

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.

People have a choice

To the Editor:

We the people now have a choice. Our current sheriff was appointed the position when Roy Drago left. Now we have a choice on who we want to elect as Morrow County Sheriff.

My vote is going to Steve Myren because ability without ambition is useless.

I've known Steve for almost 10 years and have found him to be honest, fair, hardworking and friendly to everyone. I've found his word is as good as gold. If he says it, he means it.

Officer Myren would like to see our rural areas and our back streets patrolled more, which I firmly believe would cut down on theft and vandalism.

He would like to see our community offer more drug and safety education to our children. We need to make our children more aware of their surroundings. I know we all feel safe with our county lifestyle, but anything can happen - even here. Our children need to be taught who and what to avoid and to stand up for themselves. This will make them

strong enough to just "Say No." Knowledge is power; let's empower our children.

He also has some new budget ideas that would greatly benefit everyone in our county.

Steve is easy to talk to and willing to listen to your ideas. He's always out and about, so next time you see him on the street, take the time to stop and chat and listen to some of his ideas to help our community.

If you really care about our community, you'll listen to what he has to say and he'll listen to you. He cares.

I believe this change will do us good because ideas are a dime a dozen, but action is priceless.

If you would like to contact Officer Myren and hear more about some of his ideas, feel free to call him at 481-2924 or write to P.O. Box 1276, Boardman, OR 97818. He'll be glad to hear from you and know that you care.

I care. I'm voting for Steve Myren.

(s) Darla Wishart
Heppner

Vote for Harrington

To the Editor:

I am supporting Linda Harrington in the race for State Representative from District 59. I live in Heppner and am acquainted with Greg Smith.

At the University of Oregon, I majored in the study of English literature, and learned to analyze characters in a poem, play, story, or novel through close attention to what they said and what they did. I learned that it was essential to look for that one defining moment that would symbolize the essence of character. This is also true in real life. Style reflects substance.

My lack of enthusiasm for Smith's candidacy had been growing, but I became firmly opposed a few weeks ago when reading an article in local newspapers trumpeting the National Rifle Association's endorsement. In this article, Smith was quoted as being opposed to background checks for gun ownership, saying, in effect, that law-abiding citizens

should not have to be subjected to such checks.

This is that defining moment in which Smith shows that he has either not thought carefully about what he thinks, or has not planned carefully what he will say. Style reflects substance. It's a matter of simple logic--how is one to know who the law-abiding citizens are without a background check?

I own guns. I support the right to carry firearms. I currently hold a permit to carry a concealed weapon in the State of Oregon. That said, I was very willing to be fingerprinted so my background could be checked to make sure that I was, in fact, a law-abiding citizen.

Is Smith telling voters that he has a way of recognizing law-abiding citizens without checking the record? I'd like to know how he plans to do it. In the meantime, I'm voting for Linda Harrington.

(s) Linda Shaw
Heppner

Denton has background, experience

To the Editor:

I support Verlin Denton, because he is the best candidate for the position of sheriff of Morrow County. He has the experience, background and knowledge to continue to be your sheriff.

I first met Verlin Denton when he came to Prineville in 1987 while he was doing a background check on me after I had applied to work as a deputy for the Morrow County Sheriff's Department. At this time Sheriff Denton was the undersheriff for Morrow County Sheriff's Department. After talking with Undersheriff Denton, I knew he was a person that I could trust and that he was dedicated to the sheriff and the sheriff's department.

After accepting a deputy's position to work for Morrow County Sheriff's Department I found that Sheriff Denton was a very honest and trustworthy person. If Denton told me something then I knew I could believe what he said.

I have gained a lot of respect and trust for Sheriff Denton in the past 13 1/2 years that I have worked for the Morrow County Sheriff's Department. I know that Sheriff Denton treats all people and employees with respect and that the employees of the Morrow County Sheriff's Department respect him also.

Sheriff Denton does not make promises that he can't keep. I know that Sheriff Denton expects his deputies to do an honest day's work and they are not in the coffee shop the first and last hour of their shift.

You need to be more than just a good old boy to manage a 24-person department which includes (10) 911 dispatchers,

and a budget that keeps dwindling because of Oregon Measure 50. The Morrow County Sheriff's Department is also responsible for dispatching and 911 emergency calls for three other counties. Sheriff Denton has the background, knowledge and experience to do the job he has been doing for the past two years as Morrow County Sheriff and assisted retired Sheriff Roy Drago with for 15 years. The outgoing Sheriff Roy Drago had enough confidence in Undersheriff Denton to recommend to the Morrow County Court that they appoint Verlin Denton as sheriff when Sheriff Drago retired in 1998.

In closing, I hope you will join me in supporting Sheriff Denton for Morrow County Sheriff and putting your (X) in the box to retain Sheriff Denton as Morrow County Sheriff.

Please Vote.
(s) Larry S. Sample
Boardman

Val Doherty runs as mayor

Val Doherty has announced her candidacy as a write-in candidate for mayor of the town of Lexington.

Doherty has been a resident of Lexington since 1963 "except for couple of educational leaves of absence."

Doherty served as deputy district attorney and county counsel for Morrow County from 1987 to 1997 during which time she "learned to work with a public budget."

Currently Doherty maintains an office in Hermiston where she practices law in partnership with Earl Woods.

Ask questions about Lexington council

To the Editor:

I hope the letter to the editor by the five citizens of Lexington does cause the other citizens of Lexington to start asking questions. And I hope that you will ask each of these five people the next time you see them every one of these questions below; because you need to know the facts from fiction.

Ask them why they keep singling out Glenn Anderson as the one who hired Mr. Cline when they were told that it was a majority of the council who did?

Ask them why they have never asked the council why it was considered an emergency?

Ask them how many water customers would be out of service if this was not done?

Ask them for how long these customers would be without service?

Ask them if they were one of these customers would they consider it an emergency?

Ask them how many thousands of dollars the town would of lost if this was not done?

Ask them how they proposed to make up this loss of money?

Ask them who had more experience with the town backhoe, water system and was readily available and willing? (Please leave name at city hall for the future.)

Ask them how many times the starting date of this project was changed?

Ask them how many days notice the town got ahead of the last change?

Ask them how much time the town maintenance man worked on this before it became evident that he needed help?

Then ask how much time was left before loss of money or water service?

Ask them how they can say "no one in town was aware of the situation or hiring of Cline until he was seen on the site" since this was done by the majority of the council?

Ask them to name the lawyers who they claimed were contacted? Ask them if council members have and do represent the town? (Maybe they forgot.)

Since they claim to know about the fire department and make certain claims, ask them how many people it takes to man a truck? Ask them how many

people are in and continuing training through the fire department?

Ask them why they did not quote Section 21 of the town charter? "In the absence of the Mayor the Councilors will choose a Moderator amongst themselves for the meeting. Whether acting as mayor or as a Councilor, the Council chairman has only one vote on questions before the Council." Ask them if they know the difference between a mayor and a moderator? Ask them what the town lawyer said about this before their letter came out?

Since they have finally figured out what a quorum is (I tried to clarify in 8-9-99 but they would not believe.) Ask them why a 2 to 1 vote against Bob Taylor on 7-27-99 was not a no vote to them? Ask them why the minutes record the verbal concurrence of 2 of 3 council members for Glenn but this was not a yes vote? Ask them why when they used the special district voting quorum argument on 8-9-99 it was okay, but when used against them at the September 2000 meeting it was not?

Ask them why when Luella hired Mr. Cline through the same process to paint numbers on meters they did not get upset? Ask them what is the greater emergency, painting numbers on meters or saving thousands of dollars and water services for the people of Lexington?

Ask them why two council members were willing to come? Then ask them who the problem was? Ask them what truth and integrity is?

If they have not been able to answer these questions for you, ask them why they chose to sign their name before they got the facts? If they have been able to answer these questions for you then ask them how they could sign knowing all of this? Ask why are they not willing to allow "our laws to be enforced according to majority rule, as it was intended" as they claim? Yes, please ask questions of them. Please find the facts from the fiction. Maybe their last sentence really gives us their agenda. "People of Lexington, we trust and hope you will choose wisely."

(s) Glenn Anderson
Lexington

Choose Denton

To the Editor:

As the elections approach, Morrow County voters are presented with several important choices. One of the most important is the choice we will make for Morrow County Sheriff.

I first met Sheriff Verlin Denton more than 15 years ago when we attended Northwestern University's School of Police Staff and Command. The dedication, professionalism, and knowledge that he displayed impressed me then, and I have continued to be impressed, especially since he was elevated from Morrow County Undersheriff to Sheriff upon the retirement of Roy Drago.

A sheriff must be not only an able administrator, but he is also the bridge between Morrow County and other law enforcement agencies. Modern law enforcement, to be effective, must be a partnership between all jurisdictions - city, county, and state. Sheriff Denton has been

able to accomplish this, as evidenced by the excellent relationship he has, as sheriff, established with his peers in other agencies.

In addition to his other duties, Sheriff Denton serves as chairman of the Executive Board for the Blue Mountain Narcotics Enforcement Team (BENT). The efforts of this group have been recognized widely. In a recent letter of appreciation, Oregon State Police District IV Commander, Captain Dennis Dougherty, congratulated the team on its efforts and said, "Your commitment to stem the flow of illegal drugs to our children and communities deserves praise. BENT is perceived as one of the elite task forces in the state and for other task forces to emulate."

I encourage your vote for Sheriff Verlin Denton on election day. Let's retain a professional in this important position.

(s) Dan Brosnan
Heppner

Denton has qualities, qualifications

To the Editor:

In the election next month, we will be choosing the next sheriff for Morrow County. We are writing this letter to urge you to vote for our current sheriff, Verlin Denton.

Sheriff Denton came to this county as a deputy for the Morrow County Sheriff's Office. He was promoted by his predecessor to undersheriff, second-in-command of the sheriff's office. He held the undersheriff position for several years, prior to his appointment as sheriff almost two years ago.

Over the years we have appreciated Sheriff Denton's law enforcement expertise in Morrow County. He has been active in efforts to curb drug use, prevent child abuse and fight crimes so

our county can be a safer place to live.

Sheriff Denton has the qualities and qualifications to be our sheriff. He has direct law enforcement experience as a deputy. He has the administrative qualifications in his position as undersheriff and sheriff for this county.

Sheriff Denton has created a department that we can all be proud of. He has recruited and hired qualified officers. He has built a department with a positive reputation that other police agencies look up to. Sheriff Denton has the endorsement of the majority of Oregon's sheriffs. That says a great deal about his ability to serve this county.

Please vote for Verlin Denton, Morrow County Sheriff.

(s) Jack and Kim Carnine
Boardman

Budget committee supports road levy

To The Editor:

As members of the Morrow County Budget Committee, we are submitting this letter in support of the road levy.

The Morrow County Court and the budget committee were faced with a significant shortfall in the county budget this past year.

Over the last two years we experienced problems with balancing the budget. However, we were able to balance the budgets by making many small cuts and by reducing ending fund balances. This year we had no option available except to make significant reductions. Some of these reductions included the loss of 13 full and part time positions, shutting down the rock crushing operation for the year, and the elimination of funding for the county museum and the GIS program.

The last several years \$206,000 have been transferred from the Finley Buttes tippage fees to back fill the general fund budget. This year as additional \$250,000 was needed to balance the budget. This fund is now depleted.

The following are some of the factors that have caused revenues to not keep pace with ever rising costs; Ballot measures 5, 47 and 50, and the decreasing value of the utility systems due to depreciation. Utility values make

up 53 percent of the total county valuation.

We feel the county court made a prudent decision in putting the local option levy for roads on the ballot. This levy will enable the road department to maintain its current high level of service. It will not allow for any additional services.

The current budget calls for a \$485,000 transfer from the general fund to the road fund. The passage of the road levy will eliminate the need for this transfer and will allow general fund operations to continue at their current level, rather than create a need for additional cuts to positions and services. If senate bill 1608, the federal payment in lieu of taxes, passes those funds will be used in the road department for contingency and capitol reserves. In order to balance the budget for the last three years, these funds have been drawn down to a dangerously low level.

We feel that passage of the road levy is necessary for the county to continue services at their current level. We recommend a yes vote on this very important issue.

(s) Vern Frederickson
Irrigon
(s) Leann Rea
Boardman
(s) Larry Mills
Heppner

Sheriff corrects misinformation

To The Editor:

Re: Steve Myren's Letter regarding the Drug Task Force I think its important that some misinformation that Mr. Myren had in his letter be corrected.

First of all he quoted some figures from the Oregon Uniform Crime Reports that are correct as far as they go. However it would be a paperwork nightmare for the six member agencies to try and separate out these statistics from Task Force work and enter them in each agency's OUCR's. That's why the Task Force Executive Board agreed at the beginning to have the OUCR information on drug arrests entered under one member agencies name. In this case it is the Oregon State Police. As an example in the year (1999) Mr. Myren mentioned, the Task Force worked over 835 cases and made over 200 arrests in Morrow and Umatilla counties. This Task Force has a reputation of being one of the finest in the state of Oregon and for an area with our population this is outstanding work.

In reference to Mr. Myren's remarks about seeing a lot of search warrants being done and making drug cases in 1989. During that period we had a very loose group of agencies working together on drug problems. We were making a lot of arrests of street level drug users. It looks great in the newspapers; however, in time we came to recognize that we were spinning our wheels and having no effect on the drug flow coming into the two counties. In 1991 the agencies involved came together and formally put together the Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team (BENT). Certain goals and priorities were set for the team and one of the primary goals was to go after the people who were bringing the drugs into the two counties. It was recognized that if we don't stop the source of the drugs we will continue to arrest the same street level users and dealers time and time again and we all know they don't spend any time in jail. We also made it a priority to seize assets to take away the incentive to sell drugs and to use those assets to support the Task Force. The focus has never been on the "larger population areas". It has always been on those people who bring the drugs into our communities. A few years ago the Task Force executed a search warrant in the Umatilla area. In the process a list of drug buyers was found. This list included a

lot of names from the Heppner, Boardman and Irrigon area. Of the information that has been gathered over the years it's clear to the Task Force and me that the overwhelming majority of the drugs coming into Morrow County are coming from the Hermiston and Tri-City area.

Regarding the comment about the Task Force suddenly working in Morrow County two weeks after he filed for sheriff. I'm flattered that he thinks I have that kind of power with the other five members of the Executive Board that I can change priorities of the Task Force that have been in place for years. The fact is that it is very rare that drug cases can be put together in less than a month. Cases have to be built. Drug buys have to be made. Suspects have to be identified, information gathered and a search warrant has to be written and submitted to a judge. This doesn't happen overnight and anyone who has worked drugs would know that.

In reference to the question posed by Mr. Myren about whether the seizing of drug assets should or should not be the goal. In my opinion it should be one of the primary goals. A drug dealer can amass a large amount of assets in a few years. If he/she should get caught then they do a little time in jail or on probation and come back with their profits waiting for them. By targeting the assets we are taking away the rewards for dealing drugs. That's what it's all about. We are also making the drug dealer pay for the law enforcement cost to deal with them.

Finally there are task forces all over the State of Oregon because it has long been recognized that the pooling of resources to address a problem is an effective way to deal with it. Morrow County does not have the resources to go it alone against a problem of this size. Even with the task force we have to prioritize and attack the problem in the most effective ways. We can not go after every drug user and dealer in the two counties. We have to go after the source. The Task Force is meant to be a cooperative effort. I would not, even if I could, try to influence the Task Force to focus on Morrow County. The focus is on getting the sources of the drugs coming into the county regardless of which county they are in.

(s) Verlin Denton
Morrow County Sheriff
Heppner

Parks committee to meet

A meeting of the Morrow County Parks Committee will be held Wednesday, Oct. 25 at 7 p.m. at the Public Works office in Lexington.

Correction

Jeremy Rietmann was misidentified in a picture caption in the October 11 Gazette-Times. Rietmann was pictured ringing the bell at the first service at the newly construction United Church of Christ in Ione.