

THE GAZETTE-TIMES

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MORROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER

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Taxes and the Legislature

At this writing it appears that the State Legislature is about to adjourn after a session of record length. Despite its difficulties in working out a program to present to the people on relieving the property tax burden, it has been a session that has accomplished much in a number of fields. Therefore, it cannot be justly criticized for lack of achievement. While the public has tended to be impatient and weary of the long deliberations, it probably can be said with truth that the legislators themselves are the most weary of all.

With the House having failed to secure Senate approval of its sales tax proposal, it now appears that voters will be called upon to ballot in November on a net receipts tax on income. As of the present, details of this plan are yet to be spelled out in full with the possibility of late amendments. Because of this, there has been no chance to study the provisions with the thought of determining how palatable it might be to the people who foot the bill.

In looking back on the session, we believe that House Republicans were too inflexible in their stand in favor of the sales tax, although they have charged Senate Democrats with "appalling irresponsibility" in not passing the bill and giving the people a chance to vote on the program.

Perhaps the people should have had this opportunity, but the catch was that it proposed a "sales tax or nothing" to relieve the property tax burden. We cannot believe that the people of Oregon would vote for a sales tax for many reasons, many of which have been treated in previous editorials.

It may have been that the members of the House (those who supported the sales tax) were deathly afraid that the 1 1/2% property tax limitation would certainly go on the ballot by initiative petition and be approved by the people. Now, we understand, there are two petitions circulating—one that would seek a 1 1/2% property tax limit on true cash value and one that would impose a 1% limit.

House Republicans probably feel that the sales tax is the only proposal that could offer a great amount of property tax relief. It would give much more relief, to be sure, than a net receipts tax or probably more than any other type of added income tax.

But who can say just how much relief property taxpayers actually want? There might be dozens of different opinions. Perhaps some would just like a guarantee that their property taxes do not continue to increase year after year. Others may not be happy until the property tax is eliminated entirely.

One thing that property taxpayers might bear in mind is the fact that if they get too much relief from state sources, they will tend to lose a voice in their local taxing programs. The state will set standards that must be met by the local governmental units or be threatened with loss of their share of revenue. This has already been done to some extent with schools.

Thus, while property taxpayers do have an excessive burden in many instances around the state, in the long run they may find that they are better off by not having too much property relief.

It may be that the net receipts tax, which apparently will be put to the voters late this year, will give sufficient relief to satisfy many while retaining for property taxpayers their local control. These same property owners still have the right to vote on budgets over the 6% limitation; they still have the right to seek positions and to serve on boards, councils and committees which propose expenditures and prepare budgets.

If the net receipts tax program is voted upon in November, there is still some likelihood that it will be defeated. These would almost surely open the door for the 1% or 1 1/2% limitation supporters, but we can't believe that these rather stringent limitations would be in the best interests of the people of Oregon.

After all, it comes down to a choice for the people—what they want to buy with their money. Probably one reason that metropolitan home owners are so avidly seeking property tax relief is that they have over-extended themselves. Maybe many have tried to "keep up with the Joneses." Some of them, perhaps, have bought \$25,000 homes on mortgages when they should have bought \$17,500 homes. Perhaps they gave little thought to taxes when they bought these places. At hundreds of new homes, mushrooming around the cities, one sees two cars in the carports, boats, house trailers and all manner of evidence of rather luxurious living.

If they want to spend their money this way and turn down budgets designed for better schools, better streets and sewers, better municipal services, this is their privilege.

The reason we pay taxes at all is that our society has decided that certain institutions, services and improvements are to be used and enjoyed by all. Therefore, all should share in paying for them.

Some have special interests in one type of service but a lesser interest in another which a different taxpayer might find of paramount interest. For instance, a couple with four children in school would be more willing, generally speaking, to pay more for schools than a childless couple.

The trouble comes when someone wants to shift his share of taxes to someone else, or when one is paying more than his just share. Working out a completely equitable system can never be anything more than an ideal, but certainly our society will keep working towards this ideal.

Another difficulty arises when we seek too many services at too high a cost, and each taxpayer's share becomes too much. Here again is where the property tax system has merit over taxes that go through the state or federal government. The individual's voice means more.

But the bills that are approved at the local, state and national levels have to be paid. The individual citizen has a responsibility to use his voice and vote to see that he is not burdened with more than he wants or can pay. Too many have been lethargic about this point. Budget elections or bond issue elections never bring out more than a minority of those eligible to vote.

With the future still uncertain on this tax question, we would inject just one fervent hope: That our citizens retain a sense of real values; that they have enough realization of the importance of things which all share for the common good — schools, county services, police and fire protection, streets, water systems, sewers and many other things—that they don't yield to mass hysteria, vote unrealistic limits and lose the ground we have gained.

The net receipts tax could, if properly worked out, shift enough of the burden to relieve property taxpayers and still retain the essential local services that all enjoy.

Our Hospital--A Blessing

After taking a guided tour through the hospital Sunday at its open house on its 17th anniversary, the thought occurs again that this institution is a great blessing for this community and the broad surrounding area that it serves.

Unfortunately, relatively few persons have gone through the hospital to get a close look at its facilities. Those who have are struck with how well it is equipped and how well it is maintained.

A demonstration was given Sunday of some new heart equipment which most persons who are untrained in medicine could not pretend to understand completely. Some of this is part of the hospital's regular equipment and some was brought here merely for demonstration but may be added at a later date.

Significance of this equipment is that lives will be saved in the future among those types of heart cases that had absolutely no chance of being spared in the past.

Indeed, we understand that in the not too distant future, known heart patients will wear devices that will keep them in electronic contact with hospitals. When the person starts to suffer an attack, it will register at the hospital. The same equipment will enable the hospital to determine the location of the patient at once.

It's simply remarkable what is being done in the field of medicine to alleviate suffering and save lives. Within the limits of its resources, the local hospital is keeping abreast with modern developments or maintains connections with other hospitals where the advanced specialized treatment is available.

Many persons have an aversion to hospitals because they don't like to think of themselves as being sick or injured, but there is no greater blessing when its services are needed.

Too, hospitals are more pleasant than they used to be. There have been many developments aimed at the comfort of the patients, and this is certainly true at Pioneer Memorial—even to the gaily decorated walls in the pediatric ward where the artistry of Lois Winchester shows in the life-like paintings.

Quite a few organizations and individuals have contributed much on a volunteer basis to the hospital, giving both of their time and money. Certainly there is nothing finer that they could do.

There is considerable need for others to take an interest in the hospital, for it is a community institution that needs continuous interest and support. Organizations in search of a project can find worthy ones at the hospital, just as others have done before them.

Some thought has been given to the possibility of forming a citizens committee to support and boost the hospital and serving in a public relations way to translate its needs to the community. This is something that is well worth further exploration.

Chaff and Chatter

Wes Sherman

CONGRATULATIONS to Doug Drake on being chosen as Father of the Year!

He is a Big Daddy in the most affectionate sense, and his accomplishments, together with those of his fine family, make it a well-deserved honor.

It is called to our attention that three of our recent Fathers of the Year have one thing in common. They have all had laminectomies (back operations). These include Drake, Bob Abrams and Gene Pierce.

Maybe the inference would be that these men break their backs to be good fathers.

CHANCELLOR and Mrs. Roy Luevallen, accompanied by their two daughters, Barbara and Margaret, happily surprised a lot of old friends in lone and Heppner Monday. They were headed for La Grande to a meeting of the State Board of Higher Education and decided to come through Morrow county to see friends.

We don't know who all they found in the brief time they had to spend, but do know that they visited with Harlan McCurdy and Elma and Everett Harshman.

The chancellor, a graduate of lone High school, and wife, Barbara, never seem to get any older. They maintain a happy and congenial appearance, and he never seems to fret over the harassing problems that confront him in the very important responsibility as head of the State System of Higher Education.

Their two sons, Scott and Douglas, were not with them on this trip. Douglas, their oldest child, will be a senior at the University of Oregon next year.

SAY, THAT parallel parking makes Willow Street look like an entirely new street. It's surprising how much more room there is down the center in the change from diagonal.

Vic Groshens and the city crew completed the job of installing the meters and painting the stalls for the new parking today, and they'll be glad to have it done after all the ribbing we've given them.

Might be that drivers who have a phobia against parallel parking will shy away from Willow for a while, but the stalls are so set up that it is easy to get into them.

Groshens went through all the maneuvers of parallel parking with the city truck when there wasn't another rig on the street, just to get a little practice. He imagined that there was a car ahead and a car behind as he backed into the stall. In so doing he got within 1 1/2 inches of the curb. We told him he should be within eight inches, but he declared that as long as he was within the limits of the painted stall (8 feet), he was O. K.

Notice some of the longer cars are hanging over the lines, front and back, but this doesn't hurt because there is a "neutral zone" (maybe we should call it a DMZ—demilitarized one) between the spaces. Noticing this overhang, we accused Groshens and Wayne Harsin of setting up the system for Volkswagens but they shook it off in good humor.

KNOWING that the Arlington rodeo court was supposed to ride in the Rose Festival floral parade, we watched the repeat TV programs of the parade, Saturday night, hoping to get a glimpse of them. After catching the "Parade Highlights" on two stations, we concluded that the announcers and cameramen had an aversion to horses. Any time the viewer caught sight of horses coming down the street, he could expect the camera to swish by them and pick up the next float.

This happened time and again, but wonder of wonders! When the Arlington court came along on the second program we watched, the camera picked them up, followed them, and viewers got a good look at them. Princess Janet Palmateer came in for some closeups. Princess Barbara Gribble was on the other side of the street but she got good attention, too.

So far as we know, the Arlington court was the only mounted group that received such attention on these repeat programs, although all mounted groups might have been recognized on the live telecasts in the morning, which we didn't catch.

GILBERT L. STERNES, state climatologist, was here last Thursday visiting our faithful Heppner weather observer, Don Gilliam, and the two dropped over for a chat.

Sternes was highly complimentary to the Gilliam family for the work they have done in keeping weather records in Heppner for years and years. He was interested in having some local group sponsor publication of a 30-year climatological summary for lone and Heppner, which is a sheet that lists concise facts on temperature highs and lows, rainfall, snow and other information. After a directors' meeting at the Chamber of Commerce Monday, it appears that the Chamber will cooperate with Morrow County Grain Growers on this project, and the sheets should be available for distribution soon to those who have use for a copy.

But we were also interested in other things that Sternes had to say. He said that Umatilla is the driest point in the State of Oregon. That's something we didn't know. Rainfall there averages less than nine inches, as we recall from conversation.

came to this country, it would be a far different type of country than it is now. We'd probably have timber, ferns and brush all over the place.

But we recall, and Sternes confirms, that some points in the Coast Range leave Valsetz in the shade (or sunlight) when it comes to rain. Seems we can recall stories told by Harry and Max Reher of Forest Grove, who spent their early days at a homestead at Reher's Camp in the Wilson River country, of rainfall getting up towards 160 inches, but we cannot trust our memory on this.

THE CLIMATOLOGIST said that Ukiah is considered to be the coldest place in the state, but he couldn't say off the cuff just which place is the hottest. Without his records handy, he thought Heppner had had one of the hottest days on record, but not the hottest. As he recalled, the warmest day on record in the state was 119 degrees.

Sternes said, and we can verify, believe, that The Dalles is at least in contention for the hot spot of Oregon.

Waffles intrigue him. However, they do have pancakes at home but can't afford the honey to put on them! So you see what an impression this is having on my family.

We are all happy to be in a land of "plenty" (even if there are also plenty taxes to go along with it!).

Thank you, Mrs. Mervin (Grayce) Thomas Formerly "Cecil General Store"

Supt. David Potter was dismissed from Emanuel hospital, Portland, Monday after entering last week for treatment following surgery recently. He was reported to be feeling considerably better.

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TO THE EDITOR...

To Donate Rifle

To the Editor:

On June first I left by Jet from Portland airport at 7:50 a.m. and was supposed to be at Charlottesville, Va., at 6:36 p.m., but due to the plane from Chicago having trouble with some of its electrical works, it was detained for three hours and finally had to get another Jet to take the passengers to Washington.

There I was to take a Piedmont plane to Charlottesville, but as the Piedmont is the only airline into Charlottesville, I had to take a taxi from the airport to the railway depot and take the train at 10:45 p.m. I arrived in Charlottesville about 1:30 a.m. June 2.

The alumni reunion (at the University of Virginia) was the next morning at 9:30 a.m. There were 600 alumni present but only one from my class. I stayed with my niece, Miss Marial McMurdo, where her father (and my eldest brother) live now. He will be 94 on June 15. I had a wonderful time seeing my nieces and nephews, as well as some friends.

The weather was just about perfect, and I never saw the country look more beautiful. I also went to see Dr. Hal S. Hedges, who is in a rest home. He is a noted eye specialist and now 99 years of age. If nothing happens to prevent it, he will be 100 on September 30 of this year.

When I went to see him last year at his daughter's home, he was much more able to get around and showed me two flintlock rifles which I had never seen before. On this trip I told him we had a museum here in Heppner and asked him if he would like to give one of the rifles to the museum. He seemed delighted at being asked to do it and was so glad that I asked him.

One of the rifles was given to him by the father of a young boy who was blind and lived in the Blue Ridge Mts. Dr. Hedges went up to his home, operated on his eyes, and brought back his sight. Then he stayed with the boy for five days until all was well. When he left, the father gave him the flintlock rifle for pay, as he said he had no money to pay him. Dr. Hedges told the boy, "This will be plenty of pay as I have no flintlock rifle in all my collection of guns."

Was gone a week and returned home June 9.

Dr. A. D. McMurdo

Miss Morrow

Hello, Wes:

Thank you for sending the paper—we miss Eastern Oregon very much so this will help us to keep up with "goings on."

Even though we loved our store, post office, and Eastern Oregon we had to come back to Kent, Wn., for personal reasons. However, we'll never forget the wonderful people of that serene Willow Creek area.

Summer for us promises to be most interesting as we have a foreign student from "old" Japan staying with us while he goes to Green River College. Already his warmth and friendliness have gotten "through" to us.

Even though he sleeps on mats on the floor at home, he has a bed here and thinks it will be hard to sleep on the floor again!

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'No Tam Lie'

Dear Friends:

I greatly enjoyed Art's comments about the Heppner Silver Cornet Band and would like, with his permission, to add a little to his story.

He was correct about the band marching to the depot, but that was in the morning. The band spent the day in lone awaiting the incoming train (which more often than not was an hour or so late) to accompany the Republican candidate, W. J. Furnish of Pendleton, to Heppner.

Shortly before the train was due a message was received stating that Mr. Furnish was "unavoidably detained" and in his stead a young Astoria attorney, Charles W. Fulton, would be the speaker at the county-wide rally that evening. After tootling around all day and whooping it up for the Republican ticket, most HSCB members were not concerned about the speaker of the evening, but when Fulton launched out on his address it was evident that the state campaign committee had chosen wisely. Fulton later was elected U. S. Senator.

Now to beg a few more inches of your valuable space for my pet story. It will be the first time in print, the worth of which you will have to be judge.

Some of your readers who were around at that time may have heard and seen this little comedy. At least, I am sure that some will remember the leading character. They also will remember A. Abrahamsick's tailor-shop on May Street where "Abe" and his hired tailor, a smallish man by the name of Miller, plied their trade. Abe was a family man and as such conducted himself as a good family man should. Miller was unattached as far as was known and what he did after working hours was his own affair. Thus it was that he showed up at the rally in a most amiable mood toward the world in general and toward the rally in particular.

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Mrs. Cutsforth's Stepfather Dies

John Denslinger of The Dalles stepfather of Mrs. Orville Cutsforth, died in The Dalles Sunday morning, according to information from Mr. Cutsforth.

Mrs. Cutsforth left for The Dalles after learning of his death and remained there through the first part of the week. Funeral services were scheduled in The Dalles at 2 p.m. Tuesday.

er. Hynd was a bit non-plussed when after the usual opening—"It is indeed heartening to see so many of our citizens gathered here this evening to listen to our distinguished speaker and the local candidates... If this spirit pervades throughout the campaign it is quite plainly evident that Oregon and Morrow county will remain in the Republican column."

A rather small voice piped up from the rear of the crowd: "Dot's no tam lie neider!" The chairman endured two or three repetitions of the line and concluded it was time to bring it to a halt. He thanked the enthusiast for his apparent appreciation but felt that due to the repetition of the line it was apparent something other than his (Hynd's) remarks was responsible.

As Marshall George Thornton led the offender away, Miller got in the last word: "Dot's no tam lie neider!"

O. G. CRAWFORD
Lincoln City, Oregon

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