

~ 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.

Town of Lexington shares proposed protocol revisions

To the editor and Lexington residents:

Once again, there has been a letter sent to the Heppner Gazette-Times regarding Lexington Town government that is full of inaccuracies. We would like to address some of those inaccuracies here.

The actual first draft, which has not yet been adopted by Lexington Town Council, of the new public comment protocol revisions, is printed below and is not what was in the previous letter.

Issues that you would like to discuss, with the City government members, at the current month's Town Council meeting, have to be submitted in writing 48 business hours prior to the meeting, on a public comment form, which is available, free of charge at Town Hall. Those issues, that legitimately pertain to Town business, will then, as time constraints allow, be placed on the agenda for next month's meeting. Speakers will be limited to three minutes, unless extended by the Mayor.

There will still be a place on each meeting agenda for "other public comment" for persons wishing to address the City government regarding matters that are not on the current Town Council meeting agenda. Speakers will be limited to three minutes, unless extended by the Mayor. Action, regarding issues that legitimately pertain to Town business, will not be taken at this current meeting. The City government members, however, after hearing from interested citizens, may, at their discretion, place items under new business on a future agenda. Those people that do not respect, and do not follow this protocol will be warned once that they are out of order. The second time that they are out of order, regarding this protocol, they will be asked to leave the meeting.

We are not taking away anyone's right to speak, or state their opinions, at council meetings. We are not required by state, county or city laws, or statutes, to include any community input in Lexington's Town Council meetings. The community input section of our meetings are included strictly as a courtesy to the community members. What we are doing is simply revising the protocol so we can eliminate any yelling, fighting, or time-consuming disruptions during meetings. These protocol changes will allow the Council to conduct Town business in a timely manner, and are for everyone's benefit.

The Town Recorder does not make "other arrangements" with people who are behind on their water bills. A letter of delinquency is sent out, stating that payment arrangements are allowed. If the bill is not paid, or payment arrangements made, and followed, the water is turned off. This procedure is per the Town's water ordinance.

The statement that all of the Town's revenue comes from water service is inaccurate. The audit of the Town's finances for the 2007-2008 fiscal year states that water service was just under 50% of the Town's total revenue. The other 50% of the Town's revenue comes from "a few other small incidentals." Anyone wishing to obtain a copy of the audit may request one at Lexington Town Hall.

The opinions regarding the monthly financial statements are also inaccurate and indicate a lack of knowledge as to how a municipality actually operates. Some months will have greater expenses than revenues. Some months will have greater revenues than expenses. These numbers wax and wane, but always balance in

the end. Our accounting practices are impeccable. Our financial records reconcile to the penny each, and every, month. Anyone wishing to see the Town's financial statements may do so at Lexington Town Hall.

If we were, in fact, managing our Town's finances, as stated in Mr. Taylor's letter, we would not be operating. Mr. Taylor has not requested, at least in the last two years, a copy of the Town's financial statements. The Town Council is at a loss as to where Mr. Taylor gather his "facts" and information.

We would be more than happy to explain, to anyone who asks, why we are changing our meeting and community comment protocols. Our next meeting will be held at Lexington Town Hall, Tuesday, September 8, at 7 p.m. We would appreciate your attendance.

We would also like to share a copy of our proposed Council meeting protocol revisions. This draft has not yet been adopted by the Lexington Town Council. That document follows:

These Town Council meetings are business meetings, and will, from this meeting forward, be executed as business meetings.

I, Dwyla J. Yocom, am the current Mayor of Lexington, Oregon. My duties include, but are not limited to, the responsibility of managing and controlling the city council meetings.

As of right now, these council meetings are going to be managed differently.

Visiting, or talking, in the gallery during the meetings will not be allowed, or tolerated, from anyone.

No racial comments, or racial slurs, will be allowed, or tolerated.

The City government will not allow or tolerate, disrespect, profanity or harassment at any time. No comments regarding the City government's job performance, or experience, will be allowed, or tolerated.

Personal comments regarding City employees or City government members, will not be allowed, or tolerated.

Any complaints regarding City government, or City government's job performance, must be submitted in writing, including signatures. These complaints will be taken under advisement, in executive session, by the Mayor and City Council members and dealt with accordingly. These complaints will be forwarded to the proper persons, with the State of Oregon, if necessary.

No comments regarding City personnel, or their job performance, will be allowed, or tolerated.

Any complaints regarding City personnel, or City employee's job performance, must be submitted in writing, including signatures. These complaints will be taken under advisement, in executive session, by the Mayor and City Council members and dealt with accordingly.

Those people that do not respect, and do not follow the above stated protocol changes will be warned once that they are out of order. The second time that they are out of order, regarding these above stated protocol revisions, they will be asked to leave the meeting.

Dwyla Yocom, Mayor, Lexington
Ruth Haskett, Council Member, Lexington
Charma Marquardt, Council Member, Lexington
Will Lemmon, Council Member, Lexington
Billie June Owen, Council Member, Lexington

Consideration for second drama presentation re-instatement requested

Letter to the editor:

I regret our Morrow County School System finds it necessary to cut programs for this 2009-2010 school year.

I refer specifically to the reducing of the Heppner High School Drama Club presentations from two to one. I am grateful one remains.

Twice, I sat on the drama audition panel as a community representative. I was impressed how much change evolved from audition time to performance nights. I could see and hear increased confidence to express oneself, speak up with clarity, new skills learned in music, dance, stage preparation/settings/changes, wardrobe/make-up and relating to one another beyond their day-to-day "teen talk."

The audience support included siblings, parents, grandparents, other family members, friends and people from the community coming for a night out for entertainment.

Although there are other extra-curriculum activities; drama offers an opportunity for growth, exposure, and achievement for those not involved in such other activities, and/or desire to experience an additional dimension to their high school experience.

Our community is fortunate to have a willing, highly skilled drama coach in Jodi Chapa. She offers an experience with responsibility for cast members that can undergird them if they opt to participate in higher level productions in college and elsewhere.

I sincerely request the re-instatement of the second drama presentation to be considered.

Carolyn M. Willey
Heppner

No creative arts makes Heppner a second rate school

To the editor:

When we lived in Medford we took our two young sons to high school plays. After we moved to Heppner we bought reserved seat tickets to the Heppner High plays so we could sit in the front row. That was the beginning of life-long enjoyable entertainment for two young boys. One of our sons, his wife and two other couples are attending a dinner comedy this weekend.

High school plays are an important part of nearly every community. They compliment athletic events for some of us and are an enjoyable event for those who don't attend athletic events. A fall play and a spring play keep those of us who like those kinds of cultural events entertained.

It was truly saddening to learn that the drama program has been severely reduced and the art program has been cut from our schools. That leaves Heppner with no creative arts program and that makes us a second rate school. I believe we should support our creative arts, not reduce them.
Barbara Hayes
Heppner

Rietmann graduates from Pacific University

Shanna Rietmann of Heppner graduated from Pacific University in May with a bachelor's degree in biology.

More than 200 bachelor's degrees were awarded at this year's commencement ceremonies, which were held in the Pacific Athletic Center.

Health district approves payment of state health insurance tax

-Continued from Page ONE

ments to the vehicles. The board concurred that while nothing may be wrong with the decals in question, it was the perception of non-professionalism that they were concerned about. The board was also concerned that the vehicles had no signage indicating that they were owned by the district. The board has learned that the vehicles now have decals identifying them as Morrow County Health District owned and some decals have been removed but other decals still remain. They also learned that the OHV park has "recreational immunity" and the EMTs volunteering there act as "good Samaritans," so district insurance in this capacity is sufficient. The board voted to draft a letter to ask the volunteers to remove the questioned

decals and to express the board's appreciation to the volunteers who are providing EMS services there.

-learned from Director of Nursing, Home Health and Hospice Molly Rhea that the hospital now has five people in long-term care. She said that two or three people were on the waiting list.

-learned from Mahoney that the district had \$599,634 in gross patient revenue and \$660,187 in total operating revenue for July with \$640,579 in total operating expenses and a \$40,484 gain for the month.

-learned from Mahoney that the number of days in accounts receivable has dropped to 56.1 days, the lowest in a year.

-learned from Blauer that he had received a call from a patient who

had received a colonoscopy procedure at the hospital. Blauer said the patient commented on the great care that people can receive locally.

-learned that the Irrigon Clinic had 166 patient visits for the month of July with 22 new patients, 41 seen by a nurse had 15 no shows, even with four days that a provider was not available due to a nurse practitioner position vacancy; Pioneer Memorial Clinic had 422 patient visits with 38 new patients, 38 seen by a nurse and 11 no-shows; Heppner Ambulance had 23 page-outs with 19 transports for \$23,434 in revenue; Boardman Ambulance had 26 page-outs with 22 transports for \$25,865 in revenue; Irrigon Ambulance had 18 page-outs with 10 transports for \$9,999 in revenue; there were two flights;

Pioneer Memorial Hospital had two admissions, two swing bed admissions, 14 admitted for observation, one admitted for hospital respite, 488 total outpatients, 88 emergency room encounters, 1615 lab tests, 98 x-ray procedures, 29 CT scans, 26 EKG tests, two treadmill procedures, nine colonoscopy procedures, seven respiratory therapy procedures, 111 Home Health visits, six Hospice admissions and 1498 drug doses for \$18,261 in drug revenue.

Senior Center Menu

St. Patrick's Parish members will be serving lunch on Wednesday, September 9. The menu will include baked tilapia, rice pilaf, mixed veggies, spiced pears, and hot rolls.

**CLOSED MONDAY
SEPTEMBER 7**
Have a Safe and happy Labor Day!

Wedding Tables
**Chris Peck &
Angela Munkers**
Saturday, September 5th

**Lacey Matteson &
Sam Mackenzie**
Saturday, October 24th

**Adam Neiffer &
Lauren Stender**
Saturday, November 21st

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PRESS RELEASE

Electric Co-Op to Perform Tree Trimming Operations in Area
Columbia Basin Electric Co-Op, and their subcontractors, will be conducting their annual tree trimming operation throughout the service territory during the coming weeks. Consumers with power lines going through trees are asked to call the Co-Op so these locations can be put on the list of areas to be trimmed.

Trimming of trees around power lines is an annual chore and is required by Oregon PUC and REA to reduce outages and insure continuity of electrical service. Areas affecting both Primary (distribution) and Secondary (individual service connections) lines will be cleared.

Any comments, concerns or questions about trees obstructing power lines or the removal of them may be made to Slater Mitchell at 541-676-9146 or slaterm@columbiabasin.cc



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Stephens and
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\$8.50/bushel treat-
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Cruiser available**
**Ralph Morter, Ione
422-7429**