

~ 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.

Liberal spirit has replaced independent spirit in Oregon

As a native Oregonian born here in this state in the 1930s I personally had to make many adjustments politically to run a business in this state.

Agriculture has been my primary profession, running two businesses in the western part of the state, and I have been a Republican for 45 years. In 1998 I left the Republican Party, as I saw it dwindling into an empty shell of what it once was as I saw it. I took up the non-affiliated party until two months ago and registered back to the Republican Party again. From 2000 my wife and I ran the Windyhill Sheep Ranch in the Burnt River area in the town of Unity. That side of the state is all agriculture and mostly Republican, and at times I felt we were a white dot in a red sea.

After totally retiring from ranching and selling the ranch we relocated to Lone, a nice, quiet and clean town. Retiring gave me some time to think about an article I wrote for The Oregonian in 2010: "Why does Oregon come out so badly?"

Today's state officials seem to have gotten a lot worse in their thinking on how to solve issues that require understanding of how the west side of the state thinks as to what the east side has to do to make a living from the land. Looking back to that article I can see no changes, but blockage of ideas to try to get this state back on the right track to prosperity.

The state seems to make the case by wasting millions of dollars from state employee funds to failed health care programs and liberalized programs that people seem to think they don't have to work as hard to get what they want. All of the people in Oregon have an independent spirit, but if you live on the eastern side of the state you are on your own. And when it comes to voting on a statewide issue that would benefit the eastern side, the majority of the vote come from the populated areas.

The tax structure in Oregon is one of the highest and does not encourage new development, but drives away the businesses that are already here, and the ones that are entrenched have been made secure by such massive tax giveaways they could not even consider leaving.

Oregon is now a state with three parties—red, white and blue. In the coming years it will be a test of time to see if liberalism works.

(s) Ronald Blaine Folck, Lone

Is the siege really over?

Now that all the armed protestors are gone from Harney County, many of which are in jail, one would think the siege is over. Steve and Dwight Hammond are in federal prison, convicted as terrorists for starting two fires, the first which improved BLM property and the second which saved the Hammond ranch. The BLM will confiscate the Hammond ranch, when the women will not be able to pay the \$400,000 fine. The 200-plus FBI agents and other armed agents that had no insignias, that manned road blocks and interrogated American citizens, can go home. The siege is over. Right?

C.J. Hadley, editor of Range Magazine, Spring 2016 issue, documents an intentional conspiracy on the part of the government to deprive Western ranchers of their property rights. In Hage v. United States 2010 Judge Robert C. Jones found a "literal intentional conspiracy to deprive the Hages not only of their permits, but also their vested water rights. This behavior shocks the conscience of the court." The government has yet to pay the Hages the \$14,000,000 fine.

Many Americans, myself included, do not agree with the armed takeover; however, whether we agree with protestor methods never was never the issue in Burns. Our Pledge of Allegiance ends with "liberty and justice for all." If justice and liberty are denied to the Hammonds then justice has been denied to all. These protestors are Americans. Most have families. Many are veterans. They have sacrificed their liberty and freedom to stand against injustice and government oppression. According to witnesses present Lavoy Finicum was shot multiple times with his hands up, attempting to surrender. Who exercised restraint and who exercised violence in Burns?

Why has the press never documented that uranium is the real issue with the Hammond ranch? A 1956 Dept. of Geology Mineral Industries study (Vol. 18, #12 by Max Shafer) "documents occurrence of secondary uranium mineralization...in Harney Co." In September of 2011 uranium officials met with Burns officials. The Oregonian Jan. 8, 2012 documents: "Oregon Energy LLC hopes to mine 18 million pounds of Yellowcake uranium" near Burns. The New York Times in April 2015 documented under the Hillary Clinton State Department the United States "gave the Russians control of one-fifth of all uranium production capacity" in America. The same article documents the Clinton Foundation received over \$250,000,000 in contributions from uranium companies. Who are the real terrorists?

(s) Stuart Dick, Irrigon

St. Pat's boxing event cancelled

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce has announced that, due to restrictions placed by state rules and regulations regarding sponsoring boxing events, the chamber board has no choice but cancel the Irish Smoker amateur boxing event for this year.

The boxing event had been planned for March 18.

Chamber executive director Sheryll Bates said the board will review the required process and determine whether to sponsor a boxing event in the future.

"We want to thank everyone who volunteered in any way to help us put on such a successful event for the last eight years," said Bates. "We know it was a popular event in the annual St. Patrick's celebration."

Sponsors who already submitted checks will have the funds returned, Bates said.

"We have really appreciated your sponsorships for the last eight years," added Bates. "We couldn't have done it without you."

Morrow SWCD to meet

The Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will hold a regular board meeting Tuesday, March 1, at the Ag Service Center Conference Room, 430 W Linden Way, Heppner, beginning at 6 p.m.

Time will be set aside at the beginning of the SWCD meeting to receive comments from the public.

The agenda for the SWCD meeting includes review and approval of the minutes of the Feb. 2 regular meeting, bank reconciliation for February, budget versus actual report, staff reports including an

update on a cooperative water quality testing project on Upper Willow Creek, partner reports, update on an easement document allowing the Heppner Fire Department access to Highway 74 across Morrow SWCD property, and loss of income reimbursement request.

A board position representing the Irrigon area is currently vacant, and interested parties are invited to contact SWCD for more information.

Meetings of Morrow SWCD are open to the public.

St. Pat's Players are back with another dramatic offering

The St. Patrick's celebration this year will again feature an original play written by Fr. Gerry Condon and performed by local community members.

"Intrigue at Glendalough" will be performed twice for the community; first on Sunday, March 13, at 3 p.m. at Ione Community School and again on St. Patrick's Day, Thursday, March 17, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Patrick's Parish Hall in Heppner. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted.

Cast members include

Joe Lindsay, Larry Lutchter, Bill Monagle, Rick Drake, Bill Kuhn, Cam Sweeney, Corey Sweeney, Dan Van Schoiack, Dan Lindsay, Adam McCabe, Debbie Gutierrez, Ashley Lindsay, Rita Van Schoiack, Janet Greenup, Beth Dickensen, Brian Kollman, Josh Coiner, Ann Morter and Nikki Coe.

The evenings will also feature Irish music with Joe Lindsay, Bill Monagle and Rick Drake. More information on the play will be available closer to the event.

St. Pat's pins available now

The lapel pin for Heppner's Wee Bit o' Ireland Celebration is available for sale at Heppner City Hall, Murray's Drug, Community Bank, and will be available during the celebration.

Each pin is \$3 and gives you a chance to win \$100 at two different drawings. All proceeds help with expenses of the annual March event.



St. Pat's buttons are now available.

Historical society plans meeting

The quarterly meeting of the Morrow County Historical Society is scheduled for 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, March 13, at the Irrigon Baptist Church, 315 N. 10th Street in Irrigon.

The agenda will be a continuation of the last meeting. The group also will bring everyone up to date on society projects, and make decisions about the field trip planned for April 15, 2016.

Local students achieve FFA state degree

Six Heppner FFA members will be among the 246 Oregon FFA members receiving their State FFA Degree at the 88th Oregon FFA State Convention in Corvallis March 19. This achievement, the highest accolade the state can award its members, is the result of their participation in the Oregon FFA for a minimum of two years, and of meeting the high standards required for the Degree.

CJ Kindle, Patrick Collins, Tim Gould, Kolby Currin, Kaelyn Lindsay and Rylee Kollman began in the FFA with the Greenhand Degree, followed by the Chapter FFA Degree. These two degrees are awarded by their chapter after they have met the qualifications for each degree. In addition, some chapters include middle school programs,

which allows them to earn the Discovery Degree.

For the State FFA Degree, each of the recipients must have two years of records of working in an Agricultural Placement for over 900 hours or have earned and invested \$1,500 in an Entrepreneurship Supervised Agricultural Experience, or a combination of the two.

In addition to completing the application for the State Degree, each candidate had to pass a written exam, present a six-minute presentation on an ag topic, serve as an officer or committee member, participate in at least 30 activities, and complete a presentation on their project to a local advisory team in their community or region.

Oregon FFA has a total membership of over 5,500 members.

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