

~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT 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 \$10.

Economic Development Group supports speedway excise tax

To the Editor:

After hosting a community meeting regarding the proposed Boardman Speedway project and the proposed excise tax on speedway goods and services and considering carefully the pros and cons of the project, the board members of Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group have voted to endorse and support the building of the speedway and urges a yes vote on the Speedway excise tax vote that will be in the mail to you shortly.

The prospect of creating hundreds of family wage jobs in Morrow County and increasing the tax base because of the development and related projects makes the speedway project a good one. Issues such as traffic and noise and zoning have been studied carefully and will be mitigated to the fullest extent possible.

The excise tax will apply only to goods and services purchased at the raceway and can't be changed without a further vote of the people. It amounts to a user fee on people attending events at the speedway. The conduit bonds sold will be guaranteed by a money center bank by means of a letter of credit insuring no risk to Morrow County residents.

Tourist projects are important because they create jobs, have people spend money in our communities and then the tourist leaves and doesn't burden existing services for the most part.

Please join us in voting YES on the speedway excise tax and supporting the Boardman Speedway project.

(s) For the Board of Directors,
George Koffler, President
Willow Creek Valley
Economic Development Group

Passing excise tax good step in supporting speedway

To the Editor:

After reading and listening to information and asking questions about the proposed speedway project in Boardman, we have decided that it can be a positive development for Morrow County. We will vote "yes" on the excise tax, as one step toward bringing the speedway and adjoining businesses to the county.

Previous concerns have been allayed as we have learned, the following: Apparently, the majority of Boardman residents who have attended meetings about the project do not oppose it. Water quality in Boardman will not be adversely affected. Neither the county nor the Port of Morrow will be responsible for payment of borrowed funds if the project fails. Any tax proposal must be voted on by the county voters, so we must vote on this excise tax, but the tax will be paid only by people who make

purchases in the speedway district. Tax revenue for the county, once the related enterprises are operating, can be expected to almost double the present base. The jobs generated by the construction phase of the project and then the permanent jobs in the speedway district can positively impact the county's economy, in retail, services, schools and real estate.

Several steps must be completed if the speedway is to come to Morrow County; the passing of the excise tax for that district is one step. The guarantee by the developers of a certain number of race-day commitments is another. We voters cannot influence the decision-makers of the race industry, but we can vote "yes" on the excise tax to help move the project toward realization.

(s) Dan and Doris Brosnan Heppner

EO promised to be fair, accurate and balanced

To the Editor:

Once again the community of Irrigon finds itself trying to hold the East Oregonian to a promise that was made to it by managing editor Steve Brown. That promise was to be fair, accurate and balanced while reporting both the negatives and positives of Irrigon. We have asked for this promise because we truly believe the children of this community deserve nothing less.

The East Oregonian has been working with a very small group of parents who have continually complained about Irrigon Jr. Sr. High School and its administrator Ron Anthony. A larger group of parents have met with the E.O. on two different occasions. We were told that our comments would be included in future articles. We received nothing. Not one comment from those meetings have ever been printed. We are assuming it is because there were too many positive statements made about IJSHS and Ron Anthony. Printing positives doesn't sell papers. But the E.O. promised to be fair, accurate and balanced.

We would like to address a couple of the facts the E.O. left out. The first fact is that this titty twisting incident happened two years ago, not this year, but two years ago. According to the article in the E.O., Oregon State Law requires public officials such as teachers and administrators to report possible child abuse directly to the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS). If this is in fact true, and Mr. Melendez witnessed this act and deemed it child abuse, why didn't he report it directly to DHS? Seems to us that he dropped the ball too. And let's all remember, this was two years ago, the student and grandparent involved didn't want to press any charges, have gotten over it and have moved on. Is it possible this group of negative parents could do the same?

The second complaint of this group is the rapid rate of teacher turnovers. Did the E.O. investigate this complaint before they reported it? Probably not or they would have printed the facts. Yes, Irrigon Jr. Sr. High School received seven new teachers for the 2005/06 school year. Two of those were brand new positions, (because we went from being a middle school to a high school), two were to replace teachers who moved into administrative positions, two teachers moved back home to be closer to their families, and the last one went back to school to further his education. Anyone who works around schools

knows that teachers come and go yearly. It happens.

Our principal, Ron Anthony, has found himself on the front page of the E.O. for violating the Internet policies of the Morrow County School District. The E.O. left people believing that he was looking at porn on the Internet. Nothing could be further from the truth. He received and forwarded an email. Nothing more, nothing less. Mr. Anthony did break a rule by forwarding it, and has owned up to his mistake. Mr. Anthony has given this community a heartfelt apology and it has been accepted. We are in total support of Mr. Anthony and are proud of the way he is administrating our school.

This small group of negative people have kept this community in turmoil this entire school year. Have they once given any thought to the damage they are causing their own children and the children of this community? This community is tired of being held hostage by this group. If you don't like it here, move. Time and time again a large portion of this community has come out in support of Ron Anthony and how he is administrating our school. The MCSD must think highly of Mr. Anthony as well since last year they had him administrating two schools for them. One man, two schools.

We honestly believe this is a modern day witch hunt and it needs to stop. If a child receiving a titty twister is child abuse I guess my mother should have been charged years ago. My brothers gave their sisters plenty of them.

In closing we once again ask the E.O. to do a better job reporting the facts. We also ask this small group of negative parents to move past the hatred in their hearts for the sake of the children of this community. We've accomplished a lot while being divided, let's try working together and set a better example for our children.

(s) Danny and Meredith Young Irrigon

Justice Court Report

Jeffrey Patrick Cutsforth, 46, Lexington, Passing in a No Passing Zone, fine \$185.

Kurt E. Hendrix, 32, Pendleton, Failure to Use Seatbelt, fine \$99.

John Looney, 24, Heppner, DUII, fine \$2914 and 40 hours of community service, 60 days electronic surveillance and completion of an alcohol education program.

Spicer can be serious, fair-minded judge

To the Editor:

Forty or so years ago, I would have been reluctant to endorse any woman for an elective position in our county. However, after a few years of serving the county myself, I completely changed my opinion. I learned that intelligent, dedicated women are capable of doing most jobs as well or better than most men.

Consequently, I was happy that a lady I have come to admire is seeking a county position this year, Ann Spicer for Circuit Judge.

Ann came to the county as a newlywed and recent law school graduate in the 1970s. She soon took a job as assistant district attorney for Morrow County. In that job she was generally designated to handle the juvenile crimes. I rapidly came to respect her as a very practical and

talented young lady and very interested in the future welfare of our children.

When Dennis Doherty resigned as district attorney, Ann held the job for a term. In that position, of course, her primary job was preparing for trial and prosecuting lawbreakers. She was also the primary legal advisor for the County Court. I came to respect her as a serious, hard working attorney with a great respect for the law. I do not believe that she would be the kind of judge who would interpret the law to fit her personal prejudices. The term "Compassionate Conservative" probably comes much closer to describing Ann than any other adjective I can think of now. She will be a serious and fair-minded judge with enough experience in both criminal and civil law to do an outstanding job.

(s) Don McElligott Ione

East Oregonian doesn't give equal coverage to Irrigon

To the Editor:

I was amazed to read on the front page of the March 18 East Oregonian-in extremely large and bold font- "Irrigon suspends Principal of the Year." Anyone with an ounce of intelligence knows that Irrigon couldn't suspend a mosquito. Morrow County is in a County School District, and any action comes from the Morrow County School Board.

Irrigon (as proven by your [East Oregonian] recent poll) has a very large majority supporting (and appreciating) Ron Anthony. The things that have been accomplished in just two years with the new high school are amazing. I can't begin to imagine how fast we would progress if the negative energy could be converted into positive efforts. It would really be fun to all work together for the betterment of our kids and our community.

There were other inaccuracies in this article as well. I believe they were corrected in a later edition, but in a very small font. I do appreciate the sensitivity portrayed by the Hermiston Herald and the Tri-City Herald in their manner of reporting this story. They called the district first to get accurate information- also, they didn't splash it all over their front pages in a tabloid fashion. I hope I'm not being paranoid, but it really seems as though the East Oregonian has an ongoing vendetta against our community.

I vividly remember when we made a valiant attempt to have our high school restored 10 years ago and our citizens flooded the paper with letters in support of this effort. The East Oregonian reciprocated by running a full-length editorial stating all the reasons they felt we should not have a high school. They seemed perfectly happy for every other town in our area to have a high school but did not feel Irrigon was entitled.

At a meeting with editor Steve Brown, one member of our group pointed out to him the meager coverage they give Irrigon compared to any other town. One example was the Awards Banquet, where our coverage was minimal and other towns in

our area received big write-ups. The first year we had our high school, our students entered a fabulous float in the Irrigon Watermelon Festival parade. It won the "grand champion" trophy, but the East Oregonian bypassed it in favor of a picture of the Riverside cheerleaders float. We were tickled to pieces to have the Riverside cheerleaders, but wouldn't it have been nice if the paper could have recognized both high schools? After several people called to complain, I believe they did later run a picture of our high school's float.

We have noticed the paper gives excellent coverage for special events for every town except Irrigon. In the years since I have been chairperson of the Irrigon Watermelon Festival, we have given the E.O. thousands of dollars in advertising. They are very willing to accept our money, but give very little coverage for our event. If this trend continues, there is only one recourse for citizens of Irrigon, and I don't think I need to spell it out.

(s) LaVelle Partlow Irrigon

Illegal turkey hunting teaches children practices

To the Editor: Sunday, April 9, someone shot a turkey at Cutsforth Park illegally. To begin with, it is illegal to shoot in the park. Whoever adult is teaching this child to hunt (it was a youth season) is teaching them to break the law.

I and another person at the park have fed those turkeys all winter and they were almost tame.

This happened at the very edge of nightfall. I observed the vehicle leave the park at dark with their lights on.

(s) Barbara Gilbert Cutsforth Park

Births

April 6: Victor Hugo Ramirez, 25, Boardman and Adilene Gabriela Padilla, 19, Boardman.

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