

The Official Newspaper
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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Board doesn't play by the rules

To the Editor:

I would like to applaud the petitioners of the Morrow County School Board recall effort. I know that they all have families and jobs and have made sacrifices in order to present the people of Morrow County with the option of determining the make up of our current school board.

These citizens have spent the last five years attending school board meetings and being elected or appointed to school district positions. They have gone many extra miles in order to positively influence school board decisions but have met with

one overwhelming obstacle. The obstacle is that the school board does not play by the common rules of decency and fairness. In fact, they have received a citation by the state's Government Standards and Practices Commission for holding a clearly illegal meeting. Theirs is the culture of "good old boys and smoke-filled back room politics". This must end.

Join me and support free and open school board proceedings. Please vote yes to recall school board members Rietmann, McNamee and Frederickson.

(s) Ed Fullmer
Heppner

Mark 'no' on recall ballot

To the Editor:

More challenges than ever before face Oregon school districts - declining enrollment, inadequate funding and aging facilities, to name a few. Have you seen the schedule for a school board member? Our ever-changing education environment requires these unpaid volunteers to take hundreds of hours away from their families and jobs annually for the meeting and training sessions needed to keep current.

Over the past few years our school

board members have been called upon to make some very tough decisions. Striving to do what is best for the education of all children within our district, they have handled these often painful choices with professionalism, vision and fortitude.

Join us in showing our appreciation and support for the Morrow County school board members by marking "no" on the recall ballot.

(s) Gary Neal
(s) Kathy Neal
Boardman

Send a different message

To the Editor:

Voters who are against the recall of the three Morrow County School Board members are sending a clear message:

- It is okay to hold illegal private meetings in order to hide facts from the public and make decisions without public input. (They were cited for and admit to this.)

- It is okay to disregard public opinion expressed in packed school board meetings, not unlike the one in Boardman with over 400 people in attendance or a recent meeting

in Lexington with over 100 people in the audience.

- It is okay to rubber stamp requests from an administrator which it should be overseeing.

- It is okay to discontinue important programs, such as FFA, yet still maintain a private fleet of automobiles for use by the administrators.

Please send a different message by voting "yes" to recall these school board members.

(s) A. Kim Cutsforth
Heppner

Ione JVs lose to Helix

Ione's junior varsity volleyball team was allowed only one game against Helix on Saturday, October 13, because of a lack of players for Helix. Ione lost that game, 6-15.

Tracy Griffith scored five points, accepted three passes and delivered four hits. Caitlin Orem, the only other person to score, had one point and delivered four set assists. Jamie VandenBrink served 100 percent and controlled one pass. Macarena

Esposito accepted two serve-receives and Kim Morris accepted one pass. Katie Hams accepted one pass, delivered three hits, one block and three set assists. Barbara Holland accepted two passes and delivered one hit. Sara Peck had one pass, two hits and one block. Eva Chitty had one save and delivered one hit.

The Cardinal junior varsity served 80 percent for the game.

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.)

Vote no on recall election

To the Editor:

Patrons of the Morrow County School District will be asked to vote in a recall election very soon on Directors Rietmann, McNamee, and Frederickson. When you receive your ballots, please consider this issue carefully and I urge you to vote "no" on this recall.

The entire board of directors of the Morrow County School District continues to be challenged by growth in our schools in the north end of Morrow County and continued decline in our populations in south Morrow County.

Because of these issues, the board has had to make difficult decisions regarding staffing at all of our schools. Because a small but vocal group of district patrons was not able to convince the board of directors last year that teachers should not be reassigned and programs cut, they decided the board was unresponsive and did not consider its point of view.

Add to that the discovery that two of the current board members were not living in the district which they represented and you have the makings of a recall election when the board acted to declare those seats vacant.

The board members who are the subject of this recall are intelligent, thoughtful and well-meaning individuals. They have considered the welfare of all of the school students in making decisions in the past. They have not pandered to the desires of small groups but have kept the big picture of educating all of our kids in mind. They spent long hours deliberating on difficult choices to make in an atmosphere of declining revenues and increasing costs.

They have done a good job and they deserve your support. Vote "no" on the recall election coming up.

(s) George Koffler
Heppner

Keep Frederickson, McNamee and Rietmann

To the Editor:

For those of us who have devoted many hours to attending meeting with the Matrix Group, Inc., the Morrow County School Board, Superintendent Bruce Anderson and the district staff, it is virtually impossible to understand the charges leveled at the superintendent and three board members. Bruce Anderson and the Morrow County School Board have created, and the people have passed, a construction bond that will fulfill the needs of every community in this county. And, I might add, at the unbelievable price of \$1.37 per thousand. Compare this price to those of surrounding communities.

To suggest that they have "free rein" to spend bond money is ludicrous. Oregon State Law decrees that bond money must be spent exactly as stated in the issue presented for the people's vote.

Meetings are now begin held throughout Morrow County between architects, teaching staff, administration and the public concerning designs for the new elementary schools.

Under most circumstances, the board ignores "anonymous letters"; however, when the legality of the election of two board members was brought into question, they had to investigate. Upon learning that the allegations were true, they devised a plan to resolve this matter in a most affordable matter. They hired a retired judge to listen to the case.

At the June hearing concerning the Lindsay/Lewis zone dispute, everyone present heard both gentlemen admit that they do not live in the zones they were elected to represent. What more needs to be said?

At this hearing, Lindsay and Lewis' attorneys announced that they would not honor the judge's decision and would take the case to court. It would have been much less expensive for both the district and the individuals if they had just resigned.

The remaining board members never attempted to promote the notion that the judge's findings in that hearing were binding. I am quite certain they hoped that Mr. Lindsay and Mr. Lewis would heed his advice and resign, saving the district and themselves the expense of going to court.

Most of the citizens of Heppner understand that with the decreasing population they have suffered in the last few years, the teaching staff in their schools had to be reduced. Because of the rapid growth in Irrigon and Boardman, the opposite is true. To guarantee each student in this county the best educational possibilities, changes had to be made. Mr. Armato and his group repeatedly complain that "they took teachers." They never admit that their schools enjoyed one of the lowest teacher/student ratios in Oregon and are still far below the state average. The children in the north part of the county should not be burdened with overcrowded classrooms so that the Heppner schools can maintain a teacher/student ratio of only 12 students per teacher.

Mr. Anderson should be commended for leading the way. He has made a mark on this school district that will not soon be forgotten. He had earned the respect and admiration of every person in this county that recognizes the equity of providing every child with the possibility of being the best that they can be.

It is imperative that we keep Gary Frederickson, Pat McNamee and John Rietmann on the school board. They are only guilty of doing everything in their power to create a school district, that despite funding problems, will provide our children with a quality education.

(s) Merideth De Haven
(s) Barbara Huwe
(s) Billie Griffin
(s) Samie Griffin
(s) LaVelle Partlow
Irrigon

There is help in Jesus

To the Editor:

There is much being said about unity in this hour. We must understand that true unity is unity of the faith, which we know comes by a hearing ear. May God give us ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the church today.

I see Christians and Moslems standing together proclaiming that we serve the same God. But I say unto you, Let God's Word be true and every man a liar. How can two walk together except they be in agreement? And who is a liar?

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is anti-christ, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father... 1 John 2:22-23

Jesus is the Christ. Jesus is the Word. Jesus is God. If we deny that, then how can we say that we serve the same God? If you deny the Word you do not serve the same God I do. Jesus said, if you have seen me, you have seen the Father. May God open up the eyes of our understanding. No man can come to the Father except through Jesus Christ. There is no mediator between God and

man except Jesus Christ. Jesus and the Father are one.

In this hour of darkness, we must allow the Word to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. We must hear His voice. May God give us understanding in all of these things.

A dear brother said these words to me on the phone recently, "We must hear and obey Him to be kept out of harm's way." How true that is. He is an ever-present help in the time of trouble. He is our hiding place. There is help in no other name. His name is Jesus.

(s) Lynda Crane
Heppner

Men's breakfast

A community men's breakfast will be held on Sunday, Oct. 21, at 8 a.m. at Christian Life Center, 535 W. Morgan Street, Heppner.

The breakfast is sponsored by the First Christian Church, the Nazarene Church and Christian Life Center.

After breakfast, a devotional will be led by John Marvin, missionary to Antigua.

All men are invited to attend.

Let's all work together

To the Editor:

I'm part of the "Gray Group" who have lived here all their lives and find all the discord about our schools very disturbing. Does it matter what happened in the past? Our world was changed on Sept. 11 and will never be the same. Let's all work together after this recall election and keep our eyes on the prize. The prize as I see it is the student we must prepare to live in this complex and dangerous world.

Face it -- the money is just not there at the local, state or federal level, for anything new. Leadership is the key and we must try to direct it in the following ways:

Attend school board meetings when held in your area and offer support and suggestions as appropriate... know what's going on.

Volunteer an hour each week in your child's classroom. With the size of our classes, our teachers need all the help they can get. Nothing works better to help the education process more than one-on-one contact, no matter what your age.

Serve on the advisory or school board. As a past member, I can tell you it's a thankless job, but also very rewarding. When I served on the

school board I once received a threatening call toward my daughter's welfare. I recognized the voice and after issuing my own threat, invited him to participate by running for the school board. He now has grandchildren attending our schools and I'm still waiting for him to do so.

We are going to have super facilities when the building process is complete so let's try to ensure we have education at the same level. Support our fine teachers, even the few clunkers, as they all need all the help they can get.

I'm sure wrongs have been committed, but how long are we going to dwell on them? We only have one shot at those little formative minds, so let's all join together and give them all we've got. I'd like to see 25 applications for the vacated board seats as we need a choice. I feel four days a week is okay if it's quality time. I agree leadership is the key so let's make sure we have the best we can afford. Attend the board meetings and volunteer for the selection committee.

(s) Pat Wright
Lexington

Line of reasoning interesting, troubling

To the Editor:

A recent letter to the Editor started an interesting and troubling line of reasoning that I would like to discuss. The comment, "Can you imagine how much better we could have made life for some disadvantaged kids if the proponents of the recall had devoted their energy to helping them instead of the direction they took." Please form your own opinion with a few more such statements.

Can you imagine how much better we could have made life for all kids if the school board had considered other options instead of accepting the superintendent's proposal of cutting 17 teachers in one year and the subsequent gap to the curriculum and programs with no consideration of what would be left to offer students? Scheduling is difficult to accommodate requirements and fill the schedule with the small number of electives that are available. The curriculum is lacking for both college-bound and vocational-minded students.

Can you imagine how much better we could have made life for all students if the superintendent had used the grant from the state's small school funding (which they received but have not used) to hire a teacher as the state intended?

Can you imagine how much better we could have made life for all students if the school board would have followed its own policies on accepting anonymous letters, or if

they had not spent thousands of dollars on a retired judge whose decision both sides said was not legally binding and thus not to be adhered to; or if they had given fellow board members adequate and equal time to prepare for the board meeting where this was first discussed? Go ahead, add your own endings. Unfortunately there are plenty more examples on this issue alone.

Can you imagine how much better we could have made life for all kids if the school board would have discussed board business in open meetings with all board members present; or came to board meetings with an open mind and not a pre-worded motion typed out for them by district staff?

Can you imagine how much better we could have made life for all kids if the proponents of the recall had devoted their energy to attend parent-teacher conferences, or attended school board meetings, site council meetings and advisory committee meetings to voice our concerns or been an active member of these councils and committees, or attended musical, scholastic and sporting events or spent time mapping our kids' future class schedules and college requirements. Oh wait! We did! We are not a "small but vocal group of district patrons"; we are parents with kids in this school system. Vote "yes" on the recall.

(s) John Murray
Heppner

Willows Grange #672
Fund Raiser To Replace Heating System
Saturday, October 27th
SPAGHETTI FEED at 5:30 p.m.
and
BLUE MTN. OLD TIME FIDDLERS at 7 p.m.
Music and Meal:
Adults \$8 • Seniors & Students \$7 • Ages 6-12 \$2.50 • 6 & under free
Meal Only: Adults 12 and older \$5 • Ages 6-12 \$2.50 • 6 & under free
Music Only: Adults \$4 • Seniors and Students \$3

For Frog Lovers



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Halloween Costumes 20% off!
Lots of Candy and Decorations!



Watch for our upcoming Christmas Open House!
Thursday, Nov. 29 (Light Parade Day) through Saturday, Dec. 1

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The Country Rose
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