

~ 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. Email to editor@rapidsolve.net or upload to Heppner.net.

**Lindsay is a true leader**

Commissioner Melissa Lindsay is one of the most effective county commissioners I have worked with, first in my role as a Harney County Commissioner and now as the state representative for House District 60. She advocates effectively for her constituents and for county issues, putting the concerns and priorities of the communities she represents first above all else. During the COVID pandemic, she navigated tough challenges to bring much-needed financial and health resources to Morrow County. She pushed for rural schools to open to in-person learning and brought tens of thousands of dollars of Morrow County small businesses in order for them to stay open. She's helped expand broadband

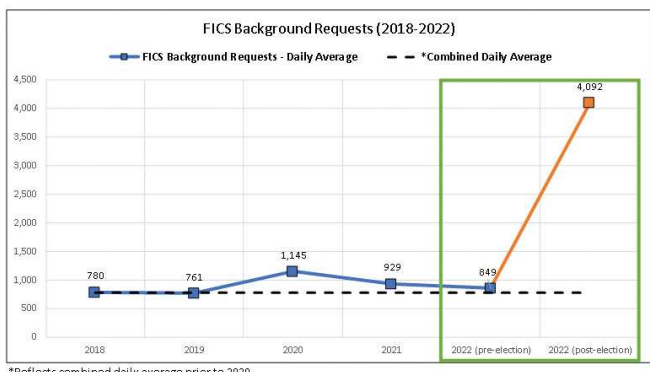
access and find funding for the fairgrounds to ensure kids in Morrow County have opportunities for 4-H, FFA and expand tourism to the county.

Melissa has built important relationships and partnerships at the local, regional, state and even federal level to ensure Morrow County has a voice and a seat at the table, which in turn has provided new opportunities for the county to thrive.

In our time working together, she has shown time and time again to serve selflessly and with integrity—two things that are rare in politics these days. Commissioner Lindsay is a true leader and a public servant, and she deserves support and recognition for her work for Morrow County.

Rep. Mark Owens Burns, OR

**State police face backlog following measure 114**



Requests for background checks for firearm sales jumped after the announcement that Ballot Measure 114 passed this month. -Contributed photo

The Oregon State Police reports a backlog of background checks for firearm purchases following the passing of Ballot Measure 114.

The Oregon Secretary of State's office notified OSP that Ballot Measure 114 will go into effect at 12 a.m. on Dec. 8. Among other things, the measure requires a permit to purchase firearms and requires the police to maintain a permit/firearm database. It also makes it illegal to purchase magazines that hold more than 10 rounds. The Oregon State Police has been working with the Department of Justice, the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association and the Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police to assess the required processes that need to be completed to implement this law.

Right now, the biggest problem for the state police is the processing of increased requests for background checks. The department reports that, as of Nov. 16, only about 63 percent of the requests received into the OSP Firearms Instant Check System (FICS) unit have been approved for the month of November. The remaining transactions must be evaluated by an OSP employee to determine what caused the person to be kicked out of the automated process. If applicable, a manual correction can be made, and the application can be approved.

The state police offer some important notes to consider when submitting for a firearm purchase or transfer. Things that could exclude someone from automated approval include:

-If you have ever been arrested or convicted of

a crime in Oregon or any other state.

-If you have incomplete or incorrect information listed on federal ATF Form 4473. A potential fix is to double-check the information for accuracy.

-If your registered DMV address does not match the address listed on federal ATF Form 4473. A potential fix is to update personal address with DMV.

That said, the unit has been working through these extreme firearms request volumes and says it will continue to process them as quickly as possible.

The FICS unit's hours of operation is set in Oregon Revised Statute (ORS), and largely determined by retail hours. FICS is open and processing background checks from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week, 363 days a year, with only Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day off.

For more information about the Oregon State Police's Firearms Instant Check System (FICS), including how to complete a Firearm Pre-Purchase Self-Assessment Questionnaire, go to <https://www.oregon.gov/osp/programs/cjis/Pages/Firearms-Instant-Check-System.aspx>.

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**Spiritually Speaking**

Father Thankachan Joseph St. Patrick Catholic Church Heppner



**Prepare the Way for the Messiah**

The main theme of this Sunday of Advent is to prepare the way for the Messiah, and Scripture gives us answers to these questions: 1) What kind of Savior is the one we are waiting for? 2) How are we going to get ready to receive Him? 3) What are we to do so that we may be saved by Christ?

The Prophet Isaiah (11:1-10) describes justice and peace, describing seeming impossibilities. The condition of the people of Israel at the time of Isaiah was sad. After the death of King Solomon, his kingdom had been divided into the northern Kingdom of Israel and the southern Kingdom of Judah. The destruction of the Kingdom of Israel involved most of the people being carried off as slaves and scattered over various countries. Isaiah compares the scattered people of Israel to a felled tree of which only the stump remains. Usually from the remaining stump some shoots sprout, but little chance exists that any of these shoots will become a grown-up tree because they are eaten by cattle or they just dry up. Isaiah's vision in 11:6-7 answers the first question in the introduction, "What kind of Savior is the one we are waiting for?" He recounts his vision of "the days to come" when God will manifest His glory to all humankind. "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." All these descriptions of the day of the Messiah, some people will say, are impossible. The wolf can never live in peace with the lamb because it the wolf's nature to eat the lamb. Isaiah is pointing out that a radical transformation of our human nature is required, possible only by God's grace.

How are we going to get ready to receive our Savior? John the Baptist in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 3:1-12) gives us an answer to this question. We must allow ourselves to be possessed by the Spirit of God, just as John was. John invites the Jews to conversion. "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is close at hand" (Mt. 3:2). In other words, John invites us to change from wolves into lambs because, in a way, we are all wolves as long as we persevere in sin. John does not hesitate to call the leaders of the Jews "vipers" –snakes whose hearts were full of poison that poisoned people around them. In another comparison, John invites the Jews to change from useless chaff into precious grain. He invites them to start yielding fruit, or else the coming of the Messiah would be of no use to them. They would all be condemned to be burnt.

We have the plain, yet powerful, message of John the Baptist, for all ages, a fine response to the third question of the introduction, "What are we to do that we may be saved by Christ?"

John preached condemnation. He preached the truth of what men had become, "vipers," having allowed themselves to be poisoned and poisonous to others. Sick and doomed, they were biting, making others sick and dooming them.

John preached repentance. Man must first repent and then produce worthy fruit consistent with repentance—fruit that shows a changed heart and a turning away from sin.

John preached against pride. Many of the people wrongly believed they were acceptable to God simply because they were children of Abraham and godly forefathers, whose righteousness saved them. How they lived mattered little. We can wrongly think similarly, that we need only to have godly parents, to have been baptized, are better than many, belong to pious associations, hold important positions in public, etc.

John preached social justice. The people wanted to know how repentance would affect their lives. What kind of fruit should they bear? To the average citizen he said to share your surplus food and clothes with the starving and the naked. To tax collectors he said not to rob the people. To soldiers he said not to abuse your power, intimidate people or use violence against them.

John preached the Messiah's coming. The Messiah was more worthy and more powerful than he. "I baptize you with water, but he with the Holy Spirit."

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**Good News Only by Doris Brosnan**

There was a fun laugh among friends on Thanksgiving when one sent a "Happy Thanksgiving" text to several and included a picture with the comment, "I hope that's a turkey. I don't have my glasses on." It was a picture of a bat!

At least one person—but probably several others—sees as good news the strong wind that blew so hard, "the fall leaves blew off trees all the way to the next county!"

An observer shares being impressed with the muscles and energy necessary by each HHS class to climb the hill behind the fairgrounds to change the number to match the new senior class's graduation year—a long local tradition and something she is eager to watch for.

Good news for young pregnant women and new mothers is that Birthright of Morrow County, at 128 West Willow Street in Heppner, has many diapers give away. Sizes range from "premies" to 10 pounds. Birthright is open on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Thursdays from 5 to 7 p.m., and Saturdays from 1 to 3 p.m.. If coming to pick up some diapers is not possible, a volunteer can deliver. The phone number is 541-676-0530. This organization, which is run by volunteers, also has free baby clothes, many new pieces donated by retail stores. These same volunteers also plan to spearhead a "Great Community for Moms" on Dec. 15, at which young moms and newly pregnant women can gather for fellowship. They plan to host this opportunity on the third Thursdays of December, January, February and March from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Not knowing something over which a grandmother has no control until after the reason for worry has passed can be good news: On Wednesday before Thanksgiving, a vibrating sound and slight vibration in the car resulted in Carson and Conor Brosnan pulling off Highway 84 near Rufus at 8:30 p.m., as they traveled to Hermiston from Corvallis. A search revealed that a bolt from one wheel had been shirred off and two lug nuts were missing from the remaining bolts! Long story short, by the time Grandma heard the story, the car had been towed to Les Schwab in Hermiston on the day after Thanksgiving, all necessary parts repaired and replaced. Definitely reasons to be thankful.

Readers look forward to our tidbits of good news and moments that brought us smiles, so please send your contributions to dbrosnan123@gmail.com or call 541-223-1490.

Here's hoping that some good news comes to everyone reading this!

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**December 1st**

**5:30pm**

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