

## Candidates Forum

### County Commissioners

Three people, Jackie Bergstrom, incumbent Ray French, and Art Kegler, will vie for one four-year position as Morrow County Commissioner.



Jacqueline Bergstrom

Jacqueline Bergstrom, 57, of Lone, has lived in Morrow County since 1974 when the family moved to the area to ranch on Gooseberry Road. She and her husband, Rudy, have three children, two grown sons and a 19 year-old daughter.

In addition to being co-owner of the family wheat ranch, Bergstrom is a part-time statistician with Oregon Agriculture Statistics Service, associated with the National Dept. of Agriculture.

Bergstrom was chairman of the Morrow County Medical Board from 1987 to 1992. She is a past member of Soroptimist International Club of Heppner and the Valby Lutheran Church Council.

Following are Bergstrom's thoughts on county issues:

**Role as County Commissioner:** "I see my role as commissioner as a representative of the whole county, all of the people, not just the area where I happen to live. I think that special consideration for the needs of Boardman and Irrigon would be one of my main responsibilities. In this day of computers and modems, I can be readily available to anyone in the county, via FAX, telephone or mail. I feel that during my term on the Medical Board, I addressed the needs of the North County as much as, if not more than the rest of the county."

"Growth in the north county is an ongoing process, with the fantastic work that Gary Neal and his people are doing with the Port of Morrow. I feel that by working closely with Gary that some of the economic development could also be directed towards the south county. The completion of the lone-Boardman road is a must to facilitate any kind of growth between those two communities. Stress has to be put on all of our county communities to work together to attract commercial, retail, agriculture and any other businesses to our county. We have many diverse attractions in Morrow County, and only by working together and especially having a strong, open line of communication with all of the population of the county, can this county resolve any of its differences. I feel that the "Rivalry" is more of a media term and not an accurate one at that. Too much stress has been placed on this terminology in the past. We need to ignore the term and proceed forward with the matters at hand."

**Home Rule:** "Hiring a business administrator to run the financial services of the county and having five commissioners, one each elected from each of the communities would be a tremendous help in taking "Politics" out of county government. "Politics" is one of the county's largest drawbacks at the moment and is a matter that needs to be addressed immediately."

**Medical Services:** "We have a tremendous reputation throughout the state of Oregon because of our excellent medical services in our county. These services need to be maintained and expanded upon as much as possible. With the ongoing health insurance

changes, we need to look closely at "Preferred Providers" with various HMO's (health management organizations) in order to meet the needs of more of the people, not just a select few."

**Special Projects, Programs, Changes:** "I have addressed a few of my goals and interests in this article already. I do feel, however, that we should look into forming a law enforcement district and take the county sheriff's department out of the general fund. We need the fine officers that we have at the time and I feel that in order to retain them we need to offer them more job security that they presently have. If the general fund is voted down, their jobs are in jeopardy and we cannot afford to lose them. We need to assure them of positions and also we need to be able to attract more of the qualified officers available in the state to come to our county. The largest population is definitely in the north county, however, with the rapid changing of times, the south county needs to have the knowledge that they are also protected at all times."

**Issues/Challenges:** "Being elected in the first place. I have not actively sought contributions. I don't want to seem to be beholden to any particular group or persons. My campaign has suffered in this respect, i.e., lack of professional signs and posters. The people in all of the county need to be aware that I would represent each and every one of them. A goal of mine is to make more of the general population more aware of the issues constantly facing the county and getting more of their opinions on how they want their county operated."



Raymond French

Ray French, 67, Heppner, a lifelong resident of Morrow County, has been a livestock rancher for 40 years. He and his wife, Norma, have three grown daughters. French is a graduate of Heppner High School and attended the Montana School of Mines and Colorado College.

Incumbent French has been county commissioner since 1991 and was a state representative from 1985 to 1989. He is a former member of the school board and has been a member of the Soil and Water Conservation District for the past 16 years, serving 12 of those years as chairman. He is currently a member of the National Association of Counties Public Lands Committee. He has been a member of the Board of Equalization and served with the U.S. Navy.

French is a member of the Heppner, Boardman and Irrigon Chambers of Commerce and the Lone Community Agri-Business Organization. He is a member of the Heppner Elks Lodge, where he currently serves on the board of trustees, and the St. Patrick Catholic Church. He is a member of the Morrow County Livestock Growers and the Oregon Cattlemen's Association of which he was president from 1980-81.

**Role as County Commissioner:** "From past experience as both a county commissioner and state legislator, I find it necessary to represent the whole county. Any divisiveness will be perceived by outsiders as a definite weakness to be exploited. As a state legislator I was able to represent a district composed of a vast section of eastern Oregon and approximately 45,000 people. From this experience I learned

to deal with individual problems facing any group of people or area of Morrow County."

**Home Rule:** "The Morrow County Court has appointed a committee to study home rule and is presently awaiting its recommendations. When these recommendations are forthcoming, the court will hold public hearings and prepare to present the issue to the voters of Morrow County for their decision."

**Medical Services:** "Morrow County Court has formed a medical district by decree independent of county government. This was done at the request of the petitioners of two proposed medical districts. A board of directors will be elected at the Nov. 8 election to manage the new district."

**Issues/Challenges:** "It will be necessary for county government to be involved in maintaining and improving the infrastructure of Morrow County and also maintain the quality of life for all citizens of Morrow County. Presently I am serving on a committee to study the possibility of a regional jail. We can no longer depend on out-of-county facilities to house county prisoners as in the past. With a regional jail, county law breakers could be forced to serve their sentences without early release because of a lack of space. With continuing growth it is necessary criminals be made to realize their activities will not be tolerated in Morrow County. During the last session of the Oregon Legislature a bill was introduced to completely eliminate justice court judges in the state of Oregon. With the help of other eastern Oregon counties I was instrumental in defeating this bill. A justice court judge is the only judicial judge residing in Morrow County."

"Legislative issues will continue to be of concern too, and I expect to be involved on behalf of Morrow County in supporting legislation that is to our benefit and helping defeat bills that may be detrimental to the citizens of our county."



Art Kegler

Art Kegler, no age given, Boardman, has been self employed, first as a grocer and then as a realtor since 1983. He and his wife, Roseann, have three sons and a daughter.

Kegler, who moved to Morrow County in 1983, is a former Boardman mayor, city council member and planning commission member. He is a member of the Community Church, the Chamber of Commerce and trade organizations.

**Role of County Commissioner:** "Presently the county has county-wide elections for the commissioners' positions. This has presented a problem at the present time, because, as I have previously stated, the county is split by our geography and not by choice."

"This natural fact is then multiplied as a problem in the minds of the residents when there is no representation from one of the areas. It doesn't make any difference which area is not represented. Either area would not feel fairly treated without a representative. It is particularly important to recognize this fact now considering the changes occurring in our county."

"To balance this situation and respond to the growth in the north and continue to provide the necessary services to the southern portion of our county there needs to be a blend on the county court of

representatives from each area. It is not up to any one individual to represent all the county, it is the blend of representation that will be the most effective for all the county. This blend will reduce the conflicts and division within our county. It is the blend of experience by the different commissioners that will create a balance for the good of the county. I would not expect total agreement between the commissioners representing the different areas. It is then their responsibility to find the best course for all."

**Home Rule:** "I do support home rule-five commissioners and a manager elected by area or population districts and non-partisan."

**Medical Services:** "I served on the committee to develop a county-wide health district, avoiding the north/south split. The health care is now the responsibility of the district, not the county."

**Special Projects:** "There are areas needing attention and a long term goal. First of all this past year has seen more asphalt being put in the north end of the county than in many of the recent years. There is still some work to be done in this area. This can only be done in turn with other needs as funds are available, however there is some heavy traffic on roads around the Port of Morrow that need repair."

"A goal that needs attention is the stability of industry and jobs in the Heppner-Lexington-lone area. The restart of the Kinzua mill has been a godsend, but the continual operation is not a given. We cannot sit around waiting for the other shoe to drop, we need to aggressively seek industry and economic stability in the area. In the past I have served on economic development committees for the Columbia Basin and that experience is available if elected."

**Issues/Challenges:** "To get elected."

### County Health Dist. Directors

Two people, Tom McElligott, Heppner, and Cara Osmin, Heppner area, will vie for one position as zone 5 director of the newly established Morrow county Health District 25-10 Zone 5 is comprised of the area including precincts 10 and 11 and all of Heppner.



Tom McElligott

Tom McElligott, 43, Heppner, has owned Morrow County Title and Abstract for the last 14 years. He graduated from Lone High School and received bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration from Gonzaga University at Spokane, WA. He and his wife, Laura, have five sons, 17, 16, 14, 7 and 5, and a daughter, 2.

McElligott is a member of the local Trauma Board No. 9, which is comprised of Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Baker, Wallowa and Malheur counties. He has been a volunteer ambulance driver for the past 10 years and is a member of the Heppner Elks Club, Willow Creek Country Club and St. Patrick's Catholic Church.

**Role as Morrow County Health District Director:** "The function of the Morrow County Medical District is to serve the needs of the Morrow County area, not necessarily just the wants of any individual or group of individuals within the county. The board should be a positive influence, looking and planning for the future as it relates to the changing outside influences on the local, regional and national medical environment. I feel that with the enactment of the tax base there will be sufficient resources to care for all of Morrow County's medical needs. As certain segments of the medical services generate profits, these profits can be applied to projects and services that attention to promote long term continued quality service to the people of Morrow County. We should try to retain as much money within the county as possible, so that local persons benefit from our tax dollars."

**Issues/Challenges:** "The biggest initial issues will be the ac-

tual implementation and formation of the bylaws and rules of the district. This will be more important than any other issue facing the first board."

concern for our area and one which needs to be addressed continuously. One of my strengths which I have developed over the past years in my political and professional life is that I am a consensus builder. With a new district formation, this skill is needed."

**Special Projects, Programs, Changes:** "Since this is a new medical district being formed, I would go into it wanting an assessment of the present facilities, contracts, contacts being made, and an overview of specific needs of the county prior to any changes taking place. Only with this knowledge, can an evaluation be made and goals set for future development."

**Issues/Challenges:** "One of the biggest issues and challenges which I believe is facing us is the increase in the Hispanic population at the north end of the county and creating as well as maintaining the health care needed. We need to expand and become a more bilingual community in order to meet the needs of all people in the county."

"Another challenge which faces Morrow County is being able to keep the current medical facility and personnel in the south end of the county, which is more remote than the north end. This is not to say that the north end does not need health care facilities it currently has in place, however, being on I-84 does give the Boardman and Irrigon communities faster access to large hospitals, which is limited in the south end of the county."

**Shirley McCarl**  
Shirley McCarl, 59, is a Morrow County native, graduating from high school locally. She has been the chief deputy for the Morrow County Clerk's Office for the past eight years and has served 12 years on the Lexington City Council. She and her husband, Morris, have three grown children.

Why do you want to be elected to this office? Why would a voter select you over your opponent? "I am currently on the city council, so I bring experience to this position. I believe in being honest and fair to all citizens of the city of Lexington."

(Baker and Ripple did not respond to a G-T questionnaire.)

### Lone City Council Position

Four people are on the ballot for three four-year terms as Lone City Council Persons, Harvey Childers, Gale Gray, Dennis Stefani and Dennis Thompson.

Harvey Childers, 36, has lived 34 years in Morrow County, with 24 of those in the city of Lone. He is a graduate of Lone High School and attended two years at Bates Vo-Tech. He has been a mechanic for 16 years. Childers and his wife, Bobbi, have three children, 15, 14, and 12.

Childers has served on the city council for eight years. He is a Morrow County EMT and is a member of the Morrow County Gun Club and the Hermiton Rod and Gun Club.

**Issues/Challenges:** "All the state and federal laws coming down to city level," and "keeping the city operating in the black."

Dennis Thompson, 35, has lived 20 years in the city of Lone. A graduate of Lone High School, Thompson has been a truck driver for the past 15 years. He and his wife, Janet, have a daughter, 11, and a son, eight, and are expecting a third child in Feb. He has been on the lone City Council for two years and is a 10 year member of the lone Volunteer Fire Department. He is a member of the lone Booster Club and for 10 years has done lawn maintenance for the lone United Church of Christ.

**Special Projects, Programs, Changes:** "I would really like to see the water system updated. I would also like to see the lone Community Agri-Business Organization (ICABO) project on the Emert addition grow and improve and be annexed into the city."

**Issues/Challenge:** "Financing and building a water storage system for lone."

Why do you want to be elected to this office? "To do whatever I can to improve things." Why would a voter select you over your opponent? "Hopefully they would feel I would do the best job possible."

(Gray and Stefani did not respond to the G-T questionnaire.)



Shirley McCarl



Cara Osmin

Cara Osmin, 46, is a third grade teacher at Heppner Elementary School. She has a bachelor of science degree from Western Michigan University and has over 60 hours above this degree in graduate credits. Osmin and her husband, Frank, together have two sons, both 20, and a daughter, 25.

Osmin, who was mayor of Heppner from 1984 to 1991, is a member of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce, a member and lay leader of the Heppner United Methodist Church and chair of the Heppner Elementary School site council. She has also worked on the Heppner St. Patrick's celebration and Morrow County Fair and Rodeo as well as other community activities.

**Role as Morrow County Health District Director:** "I feel I can represent the entire county as a health district director. In my past capacity as mayor of Heppner I have made many contacts with those around the county and state. I believe the rural health issue is a growing