

Parents upset about class size

By April Hilton-Sykes

A group of parents is demanding that changes be made in their children's first grade class at Heppner Elementary School.

Enrollment in the class has climbed to 33 students and the parents are upset. Several of the parents, represented by Dr. Ed Berretta, the father of an HES first grader, appeared at the Monday night meeting of the Morrow County School Board Oct. 9, to voice their concern.

According to HES Principal Bill Karwacki, the large first grade class was not anticipated, with only 22 children expected to enter first grade at the end of the kindergarten year. That number dropped to 20 in the summer and administration decided that only one first grade teacher was needed. When school started however, 30 children registered and another three have joined the class since then.

Dr. Berretta told the assembly that the classroom numbers were "unacceptable" and that the parents want another first grade teacher hired. He also said that the parent group would "take further action" and will continue coming back to the board until the situation was rectified. "The first grade is no place to skimp," he said. Dr. Jeanne Berretta, Ed's wife, commented that the teacher-student ratio in the HES first grade is "above the ratio of what inner city schools are."

The parents said, in a letter to the board, that they felt the first graders were already at a disadvantage because they had only two days of kindergarten per week last year. "...Placing these students in a small classroom with one teacher is again, placing them, as well as Ms. Webber (the first grade teacher) in an unfair position," read the letter.

The Morrow County School Board earlier indicated that they would not hire an additional teacher, but instead hired an educational assistant to work with the teacher and students.

The parents, however, maintain that the teacher's aide is not in the classroom enough, since she is responsible for supervising recesses and the lunch room, which necessitates her taking breaks during student contact time and class preparation time. They also say that the room is too small and the large number of students in the class creates an unaccept-

table level of noise and confusion. Karwacki said that a plan to move the class to the much larger multipurpose room would not be feasible because the room is too cold and a combination of acoustics and high ceilings would not help lessen the noise.

The parents are also concerned about the first grade's lopsided division, the class has 25 boys and only eight girls.

Both Superintendent Chuck Starr and Karwacki said that Heppner Elementary would pursue multi-age grouping with the first and second grade classes to help ease the crowding. Starr said HES is the only school in the county that hasn't yet implemented some kind of multi-age grouping. Multi-age grouping places a student in a classroom based on abilities rather than age.

Karwacki told the Gazette-Times that classroom size is an important issue in learning. "Having a good ratio of adults to children in the classroom is helpful. However, with shrinking budgets and money tight, this may be a thing of the past. You've got to live within a budget and realistically. Our effort is to try to make the best situation we can."

Karwacki said that they have reduced the student/adult ratio in the class by adding the full time teacher's aide and another aide who is in the classroom an hour a day. He also said that 15 first grade parents have volunteered to help out during various times. Additionally, Karwacki said that he would explore the parents' suggestion that the full time aide be in the classroom at all times except for her lunch and breaks and that the class be divided into two rooms as much as possible. However, he added, "first and foremost, I want to do what the classroom teacher wants. We're going to develop the classroom program largely around the classroom teacher's recommendations."

North Morrow County schools have traditionally had larger classrooms than in south county. Extreme growth there has prompted the additional of classrooms in Boardman and Irigton. Sam Boardman Elementary School Principal Susan Tolar said "28, 29, 30" students per class are typical at SBE. Their largest class this year is a kindergarten class with 28. "The district has traditionally looked at the younger grades with a great deal of care," said

Tolar. "When the numbers get high, then we search for various strategies." While many parents remember class rooms of 30 or more students, Tolar said that not only is teaching different, but so are the students.

Total school enrollment is as follows: Heppner Elementary, kindergarten through sixth grade, 264; Sam Boardman Elementary, Boardman, K-5-slightly over 400; A.C. Houghton Elementary, Irigton, K-5, 303; Columbia Junior High, Irigton, sixth-eighth grades, 364 to 369; Heppner Junior High/High School, ninth-12th, 238; and Lone Schools, K-5, 65, sixth-eighth, 40, and ninth-12th, 57.

In other business, the board approved a resignation from Bob French from a three-hour per day assistant custodial position at Columbia Middle School; a medical leave request from Geneva Mathews, from her music teaching position for lone and Heppner schools. The district will hire a substitute to fill Mathews' position and will advertise for a teacher to replace her until the end of the year. Mathews' leave is effective Oct. 23.

approved maternity leave for Brenda Newport from her north end bus driving position; a transfer for Donna Roy from her one-on-one special education assistant at Heppner High School to the new temporary education assistant position at HES;

approved employment for Kellie Adams-Morgan and Robin McCord, both north end bus drivers; Donna Bond and Tracy Gordianier, both one-on-one special education assistants at Columbia Middle School; Kathy Eyster, Amanda Gilbertson and Jodi May, temporary educational assistants at SBE; Dale Peters and Benn Houk, extra duty contracts as assistant football coaches, CMS;

approved attendance variances for the Robins family children (lone attendance area) to attend Arlington Elementary School, and Jose Zumudio (Riverside High attendance area) to continue attending Umatilla High School;

accepted donations of a computer from PGE to Riverside High School; and a field lining machine from the Heppner Booster Club to HHS;

heard comments from the OSEA representative concerning negotiations with school bus drivers;

heard a curriculum report from HJH/HHS teacher Al Beck on his law class;

heard reports from district principals. HHS Principal Steve Dickenson reported that four people have been interviewed and another will be interviewed next week for the vo-ag teacher's position vacated mid term by Bill Umbarger, who resigned. Dickenson added, however, that none of those interviewed is licensed, so it may be two to four weeks before a qualified teacher is in the classroom;

heard the first readings of revisions of student records policies and administrative regulations, revisions to site council policy and administrative regulations and proposed budget calendar for 1996-97 budget;

heard announcements of the following events: Oct. 13, statewide inservice day, Oct. 20, mediation session, Oct. 26, end of first nine weeks, Nov. 1 and 2, motivational speaker Dan Clark who will present programs for students and parents, Nov. 2, 3, parent-teacher conferences, Nov. 10, Veteran's Day holiday.

HEPPNER



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Pendleton couple buys service station

By April Hilton-Sykes

A long-time Pendleton couple, quite familiar with the Lexington-Heppner area, have leased the Lexington Service Station.

Enoch and Bernita Hickey, Pendleton residents since 1959, started leasing the station from owners Buck and Joanne Morris on Sept. 25.

Enoch, who has had the rural mail route contract in the area for the past 18 years, says that he often stopped in at the station to visit with Buck. "I'd been looking at it (the station) for quite some time," says Enoch. "It just came at the right time."

In addition to the Heppner-Fossil mail route, Hickey has also had the Pendleton-Pasco route express run since 1981. The couple also operates the garbage route in Fossil.

Buck has had 10 years as a trailer truck driver and nine years as a Pendleton Police officer under his belt. He also is familiar with the service station business, having worked in one since he was 15 years old.



L-R: Josh Clark, Sherri Stahl, Enoch Hickey and Joe Harwood

years old.

Buck says he plans to be in the station as much as possible and wants to get acquainted with people in the community. The Hickeys' grandson, Joe Harwood, 18, will be the station manager until the Hickeys are able to move to Lexington. Joe grew up in Pendleton and worked for Quicky Lube as well as a Pendleton wheat ranch, McCormick Ranches. Joe will be commuting until he is able to find a place to live in the area. Assistant manager is Sherri Stahl. Josh Clark is also employed at the station.

The Hickey family also includes granddaughter Kyanne, three, whom the Hickeys are raising. The Hickeys, both 60, have six children, Cara, who lives in Athena with her children, David, 14, Kevin, 12, and Rachel, three; Dana and her children, Joe, Jay, 14, Zachary, seven, Daniel, five, all Pendleton, and, Jeremy, 20, Roseburg; Jay, with Ricki, 17, and Sunni, 15, and Jacob, five; April (Jay's twin), Pendleton, with Shane, 14, Nick, 12, and Kyanne; Judy, Portland; and Steve, with children Amy, 15, Angela, 13, Whitney, seven, and Jessica, two, Portland.

OTPR Court announced



The 1995-96 Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Rodeo Court was announced Sunday, Oct. 8, after interviews and tryouts. Representing this year's court are (from left): princesses Dawn Boor, lone; Beth Hermanns, Irigton; Stormy Howard, Heppner; and queen Brenda Holtz, lone.

Wheat League schedules fall meeting

The Morrow County Wheat League fall meeting is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 23, at 3 p.m. at Beecher's Cafe in lone.

A social hour is planned at 5:30 p.m., hosted by Morrow County Grain Growers, with dinner, hosted by the Morrow County Oregon Wheat Growers League (OWGL), to get underway at 6:30 p.m.

Topics include an update on developments for the 1995 Farm Bill by the OWGL staff; the latest on CRP contracts by Skip Matthews; new export market developments by Stan Timmerman; and the history of the OWGL by Allan Pinkerton.

The evening will also include a door prize of a weekend on the Oregon Coast or a night at Skamania Lodge, sponsored by the Bank of Eastern Oregon.

Morrow County OWGL President Judy Rea asks that those interested in attending RSVP by October 18.

Bank of EO receives five-star rating

The Bank of Eastern Oregon has once again received a five-star rating from Bauer Financial Reports, Inc., bank president George Koffler has announced.

The Coral Gables, Florida, company evaluates financial data submitted by institutions to federal regulators. According to a letter to the bank from Paul A. Bauer, president of the firm, this is the 26th quarter that the five-star rating has been awarded to banks and that BEO has earned the five-star rating each

quarter.

"To earn our five-star rating, the highest on a scale from 0-stars to 5-stars, your bank's tangible capital ratio and or total risk-based capital ratio exceeded twice the level required by federal regulators. Delinquencies and repossessed assets were manageable and your bank was soundly invested and profitable at March 31, 1995," the letter from Bauer stated.

County unemployment falls in Aug.

The unemployment rate for August in Morrow County fell to 4.6 percent largely on the strength of seasonal agricultural work. The August level represents a decline of more than three percentage points compared with the rate for July. Compared with the same period last year, Morrow County's unemployment rate is more than one percentage point lower. The number of unem-

ployed measured 190 in August, while the revised level for July was 310.

Manufacturing employment increased by 210 jobs in August. All of the month's gain was posted by food products, as employment elsewhere in manufacturing was unchanged. Small gains posted by the construction and mining and trade sectors were canceled out by losses in services and government.

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