~ 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.

Hosting foreign exchange students can be a wonderful experience for everyone

To the editor:

It was about this time last year I saw an article in the Heppner Gazette, "Host families needed for exchange students." It caught my eye and stayed in my thoughts for a few days. Then with work, kids and just a busy life, the thought faded…

Then it came, the phone call saying that my family had been referred by someone "anonymous" saying that we would be a great host family. What a coincidence, we had already been thinking of hosting an exchange student.

The woman on the phone tells us a few things about the organization she was with and set up an appointment to meet with us.

In the meantime we were sent, via email, several profiles of students available and told to "pick" our top three choices. These profiles consisted of a photo, home country, age, year in school, the duration of their stay, smoking or non-smoking, if they liked animals, etc. We didn't know what we should be looking for. What were the criteria that we should be interested in or focused on? Do we care if it's a boy or girl, their age, their home country? We have never done this before; we don't know what we are doing. So with no guidance we picked our three top choices.

Two weeks and school will be starting. We had heard nothing about our exchange student. When is she coming? We have jobs and we need to know when we need to be available to pick her up at the airport. We got no answers, not a single person we contacted within the organization had any answers for us. We sat waiting and wondering if she was even coming. Were we going to be getting an exchange student? Did they pick another family and not tell us? So many questions unanswered. No communication at all between the company and our family.

One week before school starts and the phone rang. It's a call from the company asking about our exchange student. They want to know if her arrival went well. What? She is not here yet nor do we know when she will be here!

August 28, we get an email telling us that our exchange student will be arriving on August 31! Now we have three days to make arrangements to pick her up. Three days! I guess we were lucky though, I know a family that learned about when their exchange student was arriving the day of their arrival.

Kylie. This is her American name. A cute little South Korean girl, 16 years old, shy and scared to death walking off the plane. Welcome to America! It would take a long time to go through the 10 months that Kylie lived with our family here in Heppner, highlighting all the great experiences we both had, her and our family. Telling of all the things we each learned about each other's countries. There were great moments that will be treasured forever. But what I would like to share with you is this: Kylie did not share many interests that our family had. Some of this was cultural, some of this was her personal interest did not mesh with our family. This is supposed to be an experience that both the student and the family enjoy. We love sports, Kylie hated sports. We would spend time outdoors; Kylie hated to be outdoors. During our journey together, exchange student and host family, and watching other families with exchange student's deal with their struggles at home, I decided this has to change, what I was seeing was not right and there has to be a better way to do this. A way to make this enjoyable for the student and the host family.

I am now an area representative for a small exchange student organization, ICES, that focuses on quality, not quantity. I have chosen to work with the following communities: Heppner, Ione, Arlington, Condon, Fossil, Boardman, Irrigon and Echo. I am committed to turning a new leaf in the arena of exchange student programs. Because of stories like mine that happen everywhere, this is going to be an uphill battle, so much damage control to be done.

I know from our experience the importance of finding the right student for the right family, a student who shares the same interest as your family, students with good grades who we think are coming here to truly learn English and the American culture.

The best part, I will be with you every step of the way, holding your hand when you need it, giving you tips from other family's experiences to help deal with any cultural differences that might come up, working with you and the schools to ensure these students are following the rules set in place for them. Should a problem arise I will be a phone call or a short drive away. The area manager is Linda Corbin. She has already been in contact with many schools in and around these areas. The schools have committed to allowing us to work on placing students in their communities. Some of these schools are setting no limit on the number of students they will take. Small community schools greatly benefit from their community members hosting exchange students. It provides additional funding for them.

If you are one of those families that has hosted in the past and you told yourselves you would never do it again, I urge you to reconsider. If you have never hosted before, it can be a wonderful experience for everyone, the student, the community and the family. Please contact me your local area representative with ICES, Teresa VanDoorn at 541-676-5985, 541-377-2162 or email at go_celebration@hotmail.com.

Teresa VanDoorn
Heppner

Apology to the citizens of Heppner

Dear Citizens of Heppner:

I'd like to address the recent events that occurred here in Heppner. My actions were unlawful and I wronged so many people, not just those people directly affected, but everyone who was affected by my actions.

I feel that I should apologize to all those people. But it doesn't stop there. In response of my actions I made concerned parents scared and outraged, for that I also apologize.

What I did was wrong, there's no denying that. Though, I would like to prove myself, prove that I have changed for the better. It's time I grow up and become a hard-working member of this community. Again, I apologize to all those I wronged.

Christopher E. Hendricks
Heppner

Hospital patients still need a dose of patience and a sense of humor

To the Editor:

Like a boiling teapot sometimes on just has to vent. Recent bouts in hospitals have updated me on modern procedures with advanced technology and skills. But in order to receive the most benefit from all this TLC, a patient still needs a dose of patience along with a sense of humor.

I certainly didn't help myself by not preparing for a hospital stay compared to when we child-bearing females used to pack an emergency bag in anticipation of the big event as well as fully dressing for hospital trip. Now it's OK to trip in without even underwear or shoes. No matter, you still get stripped bare butted, exposing your wrinkled oven-dried prune appearance instead of a once youthful, smooth body. No use getting dressed up to be dressed down with a southern exposure. Casual dress, it's called. Even a pair of bed socks seems like a fashion accessory and a beat-up pocket comb given to me by a sympathizer seemed like a precious gift.

After fanning you with a well-ventilated hospital gown, they put a patient in an ice-cold room. This is to prevent further deterioration until they can decide if you are salvageable. Later, just before discharge, if procedures are successful they ramp up the hospital room temperature so that one has a healthy looking pink glow when re-entering the outside atmosphere that was cruising along in the triple digits.

If one doesn't survive in the outside world following discharge perhaps it's because a patient can't fathom all the prescription drug terminology with a road map that sounds like an obstacle course. "Take 1 in the morning ½ hour before eating" means lay off the grub, fatso. Then there are the morning pills, the noon pills and the afternoon pills until you shake, rattle and roll. Try not to choke on the horse-size potassium tablets and don't forget that slow-burn feeling when they put the stuff in your IV. Must not forget to take your before-bed pills, even though you know you aren't going to get any sleep.

Hospitals orchestrate it so no patient can expire from over-relaxation. Nurses take "vitals" so often, the blood pressure cuff stands at attention. Then there's always one "Dracula" registered nurse with PMS and a needle frenzy. Rolling veins, my eye, that lady whose face would crack if she smiled, is all about blood. Next time I hope I can bring my own needle as the one used on me was designed for elephants. We at least use sharp needles when vaccinating or drawing blood from cattle or horses. As to sleeping, the banging of the pharmacy door, like a drumbeat, is designed to keep your senses alert.

At least I have the good sense to say nothing and shut up occasionally; like when the nurse said, "nothing by mouth" and I thought she said, "you've got a mouth." Gee, all I wanted was a drink of water before rigor mortis set in from lying on a modern slab called a bed. After a bout of fasting, they then served harvest crew meals laden with so many calories your body can work on elevating blood pressure and cholesterol problems. The specialists and the techs need business also, I guess. I've sampled better, less gummy rolled oats fed to our horses and there are potatoes still around that haven't recovered from six months in a flooded field. It could be called "flashing" that features an arthritic strip-tease in the hospital bathroom shower minus ballet-like movements or any jazzy music – not something to record or watch.

Once you are home again you're on your own. Then one begins to appreciate the extra steps, the kind words and the attention of caring hospital personnel who try to bring us out of our misery and give us comfort when we need that TLC. Hooray for the health care industry from start to finish. Some of us may not run like a deer anymore, but at least the motor keeps on ticking thanks to a little tune-up or two and a "can-do" attitude.

Merlyn Robinson
Heppner

You will get caught

Letter to the Editor;

Several weeks ago someone decided that the five gallons of gas and gas can we had for our lawnmower was needed by them more than we needed it. Or maybe they felt they deserved more than us - I don't know, but I would like our gas can back.

We as yet have not reported this to the police department and will not do so if our can is returned - keep the gas. A bright blue five gallon gas can is very unusual in Heppner so you will get caught if it is not returned. Just leave it in our yard - please.

Diann Nagel
Heppner

"A" list weeds require management plan

The Morrow County Weed Control District Noxious Weed Ordinance Compliance Policy MC-C-3-90, as amended requires landowners/operators in Morrow County with infestations of "A" list noxious weeds to file a weed control management plan with the district.

Plan requirements include a map showing weed locations and short term and long term control strategies. The Advisory Board considers the plan requirement first as a way to increase both awareness and involvement of the landowners and operators in the required weed control activities, and second, as a protection from being issued citations as long as the plans are being followed. Ownership changes and new weed locations also require a new or amended plan for the property.

The Advisory Board is focusing on areas where Mediterranean Sage and White Top are found, but all "A" list weeds do require a plan. Morrow County's "A" list weeds include rush skeletonweed, yellow starthistle, tansy ragwort, dalmation and yellow toadflax, Mediterranean sage, Leafy spurge, spikeweed, musk thistle, Scotch thistle, purple loosestrife and common crupina.

Holly Rebekah Lodge card party to be held

Holly Rebekah Lodge will be hosting card parties in July and August. On Saturday, July 12, play will begin at 7 p.m. The cost continues to be only $5 per person with refreshments being served throughout the evening. Prizes will be awarded at the end of the evening.

Degree of Honor to hold annual picnic

The Degree of Honor will hold their annual picnic on Tuesday, July 15 at 6 p.m. at City Park. All members and friends are invited to attend. Drinks will be provided.

For more information call Shirley at 676-9977 or Mary Ann at 422-7485.

Wedding Tables

Joe and Kathleen (Greenup) Albitre
Wedding and Reception - Aug. 2, 2008

Jill Sorey and Corey Miller
Wedding - Oct. 18, 2008

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