

~ 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.

**Let's talk about gender**

Editor:

A survey from Oregon Health was recently given to Morrow County students, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade. One of the questions was: what is your gender identity?

- 01) Two Spirit American Indian/Alaska Native
- 02) Girl/Woman
- 03) Boy/ Man
- 04) Demi girl / Demi boy
- 05) Nonbinary
- 06) Gender Fluid
- 07) Agender/No gender

Parents were given written notice from their children that they could have their children opt out. Students did have the choice to refrain from answering questions, and no names were required on the questionnaire.

The state of Oregon is very concerned about gender identity and is aggressively offering "gender affirming care," defined as "social, psychological, behavioral or medical (including hormonal treatment or surgery) interventions designed to support and affirm an individual's identity." In Oregon, gender affirming hormones (GAH) are given on "informed Consent" basis for those 15 and older, per Oregon Law. The Oregon Health Plan covers hormone therapy and some surgical services for transgender and gender-nonbinary. In Oregon, minors 15 years and older are able to consent to medical and dental services without parental consent. A minor 14 years of age or older may obtain, without parental knowledge or consent, outpatient diagnosis or treatment of a mental or emotional disorder or a chemical dependency (ORS 109.640).

What does this mean? It means you better pay attention to what your children are being taught and what gender identity means. Demi girl or boy means that person identifies with both their sex and a gender, i.e. divided identity/ split personality. Nonbinary means neither

male nor female. Gender fluidity refers to change over time in a person's gender expression or identity, or both. That change might be in expression, but not identity, or in identity but not expression, or both expression and identity might change together.

If you as adults are confused, imagine what our youth are going through.

Here is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. There are only two genders, male or female. Biology, science and our creator affirm this truth. "God created them, male and female" (Genesis 5:2). These woke doctors, psychiatrists, health professionals, etc. are using hormone therapies, gender affirming care, and surgeries to turn females into masculine (but still) females and males into feminine (but still) males. The result has been heartbreaking. "82% of transgender individuals have considered killing themselves and 40% have attempted suicide" (2020 Official Factsheet Now, save.org). The Florida Board of Osteopathic Medicine has banned puberty blockers, cross sex hormones and transgender surgeries in minors. The surgeon General of Florida warned "the state must do more to protect children from politics-based medicine" (Tyler O'Neil, Gospel of Transgenderism, 12/8/22, daily signal.com). The International Review of Psychiatry study found "80% of those seeking chemical care will lose their desire to identify with the opposite sex" (O'Neil op. cit.). In Sweden they no longer "prescribe hormone treatments to minors under 16" (O'Neil op. cit.). The same in Great Britain and Finland.

Get involved and protect your children from those that would offer "gender affirming care" before it is too late. These questionnaires our youth are being subject to can be the curiosity that killed (or mutilated) the cat.

Stuart Dick  
Irrigon, OR

**Good News Only** by Doris Brosnan

Just one week from today, the daylight hours will begin to increase! Granted, they will do so until June at a rate of approximately two minutes and seven seconds per day, but they will add up. Good News for several people who were asked whether or not they look forward to the change.

In the meantime, winter activities in Heppner and Ione are looking more and more like those spirit-lifting activities of long ago (pre-pandemic)—the holiday-lighting at the park, the school concerts, this week's event at the fairgrounds, the giving trees, the music on the streets, the open-houses. Not everyone uses social media for information but can watch the Gazette-Times for details as these events near.

Sharon Lewis has been recovering at home after a one-day stay for surgery in Portland two weeks ago. She reports that she is truly feeling better and better.

When describing her adult son, Andrew, as a young person, April Sykes finds "rambunctious" a fitting word, which is why she is especially impressed with his latest news. Andrew now lives in Pendleton, is active in his mom and dad's (Dave) business and has recently become an acolyte in St. Mary's Catholic Church. Andrew's contribution to the parish also includes his talents at the piano and as a member of the choir.

Maggie and Joe Armato have been in San Francisco to attend a large Armato gathering. Great opportunity for staying in touch with both sides of their father's family and to meet more cousins!

Last Friday in Las Vegas, Stephen Thompson "popped the question" and Charlie Dimke said, "Yes!" As if by magic, the ring appeared from inside the top of a cowboy boot. Apparently, Thompson had been able to keep his plan a secret from Charlie, who must not have wondered why so many members of his family and her family (from Asotin, WA) had happened to gather at an entrance to the NFR arena. Wishes for happiness go out to the young couple.

To all the people who have been complaining about the abundance of "scam calls" that irritate and consume time, once in a while what appears to be is not: Kay Proctor received what she was all but certain was a bogus call from "a company in charge of a contest sponsored by Oreo." Since Kay had, a few months previous, actually seen a notice and entered a contest that required an essay explaining how the writer would help Oreo celebrate its 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary, she decided to investigate a bit instead of writing off the call as a scam. Long story short is that Kay did investigate and discovered that she had won the national contest with her essay! Consequently, she received as her prize what she had explained she would do to help Oreo celebrate - 110 gift baskets (actually, backpacks) to be distributed among the many medical personnel who have worked diligently with her son, Roy, for several years. No wonder Kay won the contest. (Kay has learned that many of the gift bags are being regifted to young patients.)

Heppner's Birthright organization is eager for its first sponsored "Mom Connection" gathering tomorrow from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at its facility at 128 West Willow Street. The purpose of the informal social event is to give young moms and expectant moms some "me" time, an opportunity to share ideas, questions, thoughts, whatever is on their minds.

Updated information: Madison Orem was previously congratulated as a volleyball Big-Sky-League-First-Team choice. Well, Calli Troutman was also chosen for that volleyball honor by the league coaches. Congratulations, Calli! The Ione-Arlington team ended their season with a 19-6 overall record, which took them into a round of the 1A state playoffs.

**SWCD to hold annual meeting**

The Morrow SWCD (Soil and Water Conservation District) will hold its annual meeting for fiscal year 2021-2022 on Tuesday, Jan. 3, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Ag Service Center in Heppner. The purpose of the meeting will be to report activities and give a financial review for the year. To join via Zoom or conference call, contact the SWCD beforehand at 541-676-5452. Meetings of the Morrow SWCD are open to the public.

**Spiritually Speaking**

Father Thankachan Joseph  
St. Patrick Catholic Church Heppner



**Immanuel: "God Is With Us"**

Universally, the church is waiting for the coming of the real Savior Jesus. We have seen Jesus's marvelous display of empathy and compassion for suffering humanity. Among these suffering generations he takes flesh and becomes one, and becomes Emmanuel for them, which means God is with us as our savior and redeemer. In every Eucharistic celebration, we will encounter the same empathetic Christ. Let us not be afraid to show Him the various handicaps, disabilities and wounds that we suffer. May the Babe of Bethlehem heal us from all these disabilities and raise us to the status of children of God.

The first reading of this fourth week of Advent is from the Prophet Isaiah (7:10-14), describing the reign of Judah of King Ahaz, during which war broke out between Judah and Israel. Pekah, the king of Israel, entered into an alliance with the King of Syria (Rezin), and the two went to besiege Jerusalem. When King Ahaz learned of the coalition against him, his heart sank along with his people. He was an evil king and could not reasonably expect God's intervention, but God had not given up on Judah. God sent Isaiah to Ahaz to give him a message of comfort, a promise of Judah's triumph. Isaiah told Ahaz to ask for a sign to authenticate the promise from God. He refused. So, Isaiah gave a sign from God, "and shall call His name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14). The word "Immanuel" means "God with us."

The Gospel reading is from St. Matthew (1:18-24), describing the birth of Jesus. Before we come to this particular section of our reading, however, Mathew describes the genealogy of Jesus Christ to explain that Jesus is from the clan of David, bringing before us the forty-two generations from Abraham to Joseph, the foster father of Jesus—from Abraham to David, 14 generations; from David to Babylon exile, 14 generations; from Babylon exile to Jesus Christ, 14 generations.

The Gospel presents the person of Joseph for us to imitate and appreciate as we get ready for the great feast of Christmas. The Bible presents him as a righteous, just man. Joseph loved Mary very much, so he did not want her to be stoned to death. (The Jewish law dictated that if a woman is engaged to one man and found sleeping with another, both she and the other man should be taken out of the town and stoned to death.) (Due. 22:22). Instead, he plans to take all the blame upon himself and to escape to somewhere else. The angel of God appears to him to reveal the divine plan, which was very difficult for him to understand and accept. He is a model for us to imitate. In modern society, if we carefully scrutinize, we notice that we are trying to belittle others and trying to be great in front of others. Joseph, though, had an opportunity to belittle Mary and get rid of her, but he became a beautiful example of righteousness and justice to others. He becomes the protector for that young virgin, as well as for the child in her womb conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the present-day society, in which the sacrament of marriage undergoes a great threat, Joseph and Mary are great examples for the modern young couples to imitate. Joseph overcomes the problems of his married life and leaves these few aspects for us to imitate to make our families like that of Nazareth:

- 1) Don't try to belittle anyone through our words or deeds.
- 2) Ignore opportunities to belittle and humiliate someone in public.
- 3) Like Joseph, always listen to God's word and give importance to it.
- 4) Like Joseph, fully trust God's words, and adjust our lives accordingly.
- 5) Imitating Joseph, keep silent on some occasions and try to do the responsibilities entrusted to us with maximum capacity.
- 6) Through the sacrament of Holy Matrimony, God is entrusting to our care the spouse and children we need to take care of and protect from all sorts of dangers, as Joseph did, in spite of undergoing great troubles for them.

When we try to live our family lives in this way, our families will become like the family of Nazareth, and God will be always there. That is the Emmanuel experience for all of us.

**Elks Free Throw Shooting Contest  
Sunday, December 18th  
1:00 p.m. - FREE**

A free throw shooting contest for girls and boys ages eight through 13 will be held at the Heppner Elementary School gym on Sunday, Dec. 18 at 1 p.m. Girls and boys must be within that age group as of Apr. 1, 2023 and live in the Heppner, Lexington and Ione area. The contest is sponsored by the Heppner Elks and is free for participants. Girls and boys will compete separately in three age groups: 8 to 9 years old, 10 to 11 years old and 12 to 13 years old. Each competitor will shoot 10 free throws, then rest and shoot 15 more, for a total of 25. Winners from each age group will advance to the district Hoop Shoot in Heppner on Jan. 8. For additional information, contact Corey Sweeney at 541-256-0355.

**Elks** **HEPPNER ELKS 358**  
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**TOM & JERRY PARTY**  
With Live Music Friday Dec. 16th  
Tom & Jerry Drinks at 5 p.m.  
Steak Dinner at 6 p.m.  
Music by Frank Carlson 7 p.m.  
Members & their Guest  
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**DEC 23<sup>RD</sup>**  
DRIVER APPRECIATION DAY  
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*the loop*

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**Elks Memorial Service**  
*"To our absent members"*  
**Saturday December 17th at 4pm.**  
*Please join us Saturday, December 17th at 4p.m. as we remember our absent members by reading their names aloud during the service.*  
**A Spaghetti Dinner will follow. Family Members of our absent members are invited to attend.**  
**HEPPNER ELKS 358**  
676-9181 "Where Friends Meet" 142 North Main