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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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David Sykes Publisher
April Hilton-Sykes Editor

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Guest Editorial

Support Morrow County School Board members against recall challenge

We are asking the voters for support against the recall challenge to our Morrow County School Board positions.

As elected representatives, who have volunteered our time, we have always acted with care and thoughtful deliberation. Our first priority in making a decision has always been what is in the best interest of all the children in Morrow County Schools. Providing the best educational opportunities is a challenge with the limited money that current state funding provides. The board has been required to make many difficult decisions, but we have been able to continue to provide an excellent education for all students in the district. We have worked hard to maintain class sizes in all schools that are moderate to low, compared with state averages.

Many positive changes are occurring in the district at this time. Each community is preparing for the long needed construction and/or remodeling of facilities. Due to the direct effort of our board, small high school funding was brought to the attention of our state legislature. As a result, we are now receiving state support that is allowing us to maintain quality small high schools in Heppner and Lone. The current superintendent will leave in June. The board is working to secure the services of a new superintendent, to start serving the district July 1, 2002. Students are continuing to improve their state test scores and are making good progress towards meeting state benchmarks. One school in our district received a rating of 'excellent' from the state this past year. The district continues to maintain a highly talented and experienced staff that is dedicated to the needs of children and youth.

When questions arose from the public as to the appropriate residency of two of our members, the board was required by Oregon law to explore and act upon the issue. Advice from our legal counsel and a Senior Circuit Court Judge was sought and followed. Both board members were given time to state their case and present evidence. After deliberation, the judge's conclusion was that the two members were not residents of the zone from which they were elected, and that Oregon law required the board to remove those two members. This was an unpleasant task, but following his legal advice was the only responsible alternative available to the board. This was not a personal attack on any person involved. The law must be followed or it holds no validity.

John Rietmann has served 10 years, Gary Fredrickson has served seven and Pat McNamee has served two years. We have always considered the needs of Morrow County school children first. We have always considered input from the public and staff, before casting our votes on an issue. We have always followed district policy and upheld the laws of the State of Oregon. There is no reason that we should not continue to serve in our positions.

(s)Pat McNamee, Gary Fredrickson, John Rietmann

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.)

Recall only way to rebuild unity

To the Editor:

I have been asked several times during the last two weeks if I or supporters of the school board recall want the lone schools closed. I have asked other Heppner area citizens this question and their answers are the same as mine. Community schools are critical to a rural community's social and economic development. Morrow County voted a bond measure to build new schools in both Lone and Irrigon. These schools are needed and it is my fervent hope and desire that both are built as quickly as possible.

Ione should insist the school district build a school that meets their needs for the twenty-first century. Irrigon should insist that as soon as the new building is built in Irrigon, it is staffed and used as the high school for which the community voted.

I had to wonder why rumors were circulating that some or all Heppner residents want to close lone schools. The rumors are clearly an effort by the school district to change the focus of the upcoming recall election from the issues to emotions to alienate the Morrow County communities from each other.

I am extremely concerned that over the last two years, the school board has drastically cut teachers, programs and curriculums and appears to be ready to continue to do so. The board turns deaf ears to the voice of the public, as it did at the February 2000 board meeting in Boardman. Administrative spending is prioritized over teaching staff. The board and district have no vision for curriculum improvement or meeting the educational challenges our children will face in the new century. It is easy to balance a school district

budget by cutting teachers and programs. It takes vision, ingenuity, and work to keep and improve programs when budgets are tight.

Of larger concern to me is the board's and administration's failure to provide leadership in bringing the Morrow County communities together. The Morrow County school district is geographically one of the largest in the state. Our size is a blessing if we work together. It is a curse if we are divisive. Joint use of teaching resources via telecommunications can be a very successful way of preserving scant resources and expanding program opportunities. As a district, we should have the vision of sharing among our various communities resources and teachers, with students district wide. However, implementing such programs takes vision and commitment on the part of the district and cooperation and understanding among the district's communities. We can not implement any vision if the district encourages disunity.

I am happy my daughter is taught advanced math via telecommunications by an excellent lone teacher. I don't believe even one distance education class would have been implemented without the Heppner High School Site Council's repeated requests to district. We need to strengthen and preserve communities' school systems through the sharing of resources, not combining schools. I don't believe our school district currently has the resolve or vision to implement the educational program our children need. I support the recall because it is the only way to rebuild the unity necessary to educate our children.

(s) William J. Kuhn
Heppner

It's time for a change-support the recall effort

To the Editor:

The three Morrow County School Board members currently up for a recall election should not be surprised at the level of dissatisfaction felt by the public concerning their job performance.

In failing to control a superintendent who is known to have caused similar levels of community division and problems in such towns as Prineville, Tillamook, Adrian and Nyssa, they stand ultimately responsible for their actions as a board and the public deserves to know the truth about their behavior. They say the superintendent will leave in June. However there is no signed resignation on record, only a verbal "intent to retire". In the meantime \$22 million will be spent under his authority. The board has always rubber-stamped his proposals and after eliminating the two dissenting members in June (Lindsay and Lewis), they have had free rein on decisions, as the voters are left without two of their duly elected representatives. The whole issue of overturning and removing elected officials has been much discussed since May, but it is important that the public realize how they did it and how they are trying to justify it.

In their statement to the East Oregonian dated September 30, concerning the residency issue of the two board members they said, "advice from a Senior Circuit Court Judge was sought and followed". This statement implies that a binding decision came from a Circuit Court Judge. It absolutely has not. In fact, on July 18 it was reported that a sitting Circuit Court Judge issued a stay preventing the Board from further proceedings in replacing the positions. The date of a hearing in Circuit Court is currently set for October 17. What was rendered was an opinion by a hearings officer (a retired judge) not a current Circuit Court judge, but rather one that was retained and paid for by the district. This was a total waste of money for our school district as all the parties involved knew it was not a legally binding decision and would likely have to go to circuit court anyway, but meanwhile this forced the two members to begin their defense at

their own personal expense. The School Board claimed that Oregon law required them to remove those two board members. If so, then why did the Circuit Court judge grant a stay and prevent further action by the board?

Their letter also stated "we have always followed district policy and upheld the laws of the State of Oregon". It is important that the public know this has not been the case. In September, 2000 the three board members currently under recall were issued a citation by the Oregon Government Standards and Practices Commission for violation of Oregon Public Meetings law. They did not contest this charge. Lindsay and Lewis left the April, 2001 meeting after they perceived another possible violation of this law. One month later an "anonymous letter" surfaced complaining of residency issues. The board proceeded to break their own district policy of accepting unsigned letters. The night where the anonymous letter was presented (the chairman later admitted he had seen the letter the previous month) they attempted to make them resign. They further suggested that Lindsay and Lewis shouldn't vote and treated them with disrespect. Board member McNamee proceeded to tell the audience to "Shut-Up"! They had no intent to give "due process of law". It was only later that they were forced to delay their decision. Under oath at the hearing with the hired hearing officer, Chairman Frederickson admitted to travelling together as a quorum and discussing board business without all members present. He also admitted never seeing the postmarked envelope of the "anonymous complaint". He knew only that it came in an envelope from the office of Supt. Anderson.

Those of us who have children in our schools and have attended the School Board meetings know what has been going on and know what is at stake. We need School Board members who act legally, professionally and think independently of a hired superintendent.

Support the recall effort. It's time for a change.

(s) Ann Murray
Heppner

Pesticide law affects locals

To the Editor
and People of Morrow County:

After attending the hearing on Administrative Rule OAR 603-057-0405 through 603-057-0425 dealing with the Implementation of Oregon's Pesticide Use Reporting Law, I decided you need to understand what you can do to help. As residents of Oregon communities, this law will affect you.

As of January 1, 2002, you will have to report all pesticide applications if you are a person who uses or applies a pesticide in the course of business or any other for-profit enterprise or if you are applying a pesticide on public property. This applies to both restricted and general use products. While we support the collection of this information, we are against the release of that information to the general public.

This will include farmers, commercial applicators, businesses who sell pesticides, schools, motels, restaurants or any business who deals with the public in any way.

Hearings are being held throughout the state to receive testimony. If you have not given testimony and will be affected by this legislation, do take the time to voice your thoughts. We are aware that the people in the Willamette Valley will outnumber us. We need the hearings officer to hear more people supporting our views than our opponents will have supporting their opposing views.

Anti-chemical activists have been flooding the Governor's office and state legislators and Dept. of Agriculture asking for more stringent rules. Now is the time for you to voice your opinion. Key points to be covered are:

Electronic reporting-at the present time, only electronic reporting is being mandated. This is not workable for many people. If you do not have a computer, be sure to tell them what a hardship this will be. Since we know the government cannot keep this information confidential, do request paper reporting. Do stress that we need to make the penalty for releasing this information excessive.

Required frequency of reporting-We do need annual reporting. If someone wants to report more frequently, that's fine. How would you like to have to make out a report in the middle of harvest or your busy season?

Details-Do include such information as: Approximately how many applications you make per year. How many sections your applications

will be encompassing. Approximate cost of reporting-burden on manpower, etc.

Location of use- Zip Code is the only logical way to report this. Township, range and section is difficult to obtain for those of us who are applying for owners or lease operators. This report is to be confidential, so how difficult would it be for activists to look at the information given and pinpoint where the application was made?

Do support-We support the aggregation of the information by date and location. If a product was used for several days at a single location but not more than seven days, the last date of use should be used. Spot spraying is a common practice especially in agriculture and forestry. We are instructed to use integrated pest management since this only sprays the targeted pest, and cuts down on the total amount of pesticide used. The total product used over a multi-day or monthly use should report these applications. It is very important that you not expect someone else to do your homework. You need to write a letter and have your voice heard. It is only fair that if you will be impacted by this legislation, that you also have your voice heard. Voice your concern and don't hesitate to suggest an alternative action.

Homeowners: At the present time, they are only doing a survey of some households, but it is probably just a matter of time before they ask you to start reporting your usage, too.

Letters must be into the Department of Agriculture by Oct. 12. Send your letter to: Phil Ward, Dept. of Agriculture Pesticide Division, 635 Capitol St. NE, Salem, OR 97301-2532.

(s) Jean Jepsen
Jepsen Pest Control, Inc.
Dbn: Dobyns Pest Control
Ione

Board member should rethink proper role

To the Editor:

I just finished reading your news article on the Morrow County Health District and came away quite confused.

Who is Ed Glenn representing? The district patrons? The patrons from the area he was elected?

It seems from his comments and quotes that he has chosen to represent Dr. Boss at the meetings.

It doesn't seem proper for a board member of any public body to be

negotiating with the board and administration on behalf of any employee, contracted or otherwise. Those discussions should take place between the administration and the employee of the district.

A board member who chooses to run interference for an employee is way out of line and should rethink his proper role as a board member.

(s) George Koffler
Heppner

October 4th ~ Thursday
LADIES NIGHT: Susan Thompson and crew will be serving Italian Chicken with Pasta and more!
Dinner starts at 6 p.m.



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Getting me immunized is an important way you can protect me against childhood infectious diseases.

Thanks

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