

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

Heppner
GAZETTE-TIMES

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Letters to the Editor

Health District newsletter in error

To the Editor:
The most recent issue of the Morrow County Health District newsletter contained a chart entitled, "What do services in Morrow County actually cost you, the homeowner?". The chart compares property taxes levied by the county's various taxing districts on a \$50,000 home to provide services. Unfortunately, the figures reported for the city of Heppner are erroneous. The chart reports the annual property tax

for the owner of a \$50,000 home to be \$630.68 to pay for city of Heppner services. Actually, such a taxpayer would pay only \$293.93 for property tax supported city services. The same taxpayer would pay an additional \$158.93 for voter-approved capital improvement project bonds, for a total property tax of \$452.86 for services and improvements.

Sincerely,
(s) Gary Marks
Heppner city manager

Area residents meet on rangeland issues

Raymond French, Heppner, and Bob Lazinka, Pilot Rock, were members of the John Day/Snake Resource Advisory Council who received training on Thursday, Feb. 1 from leading scientific experts in the Northwest at a one-day Rangeland Ecology Short Course. Additionally, they began to review some preliminary standards for public rangeland health at a two-day meeting in Walla Walla, WA last week.

The rangeland short course covered the principles of rangeland ecology, the function of watersheds, the uses of rangelands in an ecological context and developing standards for rangeland health. Some preliminary draft standards were presented for the council's review, along with samples of standards and guidelines from

several other western states. Guidelines for livestock grazing on public lands will also be addressed by the council over the next year.

The next scheduled meeting for the John Day/Snake Resource Advisory Council is May 1-3 in La Grande. The public is welcome to attend all council meetings and time is set aside at every meeting for public comments.

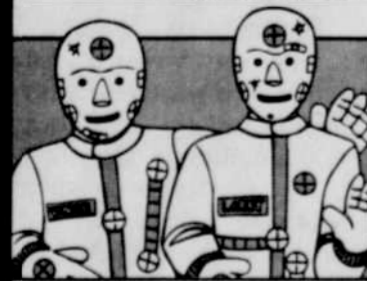
Members of the public who wish to comment on the preliminary draft standards and guidelines should contact a council member who lives in their vicinity or who represent their interest. Minutes of previous council meetings are available from Norm Hessel-dahl, Public Affairs Officer for the council, at P.O. Box 490, Prineville, OR 97754; (541) 416-6647.

Pioneer Memorial Hospital Clinic will be closed on Monday February 19 for President's Day.

BUCKLE-UP WEEK

FEBRUARY 12 - 16

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Ask some tough questions

To the Editor:
After reading recent articles concerning the Morrow County Health District's plans for expanding services in Boardman, we felt the need to express our opinions.

At the 2/6/96 Boardman City Council meeting, Morrow County Health District administrator Kevin Erich presented many facts and figures from the district's budget, the accuracy of which Mr. Gene Allen did not dispute. These should have been included in any objective article addressing this subject. This information was sorely lacking in the recent East Oregonian article by Laurie Rees, 2/7/96.

We also believe the citizens of Boardman need to be aware of the attitudes of some city council members. The meeting was purported to be an informational session to assist the council in making a decision about the future of Boardman's health care. However, some members of Boardman's council and mayor appeared and acted as if they were more interested in attacking Mr. Erich than objectively listening to his presentation. In fact, he was rudely dismissed.

One wonders what the true motivation behind the Boardman City Council's plan to break from the health district is? Question: If the clinic can be run more efficiently and more profitably under the management of the health district (Dr. Boss would be retained as physician), why is the council opposed to this proposal? Mr. Erich showed that reimbursements from Medicare and Medicaid could have been increased by \$100,000 if the clinic had been associated with the hospital through the Federal Rural Health Clinic Act.

We believe the Health District is spending tax dollars responsibly. From attending the meeting, it did not appear to us that Boardman residents need be concerned about losing their physician due to neglect on the part of the district. Mr. Erich stated that he would work to resolve differences between the district and Dr. Boss. We believe him.

If the true goal of the council is to ensure continued health care for Boardman, why was Dr. Zelinski's offer so harshly rebuffed by the mayor and some council members? Dr. Zelinski asked that residents not be stampeded into an inequitable contract with Dr. Boss from the fear of losing him. Dr. Zelinski stated he would be willing to cover the Boardman clinic free of charge for up to six months until a reasonable settlement could be made.

Are Dr. Boss' demands really reasonable? According to recent articles and meeting information, it was shown that Dr. Boss receives an approximate \$130,000 stipend to operate the Boardman Health Care Center. Additionally, he retains all revenues, estimated to be between \$300,000-350,000. Dr. Boss pays no rent and no property taxes. The district is responsible for building maintenance and some equipment

Letters to the Editor

purchase.

Dr. Boss has requested an additional \$2,000 a month from the Health District. In response, the district requested that Dr. Boss submit to an audit to ensure that funds are allocated responsibly. To date, no audit has been agreed to by Dr. Boss. Does this show that he has the interest of the taxpayer at heart? If he received a salary from the district and the district managed the clinic, Dr. Boss would no longer control the approximate \$500,000 in revenue and district funds. It would seem Dr. Boss doesn't care whose tax dollars he squanders as long as they don't ask too many questions or expect too much accountability.

We are concerned that Boardman residents are not receiving the health services that are their due. Residents must ask their leaders if all segments of their population are being served at the Boardman clinic under Dr. Boss. Are the needs of all socioeconomic groups being met? If not, why not?

Let your voices be heard and ask some tough questions. Questions that deserve to be answered.

(s) Peggy A. Johnson
(s) Delia Robinson
(s) Vickie Turrell
Heppner

Emotion a driving force

To the Editor:
How often we see folks with differing opinions readily resort to name calling, slurs and slanders, rather than squarely face the issue of difference. Our friends and neighbors in Boardman who simply want to make their own decisions about health care are being ridiculed as irrational, childish, misinformed and engaged in rumor and innuendo.

Opinions about how things ought to be are based only in part on knowledge and rational thought. Emotion can play a major role in forming opinions, especially about matters politic. Emotion, not just knowledge, was the driving force behind the American Revolution, the civil rights movement and the war on drugs.

Emotion, not just knowledge or logic, is the driving force behind the feud over health care. Our friends believe strongly in asserting their own right to self-determination. The ability to make the decisions that most affect oneself (or at least to participate in them in some meaningful way), is an emotional issue that cannot be disproved with any set of facts, however selectively drawn. Nor can one be dissuaded from it with the highest degree of rational logic.

Likewise, the power to control other people and make decisions for them as we may, is a strong emotional rush that defies either logic or wisdom.

The people of Boardman are not asking to make health care decisions for the rest of the county, that we will leave up to them. We don't insist on taking away their ability to make whatever decisions they may desire. We only ask to be re-

moved from the Morrow County Health District so we can make our own decisions about the kind of health care we want. That's all.

Hoping for this little bit of freedom is an emotional thing, one that is contested on an equally emotional basis.

(s) Ed Glenn
(s) Frances Glenn
Boardman

Seeks support for scholarship

To the Editor:
College tuition continues to rise at twice the rate of inflation and student borrowing for college is rising by more than \$25 billion per year. Those challenges have helped motivate the South Morrow County Scholarship Trust (SMCST) to work even harder this year to raise funds and award scholarships to assist local students.

To expand financial and academic support for students across the county the national "Dollars for Scholars" organization has designated 1996 as "Year of the Scholar." Collectively, Dollars for Scholars' 760 chapters are committing themselves to raise more than \$20 million for scholarships this year for students in their local communities.

The "Year of the Scholar" was officially launched on Jan. 25 with a spirited kickoff rally at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. It was hosted by actor John Ritter and also featured a number of California education and civic leaders, students and volunteers from many of California's 50 Dollars for Scholars chapters.

The SMCST has set its own fund raising goal of \$12,000 for 1996 and plans to observe "Year of the Scholar" by sponsoring in the month of February "cash cans" in local businesses and restaurants of Lone, Lexington and Heppner where people can give a dollar or more to local students; and by hosting the lamb barbecue during the week of St. Patrick's celebration in Heppner; and with donations sent to P.O. Box 296, Heppner, OR 97836.

With continued strong support from the fine people of south Morrow County, we intend to help meet the challenges facing our high school graduates of Lone, Lexington and Heppner. Please lend your support. If you would like to get directly involved in the program, call me at (541) 676-5069.

Sincerely,
(s) Rev. Stan Hoobing
President, SMCST

Think before approving Home Rule

To the Editor:
220 years ago the United States of America was born of a dream. The dream was that all men were created equal and that each had the God-given right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In order to make that dream a reality, the people of this nation had to fight and even die to destroy the yoke of tyranny which gave them taxation without representation. With this accomplished, the USA became a haven for the "poor huddled masses" who longed for the freedom held by each US citizen. Today, two centuries later, our borders are guarded to keep a flood of people out, while many countries in the world use border guards to keep their people in.

It cannot be said that the USA does not make mistakes. Like an adolescent, at times we fall victim to things we should not. Many times, a study of history would have exposed the error before it becomes a problem; however along with freedom comes a responsibility for our own actions and we have at times paid bitterly for our mistakes.

In each generation, there are

those who, for one reason or another, wish to return to the era of taxation without representation. In the present generation, this quest for regression is based mostly on the old assumption that the "masses" are somehow not intelligent enough to take care of themselves and really need a "ruling class" to govern them. This ruling class will then collect taxes from the "masses" in order to administer a "more efficient" form of government.

Now we in Morrow County are embarked on a quest to change our county government. This change will not make that government more responsive to the needs of the taxpayers of Morrow County.

On the contrary, the "Home Rule Charter" to be voted on seeks to replace the "unqualified" officials who, after all, were elected by the "uneducated masses". These "unqualified" officials would be replaced with "qualified" appointees. The idea is that these appointees will not have to be concerned about annoying or alienating the "masses" and can simply "get on with the business of governing". The only concern these appointees will have is that they have done enough favors for those who sit on the appointment boards or other high places to assure re-appointment. The kings of England may become vindicated by the American people after all.

This letter will cause some people to laugh, some to swear, and some to nod in assent. That is all right. The purpose of this letter is to make you think seriously before you vote for the Home Rule Charter. As you have already figured out, I'm seriously opposed to giving up my right to vote for or against those who will govern my county, state or nation.

Sincerely,
(s) Ray Grace
Heppner

Voters clear

To the Editor:
The voters made it clear that they wanted the person (Ron Wyden) who has been working many years on the hill in our government, for the people and by the people.

This election proved a fact, that money does not buy everything, especially in this case. Hopefully Senator Wyden will promote a bill that would limit the amount of dollars that could be spent on future elections.

I'm sure that everyone can read between the lines; taxpayers are tired of supporting fatherless families-in some cases, generations of them. Young, able-bodied people should work and make their own way.

Those who protest abortion rights should volunteer their time, energy and money to care for the many unwanted children. Child abuse and neglect is on the rise. The reports are appalling and despicable. Children deserve to be welcomed into loving homes and, by all means, be wanted. They should receive the best of care, training and have a supporting family to help them grown up to be happy, honorable, independent and useful citizens.

It is high time that we go back to the old-fashion morals and promote the family image of the father and mother for the young.

Sincerely,
Lois Winchester
Heppner

HHS FFA chapter competes at district

The Heppner High School Future Farmers of America chapter competed in the Blue Mt. District leadership contest. Members Tina Kemp placed seventh in the co-op quiz and Mandi Gutierrez tied for fifth. Toni Kemp and Frank Martin placed third in the same division.

Also attending the contest were: Jossie Evans, Dusty Rollis, Elliott Strouse, Josie Proctor, Angela Munkers, Donald White, Bobbi Rankin and Royal Robinson.

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