

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

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

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Parent expresses gratitude for teachers professionalism during strike

To the Editor:
With all the pain, confusion and anger the teachers strike in Morrow County has caused, I just want to express my gratitude to our teachers in Heppner for their professionalism during this difficult time.
The pain they are feeling as dedicated teachers is quite apparent to all who make the effort to talk to them. They don't enjoy one minute of this strike, but just want a fair settlement and to get the respect they so justly deserve.
As a newly single mother of two elementary children, I can't begin to express what a difference a loving

teacher can make in a confused child's life. Knowing I send my children to school to be in the capable and loving arms of Pat Edmondson and Karen Dubuque each day has made my life so much easier.
As parents and concerned community members, we must get involved and solve this issue. A fair and just settlement has to come about before anything like this ever happens again. Lets all put our hurt and anger aside and work together to heal our community. Our children's future is at stake.

Many roads have been traveled

To the Editor:
In my life, I have traveled on many roads. Both in the literal and figurative sense. There have been the freeways and one-ways, the smooth roads and rough roads, the paved roads and dirt roads. These roads have led me to many places. Safe and secure places, like home, and the not so secure, unknown. Allow me to describe the last road I traveled. It had no name at the time, but now, I would like to name it the Road of Nonparticipation.

let you decide. This road also has its attractive scenery, but it's not so smooth, and the destination is not so secure. It is a two-way road and there are others traveling it in the opposite direction. Once again, I travel this road in the direction of my choice. I accept responsibility for my choice and do not begrudge those traveling in the other direction their choice. But rather, I value their decision to be on the same road. As travelers on this road, we may be in opposition, but we have a few things in common. We have interaction with others and each other. We have a voice. We are creating change.

The Road of Nonparticipation I traveled by choice. I chose to not participate in my professional organizations. I chose to not be as involved in community organizations and affairs. I chose to not participate in furthering my education. I chose to not listen to opposition or get involved with politics. This was a smooth, one-way road. The scenery was attractive, and the weather was always sunny. I learned some things while traveling down this road. I had no interaction with others. I had no voice. I created no change.

To those of you who chose to read my letter, I ask you to take a look at the road you are traveling. Is it the road you want to be on? Can you accept responsibility for your choice? Like I have said, I have traveled both roads, and I have made my choice. In the words of Robert Frost, "And that has made all the difference."
Respectfully submitted,
(s) Sarah Carlson
Science Teacher,
Heppner Junior High

Step increase does not replace wage increase

To the Editor:
The Morrow County School Board has been leading people to believe that a "step increase" is the same as a "wage increase." A step increase does not replace a wage increase. Teachers become more valuable to the district with every year of experience. A step increase is designed state-wide as small compensation for this, as it does not compare with current cost of living. To get a substantial step increase, however, teachers are required to invest their own money and time into extra schooling. In addition, our most experienced teachers (15+ years) no longer get step increases, yet they still must invest in additional schooling. There are 42 teachers in Morrow County who have already reached this point. Three years ago, beginning salaries were so low the District was finding it difficult to recruit. The District raised the base salary, but veteran teacher's salaries were left below average. At that time, the District promised the

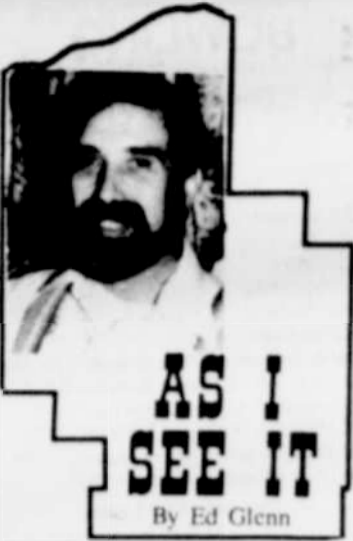
veteran teachers that they would "work" on their salaries in three years. The Board is not keeping that promise.
The State of Oregon says the Oregon average teacher's salary is \$28,000 and Morrow County's is \$24,240. Without a wage increase, veteran teachers will have no incentive to stay, and the District will have difficulty attracting and retaining quality teachers.
The Morrow County School District has always had a reputation for having quality education. Obviously, a fair compromise would be of benefit to us as teachers, but it is also in the best interest of a community that wishes to maintain quality schools.
After considering these facts, we urge you to write to the school board. A quick and fair resolution would be beneficial to all of us.
(s) Cindy Sutherland
Boardman
Beth Creason
Irrigon

Oregon doesn't have nursing shortage

To the Editor:
I am responding to the recent article (Tuesday, Feb. 28, The Oregonian) regarding the nursing shortage. The situation will continue to worsen as long as the Oregon Board of Nurses continues to reject the application of qualified and experienced nurses relocating from out of state.
The Oregon Board of Nurses does not recognize professionals who have not taken a nationally sanctioned state exam. They also do not allow Military trained nurses to challenge their state LPN exams.
Till recently, many states gave their own exams. When a nurse moved to another state their license was either transferred, or they were allowed to challenge the exam. After 1984 a nationally sanctioned exam was made available, making interstate transfer easier. Allowing a nurse to challenge an exam is based on her education and training. Most states accept Military training and experience as adequate. Oregon does not. Therefore, those qualified to care for soldiers, government officials including the president, are not considered qualified to care for the residents of Oregon.
I conclude that Oregon does not have a nursing shortage. The Oregon Board of Nurses is apparently comfortable with their numbers. If this

conclusion is incorrect I expect we'll see changes in their policies regarding interstate transfer of Licensed Practical Nurses as well as Registered Nurses.
Sincerely,
(s) Lori E. Straley
California Licensed Vocational Nurse Certified Surgical Technologist
Heppner

Green Beer, Shamrocks and Sheep



St. Patrick would be proud. In Heppner, for one day, even the Swedes are Irish.
The Irish tradition runs deep in these parts and St. Patrick's Day is just the time to celebrate. To celebrate in the Irish tradition. A parade and the works: much green beer and many lucky shamrocks. The sheep are gone.
Irish immigration to Morrow County was direct from the old country, Counties Leitrim and Donegal, peaking about 1890. The early folks, notably William Hughes and Charles Cunningham, sponsored many young Irishmen to help with the huge sheep industry of the last century. The names of Feliz Johnson, Jeremiah Bohrsan, Tom, Mike and Patt Quaid, Uzz and Lee French and dozens of Doherty's, Pat, B.P. and James appeared in this publication in the 90's.
Most were sheepherders, including John Kilkenny and most became men of wealth, fame and fun, including John Kilkenny.

According to one historian:
"The Irish influence was strong in Morrow County at the turn of the century and decade or two afterwards. It helped give Heppner the reputation of a wild western town, which it hardly deserved, although there were Saturday nights when the sheep were home from the hills and the cattle in the feed lots, when it was well enough to suit the dreams of a movie producer." Giles French, Homesteads and Heritages, 1971.
Now, generations later, the legacies of those Irish immigrants continues. The land, wealth, and surnames survive; the flood, the depression, two World Wars; a hundred years of tradition to be celebrated on the day when everyone is Irish and when Heppner may again suit the dreams of a movie producer.

In more than one instance, it's more than just survival. Subsequent generations of those hearty Irish, have distinguished themselves in their own right.
Now that mere survival is no account. We know of one county commissioner whose campaign platform was that he had inherited everything he had but had been able to hang on to it all for more than 50 years. Voters liked that and elected him handily.
But we also know of a descendant of an Irish sheepherder who has made an independent mark.
We were an aspiring young lawyer a few years back when Judge William F. Brownnton retired from the Circuit Court in Union County. Tom Gooding, then a local lawyer, now the Circuit Court Judge on that same bench, was the master of ceremonies at Judge Brownnton's retirement dinner. Judge Gooding, playing the role of Foster Brooks (unintentionally we're sure) introduced the speaker, the Honorable John W. Kilkenny, Senior Judge, 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.
Judge Kilkenny has had a long and illustrious legal career: lawyer, State Circuit Judge, U.S. District Court Judge, U.S. Circuit Court Judge, humanitarian, historian and above all, Morrow County Irishman.
Well, on that occasion, Judge Kilkenny gave us all a little history lesson. He explained that the circuit in Union County used to be part of the 6th Circuit seated in Pendleton. And in the early days it was a true circuit where the Judge, court personnel and lawyers would travel from county seat to county seat to hold court.
On one particular occasion, the entourage was travelling from Baker to John Day by stage coach when a young lawyer suggested, at the first way station, that they repair to the road house to "settle the dust" while the attendants changed the team.
That was so pleasant that it became the order of the day to "settle the dust" at each stop on the all day trip, and apparently there were several.
The group arrived in John Day just in time for a big banquet at which this same young lawyer was the after dinner speaker. Noticing that the fellow was having some difficulty speaking distinctly, an older lawyer whispered in the Judge's ear, "Your Honor, I believe our brother is drunk."
With great indignation, and in a strong Irish brogue, the Judge replied, "How can he be? He's been with us all day."
So for all the Irish on St. Pat's Day, just stick with the Judge.

Letters to the Editor

Auction items needed to continue celebration

To the Editor:
Each year the town of Heppner turns green for the annual St. Patrick's Day festivities.
Many people take part and enjoy the celebration, not only as a tribute to our area's Irish heritage, but also as a sign of the coming of spring in Morrow County.
But as with most things, it takes money to put on the St. Patrick's Day Celebration, and one of the big sources of money is the annual auction.
Donations from the community for last year's auction were very

good, but this year with only a couple of days left until the celebration very few items have come in. We need donations of items to auction.
Time is running out. We will be printing our auction list Friday morning. If you have items you can donate to the St. Patrick's Day auction, please call me at 676-9226. We will make arrangements to pick up your items, and you will be helping the celebration. Your support is very much appreciated.

(s) Pat Sweeney
Auction Chairman

General obligation bond placed before the people

To the Editor:
On March 28 a Port of Morrow general obligation bond for \$750,000 will be placed on the ballot for a vote of the people.
This bond levy, if approved, would add approximately 70¢ per thousand dollars of assessed property evaluation to our current tax bill. The levy would cover over a number of years to be determined by the opportunities of the bond market but the period would not exceed 20 years. A portion of the levy will go to stabilize the eroding shoreline at the Port of Morrow. However, the major share of the bond levy will be used to stimulate industrial development in the county.
One of the important features of this bond issue is \$50,000 dollars for the acquisition/improvement of land for an industrial site in South Morrow County. This will be the first effort by the Port to acquire property to develop industry in the southern

part of the county. The idea came out of Port Commission meeting in Lexington and was supported by persons in attendance from the Heppner, Lexington and Ione area. To be assured that a timely location of industry can be made upon application, it is necessary for the Port to own the land to insure that the property is zoned industrial. It is also necessary for area citizens to agree in advance, which site they would prefer be developed and to communicate that to the Port prior to purchase of any site.
The approximate cost of 70¢ per thousand seems like a bargain for a chance to generate some industrial growth in our area that would produce jobs, benefit schools and community and also share the tax burden.
We believe the bond issue deserves a yes vote, March 28.
(s) John L. Bristow
Chairman Ione Community, Agri-Business Organization

March 15 is historic day for Veterans

To the Editor:
Today, March 15, is a historic day for our nation's 27 million veterans. It marks the transition of their agency, the Veterans Administration, to the Department of Veterans Affairs and issues VA to the President's Cabinet.
In making this change, Congress and the President recognized what we in the VA have long known: military veterans (who with their families, constitute a third of our population) deserve representation at our highest level of government. Their contribution to our way of life and their needs influence people and events far beyond the bounds of "veterans affairs."
Veterans are served by the nation's largest hospital system which plays vital national roles in medical education and research.

Veterans buying homes through the VA guaranteed home loan program are a major economic force in the national real estate, home building and mortgage lending industries.
Veterans continue to be a major force in the financing of higher education through their participation in popular GI Bill education assistance programs.
We at the Department of Veterans Affairs welcome today's historic change and are proud to be part of the nation's newest Cabinet department. Our employees will mark the day the best way we know--by doing our jobs and serving veterans with renewed pride and dedication. After all, it's their special day.
(s) Jerry G. McRae
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Portland

Let's back the Port of Morrow's bond issues

To the Editor:
Morrow County has a lot of things going for it.
It's true that the Port of Morrow has more than doubled the county's value and tax base. This means our county tax rate is substantially less than what it otherwise could be. Nearly the lowest in the state.
And the future looks good with the Ports solid waste disposal business coming. On the job now is Gary Neal, the aggressive new manager with high marks in marketing and industrial development.

Attracting new industry is super competitive and this is why the Port is asking taxpayer support for a general obligation bond issue. It will add less than 1% to our tax bill.
This vesting in the Port brings short and long term returns to our economy, increases employment and actually will continue to reduce our taxes as the record shows.
To support the Port of Morrow's hard work to date needs our favorable vote on their Bond Issue March 28.
Sincerely,
(s) Ken Turner

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