

~ 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 \$16. Email to editor@rapidsolve.net or upload to Heppner.net.

Enough Already!

I am writing this letter to the editor as a concerned community member of Morrow County. I was born at Pioneer Memorial Hospital and have spent most of my life as a citizen of Heppner.

I am really frustrated with the statements made by some Morrow County Health District Board members, calling out the citizens of Heppner for making current employees of the district feel unsafe and for bullying the current CEO into resigning her position.

Bullying people into resigning their positions at the district has been going on for years. I am speaking from my own personal experiences with certain members of administration and a current board member. I attended some board meetings, I even stood up and gave a statement, and a member of the administration team rolled her eyes as I stood up to speak. A board member questioned the validity of the statement/questions I was going to ask. There were many other members of the community that spoke at this meeting, but I was the only one who was asked about the validity of questions/statement I was going to ask. I can say I left the meeting feeling even more angry and unsettled than when I went in.

This is the culture at the hospital, the culture previous employees had to work in. I have spoken with some of the previous employees of the district regarding their experiences while being employed at the district. Their statements were all very similar.

I can say that I commend the handful of community members who started making statements, attending meetings, and asking for meetings with the current CEO. Their hope was that attending board meetings and having one-on-one conversations regarding their concerns would be heard and addressed. It seems their concerns fell on deaf ears. These community members felt the only thing left to do was vote for change.

I feel that, had the board done their own investigations into why these people who had worked at the district for so long were leaving or being fired, we wouldn't be where we are today. You don't lose 50-plus employees because they just couldn't get on board with the culture change. Why didn't anyone ask why? Why didn't the board do their own investigations into what was going on?

Is there a possibility that some of these employees just didn't work out? Sure! But the majority of these people saw themselves retiring from the hospital. They put many years into their work at the hospital only to be bullied and belittled to the point they either quit on their own or were forced to quit because they couldn't handle it anymore. Some of these employees came to the district with a stellar record and were admired in their field only to have these records tarnished while in the employ of the district. These are people who live in our community, who are raising their families in this community and have

been forced to drive an hour-plus one way to work. They certainly aren't doing this because they want to. They are doing it because that's what they were forced to do.

I, myself, am voting for change. I encourage everyone in Morrow County to do the same. Russ Nichols, Janet Greenup, Jason Hanna and Ann Spicer-Kuhn have my vote.

Amy Kollman
Heppner, OR

So-called 'trouble-makers' are heart and soul of Morrow County

There has been some very harsh criticism leveled against concerned citizens of Heppner and south Morrow County from the ex-CEO and MCHD (Morrow County Health District) board members. According to news reports, these citizens have exercised every possible effort (letters to the editor, public comments at MCHD meetings, campaign statements, social media sites) to have their concerns addressed. Which are:

1) Their local doctors, nurses, medical professional that are no longer welcome at MCHD (over 40 in four years).

2) Smear campaign against Dr. Russ Nichols.

3) Negative response from MCHD board to openly consider their grievances. These citizens of south Morrow County have lost most of their local medical professionals and caregivers and now must drive long distances for medical care. Many are elderly and may be forced to move closer to medical care facilities. These citizens have been accused of spite, ignorance, trouble making and worse. These so-called trouble-makers that have lost their health care providers are the heart and soul of south Morrow County. Remember that when you vote for a new MCHD board.

Stuart Dick
Irrigon, OR

Salt and Light

The older I get, the less I like change, which is rather strange for an ADHD brain owner like myself. For much of my life, boredom has been a formidable enemy. Any difference from the status quo was welcome. Maybe the years have taught me that change doesn't always equal satisfaction and there's often peace and safety in the familiar.

Our world has changed dramatically since I was a youngster. The country we call our own today is unrecognizable to anyone who was paying attention 30 years ago...or even 15. Spend 10 minutes watching the news or five minutes thumbing through social media, and the evidence is overwhelming. There's been a rapid decline in decency, respect and the general moral code on which society used to thrive. This isn't Mayberry anymore, that's for sure.

Makes me wonder. Why was it so hard to maintain? What if more had bucked the downfall, spoken up, pointed out bad behavior, and done more than

just watch it happen? How different would the world look today? And I also wonder, when did we go from parents raising children to form a decent society, to a society that became the enemy of children? Parents today seem to be little more than apathetic spectators. I guess the "Me Generation" has spoken.

Not to disparage all current parents today. Some are trying. But the swim upstream is a difficult one and societal rapids are deadly. Remember when everyone knew honesty, respect, self-discipline, kindness, purity and faith were admirable qualities? Law-abiding citizens were an asset and criminals were not. Parents had the ultimate say, and their children were to be protected, in and out of the womb, at all costs. The difference between good and evil was obvious, and we all knew the difference. But that was then. It all seems upside down today.

But bravo to those trying hard to stop the decline. If you're not afraid to stand up for what's right, speak the truth, discipline your children, and risk the loss of friends and even family... you can make a difference. It's a difficult battle, and yes, you will be called names, slandered, mocked, blocked and even sued. But stay the course.

And remember the significance of the fight. It doesn't matter what you believe if what you believe doesn't matter. I know my convictions are deeper than nostalgia for what was, and deeper than politics. They're based on a firm belief in a God to whom I will answer someday. He's called His people to be salt and light. We live in a dark and tasteless world. Make a difference. It's worth the price.

"You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father" (Matthew 5:13-16).

Susie Crosby
Prineville, OR

Continue Port commission change, vote for Fletcher Hobbs

Richard (Rick) Stokoe has served as a Port of Morrow commissioner for 10 years and is the acting Boardman City Police Chief. During his tenure he has seen significant conflict of interest on the commission and said nothing. He also defended the status quo of operations at the CDA, which recently resulted in the loss of federal funding and yet another black eye for the port. As a commissioner he stated in a 2015 letter to BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure), a federal agency, that the port would legally oversee the employment of the CDA executive director, and did not.

He defends the port's

ownership of a local golf course in Boardman, which the port has spent over three million dollars on and continues with yearly operating expenses. Where was his foresight in 2016 when serious issues of wastewater disposal began to come to light?

It is time to finish the commissioner leadership change begun in recent elections and that is why I endorse and will be voting for Fletcher Hobbs for port position #1.

We voters have this and other important issues before us that will significantly affect our county for many years; three out of five Port commissioners, four out of five Morrow County Health District board members and a Morrow County School District bond measure for badly needed capital improvements.

We are blessed in Morrow County for several reasons: one is that local industry and Amazon will pay over 70 percent of the bond value, and two, we have candidates for these positions that are motivated, informed and willing to serve.

Take the time to learn what the candidates stand for and why. Do they represent the vision, goals and priorities you have? Or your community?

Please join me in voting for Fletcher Hobbs for port commissioner #1 and yes for the school bond measure.

Sincerely,
John Murray
Heppner, OR

Day of Action

Saturday, April 19, was a Day of Action, a coordinated protest, under the 50501 banner. This is a grassroots organization founded to protest policies and actions of the second Trump administration. Protests were held in all of the 50 states. Over three million people participated.

I had the opportunity to participate in Heppner. A couple days prior a friend and I decided that we wanted to participate and stand up for democracy. We made signs, got our chairs and settled on the sidewalk on Main Street for three hours. We were more than a little nervous and anxious not knowing how our protesting would be received. When all was said and done we were glad that we had exercised our Constitutional rights.

Cars and trucks drove by; some looked and some did not. Kids usually waved. There were a couple honks and no finger pointing. By the end of the afternoon we had chatted with a number of people. A couple indicated they did not agree with us, but the others were most positive and supportive. We learned there are many people in Heppner who have concerns about the Trump administration but are reluctant to get involved or express their views.

My suggestion to those

who are concerned is to call, email and write your congressional representative, Cliff Bentz, and your senator, Jeff Merkley, and share your concerns.

Joan Larson
Heppner, OR

Vote for positive change in health district

To the Morrow County community,

We, the nursing staff and technical staff of Pioneer Memorial Hospital are a newly formed union. We are committed to working collaboratively and building a positive relationship with the board of directors through collective bargaining.

Our vision for the future of Pioneer Memorial Hospital includes strengthening our workforce by focusing on the recruitment and retention of local full-time and part-time employees. Among our bargaining team, we have current full-time workers and individuals who have previously worked as full-time employees and are passionate about bringing our community's talent back to the hospital.

We are dedicated to fostering a workforce culture that prioritizes the well-being of our caregivers, supports a sustainable and positive work environment, and ensures the highest standard of care for our patients. We believe that in order to best serve our community, we must ensure that

our team has the necessary resources, support and work conditions to succeed.

Our hope is for a board of directors that shares our values and aligns with the goals of the community. We are committed to the care of our patients, and we recognize that we cannot do this without the continued strength and support of this hospital and community.

We believe that, with positive changes and a focus on community engagement, Pioneer Memorial Hospital can once again be staffed with a dedicated workforce from within our own community.

Given the challenges we currently face, we see an urgent need to prioritize the sustainability and effectiveness of our hospital's workforce. We look forward to a future where the board encourages open communication, listens to the caregivers within the hospital, and works together with us to strengthen the care we provide. Please join us in voting for the positive change our community deserves.

PMH Oregon Nurses Association and Technical Team:

Kalah Barnett (R)(CT)(VI)(ARRT), Jimmy Wimer (R)(CT)(ARDMS)(ARRT), Eva McMasters (R)(CT)(ARRT), Brittnie Wageenaar (R)(CT)(ARRT), Katie Heath (R)(CT)(ARRT), Emily Inman (R)(CT)(ARRT), Kathleen Greenup, RN, WCC, PICC, Brandy Bombersbach, RN, SANE-A, Diane Hardy, RN, BSN, Heidi Wimer, RN, Sasha Jimenez, RN, Mindy Smith, RN, Rachel Schonbachler, RN, Rachel Hudson, RN

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MONDAY AT 5:00 P.M.

SYKES REAL ESTATE
177 N Main St. Heppner, Or 97836
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Broker Chris Sykes 541-215-2274

For Sale

\$415,000

This 0.77-acre property offers everything for animal enthusiasts, with a livestock pasture, year-round creek, two chicken houses, a barn with a lean-to, and a deer-proof garden with a greenhouse for year-round produce. A 10x12 storage room. The 5-bedroom, 2.5-bath home, including a master suite, features modern updates like new flooring, hardy plank siding and new windows. Energy-efficient ductless heating and cooling. Outside, rock retaining walls, a tool shed, and a partially finished basement add function and flexibility. Located within city limits, it's a short walk to Main Street. Perfect for animal care, gardening, and quiet living, this move-in-ready property is a rare find. 580 S MAIN ST Heppner. MLS#: 629913772

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