

The Official Newspaper of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

The Heppner GAZETTE-TIMES
Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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Letters to the Editor

Responds to Readers' 'Sound Off'

To the Editor:
I am writing in response to the "Readers Sound Off" appearing in the September 3 issue of the Gazette-Times.

In reading the statements made, the first thing that infuriates me is that people were allowed to send any statements they wanted without signing their name. What kind of newspaper and editor would allow this to happen? Anyone from anywhere could write in and claim to be from Lone or Heppner. I would really like to know where "town and rural" really are?

One individual wrote in and stated that "our students" going to a four year university are behind in both preparation, plus grade point average." I strongly disagree with this. You cannot categorize students, it is up to the individual student as to how much effort they put into their education. The offerings are there, the students must take advantage of them. I feel that no matter where one goes to high school they will feel weak in at least one class at college.

Graduated from Lone High School and went on to attend and graduate from Oregon State University. I do not believe I had any more problems adjusting to the college atmosphere

than someone who graduated from the Willamette Valley. Sure, everyone has adjustments to make; college courses are a totally different situation than high school, the student is away from home, and a lot of times they are living in a place they have never been and sometimes do not know anyone. My point is that if you want to set goals and do well in high school and college you can achieve no matter where you are from. I graduated from OSU and went on to get a job teaching, yes teaching, in Sheridan, Oregon.

This brings me to the topic of teachers working six hours a day, eight months out of the year and getting paid for 12 months. I would like to meet the teacher who can do this. All full-time teachers are also responsible for supervising after school activities. There are always times when teachers take work home, not only papers to correct and lesson plans to prepare, but also student problems and concerns.

Last but not least the Lone Schools and community have a lot of pride in their school and town. If Lone and Heppner High were combined that pride would undoubtedly disappear, it would not be the Lone students school to be proud of.

(s)Michelle LaRue

Issue at hand has been lost

To the Editor:
I have spent the last weekend with a group of people from the Morrow County school district. Just by doing this, I found myself involved in the recent tax levy situation. As an outside observer, I live in California, I see the forest getting lost in the trees.

The people against the levy seem to think that closing lone schools will save money. I find it hard to believe that anyone who passed the sixth grade would believe that. On the other hand, the people of lone say

that the school is the "heart of the community" and to lose it would be a shame. While both of these view points have their merit, the issue at hand has been lost.

The issue is education. While the rest of the country is in a dilemma over our lack of education, Morrow County seems to be bogged down in a political issue that can only hurt us in the long run. Let's look to the future, and pass any law that will help our children.

(s)Paul Blanchard
Sunnyvale, California

Supports ballot measure No. 13

To the Editor:
During the 1985 session of the Oregon Legislature, I was the chief sponsor of the bill to require voter registration 20 days before elections. The bill was passed in the house but ran out of steam in the Senate. Unfortunately, while it had bipartisan support of a vast majority of Oregonians, it did not become law. The legislature instead passed an impotent substitute allowing registration until the evening before elections, making a mockery of the Oregon registration process.

The people of Oregon now have an opportunity to solve the problem. Ballot Measure No. 13 on the November election ballot will require registration 20 days before elections. It has been endorsed by 33 of the county clerks of Oregon, including 23 of the 24 elected county

clerks who are registered as I am in the Democratic party.

Passage of Measure No. 13 will again give the county clerks time to verify those who have registered, screen out those who are obviously fraudulent, and enter all legitimate voters on the poll book. The election workers will no longer need to make the decision as to who is qualified to vote, the poll book will be the final answer.

The sponsors of this measure, Oregonians in Action, should be commended for their commitment of time and money to help restore integrity to the Oregon election process. They will have my support.

(s)Peggy L. Jolin
State Representative, District 44
31251 Joe Geer Rd.,
Cottage Grove, OR 97424
Tel: 972-5827

Think of child's education first

To the Editor:
Schools are very important to

farmers and farmer's children. Some people cannot read or even write in this county, so I think it is important to have a school system here in Lone, Heppner, Boardman and Irrigon. Why are people fighting against the budget? Children need an education. If the budget doesn't pass, the children in this county will be dumb!

Erika Bergstrom
Box 26
Lone, Oregon

P.S. Think of the child's education first not your money.

Heppner Police Report

The Heppner Police Dept. reports handling the following business during the past week:

September 9: 7:15 p.m. - public assist; 9:41 p.m. - citation issued for Parking Violation.

September 11: 12:35 a.m. - report of theft; 1:26 p.m. - traffic control; 7:20 p.m. - assist ambulance.

September 12: 12:14 a.m. - assist Morrow County Sheriff Dept.; 10 p.m. - Warrant Arrest, also citation issued for possession (less than one ounce).

September 13: 12:15 p.m. - report of theft; 2:05 - motorist assist.

September 14: 12:45 - motorist assist; 8:25 - Citation issued for Violation of Basic Rule (48 mph in a 35 mph zone); citation issued for Open Container; 11:36 - assist Morrow County Sheriff Dept.; 11:45 request officer for security check.

Justice Court

Morrow County Justice Court at the Morrow County Courthouse in Heppner reports handling the following business during the past week:

Wayne R. Wilson, Jr., Heppner - Violation of the Basic Rule, \$25 fine.

Lester Allen Dutcher, Heppner - Violation of the Basic Rule (49 mph in a 35 mph zone), \$30 fine.

Nikki Dawn Papineau, Lexington - Exceeding the Maximum Speed (68 mph in a 55 mph zone), \$30 fine.

Constance Gae Eng, Lexington - Exceeding the Maximum Speed (71 mph in a 55 mph zone), \$30 fine.

Gerard Robert Taylor, Hermiston - No Taillight on Trailer, \$9 fine.

Editorial

Accuracy, responsibility, and ethics

"Please comment on the editor/publisher ethical responsibility to verify the accuracy of statements before publishing the equivalent of poison pen letters..." School Superintendent Doyle McCaslin asked in his response to the results of the school levy survey commissioned and published by The Board Enterprise and the Heppner Gazette-Times.

Ethics in communication is a responsibility journalists, editors, and publishers alike hold in the highest esteem. After all, it is the very foundation of the media's credibility, the lifeblood of our profession.

Ethics in communication, it is a heavy load indeed.

Accuracy and verification of fact is one of many of our ethical responsibilities in reporting the news. It is also our ethical responsibility to give an account of "both" sides of an issue. The word "both" is used here for simplicity. Rarely is an issue two-sided, usually there are many sides.

"Letters to the Editor", surveys, and polls are not necessarily fact, they are OPINIONS and are published as such.

The school levy survey in which we asked voters why they voted either for or against the school budget may have brought out misconceptions and inaccuracies regarding the budget and the operation of the Morrow County School District but we did not ask the voters for the facts, we asked them their reasons for voting the way they did.

However, our decision to commission a survey was based on fact:

--the fact that the school budget failed three times, a first for the district in recent history.

--the fact that with each election the budget failed by an ever-widening margin.

--the fact that the school board and the superintendent, despite well intentioned efforts to address the budget failure, could not seem to gain a consensus on why the voting majority defeated the budget.

Also, it seemed that with dissention spreading throughout the county the budget was headed for a fourth failure.

We felt that if our schools are to remain open, if education in Morrow County is to continue uninterrupted, then the reasons for defeat had to be brought out. Then, and only then, could the issues be effectively addressed.

We feel that publishing the survey results and the responses thereafter were well within our ethical responsibilities and the letters we received, both pro and con, were not written with "poison pens", but were a fine example of a free people exercising their rights under the First Amendment.

(s)Donna Schmidt, Editor
The Boardman Enterprise

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