

~ Letters to the Editor ~

A view from the hill

By Doris Brosnan

Willow Creek Terrace residents viewed their garden with more critical eyes as last week began, for a very good reason.

Since putting in the first seeds and plant starts with the help of high school and adult volunteers, they have added, watered and weeded, and watched and appreciated the progress of their productive patch. Their tables have featured some complementary fresh vegetables, with more to come. Before fall marks the end of the growing season, they will have had radishes, peas, onions, zucchini, carrots, pumpkin, squash, cantaloupe, corn, and potatoes from their garden plot.

But last week was Morrow County Fair week, and interested residents viewed the produce with that in mind, looking for those exceptional examples, the ones that might produce fair ribbons rather than just satisfy their palates at dinnertime. Their gardening efforts paid off, as they placed in the top three spots with all of their several produce entries and entries from their flower gardens.

Last Thursday evening, thirteen of the sixteen residents of Willow Creek Terrace went to the fair, to enjoy the many displays, booths, and livestock, and to search out and appreciate their ribbons. Included in those were the ribbons won by residents who had also entered and placed in the top three in the crafts divisions. Mary Lou Wilson won a blue ribbon and the "superintendent's choice" ribbon with her crocheted afghan. In the arts division, Virginia Wilkinson won the "sweepstakes" ribbon with her superb painting of a pheasant.

The residents were, indeed, pleased that the break in the weather allowed their trip to the fair. Warm weather is great, and the wading pool is soothing on hot summer days, but venturing out and about is always a refreshing change of pace.

Fortunately, the Terrace offers enough indoor activities to keep the hot, hot days comfortably interesting, as the residents participate in the regularly scheduled activity each day and look forward to the zany add-ons that the creative staff comes up with. June provided 11 special observances. July kept everyone guessing from day to day about how they might celebrate such days that included "Creative Ice Cream Day" (made their own ice cream with Gordon Craber's maker), Hawaiian Luau Day (great food and a hula, of course?), Juggling Day (any attempts or competitions have remained secret information), Puzzle Day (word and number puzzles), Gummi Worm Day ("worms" for dessert), Cowboy and Cow Appreciation Day (Lori dressed as a cow and Manager Nairns as a cowboy), Walk on Stilts Day (no leaving of feet from the floor allowed), and Woodie Wagon Day (one topic led to another and all led down "Memory Lane"). Residents understand if some readers have to ask what a "woodie" was....

American flags flew throughout the month of July, and residents and staff noted appreciation of their resident veterans on Independence Day, when they also celebrated with fireworks and root beer floats.

Two new neighbors had joined the Terrace community in time for those July days. Alice Buckley moved in on June 18, and Velma Wight soon followed, on June 29. And now, Lois White has moved into an apartment. Always interested in new points of view, the residents have welcomed the three women and have put the "Welcome" mat into service again this month, hoping that the remaining apartment will soon become home to a new neighbor. Manager George Nairns reminds readers that she always has time to show an apartment and visit about the comforts and services available at Willow Creek Terrace.

Rodeo Parade winners announced

The 2009 Morrow County Rodeo Parade was held on Saturday, August 8. The winners are:

Court & Royalty - 1949 Morrow County Rodeo Court; Individual Horse & Rider - Lelia Workman; Commercial Floats - Bank of Eastern Oregon; and Community Floats - Blue Mountain Community College.

Ribbon can be picked up at the Chamber office on Mondays. For more information call 676-5536.





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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.

Welcome to Willow Creek Valley...now LEAVE!

To the editor of the Heppner Gazette-Times:

As a relatively new family that moved into the lone - Willow Creek Valley we feel like we are living part of an old western movie. The new folks show up and are instantly branded as "outsiders" by those who control the valley. Gossip and rumors abound about the new people who purchased property outside of town. The man "waxes poetic" they say and purchased property as "a retirement location for him" and has a need to protect the scenery from "monstrous Industrial Wind Facilities". Because we ask questions or don't do the things someone thinks you should be doing to be a good community member (over involvement in the community affairs) they are ready to stretch your neck. It's pretty apparent that certain people want to control the valley.

What does it take to be a community member in this valley? We pay property taxes that include funds for the school and other important services. We bank locally, shop at the lone store, buy gas in the valley, purchase parts, propane and other items from MCGG, attend church in Heppner and often attend local events. When we first moved here we got involved in a search for a missing boy. Just recently one of our neighbors grazed some of his cows on our property. Obviously we missed the visit from the Welcome Wagon that must have included the rules to live by for the Willow Creek Valley.

Since the Blue Mountain Scenic byway was established long before industrial wind development even came to Morrow County shouldn't the county have considered protecting the Blue Mountain Scenic Byway that Hwy 74 runs through? The technical point here is that the valley includes the river bottom to the top, everything you can see from the road. If one would read the original article I submitted carefully, I never proposed a ban on wind turbines just protection of the BMSB valley views. The scenic aspect should have had some preference because it was established long before the wind resource was ever utilized in this county. There is nothing like the scenic and historic view of the Oregon Trail on Hwy 74 near Cecil being marred by an Industrial Wind Facility close by. Great job Morrow County Planning Commission and staff!

If you want to dig up dirt just follow the money trail. When it comes to industrial wind development it's all about money. The corporations who develop the wind power in this area are from New York, Delaware, Texas, California and even foreign countries. This reminds me of the salsa commercial on TV where cowboys in Texas discover their salsa is made in New York City and they say, "get the rope". However only those who don't want the county overrun with run amok industrial wind development and want to see some restraint on building wind facilities until a policy can be put in place that protects all interests, "get the rope". These foreign corporations are the ones dictating the future of your valley and not the locals as they would like you to believe. Wind contracts often stipulate that the property owners who have wind development not say anything negative about wind power and are encouraged to support wind power in any way possible. Just attend a public meeting regarding Industrial Wind Development and see the line drawn in the sand. This is a polarizing issue. You can instantly become Public Enemy Number 1 by sharing your concerns about rampant industrial development, health and noise issues and pointing out the not so green aspect of green power. People with common sense are suddenly greenwashed when money is offered and formerly staunch anti-greenies are praising the merits of green power for America, how it saves fossil fuel and how some will need to sacrifice to save America from the plight of Global Warming, which they didn't even believe. The problem is that chicken (Industrial Wind Facility owner) only donates the egg to make the farmers meal; it's the pigs (non wind property owners) that have to make the sacrifice.

Consider this, we live in a desert region and have areas nearby that are designated as critical for ground water resources. A recent amendment to an Industrial Wind Facility in this county included drilling two new wells to suck almost 70 MILLION gallons of ground water out for construction purposes in which the majority of this water will be used to water roads for dust control. Doesn't this seem to be an excessive waste of water especially when it could affect the water you drink and even your livelihood? If not this wind facility, then what about the water used at the next Industrial Wind Facility or the one after that? Potentially there will be an Industrial Wind Facility built near you in the future, what resources will they rob from you? Your water? Your view? Your peace of mind? Your health? Your property values? What are you willing to sacrifice for the Industrial Wind Facility property owner? What future restrictions are you willing to bear for these facilities? Did you know that the majority of our groundwater is only recharged from snowpack in the Blue Mountains? How many bad winters coupled with excessive waste of groundwater will it take before we have a water crisis on our hands?

Look carefully at the expense of building an

industrial wind facility and you will find that most, if not all, of the parts are currently made overseas in China and other foreign countries, shipped by barge to the US then trucked piece by piece to the construction site. Add the massive cost of construction and fuel used and you will discover that there is nothing green about Industrial Wind Facilities at all. In fact the government even has to subsidize the cost of the electricity it produces because it is far more expensive than hydro, coal and nuclear to produce. Ask yourself this, if the government has to give huge tax breaks in order for wind corporations to invest and then also has to subsidize the final product produced (green energy) then are they really worth having? This will cost all of us taxpayers in the long run. Common sense says no but greed throws common sense out the window and says show me the money.

Regarding the green energy jobs, these facilities will produce almost all of the jobs created by government mechanisms destroyed 2.2 permanent jobs elsewhere. In this case who's future job are the wind developers putting on the line with green power? Your neighbor, your friend or maybe you! Additionally these Industrial Wind Facilities will cost all the citizens of the county with higher overall electric prices due to the higher cost of these facilities to produce power. With higher overall electric prices, those citizens of the county on fixed incomes and lower pay scales will be the first ones to suffer but in the end we will all pay for these wind developments.

How much of that green energy is destined to hit your meter in the near future? How about zero, zilch, nada...yes none of it. One of the largest Industrial Wind Facilities soon to be built in the county will be sending its power for the next 20 years to Southern California Edison to power air conditioners in California. Yep, you probably didn't know that. This goes for the majority of the wind power generated in Oregon to date. So you pay the price with diminished views, property values, health and noise issues and increased energy rates and get none of the benefits from any of the green power generated from these facilities. Please ask Morrow County if any of the projected \$2 million dollars of annual payments from the Industrial Wind Facilities, in lieu of their paying property taxes, will lower your property taxes one cent. I think not.

The negative aspects in the long term will outweigh any short term economic benefits the Industrial Wind Facilities will offer you. The only real benefactors are the County, the Industrial Wind Facility owners who will sell their electricity to the highest bidders out of state, and the property owners who host the wind facilities. Local construction companies and services will benefit temporarily from this work but when the facility is built, its jobs are over. If like previously built wind facilities, the majority of the union scale jobs will be given to people from out of state, which again will benefit the valley economy temporarily as no one will purchase a home here for a temporary construction job.

Let me clarify that I have no desire retire in the midst of an Industrial Wind Facility. Living in Morrow County in the future will be akin to having a condo on the Portland International Airport main runway. I want to retire where I can enjoy a peaceful country view, I want to enjoy the solitude of the evening and enjoy neighbors that care about the impacts that their choices have on me and my choices on theirs. This is something that money can't buy today. If one wants to see thousands of red blinking lights at night, hear a constant industrial roar and experience conflict with neighbors then just move to a bigger city. I came here to enjoy peace, solitude, good neighbors and life away from the industrial development of the big city. I was totally aware of the current farming practices in the county, dust, herbicide spraying etc. and the odor of Bovine #9 that drifts our way when the wind blows in a certain direction and I am alright with that. But when is having 100's of 40 story Industrial Wind Turbines considered a farming practice? You don't cultivate the soil, water and then wait for a harvest of wind. I can't come and buy wind from you for my own use. So let's just drop the farming part of it because it has nothing to do with farming and call it what it really is, an Industrial Wind Facility.

There are a lot of great people in this community and some of them even have a different vision of this community and the Willow Creek Valley. A recent letter submitted to the Gazette by Kerry Rietmann testifies to this. I believe there are many more citizens out there that would like to take a stand on this issue but they may be afraid to make their opinion known lest they be ostracized by the community or possibly even lose their job for making their opinions known. I suggest we change the current lone motto of "Growing with Pride" to "Opinions not Welcome", which seems to be more fitting.

Get the facts about Industrial Wind Development at www.wind-watch.org.

Arman Kluehe
 Lone

Lexington Town Council in violation

To the editor:

I just received a letter signed by the Lexington Town Council asking residents for their opinions. The council did not discuss this letter during council meeting and therefore they are in violation of the open meetings law. The town has been reported to the State of Oregon

over violations of election laws, budget laws and open meeting laws. I would suggest that we tell our elected council members in Lexington to follow the law.

Marcia Kemp
 Lexington

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