

THE GAZETTE-TIMES

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MORROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER

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WESLEY A. SHERMAN

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

ROD SPIKE PARDEE

ARNOLD RAYMOND

MARION ABRAMS

REGGIE PASCAL

JIM SHERMAN

BANDY STILLMAN

Advertising Manager

Staff Foreman

Photographer

Printer

Society

Lithotype Operator

Circulation

Apprentice

Pressman

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High Fees on Riverside School

When directors of school district R-3 reviewed the fees of the architect or the Riverside school last Thursday night, they found that the total bill will come to some \$165,000. This includes fees for consultants, including engineers, an attorney, a consultant from New York, and smaller sums for other expenses incidental in making the design and drawing up plans and specifications.

This figure is considerably higher than the board anticipated, and action was taken towards investigating the charges. Discussion brought out that the architect has apparently based his fees on the original bid of \$1,750,000 for the school, which was rejected by the Army Corps of Engineers last December.

In addition, charges on the redesigned structure by the architect approximate \$21,000. The board appeared to have for understanding that the fee for the redesign would be about \$10,000. This was for the work involved in scaling down the plans to cut costs in order to get a school that would come within the \$1,484,000 available on a cost settlement with the Corps.

At the last call for bids, the board followed the architect's recommendation to seek sub-contracts on various portions of the work under the basic construction bid that was submitted by a general contractor. This was advised as being a more economical procedure, aimed at saving money for the district. But the directors find that the architect has increased his fees by 15% on the sub-contracts.

It thus appears that another difficult and costly chapter is being written in the troublesome story to secure a good school to serve the students in the northern part of the county.

Time margin is exhausted now, and the directors have only one director to go. They must move ahead with construction and get the job done.

The final bids accepted last week, will barely bring the construction within the \$1,484,000 figure, and several alternatives which are considered important, such as paving around the building, cannot be exercised in staying within this limit.

It seems quite apparent that the building as designed is more than the directors, administration and the public expected. Architects who seem to tend towards elaborate design, appear to have a problem in scaling their ideas down to adequate and fitting the public purse.

Director Jack Sumner made an effort to have bids reconsidered at the special meeting Thursday night, feeling that the cost is too high. It was apparent that other directors sympathized with his motion, but they now believe that it is too late to back up again, after so many previous false starts, and his attempt at reconsideration was defeated.

There is barely time to get the building partially completed—enough for occupancy—by April 1968, when waters of the Umatilla reservoir above the John Day dam will rise and inundate the present Riverside school site. To build a dike around the old school would be another very costly venture, and there is no other place available for holding school.

Looking backwards—which is now a rather futile gesture—the district could have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars if a firm decision had been made on the school when contract negotiations were first nearly culminated with the Corps of Engineers several years ago.

But the directors and the school administration cannot be censured for the delay. At numerous school board meetings, ever when Bob Van Houte was superintendent, the administration strongly urged action and repeatedly warned that delay would be costly.

Hesitation by the board was occasioned by sincere efforts to reach a decision on the site, type of school and a design that would please all those in the northern part of the county and would best serve the children's educational needs.

Pleasing all factions proved to be an impossible task. The board at one time asked the residents in the north end to get together and decide between themselves, but they could not come to an agreement. Even court action marked the stormy road towards the school construction.

During the time there has been at least one complete turnover of school directors, and in some zones, more than one turnover. Three different superintendents have served the district. All have found it an equally difficult situation.

The confusing and complicated course of events that has led to this costly culmination of the project cannot be attributed to a few persons, but if responsibility is to be charged, it must be shared among many, including school patrons themselves.

There is little consolation that the Riverside construction costs will come largely from federal funds, for these are supplied by taxpayers, too.

What the Morrow county school district is experiencing now is essentially the high cost of delay. Directors have their backs to the wall now, and with the pressure of time against them, decisions no longer can be made on the matter of economy alone.

The dissension that has marked the Riverside story provides a strong lesson—and a costly one—for Morrow county residents.

When the plant is completed, there is little doubt that it will provide facilities for the best possible education of the students. If somehow the rather staggering cost can be rationalized in the minds of the public, the new school will be a source of considerable pride to the county.

But the architect still holds some of the future in his hands. If negotiations with him result in a lessening of his fees, the district may be able to exercise alternatives that will indeed provide for a fully completed plant. This would alleviate the necessity of seeking more money from local taxpayers in the future for capital outlay on the plant.

It is to be hoped that the board and the architect can reach such a satisfactory agreement.

Clay Myers' Challenge

When Secretary of State Clay Myers scored Oregon editors for not taking strong editorial positions, he left with this chin.

He addressed the Oregon Newspaper Publishers' Association in a friendly manner recently, and apparently his intent was to stimulate his listeners. But his remarks also took the form of a challenge at his invitation to "take us apart" or "behold of himself and others in public office."

Perhaps he did not realize that his remarks might be interpreted with editors saying, "You asked for it."

The Oregonian followed with a rebuttal editorial that took a swing at the Secretary of State.

Some of us engaged in country journalism may or may not feel the same as the Oregonian, but we have a few additional observations.

Myers declared that when the Beach Bill came up, 31,000 telegrams and messages were received from an aroused public as the result of an editorial. But this editorial, he said, issued from a television station (KGW-TV), rather than from the press. How could he be so sure about this? Were the messages so designated?

Perhaps most of the response did come as a result of the television station's editorial, but we submit that many newspapers also had editorials on the matter, most of them written in strong terms.

The last information we had on the matter was that some 25% of the people of Oregon live in cities or towns of under 2500 population. This is still a majority of the state's total population. There is some reasonable possibility that residents of these communities read and evaluate local editorials, and consequently, that they may be somewhat influenced by them.

Myers may have made the same mistake as many others before him—that of booting to the big population areas and of assuming that from them comes the voice of the people. His impressions may be totally influenced by the big daily papers and the big television stations.

But for every Goliath, like the Oregonian or KGW-TV there may be quite a few potential Davids standing off by the sidelines from the hinterlands around the state in the aggregate they can muster considerable strength, too.

Secretary Myers' scolding approach to the press on the Beach Bill was delightful meat for the voracious vocal appetite of the television station which beat the drums so loudly on this subject.

Forest W. Amstutz, KGW-TV's commentator, who expounds freely with opinions and answers on all matters from the local to the international, chortled with glee in an ensuing telecast. He represented newspaper editors as being more dedicated to playing golf than to writing sound editorials. He inferred that none of them would say anything in an editorial that might threaten revenue by missing an advertiser.

We know some newspaper owners who make it a condition of employment that their editors' opinions are not influenced by advertisers, contrary to the commentator's allegation.

Focusing on some of the editorials that Myers and Amstutz apparently do not know, consider these men:

Giles French of Morrow, who, although no longer a publisher, still writes his pithy and pungent opinions for the Seaman County Journal. If Giles were moved to challenge Secretary Myers on any subject, he would write it in terms to make the secretary's hair sizzle.

Wally Cowen of the Milton-Freewater Valley Herald is a living rebuttal of Myers' contention that the state press was relatively silent on the tax question. During the past few months he has carried a running bombardment against the sales tax, and in doing so, engaged in a verbal battle with the Oregon Voice.

Don Moffatt of the Mill City Enterprise of the Santiam country carries on a continuous down-to-earth campaign from the grassroots against the policies of the Great Society.

Gwen Coffin of the Wallawa county Chieftain Enterprise, has well-phrased editorials weekly, which, interspersed with humor, rings the bell regularly on subjects varying from Levi pants to the course of the Vietnam war.

The Stayton Mail, right or wrong, has made some of its local people "madder than hornets" at times with forthright editorials on local matters, calling its shots as it sees them.

Not long ago, the Dallas Herald-Observer jumped up to its neck into a campaign against an errant sheriff, who later was convicted of a crime and sentenced for it. Years before, Earle Richardson, editor of the same paper, went through a terrible personal ordeal as a result of a resolute campaign through his editorial columns that brought about conviction of a county clerk for embezzlement. Townspeople turned against the paper until they realized that the editor was right and the official went to the penitentiary.

These are just a few examples—limited to the small weekly. Does Mr. Myers know about them? There are many other weeklies, similarly strong in editorials. Some dandy editorials, too, are written in the dailies out of the metropolitan areas like the East Oregonian.

There is another angle to Myers' assertions that deserves comment. An editor no longer calls a man or an official "a white-livered scurvy skunk" as was common in the last century. The time for this is gone, and the strongest editorial today is the one written with restraint. While Myers didn't call for vitriol expression, he alluded, with affection, to these old days.

Laws of libel protect the public today, and this is a good thing, even if an editorial target shows almost certain evidence of being a "scurvy skunk."

Among decent and well-intentioned human beings, differences of opinion or issues do not necessarily call for fist fights, either actual or verbal. They can more properly be resolved by exposition and discussion.

By now, our society should be advanced beyond that of tossing explosive charges at one another, although this seems to be a popular indulgence of politicians, particularly during election campaigns. This becomes distasteful to the public, and at times, disgusting.

There is a place for editors to speak quietly and to refrain from thunder—a time to take calm and reasonable positions on issues and public affairs.

Secretary Myers had an opportunity to give the publishers some information in connection with his important office that might have been helpful to all listeners. But he disappointed us.

There is no reason to believe that he will make anything but a fine Secretary of State, but he stood on shaky ground in this address to the publishers.

Having made this honest error, he stands a chance to rectify it by obtaining and reading the newspapers from across the State of Oregon without limiting his diet to the metropolitan press.

Gilliam Has Hand Surgery in Portland

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Gilliam returned Tuesday, June 20, from Portland where they had spent two weeks while Earl was undergoing surgery on his left hand at St. Vincent hospital, correcting a nerve strangulation condition.

According to Mrs. Gilliam the hand is getting along nicely, although the operation and treatment in Portland were lengthy and painful. Earl was in the hospital for eight days with the operation itself taking two and a half hours. He will need to return periodically for checkups.

Shot in Foot

Lee Hams of Heppner was taken to Pioneer Memorial hospital Sunday after he accidentally shot himself in the foot with a .22 caliber rifle, a state police officer reported. Hams was planning to go porcupine or rabbit hunting, but the accident occurred in the driveway of his residence. The officer said that Hams pulled the trigger, thinking the rifle was unloaded as it was pointed towards the foot. The bullet went all the way through the foot.

Attends Tax School

Sheriff C. J. D. Bauman was in Salem Tuesday and Wednesday to attend a tax school sponsored by the Oregon State Tax Commission. He was expected to return Wednesday night. Mrs. Bauman accompanied him on the trip.

Chaff and Chatter

Wes Sherman

ALL MUTILATED young children are annual have viewed the review of ladies' fashions as presented by one of these ultra ultra modern dress designers on television on a recent night. The mothers would have received lots of ideas for Halloween costumes for their youngsters.

NOW WE KNOW why the Heppner "Dugout" isn't included in the Reader's Digest Almanac. The editors took nearly six months in responding to our inquiry of January 5, but it was received this week.

Their explanation: "We very much appreciate your inquiry concerning the fact that we did not include the Heppner Digest Almanac. As you are no doubt aware, we are bound, as most publications, by rigid space restrictions and consequently must be selective both in the scope and depth of the material presented. Thus, we have been forced to omit early floods with casualties under 400 so that we could provide information on more recent flood disasters. However, as our objectives and viewpoints vary somewhat from year to year, we have referred your letter to our research staff for further consideration in future editions."

AN OLD story is told of an actor who had a part in a drama. At the peak of the production someone pointed a gun at him and pulled the trigger, whereupon he was to exclaim, "My gosh, I'm shot!"

But the director couldn't get the proper emphasis and enthusiasm.

The indifferent actor merely intoned, "My-gosh-I'm shot."

So the director conceived the idea of jacking the man with a hatchet at the appropriate time.

The gun, with blank cartridge was fired, and the director jabbered the pit into the actor's behind.

"My gosh, I AM shot!" exclaimed our hero.

This is preliminary to explaining about our parking meters. A couple of months ago, the city inserted an ad in the paper saying that parking meter regulations would be enforced again. But it was evident that there wasn't much enthusiasm behind the announcement because few tickets were issued in the ensuing weeks.

But now we see Officer Ben Corbin conscientiously making the rounds. By gosh, the city is enforcing the parking meter ordinance!

AIT CRAWFORD of San Jose, Calif. has written a fine story on the old Fair building, first installment of which is printed in this paper. We appreciate AIT's taking the time and effort to write this account for it includes much in the way of history and incidents which should be printed and preserved.

As he points out, probably no building in Heppner has been so important in the lives of so many. While the structure, which is now in oblivion, has already received considerable attention, we are happy to have this additional information as a part of Morrow county memorabilia. We know that our older readers, particularly, will enjoy it.

WE HAVE HAD some criticism for not saying more about our new granddaughter and first grandchild in deference to those disappointed (and it wasn't the parents who complained), we will confess that our inclination was to put a banner headline announcing the arrival of Rebecca Lynn on the front page after her birth June 6. But we felt this would be a bit ostentatious and checked the impulse.

But we will say that we are mighty proud of the little girl, who is as cute as a bug's ear, as they say. We saw her again Saturday, and she is growing by leaps and bounds. Her hair at this writing is dark, like her dad's and her eyes appear to be turning towards a deep brown, according to her mother, Rose Marie, who is giving up her school teaching career at Parish Junior High, to devote full time to her family.

Now, if the young parents don't spoil little Becky enough, it almost is certain that the grandparents will, either those on the Sherman side or the maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Sapiek of Stayton.

A FAMILIAR nuisance has made another appearance on the scene. It is one of those things that veries on being a "racker" but appears to be within the letter of the law. A concern in California sends out a punch card statement to various businesses for a classified listing. A little dab of yellow on an illustration of an open directory in a corner would mislead one into believing that it is for listing in yellow pages of the telephone directory, but it is not.

The bill we received yesterday was for \$67, and probably others in the area received similar ones. Apparently the intent of

this firm is to get the recipient to write and send a check before he realizes that it is for something that he did not order. Our contract for although it states in one corner, "This is a proposal form and not a bill, invoice or receipt." This probably puts it within the realm of legality.

If you received such a notice, be sure you read all the fine print (both on the face and on the back) before you send your check.

We just called Dale Blumber, Pacific Northwest Bell manager in Pendleton, about the matter, and learned that he was in the process of getting out a news release of warning on it.

"This is to no way associated with Pacific Northwest Bell," he said, and added words of caution to any who receive such notices. Blumber said that his office has had several other calls on the statements as they confused them with Yellow Page listings.

ANY WHO BELIEVE that a weekly newspaper isn't thoroughly read should have heard the number of comments we received last week when we forgot to change the date line on the front page. The June 22 edition carried the week-old June 15 date line. We had telephone calls, comments riling us, and even some papers returned because the recipients figured they were getting week-old news. We're vella, vella sorry about that, but the bumbling editor puts some fools as well as fools.

Pioneer Ponderings

By W. S. COVERHILL

Unless you are interested in ornithology this article will do you little good and may strain your credulity.

An outline of circumstances and developments, incident to its development, are hereinafter set forth.

On a recent excursion into the Road South country, I spent a few hours "back lifting" along the dry bed of Camas Creek near Ukiah. One of the items of interest that I found was what appeared to be a perched bird's nest. Nearby was a fossilized or agatized egg that fitted neatly into the nest. With an avidity characteristic of an amateur rock hound, I put them together and carried them away.

I had no idea of the value of my find until I exhibited it at a morning meeting of our club. One of our members, a native of Missouri, identified it at once as a nest and an egg of the Goutus bird, now extinct in the Northwest, but still extant in Missouri.

Full information revealed that the Goutus bird is peculiar in that it always flies backward to see where it has been, that it feeds entirely on grit and gravel, that it lays one egg every two years, that only half of them hatch, and that the other half to agates in the course of years.

They are much sought after by the better rock hounds. I believe I am the owner of the only Goutus combination in the Northwest.



Coming Events

HEPPNER SWIMMING POOL. Open Tuesdays thru Saturdays, 1 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. Open Sundays, 2 to 7 p.m. Closed Mondays. Classes start Thursday, July 6, for beginners, intermediate and swimmers. Sign-up Wednesday, July 5, 10 a.m. at pool.

CAR WASH. By Heppner Rainbow Girls. Saturdays, July 1, from 10 a.m. Pulleton Garage, Heppner, and George's Chevron Station, Lexington.

SIDEWALK BAZAAR. Plan now to join in the fun—Friday, Saturday, July 7 & 8. Downtown Heppner.

RODEO KICKOFF DANCE. Saturday, July 8, Fair Pavilion. Music by Good Vibrations. Portland. Meet the Queen and her Court!

FIREWORKS DISPLAY. Saturday, July 1, lone Memorial Field, 8:30 p.m. Sponsored by Ione Legion, Post No. 85. Everyone Welcome!

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Salem Scene

by Everett E. Cutler

Interim Committees To Continue Study

Adjournment of the legislature may cause a lull in Salem, but the interim committees of food products, industry, transportation, zoning, effects on industrial development, duplication of government requirements, business costs, bankruptcy and related credit practices.

Local government committee members, four senators and five representatives, will look into the unification and codification of special service district laws and problems of annexation and other boundary changes relating to cities, counties and districts.

Broad farm questions will be explored by the interim committee on agriculture. These include farm financing, labor needs and mechanization, land use, food inspector and agriculture-related water pollution.

The committee studying improvement of the legislature will be composed of 37 members—three senators, four representatives and 30 private citizens to be named by Senate and House leaders. Funds reportedly are available from the Ford Foundation to supplement the state's \$30,000.

To Revise Crime Laws. In addition to the six interim committees, the 1967 legislative assembly created a "blue-ribbon" commission to recommend steps leading to complete revision of Oregon criminal law structure and sentencing procedures. It will consist of 15 members, including judges, lawyers and district attorneys in addition to legislators.

Their study is to be conducted over the next four years, with a \$40,000 budget, and they will report to the 1971 legislature.

On top of all this, the following fiscal studies are to be made: Salaries of state civil service employees. State building rental charges. Capitol building remodeling and space assignment.

Organization and function of the State Bureau of Labor. Liquor Control Commission policies.

Higher education buildings design and costs. Vacation and sick-leave policies.

Proposed annuity program for employees of industries in the blind.

It's quite an assignment for those elected to make our laws, particularly when one remembers that nearly all Oregon legislators have their own private occupations at home, and some 80 per cent of them have to conduct campaigns next year.