

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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For Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor MUST be signed by the author. The Heppner GT will not publish unsigned letters. All letters MUST include the author's address and phone number for use by the GT office. The GT reserves the right to edit letters. 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.

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S-P-E-L-L-I-N-G contest set for Monday

Students from all over Umatilla and Morrow counties will S-P-E-L-L their way through the 2007 Umatilla-Morrow County Spelling Contest on Monday at Blue Mountain Community College.

The Spelling Contest – sponsored for the past decade by the Umatilla-Morrow Education Service District (UMESD) – pits students who have one their school spelling contests against one another to determine who will represent the two counties at the state competition in September. Each school within the 12 Umatilla and Morrow county public school districts is invited to send a first-place winner to the contest for each division applicable to that school.

There will be one winner from each of three divisions – Div. 1 (grades 1-5), Div. 2 (grades 6-8) and Div. 3 (grades 9-12). They will be invited to the Oregon State Fair on Sept. 1 in Salem, where the state contest will take place. While the students will be provided with tickets to the State Fair, their room and board is not included, so some students will do some fundraising to raise enough funds to go to the state contest.

This year's bi-county competition has some students as young as the 3rd grade competing for a division title, said Eric Volger, assistant director of Instructional Services for the UMESD, who coordinates the Spelling Contest. He said several students have won their division for several years running.

"We really try to make this a special event for this group because it's an event to show off their academic skills, and they should be proud of that," Volger said. "Some of these kids don't play sports or do other competitive activities, so this is where they can really excel and show off their academic talents. That's why we really encourage the schools to recognize these kids as well."

The contest uses a list of words provided by the Oregon Department of Education, and students write them down, just as if they were taking a spelling test in school. This is why the event is a spelling contest. Spelling bees are conducted orally. There are different lists of words for each division.

The Spelling Contest begins at 7 p.m. in room ST-200 of the Science Building at BMCC. The agenda is as follows:

- 7:00-7:05 p.m. – Introductions
- 7:05-7:10 p.m. – Students are dismissed to testing rooms, testing begins
- 7:10-7:40 p.m. – Short film for parents/guests
- 7:40-8:10 p.m. – Refreshments in BMCC Cafeteria for students and parents/guests
- 8:15-8:30 p.m. – Awards presentation, room ST-200

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~ 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.

We have lost what democracy is all about

Letter to the Editor:

To the good people of Morrow County and especially the citizens of Ione, It is with much sadness and regret that I write this letter of resignation as the mayor of Ione. This is also my reply why I was forced to resign.

I have served the fine citizens of Ione for over 11 years. Over those 11 years I have always served with honesty, fairness and passion. I have given my time, knowledge and skill to help build and improve the City of Ione. I always strived to bring our city forward and maintain the way of living that we cherish. I am honored and grateful for the time I spent serving my friends and regret not being able to complete my term. I apologize to all who voted for me and supported me but I had no choice. It also was a great honor to serve in our government. I had an opportunity to grow and learn about being a good citizen.

I learned to listen to others, debate and come to consensus.

I learned to argue and disagree with council members but also walk away as friends with one common goal.

I learned to respect all positions of leadership even if I disagree with their politics. I learned how precious and fragile democracy is.

Unfortunately there is an epidemic in our country that threatens the every heart of who we are as Americans. There is this belief that we must destroy anything or anyone who we disagree with. We run our elections by persecuting and accusing our opponents instead of offering ideas and solutions we believe in. We feel we can say and do anything no matter how negative or hurtful to others it may be as long as we have a quick and meaningless apology afterward. We believe all people, religions and countries are fair game. Crossing the line of decency and morality are now a badge of courage. We believe that those who yell the loudest and point their finger the longest deserve to get their way.

The most destructive belief is that we must tear down our government officials. Mayors, governors and presidents must be forced out of office if we didn't vote for them or agree with their politics.

We have lost what democracy is all about. We have forgotten the reasons our brave young men and women are sacrificing their lives for all over this planet. We are turning our backs on all those who sacrificed their families and lives to fight for democracy all over the world.

We need to get back to the basics of democracy to stop this downward spiral. Justice, liberty and freedom are virtues to be cherished. Respecting others who we disagree with is what democracy is. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose is what democracy is. Supporting your leaders and respecting the office they hold is what democracy is. Passing on a knowledge and deep respect for our way of life and government to our children is what democracy is. Honoring those who have given their lives for our country in the name of democracy by protecting and nurturing it at home is our duty.

Democracy is not a noun. It is a verb. It needs to be practiced in a positive and healthy way. It is a beautiful thing when it is practiced the way our fathers intended it. Their wisdom and foresight resonates in all the city halls around this great country. It is our duty to listen. The city council of Ione stopped listening no matter how loud our forefathers yelled. May they learn to listen.

Mark A. Bruno, citizen
Ione

Thanks expressed for help from school kids

Dear Editor:

My husband and I would like to let the community know how much we appreciate all the work the school kids did for us.

As we age, a lot of things that we could do easily is no longer possible. With the help of the kids who helped clean up our yard, words cannot express how much this means to us.

Skip and Peggy Connor
Heppner

Heppner city governments should be prevented from spending large sums without voter approval

To the Editor:

The new mayor and city manager have taken a novel approach. That is, if you don't have any money, don't spend it. That just might work. Too bad some previous managers placed the city so far in debt, by borrowing and spending, that there are no funds left for the present administration to work with. But then, it's no longer their problem is it? Whatever time of day I visit the new City Hall building there seems to be only two city employees working there. If I remember correctly there were only six persons, other than city employees, present at the city council meeting when the new mayor was sworn in. There would have more than ample space in the old city hall for any of this. I think there should be something on the books to prevent future Heppner city governments from spending, or borrowing, large sums of money without voter approval. The limit should be set at well below a bank building for the new city hall? No way!

Gene Sonstegard
Heppner

Divorces

Morrow County District Circuit Court has released the following report:

-Paul Anthony Backman, 37, of Ione and Cindy Rhea Backman, 28, of Irrigon have filed for divorce.

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Morrow County educators honored at annual Crystal Apple Ceremony



Lorna Botefuhr, special education assistant at HES received her Crystal Apple Award on May 9. Pictured with Botefuhr is principal of HES Jack Thompson.

On Wednesday, May 9, four Morrow County educators were awarded the prestigious Crystal Apple Award and Riverside's Principal, Dirk Dirksen, was honored with the esteemed Doug Flatt Memorial Leadership Award at the annual Crystal Apple Ceremony in Pendleton. Kathy Simonis, language arts teacher at Riverside Jr/Sr High School, Carma Barron, first grade teacher at A.C. Houghton Elementary School, Lorna Botefuhr, special education assistant at Heppner Elementary, and Beth Wheeler, educational assistant at A.C. Houghton, all received the Crystal Apple Award at the evening's event.

The Umatilla-Morrow ESD is in its eighth year of the Crystal Apple "Excellence in Education" Awards, sponsored by numerous local businesses. The purpose of these awards is to recognize outstanding individuals who are dedicated to the success of our children and their education. These outstanding members of our community deserve recognition and praise for their hard work and dedication to teaching our young people. The award is open to all members of the regular classified service. Nominated by fellow employees or supervisors, this award truly exemplifies the qualities Morrow County

looks to foster in their employees; dedication, passion for education, and a love of kids.

The finale of the Crystal Apple Awards Ceremony is the coveted Doug Flatt Memorial Leadership Award. This year's recipient was none other than Morrow County's own, Dirk Dirksen. Throughout his career in Morrow County as an educator, coach, civic leader, and now principal of Riverside Jr/Sr High School, this award could not have gone to a more deserving recipient. The purpose of the Doug Flatt Memorial Leadership Award is to recognize a school administrator in the region who exemplifies the same qualities for which Mr. Flatt was legendary. The chief executive office of Midco Bus Company, Mr. Flatt was well-known to school districts throughout Oregon, particularly those in this region. Doug lost his life in a tragic plane crash while on business. In guiding the growth and operation of Midco, Doug exemplified the finest qualities of leadership, attention to detail, service to his community, interpersonal relationships, and customer service. This award is sponsored by the Umatilla-Morrow Education Service District and the twelve local school district superintendents who are members of the ESD.