

THE 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.

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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.

'Whipped Cream' In the Budget?

The fact that the hearing on the Morrow county school budget for 1963-64 was on the stormy side Monday night was a good thing in some ways.

For all concerned, it is far better for those with objections and criticisms to come and express them openly. Only through such frankness is there hope of agreement. The public hearing is designed for this purpose, and the fact that there was a good crowd present, many with remonstrances, is not an unhealthy condition.

Whether many of those who had objections to the budget are of changed mind after the discussion is open to question. However, they should have a little better understanding of the board's position and its feelings on the fiscal needs of the system, whether they agree or not.

On the other hand, the directors should have more of an indication on the desires and feelings of the school patrons.

One of the most troublesome things, however, is the difficulty of reaching common agreement on what is essential for schools and what patrons are willing to pay for. For example, several in the audience Monday felt that the trend to higher teacher salaries is more than the public can afford, especially in view of the fact that incomes of the patrons are not climbing proportionately. However, another expression from the audience was that teachers' salaries are not too high but that the district is providing too many positions for its needs.

A relatively small item in the budget, a sum allowed for washers and dryers in the home economics department and gym at the new Heppner-Lexington high school, came in for thorough scrutiny and furnishes another example for difference in thinking. Some felt the laundry equipment was more than necessary, but later one of those present expressed the feeling that larger professional-type equipment should have been considered by the board because it would last longer, although its initial cost would add to the budget.

It has been evident that disappointment is keen by some in the Heppner-Lexington area because the shop building will not be constructed adjacent to the new school, and this was emphasized at the hearing.

The shop building was included in the original planning and was a part of the bond issue voted by the people. However, the architect's cost estimates were too low to cover the contractors' bids, as became apparent at the two bid openings. All bids, it may be recalled, were rejected at the first opening and a new call was issued with alternates provided. The shop building was one of the alternates. At the second bid opening, the contractors' figures were still above what was hoped, and it was necessary to leave out several alternates, among them the shop building.

Now, in the 1963-64 budget, the board proposed to use some \$59,000 in surplus funds from the 1962-63 budget to complete some of the alternates. These surplus funds come from \$8000 that was budgeted but not used for purchase of school site, from the fact that the emergency fund was not used, and from underestimating receipts other than taxes for the fiscal year, as well as an unexpected payment of delinquent taxes.

The shop building is not among the alternates that the board plans to complete in the coming fiscal year, and this gives rise to some indignation among the strong proponents of the vocational agriculture and shop programs.

Directors declare, however, that the board has no intention of scuttling the shop program and realizes the value and importance of this part of the educational system. They take the position, however, that in view of the insufficiency of funds for the total job, that they can do the greatest good for the greatest number of students by completing the band room, the multipurpose room, the kitchen and other alternates with the surplus at this time. There are some undoubtedly, particularly in areas to the north, who do not think the surplus should be used for the construction at all.

The board has reflected the thinking that the shop building must come from a future budget or perhaps from a serial levy at a later time. Part of the area under the school building may be devoted to woodworking but it cannot be utilized for welding machines or any type of equipment that might bring a fire hazard.

Although directors inquired about any deletions in the budget that those present would make, none were offered as definite suggestions.

Bob Rietmann of the Ione advisory committee said in a thoughtful presentation that he had carefully scrutinized all parts of the budget, and although he could find no major items to be deleted, felt that there was just a little too much "whipped cream" all down the line.

He said that the district is over budgeting to some extent and pointed out the surplus in the current budget to illustrate the matter. At the same time, he added the commendatory remark that the board had not expended the amounts over budgeted when it had it in its power to do so.

It is difficult to develop a clearcut trend in the public's thinking because of its inability to agree on what is essential and what is "whipped cream," for what is held non-essential by one patron may be the thing that another holds to be vital to the school program.

In its deliberations on the budget through a series of long meetings, the citizens' committee and the directors should have deleted anything that could be construed as unnecessary. At the same time they have a responsibility to provide the best education they can for students of the district. This is a responsibility that rests a little heavier on the heads and shoulders of the directors and budget committee than most patrons can realize, however sincere and thoughtful the latter may be.

There is a natural reaction of appall by the taxpayer at the size of the school budget, particularly when it reaches a million dollars in the general fund as it has this year. It is a mounting burden, and the cry for help from property taxpayers is one that cannot continue to be ignored.

But, ironically, from those who remonstrated Monday came several suggestions that would add to the costs instead of decrease them. One was the proposal that school buses be retired more frequently.

At last year's hearing only three questions were asked. This year's hearing was a real contrast with the session lasting more than two hours and dozens of questions posed.

Some left with the feeling that the time was wasted. It may be true that most opinions were not changed, but if some understanding were gained, some questions answered, or some festering misconceptions were quieted, then something was gained.

One regrettable thing is the tone of comment that came from some of those in the audience. Remarks of some were biting and sarcastic, and this attitude can only be interpreted as destructive. There is no quarrel with anyone with a criticism or an objection, and even an occasional flare of anger is

excusable when one is sincere in his convictions. But only when criticisms remain on an objective plane and are presented with reasonable decorum and courtesy can they be expected to help. The individual who indulges in sniping, regardless of his feelings, only defers in the solution of problems that present themselves.

It is to the credit of the directors and the administrator that they met these remarks with courtesy and respect.

Decision as to whether there is too much "whipped cream" rests with voters at the budget election on April 22. In the meantime there is still ample opportunity for questions.

The unrest over schools is perhaps the greatest continuing problem facing all the people of the county. It is a matter that calls for dedicated interest by all our people, for some real understanding of the needs and desires of those in other areas of the county than our own, for a constant recognition of the need to be constructive for the benefit of all, and with the ever-present knowledge that the needs and futures of our school children are at stake.

Squeeze on Charitable Institutions

Movements on foot at state and federal levels threaten to put a squeeze on charitable and religious organizations, as well as some educational institutions.

In this session of the state legislature was considered the matter of eliminating such institutions at least partially from property tax exemption. This could create some hardship on churches and others who have enjoyed tax-free status.

Now initiated at the federal level is a move that would eliminate from tax deduction the first 5% of a person's income given for charitable purposes. Some feel that this would be a veritable death knell for the more hard-pressed charities and churches. Probably the majority of income taxpayers do not give up to 5% for these benevolences and would not, therefore, get credit for any giving under this proposal.

It may be that nothing will come of either of these ideas at this time, but the fact that our legislative branches are looking towards them means that the threat is here.

Churches and religion are fundamental in this nation, and our charities, recognizing the needs of the less fortunate, have a rightful place. It seems inconsistent to impose hardships on such groups whose primary objective is to help others and whose existence depends on the generosity of the public.

From those who hold this point of view, an expression to congressmen and legislators would be in order.

Call for Little League Leaders!

For more than two weeks now an attempt has been made to get the coming season's organization for Little League underway. A conflict caused postponement of the first meeting, and at the second call, only three showed up. Again this week, La Verne Van Marter, president, is attempting to get things moving and has set another meeting for Friday night.

Although Monday's April Fool snow and Wednesday's rain don't look like it, baseball season is at hand, and it is time to be getting ready.

Little League has been prominent here and it has furnished a lot of interest and enthusiasm for the youngsters. All you dads with kids of Little League age should try to get out and give Verne a hand. How about it?

TO THE EDITOR.

To whom it may concern

The purpose of this letter is to state my feelings in regard to the recall petitions filed against Fredrick Martin. First of all it is not my intention to stand idly by and watch this sort of thing carried out against this decent, honorable and outstanding citizen of our community.

Fred Martin has worked long hours many of them far into the night for years at no pay to help our children get a better education in this county. We should all be proud to have a man of his character and ability serve us on the school board.

This action is extremely regrettable at this time because we will soon be voting on the budget to operate the schools of the county for another year. Let me remind you that Fred Martin is only one member of the county board with only one vote. If the will of the people of his zone or of the county on any subject was contrary to school law or the good of the county as a whole, you can be sure he would vote against it. He took his oath to do that when he accepted the job.

The third charge of failure to maintain adequate physical standards at the lone school is a good example of how unfair you can get when you really try. Very few schools in the state can boast a heated swimming pool. That is doing real well for a community that consistently

votes no on the school budget to operate that school.

The fourth charge of sanctioning duplication of school bus transportation routes is also unfair. I have spent long hours at the table in the courtroom of the Morrow county court house with Fred Martin and other directors trying to solve the school transportation problems of the county and at no time did anyone ever sanction duplication or even consider doing so. Although that was several years ago there is no reason to believe that his judgment has changed that much.

Now, my fellow citizens, friends and neighbors who signed the petitions to recall Fred Martin from the county school board, it would only damage the reputation of this good man to recall him and especially without valid reasons.

The schools of the county are constantly being improved. Take a tour and see for yourself. Look at the fine new school at Heppner. The other schools are getting new buildings, too.

We owe our school board members a vote of confidence and appreciation for the constant work and worry that goes with the job, not a recall of one member.

If you want to do something worthwhile for our schools it my suggestion that you withdraw the petition to recall Fred Martin thus eliminating the hard feelings and other damaging consequences of such an action.

Sincerely yours,
Alonzo Henderson
P. O. Box 456
Lexington, Oregon

Chaff and Chatter

Wes Sherman

IF YOUR copy of the Gazette-

Times comes folded a little bit askew this week, we ask your indulgence. It is a part of the process of working out adjustments on our new equipment. The new press is working fine, but the folder has been a wee bit cantankerous, apparently reacting to the long ride over here from the valley on a truck that had no springs. Many of the parts were loosened and slightly out of kilter and it takes a little patience getting the machine "tuned up" again.

man after all. "The Judge's Family" will have considerable historical interest even outside the family.

WE ANNOUNCED a couple of weeks ago that Ed Dick is not running for the school board, but we picked up The Dalles Optimist the other day, noticed a picture on the front page of one "Ed Dick" and it announced that he was a candidate for the school board. Not the same Ed, of course.

WELL, APRIL 1 came and went without a single April Fool stunt being played around the place. Even the children let the day go by without passing out cardboard gum.

The biggest April Fool joke was played by Old Man Weather who came forth with a short but heavy downfall of snow. That was really April Fools weather, for sure.

The April 1 edition of the Hehisch, Heppner High paper, rather startled us. It was an April Fools edition, which we recognized, but there was a story in it on five members of the school track team getting hurt in a meet. It was written so realistically we were prone to believe it. It was somewhat of a relief to see Lee Padberg walk in the office today without limping. According to the story, he suffered a bad sprain that put him out for the season.

Students Come Home For Spring Vacation

Students home during spring vacation week were Mary Shannon, Sandra Harshman, Ronnie Belsma, Ken Daggett, John Cecilia, Don Clark, Ron Creswick, Dennis Ferguson, Helen Graham, Cliff Green, Dick Sherman, Steve Flug, Gerald Bunch, Mickey Van Schoiack and fiance, Karen Wilcox, and Mr. and Mrs. Dick Ruhl, all from Oregon State University.

University of Oregon students were Dennis and Roger Doherty, Tom Driscoll, Jean Collins, Linda Van Winkle, Bob Huffman and Larry Tibbles.

Students home from Oregon College of Education were Beverly Blake, Mary Evelyn Tucker and Janet Struckmeier.

Eastern Oregon College students home were Ladd Dick, Judy and Jeanne Schmidt, Kit George, Larry Green, Leonore Leonnig, Stuart Gribble, Barney Nistad, Bob Davidson, Merlin Hughes, Libby Van Schoiack, and Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Moyer. David Creswick was home from Columbia Basin Junior college.

TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:
I thank you very much for the Morrow county map. It is very nice of you, and some time when I am in Heppner I will take you out to a dinner. You know I was born in Heppner and moved to Walla Walla Wn in 1905. My father owned a lot of land in Clarks Canyon. Thank you again.
Elmer Markham
Walla Walla, Wn.

Dear Editor:
Our family and friends enjoyed the recent Talent Show very much, but did miss the adult talent. Hope next year to see lots of it. I hope they continue to have the talent show every year. Look forward to it.
An Ione Reader.

COMMUNITY BILLBOARD

Coming Events

LEGION MOVIES
Friday, April 5, 8 p.m.
"Run of the Arrow," in color.
Plus one-half hour of cartoons.

BAND CARNIVAL
80-piece combined Ione and Heppner Bands, Thurs., 8 p.m., Ione auditorium.
Friday, 8 p.m., High School Gym. Public invited—No admission.

HEPPNER SCHOOL SCIENCE FAIR
Friday, April 5, 7 to 10 p.m.
Multipurpose room.
Science projects on exhibit.

BAKED FOOD SALE
By American Legion Auxiliary
April 13, 10 a.m., Heppner Red and White store.

BAND CARNIVAL
Fair Pavilion Bldg., Sat., Apr. 20. Full evening of fun, starting at 5:30 p.m.

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