

## 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. (Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$5.)*

### Hopes Cupid shoots race track proposal straight through the heart

To the Editor,  
After attending the town hall meeting last night in Boardman, I came home with a sickened feeling. I could see all the reasons I live in rural America being ripped away, driven out by the smell of money. I saw the fear in my neighbors' eyes when they talked about 160,000 people exiting the speedway for 12 hours after a race, the skies being filled with commercial airliners landing on the new airstrip, the thunder of revving engines and the exhaust blowing in the Columbia wind.

We love our quaint lifestyle. Our days are filled with Little League, 4-H, fishing, school and community activities. My son rides his bike to practice and friends' houses. We see five people we know at the post office and there's no line. The grocery store owners actually live in town and we know them.

I have to wonder, what on earth

could our community leaders be thinking. They talked about our property values increasing, which is good if you want to sell, but maybe you like it here; besides someone has to live here. Our own mayor commented on his experience with race tracks. He said, "We could rent our houses out for \$2000 a weekend and leave town." And our community leaders call this progress? Very few answers were given to how 160,000 drunken people were going to be accommodated in a town where you can't buy a pair of socks.

Maybe ruining our family's Valentine's Day with a town hall meeting wasn't so bad after all. Standing up for our values and loved ones on this day was kind of fitting. We can hope Cupid will shoot this preposterous proposal straight through the heart.

(s) Kelly Doherty  
Boardman

### Letter a hoax

*Editor's note:*

The Gazette-Times has learned that a letter to the editor in the February 7 newspaper signed "The Rev. Don McElligott" and postmarked St. Paul, Minnesota, was a hoax.

The letter was not written by

Don McElligott of Ione.

The Gazette screens its letters to the editor to prevent such an occurrence, but occasionally a fraudulent letter is overlooked. We regret the oversight.

### Vote for John Renfro

To the Editor:

This letter is an endorsement of John Renfro for a position on the Morrow County School Board. His qualifications:

- Former elected member of the Oregon City School Board.

- Former elected Clackamas County Sheriff.

- Possesses a master's degree in education and served part-time as an instructor at Clackamas Community College.

After serving in the Army, John worked full-time for the Clackamas County Sheriff's Office while also attending Portland State University full-time. After

graduation, he worked for the Clackamas Juvenile Court system until elected sheriff. During his years as a counselor for the court, he had extensive experience with teenagers.

He would bring understanding of administrative policies to a school board position. He realizes the differing procedures governing public and private entities. He also understands the viewpoints of both students and teachers.

I believe he would bring accountability to our school system. Please vote for John Renfro.

(s) Jane Rawlins  
Heppner

### Stop the special deals

To the Editor:

To The Honorable Congressman Greg Walden, US House of Representatives

Dear Congressman Walden: As I am sure you are aware, Oregon electric cooperatives (co-ops) purchase the majority of their power from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) as public preference customers. BPA has proposed rate increases for some of our members as high as 250 percent or more, beginning October 1, 2001.

These rate increases would adversely impact 250,000 consumers - many of whom are your constituents - served by our 17 member systems throughout rural Oregon. There is a way you can help increase power supply and help stabilize rates.

This rate increase can be directly attributed to BPA over-subscribing by 3500 megawatts to other non-preference customers, such as direct service industries (DSIs). This has forced BPA to augment its supply

for preference customers, like electric co-ops, by purchasing power on the open market at exorbitant rates. To add insult to injury, the DSIs remarketed this power back to BPA at a profit of \$1.8 billion this past year.

It is totally unconscionable to think that electric co-op customers would be subjected to enormous increases in their electricity bill so that DSIs can resell this federal power at a profit. The original purpose of public preference is to ensure the output of the federal Columbia River Hydro System is for customers of not-for-profit utilities. Federal power was never intended to be used as a "get rich quick" scheme.

We strongly encourage you to stop the "special deals" for the DSIs by not allowing remarketing rights. This action will at least eliminate one contributing factor to this unacceptable rate increase.

(s) Sandy Flicker,  
Executive Director  
Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative

### Wheat Commission plans meeting

A regular meeting of the Oregon Wheat Commission will be held on Monday, Feb. 26, at the Best Western, 112 West 2nd Street, The Dalles, at 1 p.m.

The Oregon Wheat Commission will hold a research review meeting

on Tuesday, Feb. 27, at the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, 5000 Discovery Drive, The Dalles, at 8:30 a.m.

The commission meetings are open to the public.

## Are we moving toward fascism

To the Editor:

The 2000 elections have led some to see that our democracy may be moving in the direction of fascism. The fascist philosophy of government comes "typically through the merging of state and business leadership". American voters have been aware for at least 20 years that our political campaigns have been increasingly financed by big business and other special interests to elect legislators and other top officials who will protect their interests. This is one reason why many voters are "turned off" (we have the lowest percentage of voters of the other democracies). We've heard people say, "Why vote? Big business controls Congress. They're all corrupt."

In the 2000 election, campaign funding rose to three billion dollars, with 71 million on the New York senator race alone. Thus, we already have a merging of business and state leadership. Our president and vice-president come from CEOs in the oil business, and immediately after the Supreme Court stopped the ballot-counting in Florida, they called a huddle behind closed doors in Texas of the CEOs of the largest corporations in the U.S.

At the same time, we see the merging of large corporations, increasing their power and profit while limiting competition (example: Wal-mart vs. small business in our area) which may lead later to higher prices for consumers.

The large communications corporations are also merging (CNN with Time Warner, and then Time Warner and AOL). Those spending night and day with CNN during the campaign could easily recognize their preference for Bush, Jr. The pharmaceuticals openly sponsored their segment "Campaign 2000". This was accompanied with a plethora of ads for tobacco (showing the compassionate philanthropy of Phillip Morris) and pharmaceutical corporations claiming their research to be on the edge of cures for major dread diseases (when in reality, most

breakthroughs have come from individual scientists and medical schools).

The question to ponder: what happens to democracy if the media is increasingly controlled by big business and special interests? In fascism the media is controlled by the government party. Are we moving in that direction?

Alarming is the fact that both Democrat and Republican parties are equally guilty. Even more alarming is that they may both be merging into one party (an essential to fascism).

Two senators became aware of the growing danger of the merging of state and business. Senators McCain (Republican) and Feingold (Democrat) co-sponsored a bill that would curb campaign financing by special interests. For five years Leader Lott, a far-right conservative, has prevented that bill from coming to the senate floor.

Believing in his cause so deeply, McCain then ran for president in the primaries. Saying, "The Republican Party has lost its way," he prophesied that nothing can be more important to America's future than getting the money of special interests out of politics. Far outspending him, Bush, Jr. defeated McCain with dirty tricks and lies in South Carolina and went on to the presidency with overwhelming special interest funding.

Now, the election past, McCain and Feingold have the strength of character, vision and courage to pursue their effort to bring their bill to a vote. Lott again blocked it in the first two weeks even though there was not other legislation requested for that period. But these two prophets are not giving up and are gaining some recognition, promising to take this issue to town meetings throughout the country.

Thus, Eisenhower is joined by two prophets today, seeking to warn against the lost of our precious democracy. What as the people can we do?

(s) Jane Rawlins  
Heppner

### Renfro for school board position

To the Editor:

Are you worried that the Morrow County School Board and administration has stopped listening to parent's concerns? Does it bother you that the educational needs of Morrow County students are not being addressed and met by the policies of the current school board and administration?

In February of 2000 one of the largest crowds to ever assemble at a school board meeting pleaded with the school board at Boardman not to implement the program developed by the superintendent which cut 17 teachers and stopped vocational education programs. The majority of the board turned a deaf ear to the crowd. Instead, over the course of the past year, the board has adopted policies of advancing administrative spending over that of educational programs. Administrators drive to work in district cars and have these cars at their disposal while educational opportunities diminish for our students. Another direct and devastating result of recent school district policies is the various communities in Morrow County have stopped working together for the betterment of all Morrow county

students.

If you have had enough and want a positive change, vote for John Renfro for the Morrow County School Board. John has extensive experience in education and education administration. He knows students and teachers come first. He will listen and work with parents.

He understands that by recognizing the educational needs of students first, you can get all of the parents or Morrow County to unite behind common goals. Rubber stamping the policies of the administration is not the answer. John has the courage and ability to ask the right questions and take the right action to make the administration accountable to the people they were appointed to serve, the parents and students of Morrow County.

Vote for a change for the better. Vote to make the school board and administration accountable to the people they serve. Vote for meeting the educational needs of all our students by increasing curriculum and teaching resources. Vote for John Renfro for the Morrow County School Board.

(s) William Kuhn  
and Annetta Spicer,  
Heppner

### Marriage Licenses

The Morrow County Clerk's office reports issuing the following marriage licenses:

Jan. 29: Jorge Luis Lopez, 23, Boardman; and

Maria H. Zuvala, 20, Boardman.

Jan. 30: Antonio Ricardo-Rivera, 29, Irrigon; and

Maria Leon, 23, Irrigon.

Oscar Amador Navarro-Brito, 31, Boardman; and

Eusebia Hernandez, 29, Boardman.

Feb. 2: Jose Melchor Gamboa, III, 36, Hermiston; and

Santa Martha Perez, 23, Hermiston.

Feb. 7: Octavio Estrella, 23, Boardman; and

Ma. Guadalupe Lezama, 31, Boardman.

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## Heppner GAZETTE-TIMES

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Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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David Sykes ..... Publisher  
April Hilton-Sykes ..... Editor

News deadline is Monday at 5 p.m.

For Advertising: advertising deadline is Tuesday at noon. Cost for a display ad is \$4.50 per column inch. Cost for classified ad is 40¢ per word. Cost for Card of Thanks is \$5 up to 100 words. Cost for a classified display ad is \$5.10 per column inch.  
For Public/Legal Notices: public/legal notices deadline is Monday at 5 p.m. Dates for publication must be specified. Affidavits must be required at the time of submission. Affidavits require three weeks to process after last date of publication (a sooner return date must be specified if required).

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## Ione Site Council discusses school improvement plan

The Ione Site Council, at their February 14 meeting, discussed the Ione School Improvement Plan.

Principal Mike Stuart advised that staff members will submit reports detailing their activities in order to meet the goals developed. Stuart reviewed reports from several teachers.

Stuart commented on improvements to the gym. The Booster Club is still accepting donations for the gym mats. The students in shop class have been working on repairs to frames for bracket boards. John Marick and Monica Swanson were recognized for their efforts towards the project.

State testing for third, fifth, eighth and 10th graders took place Feb. 5-7. Steve Schaber reported that the students took the testing very seriously and worked very hard, with some taking up to 2-1/2 hours to complete the test.

Counselor Mona Hardman reported that 24 students are members of OSSOM (Oregon Student Safety on the Move). They will elect officers at their next meeting. An all-night conference will be held April 7-8 in Hood River. Parents interested in helping with this overnight trip are welcome.

OSSOM has in the past been funded by licensing fees, however, due to a "constitutional technicality", the funding will no longer be available. The state OSSOM organization will be looking for alternate funding after June 30. Parents who would like to help with this program can reach Hardman by e-mail at [hardman@morrow.k12.or.us](mailto:hardman@morrow.k12.or.us). The group plans to meet with middle school students and instruct them on prevention of alcohol and drug use as well as other safety issues.

The site council was pleased with Ione's rating of exceptional in the school report cards issued by the state. Ione received the highest rating in the district and is one of only a few in the entire state to rate exceptional. These rates are based on school improvement, attendance, dropout rates and test scores.

A presentation was made on

"Action Research Plans."

The National Honor Society has academic pins that will be distributed to those who earned them. To receive an academic letter, a student must take a minimum of five graded classes and achieve a grade-point average of 3.80 or higher for the semester. If a student has already earned a letter, then a pin will be awarded.

Stuart noted that 73 percent of Ione middle schoolers achieved between a 3.0- 4.0 grade point average and 76 percent of the 73 percent had a gpa over 3.5. In the high school, 85 percent of all high schoolers were between 3.0 - 4.0 grade point average and 79 percent of the 85 percent had between 3.5 - 4.0 and 40 percent of those had a 4.0. One hundred percent of the 11 graders were between 3.0-4.0 point.

It was reported that Allison Halverson, Cory Benetto and Shelby Krebs won Elks Club scholarships. Ashley Carmack is one of three finalists in the Wal-Mart scholarship competition.

The boys' basketball team won second place in the Big Sky District Tournament.

Dean Robinson was recognized for being named the educator of the year at the Town and Country Awards banquet. Duane Neiffer's wife, Linda, was also named an educator of the year.

Billy Gates and Nick Christman were profiled in "Who's Who in Youth League Baseball" 2000 Babe Ruth League All-Star Edition.

## Fair & Rodeo court tryouts slated

Try-outs for the 2001 Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo Court will be held this Sunday, Feb. 25, starting at 1 p.m. at the Morrow County Fairgrounds.

The public is invited to attend. All applications are due in the Fair Office by Thursday, Feb. 22, at 11 a.m.

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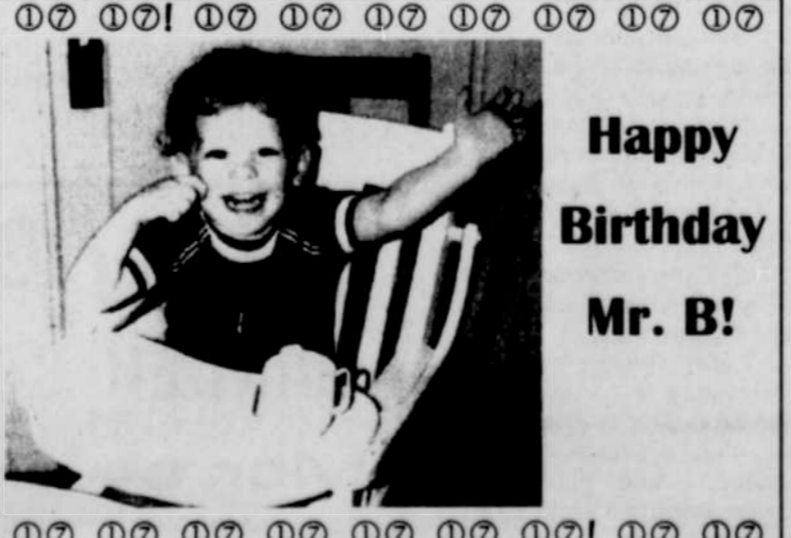
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Mr. B!**