

~ 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.

**Support for Matlack for sheriff**

To the editor:

Here we are again, and we see that the political comments and innuendos are being spread. I am referring to the sheriff's race in Morrow County.

I note with dismay the opposition using the word "Integrity" in an apparent attempt to insinuate that Sheriff Matlack somehow lacks integrity. I find this appalling!

According to Webster's Dictionary integrity means "unimpaired moral principals" and it is also a synonym for "honesty". This is Ken Matlack. I have a hard time believing that this is even an issue with what I know of Ken Matlack.

Quotes from the East Oregonian newspaper for March 30, 2008: (Stanfield Police Chief Zumwalt): His department trained and taught the ropes of police work to an officer only to lose the officer after 14 months on the job. Because small communities don't have the budget to offer high paying jobs, they cannot compete with larger communities. Once the officer is trained, the often are ready to move on, leaving the small towns in the same situation they started in. This also happens in Umatilla and Morrow Counties. Pilot Rock, Weston, and Boardman are also looking for officers. That was a quote from the E.O.

Sheriff Matlack and Undersheriff Myren have been out on patrols and doing more field work than any Morrow County Sheriff since Sheriff Bowman. They have also increased the visibility of their deputies as well.

Now, as for the reserve deputies. Two of the young men are relatives of ours. Both men joined shortly after getting married. Our grandson found that being a newlywed and having a full-time job left little time for his bride, so he left the reserve program which he loves and has since rejoined. The other young man also enjoyed the reserves, but moved out of state for employment. He will also rejoin when he returns to the area. The others I don't know, but I would recommend you are careful with your facts!

I cannot believe that the people of Morrow County would be willing to lose a man of Ken Matlack's caliber and stature. Sheriff Matlack has over 25 years with the Oregon State Police, four years as Morrow County Sheriff, and he was a well known and successful private detective. He has had many, many years of training with a wide variety of programs and classes. It would be very hard to find a man with his knowledge, leadership skills, and his amount of expertise in law enforcement.

The people would be wise to keep a man of his quality as the Working Sheriff for Morrow County!

Billy and Samie Griffin  
Irrigon

**Re-Elect Ken Matlack**

Letter to the Editor:

I moved here seven years ago and was more than a little surprised at the amount of graffiti I saw not only in my community of Irrigon, but Boardman as well. It was a sign that gang activity was very active in the area. I know because I moved from the Everett, WA area where gangs seem to flourish.

I don't know how long the tagging had been going on in this area ... but I did notice and I'm sure you have as well, that there just doesn't seem to be any more of that lately. I know that the sheriff's department, under the leadership of Sheriff Ken Matlack, has worked very hard to get control of an element of society that can breed fear and discontent in a community. He and all of the deputies have worked hard to make us feel very secure and I believe that we are safer today than we were four years ago.

I look in the newspapers at the kind of response calls it lists. It seems to me that crime over all is down in our county from what it used to be just four years ago. I don't know about you ... but I certainly feel safer and our town is more livable because of his leadership.

I want to publicly thank Sheriff Ken Matlack and all the deputies for their dedication to service and for helping make Morrow County a more livable community, a safer community.

Rick Yardley  
Irrigon

**Time to tighten our belts**

Dear Citizens:

Does Morrow County Health District think Boardman and Irrigon residents are worthless or just 'worth less'? I am sorry to say that I was a founding member of Morrow County's Health District back in 1993/1994. The idea was to create a county-wide district to distribute funds for medical services. It made sense at the time. But that's not the way it has worked. Boardman and Irrigon usually end up on the short end of the stick.

The County collects from all of us no matter where we live. But the Health District has a blind spot. It isn't spending money where people live. I am not looking at 'registered voters.' I am looking at where people live in Morrow County. 75% of Morrow County's population of 12,000 live along the Columbia River. Now look at what the Health District collects: almost \$1,120,000, dollars annually. Do the math. If every child, woman, and man, including veterans received a hunk of that change, about \$100 would be spent for each person in Morrow County. Wrong. Irrigon and Boardman health clinics combined will receive less than \$300,000 of the District's proposed budget. That means people up here are valued at about \$33 a head. That amount is actually for Irrigon's clinic only. Boardman's Columbia River Community Health Services is slated to receive 'zero' funding. So the amount the district intends to spend on our local health clinic is \$0.

Spending habits and patterns like these just don't add up. So I am asking, does the Health District consider us to be worthless ~ or just 'worth less'? Hindsight really is 20/20. I am so sorry to have supported a county wide Health District now. It has turned out to be a political football with county biases running the board. I urge a "no" vote on the bond issue before us. This is a time to tighten our belts, not to expand them.

A "no" vote sends the Health District a clear message. It needs to review its equalization of funding; past practices may not be illegal, but they are totally wrong. One other thing, advisory boards of Irrigon and Boardman should be allowed to determine their needs without interference. Each community is entitled to set priorities and the direction of its own health services.

Rodney Flug  
Boardman/Irrigon

**Matlack's integrity and professionalism cannot be denied**

To the editor:

I am writing this letter in support of Ken Matlack to continue as Morrow County Sheriff. Ken has done an outstanding job as our Sheriff the past four years! I have lived in Morrow County for 42 years and the services being provided by the sheriff and his staff have never been better.

There have been many positive changes in law enforcement in this county since Ken has taken over. First and foremost, there is increased visibility and accessibility. In addition, the professionalism of the department is very evident. The experience and diversified training that Sheriff Matlack had as an Oregon State Policeman for 25 years in a tremendous asset. It also established the foundation for him to implement improvements to the sheriff's department, both in procedures and equipment. It also allowed him to develop a good system of networking with other law enforcement agencies.

I mentioned that Ken has been visible and accessible. Both he and his undersheriff, Steve Myren, make countless calls themselves when other members of the department are already busy. They also make a point of following up on any calls that they receive. Sheriff Matlack also has a listed home phone number where he can be reached in addition to being able to contact him through the department.

On a personal note, I work for the Irrigon Park District where we had significant gang activity and graffiti on a regular basis. This was a serious problem in our community as well as at the park. We really appreciate the concentrated effort by the sheriff and his department to control gang activity and get rid of the graffiti. I also live just across the street from the Irrigon Skate Park where there was a considerable amount of bad language and rowdy behavior. This seems to be under better control now, again thanks to the diligence shown by the sheriff's office.

We also appreciate Ken's civic involvement in community and county services. He has been a Morrow County School Board member, Irrigon City Councilman, served on the County Health District Board, the Planning Commission, and the Irrigon Cemetery Board. In other words, he has been willing to be involved wherever he could help.

I could go on and on about Ken's attribute as a well trained and dedicated sheriff who is always willing to go the extra mile. His integrity and professionalism cannot be denied. I sincerely hope that you will join me in voting to retain Ken Matlack for Morrow County sheriff!

Bob Byrd  
Irrigon

**Lexington voters have a choice**

To the editor:

Lexington voters have a choice for council members. Here are a few facts about the current incumbent council members: Once council member is not a registered voter, two council members are sisters living in the same house, voted to allow the city recorder to perform the annual audit instead of using a CPA firm, and failed to inform the citizens of Lexington about water samples failures until the third consequent test. Please elect John Edwards and Bob Taylor who will follow the city charter, ordinances and keep citizens informed and encourage citizen participation.  
Marcia Kemp  
Lexington

**A bit of trivia**

To the Editor:

A bit of trivia for you: Which team has played at every "Bill's Traveling Trivia" night in Heppner and has placed at or near the top in bravado each year (though it has not even placed near the top three winning positions since the very first event)?

This Saturday night offers this team another opportunity to try to dethrone the BEO's Brainiacs from their too-long-lasting reign as Heppner's Trivia Team Extraordinaire! Other teams, too, will be targeting the Brainiacs, hopefully the Lounge Lizards, for one. All your readers are invited to join in, whether for a brain strain or just for the great time had by all!

Everyone is invited to the Elks at 7 p.m. The evening really is fun for all, and the proceeds will help out the Heppner Day Care. Each team of up to six players pays \$120 to play the several rounds of trivia questions that tuxedoed Mr. Bill offers from a wide variety of categories, and no one but Mr. Bill's lovely assistant sees those written answers as she keeps a running score for each team. Of course, at key spots in the evening, she does let everyone know the running totals for all the teams.

Oh, yes, the Legends (in Their Own Minds) will be there again, and hoping for more stiff competition this year. I know I have missed some familiar faces from the earlier events and hope to see them back with their brainy friends. I suppose that knowing that Legends will be playing might scare a few people, but I encourage them not to be afraid. After all, the Legends might not be in top form, giving everyone else a good chance!

For just \$20 a person, we get this fun-filled evening. We save more than that by skipping an out-of-town movie and popcorn. It is such a refreshing change from Saturday-night TV, and we can catch reruns later. Even you hunters can still get up to the mountains early enough on Saturday morning.

Anyone can sign up at the door that night. A call to the Heppner Day Care this week will ensure you a table waiting with your team name on it. Please, join the fun!  
Doris Brosnan  
Heppner

**Politicians: the only people who create problems and then campaign against them**

To the editor:

Politicians are the only people in the world who create problems and then campaign against them.

If both the democrats and the republicans are against deficits, why do we have deficits? If all the politicians are against inflation and high taxes, why do we have inflation and high taxes?

You and I don't propose a federal budget, the president does. You and I don't have the constitutional authority to vote on appropriations, the House of Representatives does. You and I don't write the tax code, the Congress does. You and I don't set fiscal policy, Congress does. You and I don't control monetary policy, the Federal Reserve Bank does.

One hundred senators, 435 congressman, one president, and nine Supreme Court justices, 545 human beings out of the 300 million are directly, legally, morally, and individually responsible for the domestic problems that plague this country.

Excluded are the members of the Federal Reserve Board because that problem was created by the Congress. In 1913, Congress delegated its constitutional duty to provide a sound currency to a federally chartered, but private, central bank.

Excluded are all the special interest and lobbyists for a sound reason. They have no legal authority. They have no ability to coerce a senator, a congressman, or a president to do one cotton-picking thing. I don't care if they offer a politician \$1 million dollars in cash. The politician has the power to accept or reject it. No matter what the lobbyists' promises, it is the legislator's responsibility to determine how he votes.

Those 545 human beings spend much of their energy convincing you that what they did is not their fault. They cooperate in this common con, regardless of party.

What separates a politician from a human being is an excessive amount of gall. No normal human being would have the gall of a Speaker, who stood up and criticized the President for creating deficits. The President can only propose a budget; He cannot force Congress to accept it.

Donald R. McCallister Sr.  
Heppner

**Support for the re-election of Matlack**

To the Editor:

Support of the re-election of Sheriff Ken Matlack is much in the best interests of the citizens of Morrow County.

Management of the Morrow County Sheriff's Department by Sheriff Matlack has resulted in significant improvement in the safety of the citizens of Morrow County. His cooperation with and support of the city law enforcement agencies and remote areas has been recognized by the officials responsible.

A significant reduction in meth labs, marijuana fields, graffiti and petty crime has been a direct result of his intelligent assignment of his deputies. His ability to successfully manage the use of deputies to achieve the reduction in law enforcement required in troubled areas is well known.

Citizens of Morrow County are urged to support the re-election campaign of Sheriff Matlack.

Robert Flournoy  
Irrigon

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