

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

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

U.S.P.S. 240-420

Published every Wednesday and entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Heppner, Oregon under the Act of March 3, 1879. Second class postage paid at Heppner, Oregon. Office at 147 West Willow Street. Telephone (503) 676-9228. Address communications to the Heppner Gazette-Times, P.O. Box 337, Heppner, Oregon 97836. Subscriptions: \$12 in Morrow, Wheeler, Gilliam and Grant Counties; \$23 elsewhere.

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Resentment spoken for tenure system

To the Editor:
The strike has been educational. I have learned that the M.E.A. lied when they claimed their actions were for the student's benefits.
The M.E.A.'s appearance, dress and language on the picket lines also explains this era's let down in classroom decorum.

School board encouraged to 'hold the line'

To the Editor:
The School Board's March 2, 1989 offer, to the Morrow County teachers, increasing salary, insurance, and travel allowances is very generous. I supported them on their original offer. But I will support them on this offer as well. But I encourage them to hold the line. This is as far as I want them to go.
Because of tenure practices, fair share issues, and the inability of un-

The M.E.A. has taught a lot of "us" to not like a "few" of them. Due to the tenure system we have been forced to continue sending our dollars to those "few", which I personally resent.

Respectfully,
(s) Eric Anderson
Lone

willingness of the union to police their own, I resent across the board pay and benefit increases.

Until merit pay and control by the School Board and School Administrators for hiring, firing and disciplining of teachers, I will not support increased step increases and across the board pay raises.

Respectfully,
(s) Marnie Anderson
Lone

Teachers are chastised for actions

To the Editor:
I am sick of hearing certain teachers whine and complain about how badly they are being mistreated. They always neglect to mention the fact that they have received a raise in pay each year for the past three years. They must either think that we taxpayers are made out of money or that the school district has a direct pipeline to the U.S. Mint. If these teachers have half the intelligence they are supposed to have, they would realize from the results of recent tax levy votes, that the majority of taxpayers in Morrow County do not want any more increases in school spending for anything including teacher salaries and benefits.
The latest publication from the teacher's association stated that their quarrel was not with the citizens of Morrow County but rather with the school district. This is ridiculous. Why should the teachers blame the school board? Their position merely reflects the opinion of the majority

of the voters and also the financial realities of the day.

I think that if some of our teachers are this dissatisfied with their job they should do what the rest of us do - find another one. They are neither indispensable nor irreplaceable. This community managed just fine long before these particular teachers came here and we will get along O.K. after they are gone. I'll bet that there are hundreds of good teachers that would give their "eye-teeth" to get out of those big city schools and into a small community like ours away from the crime and drug scene.

No, I don't feel that the teachers should strike. If they don't like it here they should just pack their bags and hit the road. Let them go to those big school districts with the high salaries and outrageous medical benefits. They are going to need them when they get mugged in the hallways.

Sincerely,
(s) Sidney G. Zinter

7th Grader responds to teachers strike

To the Editor:
Mr. Carroll:
My name is Tyson Pratt, from Boardman. I am a seventh grader at Columbia Junior High. I have just returned from a meeting concerning the teacher strike. I am very upset that the board didn't bother to show up. It was said that the board was invited to speak at the meeting one week ago. It was also stated at the meeting that the board's response was that you (the board) did not have enough time. I feel that it is your

responsibility as a board members to do anything you have to do to end this strike and if you can't do that you should not be on the board. I believe that a good board would have jumped at the chance to meet with the public.

Mr. Carroll, it is not going to do much good hiding from the public or sending out partially true information. But maybe that is what you want, is it not? Think about it.

(s) Tyson Pratt
Boardman

Positive direction needed to channel frustrations

To the Editor:
Conflict does strange things to people's personalities. When we as individuals feel threatened, we react by striking back at whoever threatens us, or whoever we perceive as threatening to us.
These past two months in Morrow County have been especially threatening to all of us. The teachers feel threatened by the board. The board feels threatened by the teachers. The remainder of the populace feels threatened by what is, or is not, happening between the teachers and the board.

I've heard stories about unkind personal attacks being made by the board members to teachers or other concerned citizens. My own family has been the victim of someone's

hostility. I've also heard stories about teachers or other concerned citizens making personal attacks on board members.

This kind of behavior is sad to see and is so counter productive in any situation. It only destroys what is already fragile. We need to remember that we are all neighbors, with the right to make decisions about issues for ourselves even if those decisions do not agree with each other.

I challenge each citizen of Morrow County to find a positive way to deal with your frustrations, not only in this situation but in all situations. We need to channel those energies toward making things better and not allowing our dark sides to surface.

Sincerely,
(s) Nancy Brownfield
Heppner

North Morrow Chamber urges Yes vote on bond

To the Editor:
The Boardman-North Morrow County Chamber of Commerce urges a yes vote for the G.O. Bond election March 28, 1989.

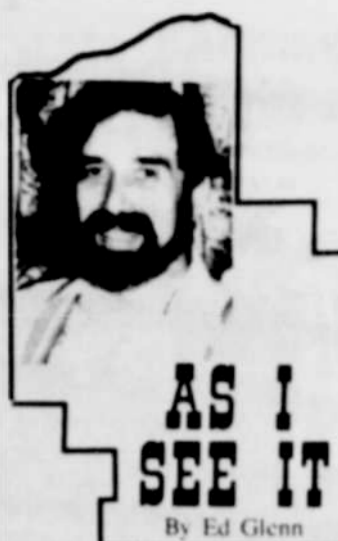
The refinancing of older revenue bonds will allow plants a minor reduction on the utility rates and will assist in making them competitive with other plants in our region.

The Chamber urges your support for this important investment in jobs and future property tax reductions.

Sincerely,
(s) John Prag
President Boardman-North Morrow County Chamber of Commerce

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Conscious Mediocrity



As we write, the school teacher strike rages on. And it appears that it will continue for some time.

As I see it, the board has the edge in public support, by a huge margin. The teachers are standing alone.

And the issue boils down to "what level of quality are we willing to pay for?"

A former board member told us that a former policy of the district was to set teacher salaries at about the 60th percentile of districts across the state. With some 215 districts in Oregon, that policy should make Morrow County rank about 86th.

For the beginning teacher, we're pretty close. Figuring in the 2% raise effective March 1 (7/10ths of one percent for the year) offered last week, beginning teacher salaries would rank 80% out of the 215 districts. But the 2% raise in each of the next two years, much less than other districts provide, would drop that rank to 166th by 1990-91.

At the top of the salary range, however, Morrow County would rank only 160th, and that ranking would drop to 180th by 1990-91.

We think it is important to maintain some relationship with teachers' salaries in the rest of the state since we do not raise our teachers but must attract the majority of them from other parts of the state. And we don't think the amenities of living in Morrow County will do it. It takes a competitive salary schedule.

We think it inescapable that with a salary schedule lower than many other districts pay will not attract a very high quality teacher.

Worse, with a salary schedule that ranks so low on the upper end, we think even those good teachers we attract fresh out of school will move on in just a couple of years.

We talked this over with a local contractor a few days ago and he agreed. Then he went on to say that he was willing to sacrifice his children's education to save a few dollars on his tax bill. We think he understands the nature of things far better than his children ever will.

With all the wounds inflicted on all concerned, we think it is time now, even before a settlement, to begin the healing process. Much hate and disrespect has arisen toward teachers, some much deserved. Similar hate and disrespect toward board members is being voiced in some circles, mostly teacher. Taxpayers are variously heroes or villains depending upon who is voicing an opinion.

The healing can begin on several fronts, but an essential element will be a community consensus on just what kind of education do we expect for our children. Do we want, for them, a strong, solid foundation from which they may compete effectively at college, at work, in the real world? Or is it enough that they just barely slide by with a little readin' writin' an' 'rithmetic?

Once the kind of quality is decided upon, we should make a realistic estimate of cost. And be willing to pay that cost. We seem to be willing to pay for roads and such through a County tax rate that's one of the highest in the state. We have more than one city with tax rates higher than most other cities. Our school tax rate on the other hand, is one of the lowest, statewide.

The healing will also require an elevated degree of professionalism among our teachers. The cards and letters they have sent board members and administration, full of hate and threats have hurt the profession immensely. Their conduct on the picket line has been less than endearing. The way they have treated non-striking teachers has been reprehensible.

Our teachers must restore to their profession the respect that it deserves and must have in order to provide any acceptable degree of education.

The healing will require a higher respect for the system and for individuals by the board. Even the best teacher will find working for a board that is out to break them, every one, a difficult task indeed. A board willing to say "we expect a degree of education equal to the bottom 25% of statewide average and therefore will pay salaries in the bottom 25% of the statewide average," will find dealing with its teachers much easier.

The healing will require an administration willing to deal with difficult situations, especially involving parents, with a level head. Operations are difficult indeed and temper-tantrums, swearing and emotional outbursts add, not detract, from that difficulty.

We fear that this healing will take a long time. Perhaps longer than even a kindergarten student will take to graduate from high school. We think some good people, teachers and parents alike will wonder if the healing period won't be too long. Perhaps longer than living in Morrow County is worth.

Letters to the Editor

Minor incidents being blown out of proportion

To the Editor:
Too often in an emotional and volatile situation as we are now experiencing, minor incidents can become exaggerated and blown out of proportion, depending on whose version is related. Oftentimes the good that people do is overshadowed by the more "sensational" actions of a few.

On Friday, March 3, the Heppner High School girls' basketball team competed for the regional title in LaGrande. For the girls to have advanced so far is admirable and worthy of attention. When the girls boarded their bus on Friday morning, there was only a small group of people to cheer them on their way. The classified workers of HHS were there as were Marcie Stookey and Joan Records. The remainder of the

group was made up of striking teachers—out of 14 striking teachers at HHS, 11 were there to give their girls the send-off they had earned. They came without picket signs, and the only shouts I heard were those of good wishes. The bouquet of balloons that the team had was also from the teachers, and the signs that were posted along the road to Hermiton were made and put up by two striking teachers.

Heppner's educators have always been caring and supportive of their students. This care and support has not stopped even in the face of a strike. Our teachers have always supported our children, and as a parent, I intend to return that support. Our faculty is, after all, a class act.

(s) Ginger Bowman

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