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Gazette Times

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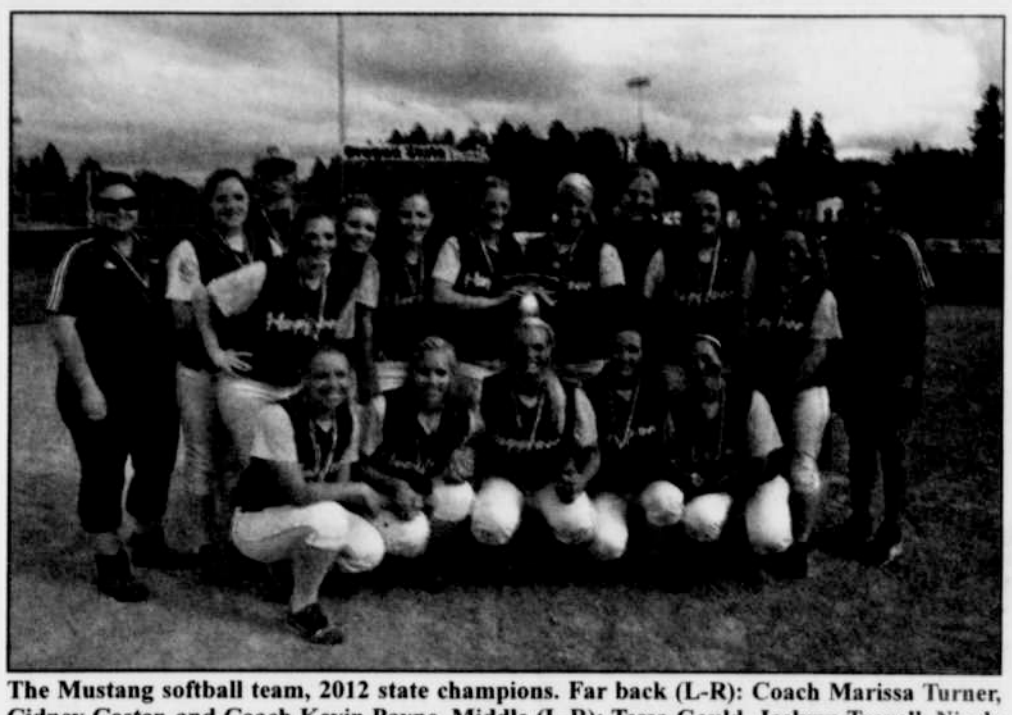
Mustangs take state championship

Shut down Enterprise, Glendale in quest for title



The Mustang softball team, 2012 state champions. Far back (L-R): Coach Marissa Turner, Cidney Coster, and Coach Kevin Payne. Middle (L-R): Tessa Gould, Joslynn Troxell, Nicole Kempken, Cassi Day and Natalie Rauch holding the trophy, Maggie Collins, Larissa Gray, Coach Petra Payne, Samm Lemmon and Coach Janelle Ellis. Front, kneeling (L-R): Micha Hintz, Lizzy Rill, Baily Bennett, Hannah Lovgren and Makenzie Correa. *–Photo by Sandy Matthews*

Teamwork and good, old-fashioned sweat paid off for the Mustang softball team, which brought home the state championship title after a Class 2A/1A victory last Friday at Oregon State University's Softball Complex.

"I just think they put their team first and work hard," Heppner coach Petra Payne said. "They all do what I ask them to and putting that team first is important at this point in the season."

The Mustang softball team showed it was serious about the state title in the Class 2A/1A semifinals match on May 29 against Enterprise/Joseph. Even though the Cubs had won 19 of their last 20 matches, the Mustangs refused to be intimidated. Pitcher Baily Bennett led the way in dominating the Ent/Jos team, limiting them to three singles and no points. Meanwhile, the Mustangs scored point after point for a 10-0 victory, a 22-4 record and a spot in the state finals.

The Heppner/Ione team then headed to Corvallis to face off against Glendale for the championship. A massive home-town crowd also traveled the 280 miles, hoping to see another shutout in the final game.

-See STATE CHAMPS/ PAGE FOUR

Merkley says 3-3-3 plan would wipe out deficit

Tells town hall 1/3 of money from closing tax loopholes would erase $16 trillion in debt

By David Sykes

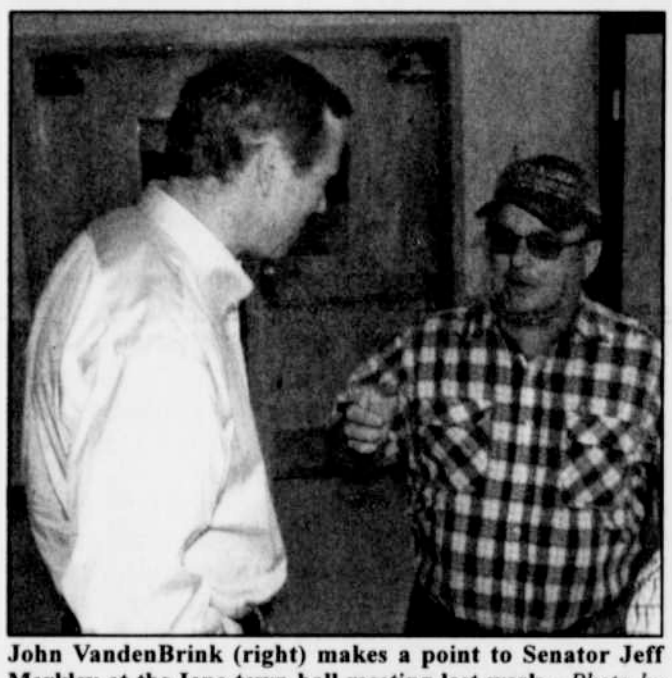
Oregon Senator Jeff Merkley told a town hall gathering last week that he has a 3-3-3 plan that could wipe out the United States debt of nearly 16 trillion dollars.

"You remember the pizza guy (presidential candidate Herman Cain) and his nine, nine, nine plan? Well I have the three, three, three plan," he told the gathered crowd of about 35 people in Ione.

"I would identify tax loopholes and close them," he said. "One third of the savings would pay down the deficit, one third would be spent on infrastructure and one third would be spent on education."

He said the last two would also create more jobs. He added that all the money being used to pay interest on the debt could also be spent to keep the economy from going further into the ditch.

As an example of tax loop holes, Merkley said a $5,000 grant is the same as a tax loophole. Later, when questioned about whether he will vote to renew the production tax credit, which is used heavily by wind energy and is coming up for renewal by congress soon, Merkley did not answer directly, but did say, "Many of us are advocating for the production tax credit."



John VandenBrink (right) makes a point to Senator Jeff Merkley at the Ione town hall meeting last week. *–Photo by David Sykes*

On infrastructure spending, Merkley said that "We are getting behind the rest of the world in infrastructure spending. We spend two percent in this country, which is less than China or Japan."

He said we are also behind in education spending, and the baby boom generation is becoming the first generation where "... our children are less educated that we are."

Merkley said stopping the war in Afghanistan was also a way the United States could save money. He pointed out that the country is spending $120 billion a year on the war, but that "...if you talk about cutting defense, then you are accused of being soft on defense and undermining national security."

When asked about what happened to the $800 billion in stimulus money the government spent, and why it has not helped the economy, Merkley said the economy would be in worse shape right now if the money had not been spent.

"When I took office, unemployment was going up." He said toxic assets had made the banks stop lending and people had stopped spending. He said there had been a $3 trillion drop in consumer spending,

-See MERKLEY TOWN HALL/PAGE FIVE

Elementary school teacher to retire

By Andrea Di Salvo

The Morrow County School District will lose another long-time teacher when Heppner Elementary School second-grade teacher Karen Clough retires at the end of this school year.

Karen Clough

Clough's official retirement date is June 8 but, "I'll probably be there longer than that," says Clough. That makes sense, since the "29 and holding" teacher will be wrapping up a 30-year plus teaching career, and more than two decades of work at Heppner Elementary. About a decade of that was spent right where she is now, in the second-grade classroom. Before that, she taught kindergarten and first grade for several years.

Clough was born at St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton, OR and spent the first 12 years of her life in Boardman, OR. Her family then moved to Pendleton, where she graduated from Pendleton High School.

After graduation, Clough spent two terms at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande and then studied at the Blue Mountain Community College Hermiston extension before going to the University of Portland. She graduated from there with a bachelor's degree in elementary education.

She remained in Portland for a few months after graduation, subbing in Portland schools, mostly in the lower-income areas of north Portland. She then moved to Arlington, OR where she lived and taught for about eight years. She moved to Heppner in 1984.

Clough has two daughters, one in Portland and one in Pasadena, CA. Her immediate retirement plans, until one daughter's marriage in September, will be consumed with helping to plan the wedding. After that, she says she has two things on her "bucket list": traveling to Ireland and riding a mule to the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

"I'm hoping to do some traveling and volunteer work," says Clough. "I'm looking at volunteer options.

As she retires, Clough says she will miss both the kids and the people with whom she has worked.

"We've got a great staff," she says of the people at the elementary school. "I've been fortunate to work with the people I've worked with."

Celebrate Heppner event schedule

June 8, 2012

9 a.m.–close: Merchant Sidewalk Sale–make sure to check out inside businesses for special sales

All Day: Free Cup of Starbuck's Coffee, Heppner Family Foods

9 a.m.–close: Community Flea Market and Craft Fair on Main Street

9 a.m.–close: Quality Concessions–will be set up in Heppner Family Foods parking lot next to "Hair I Am." They will be serving burgers, hot dogs, chili dogs, corn dogs, chicken strips, finger steaks, fries curly and regular, chili cheese fries, elephant ears and strawberry shortcake

9 a.m.-12 p.m.: Basketball competition sponsored by Willow Creek Baptist Church youth group, on Willow Street between Murray's/Artisan Village

9 a.m.-3 p.m.: Shaved Ice, Murray Drug's

9 a.m.-3 p.m.: Red and Blue River Beverage by The Stable of Youth (in front of Hair I Am)

10:30 a.m.: The "Dream Big: Read!" summer reading program at Heppner Library

11 a.m.-3p.m.: Mini carnival for kids and a prize wheel for adults, Community Bank

11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.: Community barbecue sponsored by Bank of EO in the AmeriTitle parking lot

1-5 p.m.: Morrow County Heritage and Agricultural Museums open

All Children's games and small dog races will be at the City Park.

1:30 p.m.: Children's Games

Tricycle race: 3-5 years old

Water Balloon Toss: 6-10 and 11-18 years old

Egg Toss: 6-10 and 11-18 years old

2:30 p.m.: Small dog races at City Park

Ione post office to have shorter hours starting 2014

Though post offices in south Morrow County have been saved from closure, one will experience shorter hours in the future.

The change won't happen immediately, though. According to Ione Postmistress Darcy McDonough, the Ione post office will go to a six-hour-a-day schedule at the end of July, 2014. McDonough didn't have more information, but said there will be community meetings in all areas where post office hours will change.

Meanwhile, postal services in Heppner and Lexington expect business as usual.

"From what I understand, (hour reduction) is based on several factors, and we're good on all factors," said Heppner Postmaster Dennis Lien. "We're still set to be open eight hours."

Lien added that the Lexington post office will also be unaffected, since it operates as a Contract Postal Unit and is not involved in U.S. Postal Service cutbacks.

Ione graduation Friday

End of school year approaches

The Ione High School graduation will be held on Friday, June 8, at 7 p.m. at the Ione High School gym.

The last day of school for students in Heppner schools is Thursday, June 7. The last day of school for Ione students will be Wednesday, June 13.