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of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

Heppner
GAZETTE-TIMES
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Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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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. The G-T is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters.

County teachers qualified, professional

To the Editor:
I get tired of it and I can't hold my tongue any longer. It seems like nearly every week when I get my Heppner Gazette, there is an article in there that is negative when it comes to Morrow County School District. The person who writes it has failed to see the whole picture or get their facts straight.

In last week's paper, a negative person mentioned that Heppner High School didn't have a certified teacher to teach advanced math. In the very same paper was an article about the new math teacher, telling his qualifications (which of course, said he was certified to teach math -- he wouldn't have been hired if he wasn't qualified).

I am sorry but I have taught in several school districts in the Northwest and Morrow County is one of the better ones. I am proud to be a member of the professional team of teachers here in Morrow County. The administration and the teachers are all very educated and qualified and professional and are to be extremely respected.

Our teachers go out of their way to offer special assistance and classes to students. The students actually get more than they might in a larger school because they get lots of individual attention. In Ione, where I teach, kids get what they need. If it means teaching advanced classes to one student while the others are learning at a normal pace, then the teachers are willing to oversee that.

When I mention what classes I teach, to teachers in other districts, they are usually amazed because I teach so many things. Most teachers in other districts are not willing to put themselves out to offer so many different subjects. If anyone is interested in seeing what all we offer here at Ione, feel free to visit our web site at <http://www.ione.morrow.k12.or.us> and I know that Heppner and Boardman also offer lots of extras to kids. Our Oregon test scores are above state averages for the most part and students do very well when compared to students in other districts.

Former sheriff sets record straight

To the Editor:
After reading Mike McCullough's letter of support for Verlin Denton, I feel it is important that I do set the record straight. At no time as sheriff of Morrow County did I not have complete control of that department. As for Denton "virtually running" the MCSO, he did so at my direction and leadership.

I do not intend to minimize his ability or effort that was put forth during the time he acted as my undersheriff. However, I am not about to give away the achievements that were accomplished during my tenure as my sheriff. A short list follows: marine patrol; reserve program; expansion of the dispatch center to include three other counties; drug enforcement program, i.e. task force; DARE and other education programs at schools; forest patrol; and code enforcement. These are but a few

Financially as well as in other ways, being two separate high schools on the south end is really better than being together. We would lose all our small school funding from the state if we combined.

The atmosphere at each school is totally different. Ione offers everything that a larger school can offer in many ways. Ione school is the only one in the Morrow County district to have an FBLA club (Future Business Leaders of America). We had two of our students beat competition from much larger schools (such as Pendleton) to make state competition last year. The same thing happens each year at Blue Mountain Skills Challenge. Our Morrow County students do very well. Last year our Ione girls sports team were the only ones in the whole state to have as high of a GPA as they did.

I have taught in districts where there was a 4-1/2 day week to districts where school went year round. I much prefer the four-day week. Not because I teach less, (because I am in the classroom about the same amount of time either way) but because I feel like I am more efficient and do a better job.

Some research has been done actually that indicates that people learn better when a concentrated effort (four days x 60 min. each class) goes into it instead of having shorter and more (five days x 45 min) class periods. I feel like with all the outside activities that kids are involved in our current society, the pressure of having school five days a week is more than our kids need. I love the four-day week. Yes, my days are longer. But I don't mind. I like knowing that maybe I am making a difference in someone's life.

I love Morrow County School District and it really bothers me when people don't get their facts straight about us. Our kids have nothing to be ashamed of here in Morrow County. They can say with pride, "I am from Morrow County."

Darlene Marquardt
Ione Schools
Business, Music and Computers

of the many.
I respect both Verlin Denton and Steve Myron; both would be an asset to Morrow County. I know how I am voting, but that's my choice.

(s) Roy Drago
Retired Sheriff,
Morrow County
Boardman

Holly Rebekah holds card party

Holly Rebekah Lodge held the first card party of the year on Oct. 7. High men's winner was Elmer Health and High women's was Verna Brinda. Low man was Bob Taylor and low woman, Joyce Buchanan. Traveling was won by Luella Taylor and Dorothy Wilson. Card parties are held the first Saturday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend.

Must insist on majority rule

To the Editor:
This letter was presented to the Lexington City Council on Oct. 9 by a group of concerned citizens. They have requested that a copy be sent to the Heppner Gazette for publication in its complete form.

This letter is in reference to the August 14 meeting and the Sept. 11 meeting of the Lexington City Council. At the August meeting, Bob Taylor stated that, "The hiring of Leroy Cline was not an emergency, that there should have been a special meeting (24 hours notice), that Glenn (Anderson) had hired him illegally, that Glenn (Anderson) should pay his wages and that the matter would be turned over to the State Ethics Committee."

The Mayor, Duane Disque, responded that he felt it was necessary that he be paid to avoid problems with the labor board, as he had been hired and had already done some work.

Point--The project for which Cline was hired had been anticipated for over a year. What was the emergency that it could not have been addressed in a prior or special meeting?

Point--Cline had previously terminated his employment with the city. There were/are others in the city, who are just as informed about the water system and the position as Cline and they were not advised of the availability of the opening, so that they could also apply. There are also reports that Anderson hired Cline before he contacted the other council members.

Our counselors, duties, responsibilities and liabilities (sec II a) states--district board members have no individual powers separate from the powers of the board, and have no authority to act individually without the delegation of authority from the board--also, per rules adopted by the League of Oregon Cities, no individual councilor has a legal status to act for the council outside of an official meeting, unless authority is given to councilors by a majority vote of the council; commitments on any matter should properly come before the council as a whole.

At the September meeting, Bob Taylor stated that he wanted the minutes of the August meeting to reflect exactly what he had said, and not just what the recorder had transcribed, i.e., discussion concerning the hiring of Leroy (or is it LaRoy) Cline to do the West St. water project needed to service customers during the B St. Bridge Project were addressed. Bob Taylor didn't think that it was an emergency and that he should have been hired at a meeting; therefore, he shouldn't have been paid. Duane responded that it was necessary to get the job done as Dick Kempas, the maintenance man, didn't know how to do it, and since he was hired the town had to pay him or the labor board would be down our necks.

It is interesting to note --that the recorder has no problem transcribing almost exactly what some people say, and not others, depending on her own interpretation of who might benefit from her actions.

CDR&L (sec VI F) states --special meetings require at least 24 hours notice. Such notice should include a press release or telephone call to the media, particularly media which has requested prior notice. Special meeting notice should also include telephone, letter or fax notice to other interested persons.

CDR&L (sec VI G) states --emergency meetings may be held on less than 24 hours notice. An actual emergency must exist, and the minutes must describe the emergency which justifies less than 24 hours notice. Notice of an emergency meeting must be "appropriate to the circumstances", which should at least include a reasonable attempt to contact the media and other known interested parties.

CDR&L (sec I) states --written minutes must be kept of all meetings. Minutes need not be verbatim transcripts, nor are tape recordings required. Minutes, in whatever form, must give a true reflection of the matters discussed at the meeting and the views of the participants. Governing bodies must prepare

minutes of the meetings and have them available to the public within a reasonable time after the meeting.

Point-- an actual emergency did not exist, a special meeting was not called, interested parties were not notified, Glenn Anderson acted on his own to make a decision that should have been addressed by the council, minutes were not kept of any meeting or action taken, and no one in town was aware of the situation or hiring of Cline until he was seen at the site.

All of the above are in direct violation of the open meetings law of the state of Oregon.

This is not the first time that Anderson has acted on his own, without the authority of the council. He has consulted lawyers while stating he represents the city, he has approached the county court--requesting tippage fees for the fire department --(both without the knowledge and consent of the council).

How many more incidents have there been that the community is unaware of? Perhaps he needs to be reminded that the fire department is part of the city and the city is not part of the fire department. He, however, has no problem asking for assist from the city, if he or the fire department have a need for equipment, etc.

Lexington needs more firemen. We have two trucks, and not even enough firemen to staff one. What is the problem? Could it be that when potential firemen indicate a desire to serve, that they are made to feel that they are not welcome, and that their input is not valuable?

Anderson has also attempted to undermine the recently formed Fire Department Auxiliary (which was formed for the specific reason to assist the department by obtaining needed equipment etc). He has refused to apologize for his indiscriminate remarks and mistakes. And at no time even said a word of thank you. His wife, on the other hand, is most supportive of the auxiliary's efforts.

Another concern re--the above meetings:

At both meetings there was a quorum present, and one councilman absent at each meeting.

Section 17 of the city charter defines a quorum as a majority of the council, including the mayor, to conduct its business.

Section 19 states, the mayor shall chair the council and preside over its deliberations, and shall have a vote when necessary to break a tie, shall have the authority to preserve order, enforce the rules of the council, determine the order of business and make appointments as provided.

At the August meeting, when the bills were presented there were three votes cast, two in favor and one against. The mayor declared the motion as passed. The bill, in question, being that of Cline's.

At the September meeting, when Taylor requested that he be directly quoted according to the above, there were also three votes cast, two in favor and one against. When the mayor declared the vote as passed, Anderson stated that the matter could not be decided without the majority of the council. The matter was tabled until the next meeting.

The city charter states (sec 22) except as this charter provides the express concurrence of a majority, of council present (note keyword "present") at a council meeting, a quorum being present, shall be necessary to decide any question before the council. Majority according to the American heritage dictionary is defined as--the greater number over half, a number more than half of the total. --i.e., two is the majority of three, three is the majority of four and four is the majority of five, etc.

In both of the above incidents, there were four council members present, the mayor did not vote, two members voted yes and one voted no. The majority of the vote was yes. (The majority of three being two, that shouldn't be too hard for anyone to figure out.)

There also appears to be some confusion on Anderson's part, re

the status of moderator who is really only acting as a mayor, pro tem. He is, traditionally, the presiding officer, is bound by the same rule, as the mayor, and as such is not entitled to vote except in case of tie.

CDR&L (sec F) states, in Oregon, it takes a majority of the entire board to adopt a motion, resolution or ordinance or take any other action. A majority of a quorum is insufficient. Sec E defines a quorum as more than 50 percent of the members of the entire board.

The above being the case, quite possibly the city of Lexington has just conducted an illegal election, as there were only two voting members and not the majority of an entire board. The resolution was signed on 7-10-2000 prior to the seating of two additional council person. How much better it would have been if the levy had been held off until there was a full council.

Over the past year, we have observed our city government being ridiculed, put down, questioned, lectured about truth and integrity by someone, who, apparently, does not even know the meaning of the words. We have observed the resignation of almost the entire council, with the exception of the one, who causes most of the problems. We

Misconceptions about fair set straight

(Editor's note: The following letter to the editor was inadvertently omitted from the Sept. 27 and Oct. 4 issues of the Gazette-Times.)

To the Editor:
This is in reply to Mary Garrett of Boardman's letter to the Gazette-Times, Sept. 13.

The Morrow County Fair Board believes there are some misconceptions about how judging is done for open class and we would like to try and resolve this.

During this past fair, we had 340 exhibitors for open class, 75 from Heppner, 41 Lexington, 62 Ione, 25 Boardman, 16 Irrigon plus 21 entries from out of county (Hermiston, Condon, Sumpter, Albany, Arlington, Umatilla and John Day).

We always strive to get all of our judges from out of county but some years it is necessary to get one from Morrow County. (This year we had one judge from Morrow County). During the judging period on Tuesday morning and afternoon, all the tags attached to articles of clothing, jams, paintings, flowers, crafts, etc., are closed so that the judges do not know who made the articles they are judging. It is only after judging,

Ione offers sound education for students

To the Editor:
Meg Murray continues to express her view of school consolidation week after week in your newspaper.

I wish to make a few points clear from my Ione perspective. First and foremost, just because you have an Ione address does not mean that you represent Ione. Mrs. Murray's support for Heppner is admirable, but she needs to not mislead people who are newer to the area that she is expressing an Ione point of view. She should be clear as to which high school the Murray's choose for their family and where her family's economic ties are.

I agree that we must work hard to make a good sound education available, but both South Morrow high schools have a proud history of sending a large percentage of their graduates on to higher education. My education from Ione High school was sound and I excelled at the collegiate level. My main point being that the class offerings in the past looked very much like they look today and we have a lot of college degrees to support that the education has not been

City, library discuss building

Oregon Trail Library District invite the public to participate in a pre-design work session with a team of architectural consultants on Saturday, Oct. 28 from 1-4 p.m. at the St. Patrick's Senior Center. The purpose of the session will be to address design issues and concepts before conceptual drawings are prepared.

The program will include:

have observed his attempts to twist, change, manipulate and control our laws for his own aims and purposes, and to further his own personal agenda.

We have allowed our citizens to be discriminated against according to his twisted rules. We have watched friend turn against friend, neighbor against neighbor. We have allowed ourselves to become the laughing stock of the county, and we have done nothing about it.

The city charter has served the citizens of the community well for decades. Are we now to allow one person to make his own interpretation, without question? Or are we going to insist that our laws be enforced according to majority rule, as it was intended? People of Lexington, we trust and hope you will choose wisely.

(s) Robert Taylor
Lexington

This letter was presented to the council on Oct. 10, signed by myself (Robert Taylor) and four other community members. The mayor thought the council should review before it was read in an open meeting. It was written so that Lexington community residents could become aware of some of the things that have been happening in our city government. What ever happened to the rights of "free speech"? Talk about a dictatorship!

that the tags are opened to display the name of the winners for that particular article.

Why a judge prefers one article of food, clothing, jam or whatever, over another only he/she could explain what the difference was that he/she saw or liked.

If it seems to Ms. Garrett that this is only a "Heppner fair", then we are sorry she feels that way. We can only encourage that more people from the north end enter exhibits in the open class so it won't seem like a "Heppner Fair". Most complaints from the north end seems to be time and distance. There are not many county fairs that are centrally located or convenient to all the cities in the county. Look at Umatilla County Fair, they have entries coming to Hermiston from Milton-Freewater.

The Morrow County Fair is open to all residents of the county. We could only hope that more residents from the north end would participate in Open Class, then maybe the Fair wouldn't be considered a "Heppner Fair".

(s) Shirley Adams
Morrow County Fair Board
Member
Heppner

lacking.

What seems to have been missed by many is that the problem in school funding is not just a Morrow County problem. It is those in Salem that have decided who is going to win. If you live in a rural area in Oregon, you lose.

Life does revolve around more than a school, but not much in a town the size of Ione. We like our way of life and we wish to keep it. Mrs. Murray seems to be under some illusion that she can start a gentle wave and it will slowly sweep us up into a consolidated high school.

If Mrs. Murray had more than an Ione address she would know that the people of Ione have been working hard for years to support and keep our high school. To those that agree with Mrs. Murray, although I can only speak for myself, it is hard to defeat those that choose never to give up and never to forgive.

I wish to be clear, I feel that both Ione and Heppner are great places to live and raise a family. Let's keep it that way.

(s) Jerry Rietmann
Ione

*Introduction to proposed city hall, library and police department project
• Presentation by consultants
• Workshop sessions with consultant facilitators.
• Summary of workshop input.
• Question and answer period.
Questions about the proposed meeting may be directed to Heppner City Hall at (541) 676-9618.