeks ago to relocate Riverside High in the "Boardman area," it indicated that it favored sending the elementary children to the A. C. Houghton school at Irrigon, where the new addition has been completed.

This discussion at the budget meeting was purely tentative, exploratory and preliminary.

Following the budget meeting, these matters were placed on the agenda for the January board meeting under "Budget Problems," again as a matter to discuss and consider preliminary to preparation of the budget.

Under this topic on the agenda was this statement: "Consideration of the operation of the Lexington grade school is a problem in the formation of the budget; between 45 and 48 students would be the first four grades next fall."

Three possible alternatives were listed under the heading: First, the possibility of shifting part of the Lexington pupils to Heppner; second, to send all of the pupils to Heppner; and third, to leave the school as it is.

As to the Boardman-Irrigon situation, three possible proposals were also listed: First, move 5th and 6th grades to Irrigon; second, send all elementary students to Irrigon; or third, make no changes.

At no time in the discussion Monday, which the editor of this paper attended, was anything said of a serious financial hardship, as implied in the East Oregonian story, that would make it necessary to close the schools.

It is easy to see that those in the Lexington area who would oppose the closing of the schools might consider this reported statement as a move to force closure on a pretext—that of apparent at this same meeting when the board reaffirmed "serious financial hardship."

That there is no current budgetary hardship, however, was a previous action in proposing that a \$59,000 surplus be earmarked in the 1963-64 budget to complete the job of constructing the Heppner-Lexington high school building. This surplus, reported earlier in a story in this paper, has accrued through some unexpected payments of delinquent taxes, through a residue in the emergency fund, and through unused portions budgeted for specific items.

In reviewing the Lexington and Boardman-Irrigon situation, the directors, in this writer's opinion, are doing what they should do as stewards of public money. They were considering all angles so that the taxpayer might get the most for his money. When a class in school gets down to 10 or 12 pupils per teacher, it should be subject to review in order that the board may be in a position to justify the expense to the public which should demand that its tax money be spent wisely.

No action was taken on either of the two elementary situations in question at the board meeting except that it was agreed that nothing would be done at Lexington until a meeting had been arranged with Lexington parents and townspeople to hear their wishes.

It is easy to misinterpret, to get the wrong slant, to pick up rumors and thereby add more confusion to an already difficult situation. Newspapers attempt to be accurate, but sometimes a piece slips through that conveys the wrong impression.

It is suggested that any school patrons who may have been disturbed by this story attend the next school board meeting and listen to the proceedings.

## A Good Hearing

From any point of view, the Corps of Army Engineers hearing on the Willow Creek dam, conducted by Colonel J. H. Biddow, district engineer, must be applauded.

It was conducted fairly, the plan was presented concisely and factually, everyone was given ample opportunity to speak and the meeting was opened to questions.

Those who support the project were delighted that there was such a preponderance of evidence in favor of it and particularly appreciated the response of outsiders—from Hermiston, Pendleton, Portland, and other points—who came to give testimony or submitted written statements. Hermiston gave it especially strong support.

The conviction of Steve Thompson in his opposition was evident and his views are respected. One can well appreciate how he, his son, and their families may feel about it in view of the fact that it will take their headquarters ranch if it reaches culmination.

It was obvious, too, that Dick Krebs is sincere in his feelings against the irrigation feature, although he presented little evidence in opposition.

During the survey on the project, the Army Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation have done good work. Willard Sivilly, chief of the flood control section, was particularly impressive as he presented facts at preliminary meetings.

From the local end, Judge Oscar Peterson and Oliver Creswick have carried the burden of coordinating interests and their work was apparent at the hearing.

Thus ends the first step. The interest is here. But there is a long road ahead before the dam is approved.

# Chaff and Chatter

Wes Sherman

IT IS likely that a new Morrow county legend will spring up from the banquet of the Livestock Growers annual meeting, held Saturday night. It will probably be debated for years whether the stunt pulled by Orville Cutsforth and George Rugg was authentic or not. There are those who swear that it was on the up and up, and others are equally vehement in declaring that it was all a gag. (Some did, all right).

WHEN THE snowflakes started to drift down last week, we expected to see roman candles and skyrockets going up over near the center of Ken Peck's holdings. Morrow county's No. 1 ski enthusiast had been forlornly waiting for months for a trace of the white stuff. Even in early fall you could see him examine every white flower petal that happened to be wafted about by a light breeze.

But the snowfall still wasn't enough to do much good at Ar-buckle, although it did bring hope to the winter sportsmen. Discouraging, though, must have been Wednesday's spring-like day again on the heels of last week-end's bitter cold.

WELL, WHAT do you know?

We've stumped the post office department. Postmaster Jim was over the other day checking our mailing list with us to see that we have the papers properly zoned for Uncle Sam's postal department. Jim knows the zones of most cities of any consequence without looking them up. When we came to some of the smaller ones, however, he had to consult his big fat book to find the code to designate the zone.

Things went fine until we came to Supertino, Calif. Jim hesitated, then grabbed the book. Supertino just isn't anywhere to be found in the book that is supposed to include all the post offices in the country.

But one can't dismiss it lightly by saying there is no such place, for the paper has been going to the address for some nine months. None have been returned and no address corrections have come through.

Do you suppose that someone trusted on a mail car somewhere down the line has been enjoying reading the Gazette, then tossing it out to the elements along the tracks? We wouldn't suggest it!

We'll have to call on our readers to assist. Maybe the one in Supertino will read this and write and tell us where he is. In the meantime, we'll just have to wait until the swallows come back from Supertino.

DURING THE bitter cold last week came reports of 21 below at the Bob Brindles, 16 below at Pendleton, and so on. This kind of perplexed us because our thermometer outside the dining room window, seldom dipped below 10 above, so we felt snug and warm.

When we figured what happened, though, we suddenly became real chilly. One of the children had been playing with the thermometer during the summer and pushed the glass stem and bulb upward so that it registered at least 10 degrees above true temperature. Which isn't a bad idea.

Now when summer comes, we'll just push it down as far as it will go and keep 10 or 15 degrees cooler than anyone else.

IF WE HAD been on our toes, we would have dug out some Hawaiian records Tuesday, turned up the volume on the record player and opened the door to serenade the Charlie Ruggles across the street. These fortunate people took off that day for Hawaii. We'll have to admit that we felt a little mournful at being left behind to write copy for this paper while they headed for palms, leis, sunshine and frolicking in the surf at Waikiki.

But it was an event that

Charlie and Helen had looked forward to for years, and we hope that they enjoy every minute of it.

CLARENCE ROSEWALL has one idea how to lick rust on wheat. He has turned a few thousand head of sheep into his fields, crops on which are up a couple of inches. The sheep will eat the rust, after which he hopes the grain continues to grow without the nuisance.

SENATOR LLOYD KEY brought laughter in an appearance at the Stock Growers meeting Friday when he suggested that instead of being a "lame duck" because he would soon be out of office, he was almost a "dead duck." The new legislators were sworn in Monday, so as of now, Sen. Key is, indeed, a gone goshing. However, he was not defeated in his home Umatilla county but was "reapportioned out of office," one of very few legislators who can claim that dubious distinction.

## TO THE EDITOR.

To The Editor:

In 1956 the mother of Jeannace Freeman, on account of financial trouble, asked the Deschutes County Juvenile authorities to provide care for her daughter. She was sent to the Perry Center in Portland, with a report saying that "there was no evidence that Jeannace had been delinquent in any way," but was anxious to be away from home "where she had never had a chance." She was enrolled as a student at Cleveland High school. This was a critical and decisive period in this young, mentally disturbed girl's life, as the following story conclusively proves.

By 1957 a vice principal reported Jeannace was "greatly disturbed" and needed psychiatric help, and that hers was an "emergency case." Jeannace also appealed to her "counselors for help" on many occasions. The counselor reports "that she feels these problems came from the girl's childhood experiences which must have made her life a nightmare." The counselor further reports "that the girl had been raped when only four years old." The counselor continues: "She kept asking for help for her (mental) condition. 'But we had no money' for that purpose but we did allow her to spend half of the school day in class and half with the counselor." (She was about 16 years old then). She was "really an able girl." The Perry Center had no facilities for caring for a "badly disturbed child" it is reported.

The counselor further reports that "Our psychiatrist who examined her at that time felt that 'there was much good in her if she could be reached.' But again society failed her. The counselor further reports 'that in her opinion if Jeannace had been really helped with her problem (mental) at that time she would have grown up to be a good citizen.' But again we failed to help. Counselor further reports that 'Jeannace was just beginning to be different' and was making a real effort to adjust to a normal life," when school authorities asked "Multnomah County Welfare Bureau to help in getting Jeannace the help she needed and wanted, they refused because she was a ward of Deschutes County." Again we had failed our duty as a society. She was then committed to Hillcrest School for Girls at Salem. In discussing this case with the personnel in charge of the Hillcrest School January 2, 1963, they volunteered the following statements and opinions:

"The Freeman girl was in very bad condition when we received her"—she appeared to us to have been a victim of circumstances, perhaps stretching back to her younger years of life—"a tragic childhood"—"should have been hospitalized at the State Mental Hospital for treatment before we received her"—"she was of a kindly nature, especially to children"—"neither vile or vicious"—"no sign of cruelty"—"Oregon should have a hospital for the care of teenagers afflicted as Jeannace was when she came to us. We would and did help her some"—"We cannot imagine that she would commit a crime such as this"—"We believe she should have a chance to be cured."

And so it has been—school teacher, counselor, school principal, school psychiatrist, Hillcrest Assistant Superintendent in charge, House Mother, and State Doctor, all point the finger of blame at Oregon's neglect in this case. They all cannot be wrong.

In addition to the above I have read the Court records at Madras and all the news reports published there of the arrest, trial, and conviction of these two persons and could find no direct evidence other than the testimony of the mother of the children that the Freeman girl took part in the killings. The facts are that newspaper records, which I read, show that the mother when first arrested confessed as follows: "I planned this for three days because I loved them so much and could no longer support them. I said a little prayer over them. They are in Heaven now." Records show that the mother in open court said "I admit in participating in my daughter's death." When asked if she did it purposely she answered "Yes" (This court record I have read)—"Later she pleaded not guilty on account of insanity. For some reason not known to me they did not try the one who had confessed which was the mother—first. WHY? She had been indicted for first degree murder as had the Freeman girl. They tried the Freeman girl on the charge of first degree murder, before what was no doubt an angry jury and used the testimony of the mother who had already admitted her guilt to help convict Jeannace Freeman. The jury proceeded to find her guilty without mercy which automatically means death in Oregon unless set aside by the Governor. After the Freeman girl was convicted and sentenced to death they then brought the mother to trial, not before an angry jury but before the judge, only. WHY? Not on a charge of first degree murder for which she had been indicted but on the charge of only second degree murder. WHY? and she was sentenced to life in the penitentiary by the judge which Oregon averages about 7 years.

I have had some experience in law making and if what was done in this case is just and legal under the law, we had best start to change some of our laws. Under such a practice anyone could be convicted, even if innocent. Almost any witness would be willing to lie to help convict someone else, if they could save their own life by so doing. And another thing, the Freeman jury did not know when they sentenced the Freeman girl to death that the mother comparatively speaking would be set free. Had they known, my guess is that the Freeman verdict would probably have been the same as that received by the mother.

But at any rate, a death sentence for one who pleads innocent and 7 years in the penitentiary for one who admits their guilt, just does not make sense, nor does it measure up to equal justice. I am not suggesting death for the mother. A cardinal principal of law is (as I understand it) that a complainant should come into court with clean hands. Can we honestly claim that we are without fault? We may, if we wish, collect our pound of flesh in this case. To do so, will assure us front page publicity in every newspaper in America. And per-



MR. AND MRS. CARL BERGSTROM, Ione, were honored by friends and relatives Sunday, December 30, on the occasion of their 45th wedding anniversary. A reception was held in their honor at the Valby Lutheran church, with about 90 guests present to share the occasion with them.

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## Glennie to Chairman Campaign Drives

Pete Glennie, high school teacher, has been appointed special events chairman of the annual March of Dimes campaign, according to Mrs. Jack Loyd, county chairman. He will head special projects through coming weeks to aid raising funds for the county campaign.

Postmasters in each town serve as city chairmen. Funds may be turned into Jim Driscoll, Heppner; Mrs. Flossie Coats, Boardman; Mrs. Lavelle Partlow, Irrigon; Mrs. Ruby Roberts, Ione; Elwynne Peck, Lexington, or Mrs. F. M. McClintock, Cecil. County treasurer is Mrs. LenRay Schwarz.

## Ruggles Among Tour Members in Islands

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ruggles and Mrs. Ola Ruggles were among four members who left Portland Tuesday night for a two-weeks trip to the Hawaiian Islands. The tour is sponsored by the Grange organization, with headquarters in one of the leading hotels at Waikiki. They expect to return to Portland Saturday, January 26, and motor home on Sunday.

Also making the trip with them are Mr. and Mrs. Robert Belshe, long-time friends of Moro.

## Larry Tibbles Makes U of O Honor Roll

Larry Tibbles, son of Dr. and Mrs. L. D. Tibbles of Heppner, is on the honor roll for the University of Oregon's fall term, according to announcement from the university.

A total of 360 undergraduate students made the grade point averages of 3.50 or higher, it was reported. Forty-four students made perfect grade scores of all A's.

Guests at the Lee Palmer home Monday evening were Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln Nash and Mrs. Nash's mother, Mrs. Mary Nogawski, Lidgerwood, N. D., who joined the group in Hood River Sunday for the Nash wedding anniversary. She was here until Tuesday afternoon.

## Mrs. Abrams To Lead 4-H Cooking Club

Six girls organized a new 4-H cooking club on Thursday. The club was named "Kettles and Spoons." Officers elected were Debbie Young, president; Frances Abrams, vice president; Amanda Smith, secretary-treasurer; Marcia Lovgren, song leader; Susan Melby, reporter.

Our president appointed Linda Cooper as game organizer. Esther Kirmis explained what our beginner's cooking club would teach us; what officers of the club would have to do.

We were welcomed by our leader, Mrs. Robert Abrams, and the meeting was held at her house. She said the club would meet on Wednesdays after school. She served popcorn and hot chocolate.

Three of the charter members were unable to be present. They are Susan Stark, Kathy Matthews, and Lynn Key.

Susan Melby, reporter

## Hoof and Horn Club Meets at Greenups

The 4-H Hoof and Horn club met at the Don Greenup home Friday evening, January 11, for our regular meeting. Although it was very cold, there were 13 members present.

Dee Ann Pettyjohn led the American flag salute and Teresa Harshman (our new member) led the 4-H flag salute. Then we had our business meeting.

Some planning was made for our field trips and was given a demonstration to do at our meetings. We would like to improve our demonstration work. Refreshments were served by Mrs. Greenup.

Judy Jones, reporter

Gayle Randall, Umatilla, visited here last week with her mother, Mrs. Celestine Randall, and her sister, Arletha.

haps in most of the world. But such publicity will not produce the right kind of dividends.

And lest we forget, both of these persons will be judged and perhaps punished, as will we all who deserve to be, by one who makes no mistakes. We can safely trust Him, at least I prefer to do so.

I believe legal, fair, equal and civilized justice will be best served by setting this death penalty aside.

J. E. "Jake" Bennett  
703 N. E. Tillamook St.  
Portland, Oregon

### COMMUNITY BILLBOARD

## Coming Events

LEGION MOVIES  
Friday night, 8:00 p.m.  
Legion Hall  
This week "The Light in the Forest," Walt Disney picture, in color.  
Plus one-half hour cartoons.

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL  
At John Day, Friday evening.  
At Burns, Saturday evening.

GRADE SCHOOL BASKETBALL  
At Condon, Sat., 1:30 p.m.  
7th and 8th Grades.

Legion Auxiliary Benefit  
Public Card Party  
Monday, February 11, Legion Hall.  
Dessert at 8:00 followed by bridge and pinocle. Help send a girl to State!

Don't Delay! Send in TB Seal Sale Returns Now, (if not already in.)

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## The Jeannace Freeman Case

There is a letter elsewhere in this paper from Jake Bennett, former Portland city commissioner and now state legislator, written on behalf of Jeannace Freeman, who is under sentence to death for her part in the killing of two children near Redmond.

Bennett relates society's failure to provide for the girl during an unfortunate and perhaps dismal childhood. He declares that the death penalty for her is unfair when the children's mother, also involved, received a life sentence which means, in Oregon, an average of but seven years in prison.

The crime committed by the two women was an awful and gruesome one, that we know. We know nothing of the trial of the Freeman woman, nor of the mother, and therefore cannot say if they were fairly treated or not.

The thing in Bennett's letter that gives us pause is the charge that society turned its back on a person in need of help. This is something which could well be pursued.

It was just a couple of months ago that a state policeman was shot and killed near Arlington, allegedly by a mental case who should have been in an institution but was not because of a disagreement over which state or what agency was responsible for him.

Years ago we covered a trial of a man charged with first degree murder. He was a hulking fellow of low mentality who had killed a young girl. As we sat through the trial, his consequent sentencing and then re-sentencing twice more after the Oregon Supreme Court turned down his appeal and the U. S. Supreme Court refused to review it, we could not suppress the thought that society, in its failure to provide for this man in mental distress, was as much guilty of the crime as the condemned man, who later died in the gas chamber.

At a time when we are prone to emphasize scientific progress, we should not forget our obligations as a responsible society. Probably many a person destined for a sordid life could turn out to be a useful citizen if more of his fellows showed concern and offered real help when it is needed most.

And in so doing, responsible citizens would be helping to protect themselves.