

Letters to the Editor

Editor's note: Letters to the Editor must be signed. The Gazette-Times will not publish unsigned letters. Please include your address and phone number on all letters for use by the G-T office. The G-T reserves the right to edit.

Santa's toy shop appreciated; vandalism senseless

To the Editor:

I regret that I did not stop to go into the museum to tell Tammy (Sneddon) and Marsha (Sweek) how great I thought the Santa's Toy Shop looked.

When I drove by, I slowed almost to a stop because the delightful scene had obviously grown since last year, when it was also totally enjoyable and a true addition to the Heppner holiday atmosphere.

This year's was even more detailed. I remember also thinking that living in Heppner is so refreshing, for in some of the communities in which we have lived, something like this great display, left outside, would be stolen or vandalized.

I know that the efforts of the museum staff were appreciated by many people, young and old. Some even had pictures taken at the school house-cum toy shop

as part of their season's activities. What a joy for the many individuals who drove by, walked by, and stopped by during the month of December.

I did not stop and tell the hard-working, creative individuals how much I enjoyed their efforts. By the very next day, the scene had been ruined. Many of the beautifully crafted cut-outs had been damaged. I know that I am not the only person who feels disappointed, saddened, disgusted, frustrated...

I apologize to those big-hearted people who voluntarily contributed so much to our holiday season, for not stopping that day. I hope that the person(s) responsible for the senseless vandalism are apprehended and held responsible.

(s) Doris Brosnan
Heppner

Keeping Christmas in perspective

To the Editor:

This story was shared with me and I would like to share it with others. Have a tissue handy.

"Keeping Christmas in Perspective"

In 1994, two Americans answered an invitation from the Russian Department of Education to teach morals and ethics (based on biblical principles) in the public schools. They were invited to teach at businesses, the fire and police departments and a large orphanage. About 100 boys and girls who had been abandoned, abused, and left in the care of a government-run program were in the orphanage.

They related the following story in their own words:

It was nearing the holiday season, 1994, time for our orphans to hear, for the first time, the traditional story of Christmas. We told them about Mary and Joseph arriving in Bethlehem. Finding no room in the inn, the couple went to a stable, where the baby Jesus was born and placed in a manger. Throughout the story, the children and orphanage staff sat in amazement as they listened. Some sat on the edges of their stools, trying to grasp every word.

Completing the story, we gave the children three small pieces of cardboard to make a crude manger. Each child was given a small paper square, cut from yellow napkins I had brought with me. (No colored paper was available in the city.)

Following instructions, the children tore the paper and carefully laid strips in the manger for straw. Small squares of flannel, cut from a worn-out nightgown an American lady was throwing away as she left Russia, were used for the baby's blanket. A doll-like baby was cut from tan felt we had brought from the United States. The orphans were busy assembling their manger as I walked among them to see if they needed any help. All went well until I got to one table where little Misha sat - he looked to be about six years

old and had finished his project.

As I looked at the little boy's manger, I was startled to see not one, but two babies in the manger. Quickly, I called for the translator to ask the lad why there were two babies in the manger.

Crossing his arms in front of him and looking at this completed manger scene, the child began to repeat the story very seriously. For such a young boy, who had only heard the Christmas story once, he related the happenings accurately-until he came to the part where Mary put Jesus in the manger.

Then Misha started to ad-lib. He made up his own ending to the story as he said, "And when Maria laid the baby in the manger, Jesus looked at me and asked me if I had a place to stay. I told him I have no mamma and I have no papa, so I don't have any place to stay. Then Jesus told me I could stay with him. But I told him I couldn't, because I didn't have a gift to give him like everybody else did. But I wanted to stay with Jesus so much, so I thought about what I had that maybe I could use for a gift. I thought maybe if I kept him warm, that would be a good gift. So I asked Jesus, 'If I keep you warm, will that be a good enough gift?' And Jesus told me, 'If you keep me warm, that will be the best gift anybody ever gave me.' So I got into the manger, and then Jesus looked at me and he told me I could stay with him-for always."

As little Misha finished his story, his eyes brimmed full of tears that splashed down his little cheeks. Putting his hand over his face, his head dropped to the table and his shoulders shook as he sobbed and sobbed. The little orphan had found someone who would never abandon nor abuse him, someone who would stay with him-for always.

I've learned that it's not what you have in your life, but who you have in your life that counts.

Merry Christmas,
(s) Janet Greenup
Heppner

R&W Reading Program underway

The 13th year of the R & W Reading Program started in November.

The R & W Drive-in in Heppner provides the treats that serve as reading incentives for students in all grades from kindergarten through sixth grade.

Teachers in those grades design individual goals, plan and assess activities to check comprehension and listen to students read to check fluency.

"Students are justifiably proud when they complete a reading goal, earning a certificate good for ice cream treats at the R & W," said Linda Shaw TAG teacher and organizer of the program.

The program has been

underway for about six weeks, and, as of Dec. 14, the following students have already earned certificates: kindergarten-Lindsay Cutsforth, Justin Gutierrez, Sarah Kendrick; first grade-Curtis Harper, Cassie Drew, Jacob Gregory, and Tomas Elguezabal; second grade-Jordan Shepherd, Josh Shank, Maggie Armato, Taylor Disque, Kyle Taylor, Grant Smith, Stephanie Rill, Kathryn Strouse and Joe Pranger; third grade-Billie Keithley, Katie Kilkenny, Kate Kendrick, Megan Orr, Lane Bailey, Andre Rauch, Jake Van Doorn, Correy Tallman, Taylor Kempas, J. R. Drew; fourth grade-Robbie Smith, Che Green; and fifth grade-Veronica Wilhelm.

Boardman chamber announces awards

Sixty members of the Boardman Chamber of Commerce filled the Greenfield Grange for the December 4 Chamber Banquet and Community Awards Celebration.

Pam Docken and her decorating crew-Mindy Binder and Arlene Walters-transformed the banquet hall with twinkling waterfall lights, golden drapes and candlelight. Smokey Joe Wightman and Lisa Mittlesdorf provided musical entertainment and led traditional holiday caroling.

The 1998 Citizen of the Year Award went to Lynn Prag, who served a very busy year as Chamber treasurer, and went beyond the call keeping the Chamber board and membership well informed about its financial condition, said Carol Michael.

In 1998 for the seventh time, Prag co-chaired the community 4th of July Celebration with Jane Pope. Prag also marched in the Boardman Ho-Hum Band. Prag, again with co-editor Jane Pope, completed five years of service as publisher of North Morrow Times.

In 1998 Prag and her husband John spent countless hours and miles providing transportation and support for Riverside High School's softball team, winner of the state title, said Michael. They provided support and transportation for several RHS softball players in summer leagues.

Prag is working on the 1999 Riverside High School Operation Graduation and has a private business providing bookkeeping service to area farms.

Ray Michael was honored as the 1998 Businessman of the Year. He recently completed 20 years of operating the Boardman Pharmacy and Hardware.

Ray Michael's involvement with the community involves donations of time and money to school activities, plus chairing the annual Frostbite Fund raiser Golf Tournament. This tournament enables the Boardman Chamber of Commerce to provide two RHS graduates with \$500 scholarships each June.

Ray Michael is known for his support of 4-H and FFA projects - visit his store to see photos of area youth whose animals he has purchased at Morrow Co. Fair Livestock Auctions.

Although he is generous with donations to youth activities, he

believes students should interact with the public, said Carol Michael.

He recently encouraged the RHS Girls Soccer team to earn "pay to play" money serving sodas and root beer floats at a store celebration. Ray provided the supplies and advertised the event and the team members served the public for donations. They were happy to earn nearly \$300 for supplies and uniforms.

Ray has been a longtime community promoter through the Boardman Commercial Club, which evolved into the present Boardman Chamber of Commerce. He has served for many years on the Boardman Park and Recreation District Board, is a long-standing city councilman, a supporter of the Morrow County Historical Society and served as mayor at one time.

Shane Fritz was presented with the 1998 Community Educator of the Year.

Fritz, long term Spanish teacher at Riverside High School, was recognized for her "excellent teaching skills, commitment to students and involvement with students, church, family and community."

According to Carol Michael, Fritz uses innovative techniques to make learning fun, interesting and 'stickable'. She has taken a number of students to Mexico and this past spring took some Spanish students to Spain.

Fritz does volunteer interpreting for various members of the Boardman community. She has been a member of Tillicum Club, women's service organization, Friends of the Boardman Library, an active 4-H parent and chaperon to 4-H camp. She and her husband Doug are charter members of the Boardman Lutheran Church and she has always been part of the church management team.

Vernon and Barbara Russell were presented with a plaque for lifetime achievement in the Boardman community.

Vern served on both Boardman City Council and City Planning Commission.

The Russell family's involvement in Boardman began in 1929 when Vern's dad Seth opened a small service station, lunch counter and five and dime on the South of the original US Highway 30. In 70 years the Russell station has relocated five times. In 1974, Russell Oil Co. expanded into wholesale and bulk delivery and topped one million gallons for the year.



May the Angel of Light watch over you and those dear to you, now and forever. Have a Merry Christmas!

Kuhn, Spicer & Mills



Merrily, merrily, we sing a song of Christmas and hope its love will add a bright note to your celebration.

Van Marter & Kahl Insurance
Bob, Marianne, Steve & Janet

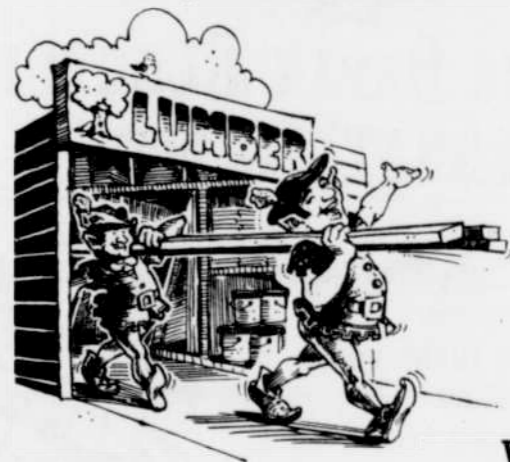
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SEASON'S GREETINGS

Our good reputation is built upon service, but our success is due to good customers like you. Happy holiday and thanks.



We will be closed on Saturday

PETTYJOHN'S FARM & BUILDING SUPPLY
HEPPNER, 676-9157

To The Cowboy Christmas Ball Committee
With Sincere Appreciation

The Cowboy Christmas Ball of 1998 held the 21st of November in Pendleton was supported by individuals from all communities. The Neighborhood Center of South Morrow County, Heppner, wants to express their gratitude for the undertaking of this organization for this Christmas. Twenty-nine children, served by our agency, received gifts that were purchased, wrapped, labeled and delivered to the Neighborhood Center.

Imagine to yourself, the sparkle in their eyes and the laughter, as the presents are devoured on Christmas Day. Happiness is there, when you feel the warmth in your heart, knowing you assisted an underprivileged child enjoy the holidays.

We lift our hearts and sing praises for living in communities of caring people, for together we make a great team and it really takes teamwork to make things happen. We cherish your time and effort, and in recognition, our gratitude is being expressed with a heartfelt THANK YOU!

Warm regards,
Janice Skaggs, Coordinator
Board of Directors of the Neighborhood Center, Heppner

HAPPY HOLIDAY

May the story of Christmas inspire you anew. We appreciate your business.

From All Of Us At
Central Red Apple
Market

Have a Wonderful Christmas

It's our pleasure to say "thanks" and to wish you all the best!

Morrow County Abstract & Title