

# A View from the Hill

By Doris Brosnan

A look at a bit of trivia as this column begins today. Last Friday was the 17<sup>th</sup> birthday of Willow Creek Terrace, this assisted living facility in which Suzanne Jepsen and her co-committee members had enough faith to persist with Jepsen's vision until it became a reality. The service the Terrace has offered the area since opening its doors to Jean Nelson, the first resident, might be evidenced in some statistics. The sixteen apartments have served 104 residents; ten of those were couples and three couples currently reside at the Terrace; ten individuals have stayed at the Terrace for varying lengths of respite care. The Terrace continues to offer assistance as needed for residents to remain as independent as possible and it continues to offer a positive working environment

for people who care.

Another birthday helped get October off on a positive note last week. Marjorie Gorham celebrated her birthday on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. One of her favorite luncheon menus added to her celebration with family and neighbors.

The staff tearfully bid Ron Peck a "goodbye, be good" when he moved away recently. Ron now requires a higher level of care than the Terrace can offer, so he has moved to the long-term care facility at Pioneer Memorial Hospital. Administrator Nairns reports that Ron and his great sense of humor are greatly missed.

The staff is pleased to report the recent addition of two student interns from HHS, sponsored by the Workforce Training Program of the Port of Morrow. This introduction to the

work-a-day world and work ethics is a semester-long experience of twelve hours a week with a staff-member mentor. Sage Ferguson and Nicole Myers, both juniors at HHS, are the first interns at the Terrace.

They could probably add some new perspectives at the morning discussions on the hill, as participants talk about Farmers (12<sup>th</sup>), the Navy's 244<sup>th</sup> birthday (13<sup>th</sup>), Being Bald and Free (on the 14<sup>th</sup>, when Bud Wilson will be especially missed), Grouches (15<sup>th</sup>), Bosses (16<sup>th</sup>), the Cadillac's 117<sup>th</sup> birthday (17<sup>th</sup>) and Mothers-in-Law (27<sup>th</sup>, probably not a subject with which Sara and Nicole are familiar).

This week is designated Fire Prevention Week, so it is time for annual fire-prevention equipment tests and a practice fire drill. Staff will also be encour-

aging residents to replace batteries in their various apparatuses.

The end-of-the-month highlight for staff and residents will again be Halloween, of course. Staff will wear some appropriate costuming and will encourage residents to do the same. They all will be enlisted to fill bags with treats, don their Halloween t-shirts, and greet the trick-or-treaters who dare to come and scare the community on the hill. All ghosts, goblins, heroes, princesses and monsters will be welcome from 4:30 to 8:30.

And that leads to two questions the residents at the Terrace view as pretty important right now, "What do skeletons say before eating?" And, "What can't you give the headless horseman?"

## USDA opens 2020 enrollment for dairy margin coverage program

Dairy producers can now enroll in the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) for calendar year 2020. USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has opened sign-up for the program that helps producers manage economic risk brought on by milk price and feed cost disparities.

"We know it's tough out there for American farmers, including our dairy producers," said Bill Northey, Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation. "As Secretary Perdue said, farmers are pretty good at managing through tough times, and we know that more dairy farmers will be able to survive with this

2018 Farm Bill and its risk mitigation measures, like the Dairy Margin Coverage program."

The DMC program offers reasonably priced protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. The deadline to enroll in DMC for 2020 is Dec. 13, 2019.

Dairy farmers earned more than \$300 million dollars from the program in 2019 so far. Producers are encouraged to take advantage of this very important risk management tool for 2020.

All producers who want 2020 coverage, even those who took advantage of the 25 percent premium discount by locking in the coverage level for five years of margin protection coverage are required to visit the office during this sign-up period to pay the annual administrative fee.

"Dairy producers should definitely consider coverage for 2020 as even the slightest drop in the margin can trigger payments," said Northey. "Dairy producers should consider enrolling in DMC to guard against what has been, for several years, an extremely unforgiving market."

The 2018 Farm Bill created DMC, improving on the previous safety net for dairy producers. DMC is one of many programs that FSA and other USDA agencies are implementing to support America's farmers.

For more information on enrolling in DMC and taking advantage of an online dairy decision tool that assists producers in selecting coverage for 2020, visit the DMC webpage.

For additional questions and assistance, contact your local USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-locator.

## EOCCO to hold meetings

Public invited to help shape future of local healthcare

Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization (EOCCO) will hold community meetings in each of the 12 counties it serves. EOCCO serves Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid) members throughout the 12-county region.

The meetings present an opportunity to learn about community-driven health improvement efforts, and to consider shared strategies under the state's next phase of coordinated care, known as "CCO 2.0."

"The greatest strength of Eastern Oregon communities is collaboration. As we move into a new era of coordinated care, Eastern Oregon is uniquely positioned to raise the bar on healthcare for the individuals and families who call this region home," said Kevin Campbell, Chief Executive Officer of EOCCO.

"We look forward to hearing from community members as we work together to build and consider new approaches to improving the healthcare system. Our commitment is better care and better health at lower costs for Eastern Oregon communities," said Sean Jessup, EOCCO President.

Established in 2012, EOCCO serves about 50,000 members across a 50,000-square-mile service area, roughly the size of New York state.

"We're really proud of the way the healthcare community has come together to form and support the CCO. Through these partnerships, we are rapidly becoming a nationwide model for success in rural

communities," said Robin Richardson, Chief Operating Officer and Board Chair of EOCCO.

On Sept. 27, the Oregon Health Authority announced EOCCO's five-year contract award as the coordinated care organization serving Oregon Health Plan members in the following counties: Baker, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa and Wheeler.

EOCCO will enter its next contract cycle Jan. 1. This fall, EOCCO will engage the public at meetings throughout the region.

The meeting to be held in Morrow County will be at the SAGE Center, 101 Olson Rd. NE, Boardman on Thursday, November 7 from noon to 2 p.m.



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~ 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.

## No litter on highway

To the editor:  
Last Friday I did a "windshield inspection" of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce Department of Transportation Adopt a Highway 1.7 state highway segment. This was to determine if a pick up needed to be organized. There was virtually no litter along the segment.

This speaks very well

of our citizens who remove any litter they see as they walk around town. This effort keeps our town litter free for ourselves and our visitors.

Good work.  
John Edmondson  
Heppner Chamber of Commerce Member  
Adopt a Highway program coordinator

## Turmoil and negativity in the community

To the editor:  
As a member of the Lexington community I feel that it is important to voice my concern. Though I have done so with other community members individually, I feel that I would be negligent not to voice it publicly.

There has been a great deal of turmoil within our small community and so much negativity, it saddens me. I will admit that I didn't take the time out of my schedule to regularly attend our city meetings until the town shut down. Since then I have been attending every meeting. Let me share some things of what I have seen.

There has been so much anger from many different people from both sides. Those that support Mayor Kemp and those that side with council members. Meetings are not productive for anyone (both sides). More time is spent in finger pointing and accusations than trying to get past issues and seek resolutions that would benefit our community.

Yes, Mayor Kemp did not individually call council members regarding the budget approval meeting, but members of the council knew exactly when that meeting was scheduled and had the responsibility to make sure they were there. When the city shut down there were comments that the mayor caused the shutdown. This only because she didn't call each member to remind them of the meeting. Once it was shut down, there was not any effort to move forward in a positive manner to move past what happened and look to the future of making Lexington better. When there was a motion to pay the two city employees for the seven days that they were off, the vote of only two council members (as that was all that was in attendance) voted to not pay them. One

council member made the comment "maybe the one that caused it should pay them." This was in reference again to Mayor Kemp and again not helpful. All of which I heard as I was in attendance.

Bottomline, we as a community need to be informed. This means attending meetings, speaking with the mayor and council members, etc. As with any election we need to vote based on knowledge and not just the word of others that are sharing their opinion. Ask yourself what the facts are. If someone like the mayor is accused of something, especially illegal, ask for the facts to back it up. We all know what a downward spiral it is to go solely based on "he said, she said" types of conversations.

In closing, let's get past the past. Let us look to a representative government in our city. A mayor and council that represent the interests of the citizens and not pushing their own agenda. We face that enough in our world on many levels. Someone may not like the mayor personally or the council members, but if they are doing the job appointed to them and we are satisfied with that, then set aside any personality disputes. If we do not like the job (based on facts) of what they are doing then take action upon that.

The city government of Lexington needs to stop bickering and seek resolution. I sincerely hope that no matter who is in office (mayor and council members) that they come together as a governing board and work together. Community members, get active, have a voice, be informed, make your own decisions. We have the ability to make this right.

Sincerely,  
Juli Kennedy



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