

~ 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.

Speedway tax needs cleaned up

To the Editor:
The April 19 article on "Lexington Council hears raceway presentation" brought out a couple of important issues for Morrow County. It seems like the mayor of Lexington, Val Doherty, is one of the few people who have read the raceway contract. It also appears that the contract doesn't match the promotion very well. The county's protection on the money from the bonds they issue is a letter of credit from the developers. I took a letter of credit from a fellow one time back when I was a naïve college student. I carried that letter of credit around for a long time. I never did see that guy again, or my \$20. Something like that happened in Morrow County a little over 20 years ago, having to do with some big farm. That was just before I came here.

I've lived a number of places, but I've never seen an increase in the tax base that didn't increase the taxes for the original residents. There may be a way to do it, but the increased police and medical, etc., which the raceway will generate won't cut taxes. With my present knowledge, I'm not opposed to the raceway itself, but that secrecy clause in the contract sure smells like a rat to this cowboy. If we want a raceway, let's clean up the contract this summer and vote it in next fall.

The second point I get from the article is that Val Doherty read the contract. Her thoroughness and careful consideration of each issue has been a major factor in the city of Lexington becoming a smoothly functioning town. She has all the necessary qualifications to be a district attorney and she has experience in criminal law from both sides of the court. More importantly, she has good sense. I wouldn't expect her to ignore a crime or to waste the county's resources prosecuting without adequate evidence.

(s) Dick Temple
Lexington

Brauer adheres to the principles of justice

To the Editor:
What do we want in a judge? Above all, we want fairness. That is not as easy as it seems. For a judge to be unwaveringly fair, he must be able to put aside his personal prejudices, be oblivious to political pressure and decide simply upon the rule of law and the evidence presented. No more, no less. Such traits are not commonplace, but I have personally worked with such a man. He is Christopher Brauer.

As district attorney, Chris Brauer is confronted with many issues that reveal what kind of judge he will be. Chris Brauer abhors crime and has even less use for the criminal mindset, yet the overriding rule for deputies in the district attorney's office under Chris Brauer was, and still is: "You are not here to simply get convictions. You are here to

Vote Saxton for governor

To the Editor:
Ron Saxton has a special ability to bring progressive change to Oregon without partisan divisiveness. He affirmed this while chairman of the Portland School Board. Tax money was conserved without threatening education.

He is strong on farming, forestry and habitat, pointing out the vital balance natural resources have on our economy.

Hydroelectric dams won't be breached by Saxton as Oregon's governor and the rift between east and west will be bridged.

(s) Ken Turner
Heppner

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seek justice." He taught us about seeking justice. Even when a jury returned a verdict of not guilty, he would remind us that the system had worked. He reassured us that if we had done our job the best that we could, then we should be satisfied with the decision of guilt or innocence because that decision is not that of a district attorney, it is that of a jury of the defendant's peers. Chris Brauer reveres the Constitution and adheres to principles of justice each day with every case.

Time and again, my fellow deputies and I learned from Chris Brauer to temper prosecutorial zeal with respect for the Constitution. A judge must always vanguard the rights of the citizen. Chris Brauer will be such a judge and I'm not the only one who thinks so. Chris Brauer is endorsed by each of the four circuit judges in the sixth judicial district that serves Umatilla and Morrow counties. Also, all three of the candidates for Morrow County District Attorney endorse and support him. You should too.

(s) Dean F. Gushwa
Former Deputy District Attorney for Umatilla County
Pendleton

Brauer has strong commitment and variety of experiences

To The Editor:
Please join me in voting for Christopher R. Brauer for Circuit Court Judge.

As Umatilla County elected (and twice re-elected) district attorney, Chris Brauer has the experience and the character to represent us well as judge. He has the civil and criminal law experience to fairly adjudicate the cases heard in Umatilla and Morrow County Circuit Courts.

On a more personal note, Chris is known for his commitment to his profession, his community and his family.

Chris Brauer is the only candidate who has participated in the Umatilla County Drug Court Committee, and has been an instrumental part of making the potential Drug Court a reality for Umatilla and Morrow counties.

Chris Brauer is the only candidate who has held himself to the highest standards of character in his campaign, offering his own qualifications, philosophy and Statement of Judicial Values in response to the negative campaigns of the other candidates.

Chris Brauer is the only candidate endorsed by all the Circuit Court Judges in the Sixth Judicial District.

Vote Christopher R. Brauer for Circuit Court Judge on May 16.

(s) Susan McHenry
Hermiston

Speedway- an investment into our future

To the Editor:
We have a vote coming up next month for an exciting new business venture in the north part of the county. It's for an excise tax that will be applied only to a 35-square mile area just west of Boardman. A group of men have been working for the last five years to get approval to build a speedway that will have NASCAR races as well as stock cars, Indie-style cars, motorcross, sprint cars, and eventually go-karts, motorcycles and even a drag strip. They have a four-phase plan that will eventually be a 10-year build out that includes an 80,000-seat stadium, 15,000-space RV park, hotels, restaurants and condominiums with views of the Columbia River. They are planning to have 70 races per year of one type or another starting in September 2008 and eventually 200 events of various kinds per year—since there are 365 days in the year, they will be scheduling something virtually full time with breaks only when the weather is bad in the winter. They will be hiring 750 construction workers immediately (if the tax passes) and when the complex is done, there will be 100-200 permanent jobs working there just for the speedway alone—this doesn't include the jobs that will be generated by other businesses that will probably be building.

They have \$300 million in funding arranged with an irrevocable "insurance policy" that covers the costs if these guys flake out or die or something. It's a shot in the arm for this county that will take us from rags to riches—the taxes they'll pay on the property alone changes from minimal dollars on pasture/grazing CRP land to \$1.3 million just for our schools in this county. They'll break ground this summer if the tax passes and I sure do hope it does. This could change everything for everyone in this county.

These guys have come to speak at Chamber and a number of other venues and they seem like real down-to-earth, nice guys—not stuck on themselves, too-good-for-the-natives types. Over and over they've said that they want to use locals as much as possible at the construction site as well as doing business with local businesses already established. These guys are paying for the changes and improvements out of their own funding for all the surrounding roads (including a new off-ramp on I-84) so there are no federal, state or county dollars being spent on their project. However, they don't want to

pay to maintain the roads forever, so the excise tax is on goods and services within the 35-mile speedway boundaries and will be used for that maintenance for the next 30 years when it "sunssets." It cannot be changed in any way unless the voters of the county approve a change. Seven-and-a-half percent goes for maintaining the roads within that area and .5 percent comes to the county to administer the funds. With 80,000 race fans paying 8 percent on tickets, T-shirts, hot dogs and beer, I think that the .5 percent the county gets will be far more than administrative costs will be. With that, I anticipate there will eventually be additional funds that can be used for other county improvements—such as roads outside the raceway boundaries or payroll for extra deputies or increases in their pay to attract and keep our law enforcement personnel so they don't leave for greener pastures. The tax affects only those who actually go to the races or stay in a hotel/motel/ RV park there or eat in one of the restaurants that will be built. Any additional businesses that build within the boundaries (and I expect there will be dozens of them eventually) will have to charge the tax on whatever they sell, but most people won't even be aware of it and since most are used to paying sales taxes in other states, it won't seem unusual. They did a study to find where they would draw the crowds from and in an area 600 miles surrounding their site next to Boardman—there are 26,000,000 people. I had no idea. But it takes in Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia and all that area clear up to Vancouver, B.C., over to Spokane, WA, Coeur d'Alene and Boise, ID, Missoula, MT and even down to Reno, NV and Redding, CA. The whole state of Oregon falls in there, as well as all the others.

These guys are even paying to lengthen the runway at the little airport in Boardman (investors did the same thing 20 years ago in Branson, MO) so charter jets and corporate jets will be able to land there. This is a very, very big deal and I just hope and pray that we don't kill this particular golden goose. I've heard the notion that "this is just a way to make the entire county pay for their enterprise." Nobody pays unless they go to the races—seems like a really good thing to me and maybe a way for more of us to keep living and perhaps even prospering in Heppner as well as the rest of Morrow County. "If you build it, they will come" is a true statement and we are blessed that someone wants to invest in the future right here in our area. We are doubly blessed if we invest some of ourselves in that future too.

(s) Nancy Gochnauer
Heppner

Grieb will work for today and the future

To the Editor:
I am writing to urge Morrow County voters to support Ken Grieb for county commissioner.

I served on the Board of Directors of the Oregon Wheat Growers League while Ken was President of the organization. Ken is a strong leader who will listen. Ken will be a sound decision maker and will be able to stand up for what he feels is the right decisions for our county. As President of the OWGL, Ken set high expectations of both the staff and the board, but he was not a micro-manager. I believe that Ken will expect the county government to work effectively within its means. Ken will provide sound leadership. Leadership that looks into the future and does what will be best for the county not only today but also 20 or 30 years from now.

I encourage you to vote for Ken, he will represent all the citizens of Morrow County well.

(s) Jerry Rietmann
Lone

Spicer can provide full service to Umatilla and Morrow counties

To the Editor:

As someone who wants to get the best return for his tax dollars, I am concerned as to what the district attorney [Umatilla District Attorney Christopher Brauer] will be able to provide to the Courts if he is elected judge. My understanding is that he would not be able to hear criminal cases in Umatilla County, having hired most of the deputy district attorneys who would appear before him. I also believe he has limited to non-existent family law experience. I would hate to think we would elect someone who would be handling nothing more than post-conviction relief, small claims and the occasional criminal case in Morrow County.

I think that the circuit would be better served by electing a candidate [Ann Spicer] who could provide "full service" and not have to recuse himself from a substantial portion of what occurs in Umatilla County.

(s) LeRoy Meharry, M.D.
Umatilla

Burns has understanding of county problems

To the Editor:

The Morrow County commissioner election is a win-win situation for the entire county. Both Mr. Burns and Mr. Grieb are superbly qualified and both possess great interest in our county.

I will vote for Loyal Burns because while working to solve our electrical problems, he has continually given freely of his time and expertise far above any expectations. In discussions of our county's problems, he has shown unusual depth of understanding.

Please join me and vote for Loyal Burns.

(s) Joe Miller
Heppner

ELECT



LOYAL BURNS

MORROW COUNTY COMMISSIONER

"Experience that can work for you!"

FIGHT DRUGS. FIGHT CRIME.

START FEELING SAFE AGAIN.

ELECT JOHN L. BALLARD

MORROW COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Straight talk - New leadership



Paid for by the Committee to Elect John L. Ballard for Morrow County District Attorney