

Merry Christmas



Technicalities hold up teacher contract

After many months of bargaining, the Morrow County School District and its teachers have yet to come to terms on two year contracts for 1992-93 and 1993-94. Both bargaining teams agree that they're open to any new proposals concerning the 28 issues that are involved. But it's likely that the next step in the process will be a "fact finding" session scheduled for January 27, 1993 at Boardman City Hall.

Local residents are hoping that there won't be a repetition of the district's 1989 strike. Along with disrupting the school system and costing the district over \$65,000, it divided communities and left bitter memories.

It's the contract language and technical aspects that both bargaining teams claim are the major issues. But the dollar figure overshadows the playing field because of undetermined state school support dollars and a cap on county property taxes to finance a \$13 million budget.

State mandated changes will impact every school. The school board says it is gearing up for those changes. They take the position that once a contract is in force teachers cannot bargain for compensation for additional work duties including longer work days and an extended school year. But the district says it intends to submit a budget impact statement to the Oregon Department of Education for any additional funding requested by teachers for compensation. If ODE denies that funding request or any additional revisions the teachers will perform extra work with no additional pay or benefits.

Eventually each school building will be required to have a site committee selected from teachers, citizens, board members and administrators.

These committees will be given a budget to finance approved professional development requests. MCEA is asking that employees serving on site councils be compensated in release time, extended pay or compensatory time and that teachers on the committee be elected annually by their peers and that training for site councils be included.

MCEA waives the right to bargain over site councils but they are proposing that the step increase eligibility clause be deleted that requires teachers to obtain nine quarter hours during a five-year period for wage advancement. The district maintains that the deletion of that requirement would weaken professional standing. MCEA holds that teachers would receive credit hours for specialized professional development under site committee approval rather than in any field of a teacher's choice.

MCEA would like to maintain the wage step increase schedule as in the past. The district is proposing that teachers may not receive more than one step increase in wages per year.

The district's teacher salaries are often compared with larger nearby school districts such as Pendleton and Hermiston. Statistics show that Morrow County's beginning teacher salaries are above average for districts of its size. On the other end of the scale, the salaries of teachers with tenure are slightly below normal.

MCEA is proposing a restructuring of the salary scale so the district won't lose experienced teachers, they say. They are recommending that \$200,000 instead of \$100,000 be budgeted for wage increases. MCEA is also asking for compensation for any increased PERS changes and a

4.5 percent wage increase in 1993-94 based on the Portland consumer price index.

The school board has proposed a two to two and one-half percent wage increase based on what they say is in line with the local cost of living increase. They also say that the salary schedule should be maintained the same as in the past which they feel is in line with the governor's proposal for a 10 percent reduction in local school funding for the next biennium.

Insurance costs are another issue. The school board wants to maintain a \$400 cap per month for each teacher's health benefits. MCEA is asking for \$460 per month for 1992-93 and a 15 percent increase, amounting to \$535 per month the following year to maintain the same level of coverage as insurance costs continue to climb.

Because of the influx of non-English speaking students, particularly in north end schools, MCEA says that elementary teachers should receive guaranteed class preparation time during the work day. They also feel that each classroom teacher be provided with a bilingual aide where applicable. The board says it has not determined the cost, but this proposal would add a number of additional employees.

MCEA is asking for a "fair share" clause requiring all teachers to pay union dues since all teachers are represented by the union. The district is of the opinion that this is an unfair demand.

The district has also proposed a clause reducing extended contracts for vocational agriculture, music, band and library at the three Heppner schools and at Riverside. That action was rejected by MCEA.

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Czechoslovakian couple purchase Office Cafe in Ione



The Novaks, back, l-r: Gabriella and Bob, front-Luci and Gabi

The Office Cafe in Ione is under new ownership. Bob and Gabriella Novak are the new owners and have been in Ione since November 3.

The Novaks, most recently from Hillsboro, escaped from communist Czechoslovakia 12 years ago. Bob, 49, and Gabriella, 40, who came from Prague, arranged their escape by first going to Yugoslavia on "vacation". Gabriella is somewhat reluctant to go into the dangers of their escape. In Yugoslavia they went to the Austrian embassy and were able to get a visa to go to Austria. In Austria they lived in a refugee camp in Vienna, awaiting an in-

terview with the U.S. ambassador. After four months there they finally got their interview and after five and a-half months they were granted permission to come to the U.S.

The Novaks arrived in the U.S. with two suitcases and no English. "It was very tough," said Gabriella, who now speaks English very well. After their arrival in the U.S., they were sent to another refugee camp in Pennsylvania where they waited for a sponsor. They finally got a sponsor in Hillsboro and moved there.

Since their arrival in the U.S. the Novaks have also lived in L.A. Bob is a master tiler and, in addition to tiling homes featured in the Portland "Street

of Dreams" he has tiled homes in Hollywood. Bob is hoping to continue his tiling business in the Ione area, tiling floors, bathrooms and countertops.

The Novaks, who have two children, Gabi, nine and Lucie, four, found out about The Office Cafe in an ad in the Oregonian. They were looking for a change in their lives and decided to come to Ione. "We are not from big cities," said Gabriella. "We were looking for a smaller place where our kids could be safe," she added. "The kids couldn't even go out to play. We think we will be happy here. Our kids are happy." The Novaks sold their home in Hillsboro so they could buy the Cafe.

"We're working very hard to stay in Oregon," added Gabriella, who says that Oregon is a little like Czechoslovakia. "That's probably why we feel like we're home."

After a 30 year career in the construction business, Gabriella says that Bob, who "never" cooked at home, is adjusting to the cafe and is even cooking hamburgers. The Novaks say they eventually hope to make some interior and exterior changes to The Office and incorporate some Czech food into the menu. "I try to juggle between American and Czech food," notes Gabriella, adding that she tries to put food on the menu that people will know and like. One popular specialty is strudel, which they feature from time to time.

The Office will continue to operate every day of the week except Tuesdays. Daily hours are from 5:30 a.m. until 9 p.m. and Sunday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Former owners, Faith and John Jordan will continue to operate the Woolery House Bed and Breakfast. Faith will also continue her beauty salon business. The Jordans may be reached at 422-7218.

Medical board has position open

The Morrow County Court announces that there is a position opening on the Morrow County Medical Board. All positions on the eight person board are at-large but with emphasis on representation from each of the five communities in the county, said Morrow County Judge Louis Carlson. The current at-large position would represent the community

of Ione. Qualifications for those interested in filling this position should include an interest in such services as doctor retention, hospital and clinic issues, medical services to all members of the county, ambulance services and other related policy making decisions, he said.

Current members of the medical board are Pam Sagely and Merle Cowett, Heppner; Bill

Sheirbon, Lexington; Ray Michael and Roger Cash, Boardman and Lori Pruitte and Roger Trueax, Irrigon.

The terms of office are four years for all members with staggered expiration dates. The unfilled position is due to expire June 1993. Those interested may contact Judge Carlson by written notice at the County Court House, PO Box 788, Heppner.

County court changes deputy DA position

The Morrow County Court has decided to eliminate the position of assistant district attorney and create the position of county counsel.

Morrow County Judge Louis Carlson says that the deputy DA position was previously under the supervision of the DA. The county counsel will be under the supervision of the county court.

Carlson said that the deputy

DA's position received around \$6,000 in state funding and the remainder was funded by the county. Under the change, the counsel will not receive state funding, and the DA's position will no longer receive county funding amounting to around \$7,000, so the costs involved are almost identical.

Carlson said that the change was necessitated by the increase

in duties required of the county counsel. Previously the deputy DA assisted the DA, as well as serving as the county's legal counsel. Val Doherty has been the deputy DA.

Carlson said that they are required to advertise for the newly-created position and advertising will probably begin around the first of the year.

The counsel's salary is estimated to be around \$28,900.

Town and Country day planned

The annual Town and Country Day, "Rural Folks Working Together," has been planned for Wednesday, Jan. 13 at the Heppner Elks Club.

Cowboy poet Leon Flick will be the featured speaker at the dinner at 7 p.m. The first citizen awards will be presented and the Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo Court coronation will be held during the dinner in addition to a gem drawing, compliments of Peterson's Jewelers.

Tickets for the prime rib dinner are \$15.

Meetings will be held at the Elks all day. The meeting schedule is as follows:

9 a.m.-Small Woodlands; 10 a.m.-Soil and Water Conservation Dist.; noon-luncheon buffet, \$5 Sagebrush Coalition, speakers, John Larkin and Dennis Maloney; 2 p.m. Water for Life, Todd Heidgerken, director field services, Morrow County Livestock Growers and Wheat League; 4 p.m.-"Pool Operation Change at Willow Creek Lake", Bruce Duffe, public meeting, reservoir regulation U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland district; 6 p.m.-social hour; 7 p.m.-prime rib dinner.

The dinner and all meetings are open to the public.

Lighting contest winners announced

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Gary and Barbara Watkins were first place winners of the Heppner Chamber outdoor lighting award. They won a \$50 prize. Joyce Hughes won the first place indoor display and received a \$20 award and the Penland House Bed and Breakfast took first in the business category. They received a \$15 prize.

Other outdoor display winners were Mark and Sandy Patton, who received second place and \$25 and Kent and Carol Goodyear, who received a \$15 third place award.

Second place in the indoor displays went to Nelson and Lois Connor. They won a \$10 award.

Gazette to close early for Christmas

The Gazette-Times will close Thursday, Dec. 24 at noon. The office will be open again on Mon-

day, Dec. 28. The staff wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

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