

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.

Real issue is board incompetence

To the Editor:
Open Letter to Morrow County Mrs. Dahlman, interim CEO of Morrow County Health District, has written a letter published in the Times-Gazette on 26 May as did I. My letter was an apology although I have much less to be apologetic for than Mrs. Dahlman. Her letter was more of the same, more threats to ruin my career, more attempted smears. Her letter is yet another attempt to divert attention from the real issue. That issue is the incompetence of the board of directors of Morrow County Health District. Nearly from the beginning of my service here in Morrow County I have loudly and continuously said that the district was being run by people who have neither the training or experience to operate a multi-million dollar facility.

There cannot be 10 people in Morrow County who seriously believe anything other than that I am being punished for being outspoken. The attempt to discredit me, to demonize me, is shameful. It is not decent. It is not right. And it is not moral. But considerable money has been spent to make sure it was "legal". Mrs. Dahlman, willing handmaiden to the board, has done this with great gusto. I have no idea how much time, energy and health district money she has spent dredging through my history. She has dredged up mistruths, misinterpretations, innuendoes and opinions; all to discredit me. But even if she could discredit me that would not make this board any more competent. They would still be unsuitable for the job they were elected to do. That is the issue, not me.

Morrow County cannot afford even one more debacle by this board. New businesses will come to an area that recently lost a mill. They will not come to an area that recently lost a hospital. That is the risk the board has placed in front of Morrow County. The board is now, I believe, paying locum tenens (temporary) physicians to provide coverage to the hospital. We can assume they are paying a premium for this service. And they will continue to pay a premium for that service. However Mrs. Dahlman assures us that qualified physicians are being interviewed and are eager to come settle here.

What physician in his right mind is going to step into a situation where a series of physicians have left under mysterious circumstances. Who in their right mind is going to go to a place where an experienced board-certified doctor is having his career threatened by the board of directors. Every attack on me is one more reason for a physician not to come to Morrow County. Even Mrs. Dahlman and the board should be able to see that every action they take to harm me harms the health district more. The only physicians that are now likely to come into this buzz saw are foreign-trained people who have little other choice or people who are incompletely trained.

The board seems not to grasp a key issue in providing medical care. Good medical care is not a commodity. Medical care means the establishment of a relationship between the patient and the doctor. They must take the time to learn about each other, to know each other, to trust each other. The doctor must study each patient to the depth and breadth that his experience tells him is needed. The patient must decide if they will place their life, or the life of their loved ones, in the hands of the physician. Time after time the people here have given that trust to a medical care provider only to have the doctor run off by the board.

The only real assets that the health district has are the medical care providers. Somehow the board has still not figured that out. Somehow the board still doesn't listen to the medical care providers, or to the public that supports the health district, but it does listen to administrators. Somehow the board still hasn't figured out that the administrators are there to make the job of the doctors easier. The board appears to think that the doctors are there to make the job of the administrator easier.

I have said from the very first that public involvement would be the redemption of the district if there was to be any redemption. If the Morrow County Health District is to survive it will be because the public once again takes charge. When the board was ready to close the health district the turnout of hundreds of people at the board meeting saved the district. The public must again make its displeasure with the board known. The business people who haven't wanted to get involved for fear of harming their businesses must get involved. If the hospital dies your businesses won't be far behind. And that includes the Times-Gazette. Retired people who need nearby medical care must speak up. Young families who need accessible care for their children must speak out. Farmers and ranchers who need emergency care must speak out.

Every person who is concerned about the future of Heppner and of Morrow County must stand up and speak out now. Write to the paper. Write to the board. Call the board members. Go the board meetings. Sit on your hands much longer and you will wake up and your town will be dead. Shortly you will have two competent people on the board. It should be simple to get a new board member from here and then you would have three of five competent people on the board.

Morrow County and Heppner have been very kind to my wife and me. We appreciate the support so many kind people have offered us. I have been honored and privileged by the trust so many patients have given me. I am very comfortable that I have done my best for my patients. I feel strongly that the truth will be seen and will not harm me. I will never have to explain to my children that what I did was legal but then have to convince them that it was also moral.

This is a good place and it deserves better than it has gotten from the board. Each and every one of you must now take the initiative to repair the damage they have done.
(s) Clyde Burnham, M.D.
Heppner

UofI awards scholarships

The University of Idaho has awarded scholarships to students who will be attending UI for the 1999-2000 academic year. Students received scholarships for excellent academic records as well as activity involvement and leadership on campus and in communities.

Local students who qualified include: Matthew Jepsen, Presidential, Heppner; Jessica Krebs, Presidential, Ione; and Ryan Neal, Presidential, Boardman.

Copies 10¢
Heppner Gazette-Times

Restore faith that life can be beautiful

To the Editor:

Upon arriving for work this morning I was dismayed to observe that my two terra cotta pots full of geraniums and cover flowers were not in the places that they have occupied for the past five years. Someone helped themselves to these pots full of blooms sometime between Saturday afternoon and Tuesday morning.

Maybe whoever did this thought that they were stealing "from an institution," since the pots decorate the area in front of the home health office. Or maybe they just don't care. The pots of flowers belong to me. I purchased the pots, the potting soil, the plants and the fertilizer.

And everyone that goes past or comes into our office is able to enjoy them.

These were more than just pots of flowers to me. People in our line of work deal with sickness, trauma and death on a daily basis; sometimes we need reminding that there are still many things in life that are beautiful. Now some of those reminders are gone too.

If you are the person that took these pots, I'm asking you to please return them to their places. Help restore our faith that at least sometimes, life goes on, and it can be beautiful.

(s) Molly Rhea
Home Health Director
Heppner

Bring back the good doctors, replace the board

To the Editor:

For the last few weeks we have been exposed to contradicting views concerning Dr. Burnham. My experience with Dr. Burnham has been very positive. My first visit with him resulted in the most complete physical that I have had in years. He followed up on every medical call that I had on record, insisting on getting a full and complete understanding of all my medical history.

The problems of the Morrow County Medical District did not begin with the hiring of Dr. Burnham. They existed long before he came, and continue

today. The medical board, in my opinion, is not as concerned about quality medical service as they are in increased revenues. I feel that there are ample revenues, but expenses are completely out of line. As soon as they realize they are top heavy in the office help, maintenance, and even in the lab, and too much time by the EMT supervisor spent on the road and in coffee shops, they will close the gap between income and expenses.

I think the time has come to bring back the good doctors and replace the medical board.

(s) Randy Lott
Heppner

W.C.C.C. Golf

WCCC Ladies' Play Tuesday, May 25

Low gross of the field: Betty Christian (42).

Low net of the field: Karen Wolff (23).

Least putts of the field: Harriet Batty (14).

Flight A: low gross-Bev Gunderson (45); low net-Carol Norris (32); least putts-a tie between Luvilla Sonstegard and Lois Hunt (16).

Flight B: low gross-Deborah Kendrick (46); low net-Bernice Lott (30); least putts-Sandi Hanna (17).

Flight C: low gross-Della Heideman (50); low net-Melba Miller (33); least putts-Sandi Day (18).

Long drive, flight A-Luvilla Sonstegard; flight B-Betty Christian; flight C-Karen Wolff.

Chip in: Bev Gunderson #2, Betty Christian #5.

Birdie: Betty Christian #1.

K.P., second shot #2: Sandi Day.

WCCC Family Barbecue Monday, May 31

Women: first low gross, Pat Edmundson (-33), second low gross, Jan Paustian (-36), third low gross, Deborah Kendrick (-38); first low net, Elaine Miller, second low net, George Nairns, third low net, Cam Wishart; special events, Pat Edmundson, Kay Anderson.

Men: first low gross, Jeff Edmundson (-31), second low gross, John Edmundson (-33), third low gross a tie between Jeff Huggins and Les Paustian (-34); first low net, Kiel Nairns, second low net, Jim Wishart, third low net, Dave Kendrick; special events, Kiel Nairns, Earl Norris, Mark Miller.

Arlington Saddle Club plans Jr. rodeo

The Arlington Saddle Club will host a Cayuse Junior Rodeo June 5-6.

Participants eight to 18 years old will participate in barrels, pole bending, goat tying, breakaway roping, bronc riding and other events.

Events begin at 10 a.m. daily. Everyone is invited to attend.

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Engagement



Robinson-Dunaway

Tanya Robinson and Dwayne Dunaway
The parents of Tanya Leigh Robinson and Dwayne Trevor Dunaway announce their children's engagement.

The bride-elect is the daughter of James and Dalene Robinson of Bend. A graduate of Crook County High School, she is employed at Budget Rent-A-Car in Redmond.

The groom-elect is the son of Harlan and Linda Dunaway of Heppner. He is a graduate of Heppner High School and of Blue Mountain Community College. He is employed at Cascade Cable in Prineville.

The couple will be married June 25, 1999, at 6 p.m. at HollinsHead Park in Bend.

FREE Outdoor Music Festival Music In The Parks

Monday, June 7 - 7 p.m. Boardman Marina Park -- Tim Cundell

Monday, June 14 - 7 p.m. Irrigon Marina Park -- "Absolutely Nobody"

Monday, June 21 - 7 p.m. Boardman Marina Park -- Craig Daniels & the Jukebox Cowboys

Monday, June 28 - 7 p.m. Irrigon Marina Park -- Two Guys & a Gal - Country Western

Inclement weather site: Boardman-Riverside High School

Inclement weather site: Irrigon-A.C. Houghton School

Funded by Morrow County Unified Recreation District; Sponsored by the Arts Council of Morrow County

Dr. Donald J. Carlson Foot Specialist

will be at the Pioneer Memorial Clinic on June 9th for the diagnosis and treatment of all foot problems

Heppner 676-5504

Hermiston 567-8750



HAPPY 40th BIRTHDAY!

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*APY = Annual Percentage Yield * APY is accurate as of May 27, 1999 \$100 Minimum Deposit * FDIC Insured up to \$100,000 * Rate subject to change Interest Compounded Daily * Interest penalty is required for early withdrawal

EFFECTIVE APRIL 22: Adult and Family Services will change the date and time a case manager will be available to serve Heppner residents.

Walk-in intake: **SECOND AND FOURTH THURSDAYS,**
9 a.m.-11 a.m., 1-3 p.m.

120 S. Main, in basement, Heppner.

Other times can be scheduled in advance on Thursdays if necessary.

RaNae Brooks, case manager, can be reached at 1-800-213-8475, ext. 273.