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35 citizens show up to ask questions

Slim turnout noted Monday on high school construction

By Bob Gilluly

Hamilton school officials began to assess the results of a public meeting to explain the proposed high school building program Monday night and said today they were disappointed with the small turnout.

Only 35 citizens showed up in the school auditorium for the presentation, with 9 board members and administrators on hand.

Discussion at the session ranged from questions about why Hamilton High School has to accept students from outside districts to reasons why the local district has given up on plans for a joint vocational education center and why trustees feel that consolidation of districts is a dead issue at this time.

[illegible]

Questions summarized

Some of the questions posed by members of the audience included:

1. Why didn't the board authorize a two-story building? Trustees said this was considered but, unable to obtain a zoning variance in regard to off-street parking, it had to be abandoned. They said they were unsure if a two-story structure would result in heat or fuel savings.

2. What happened to the joint vocational education proposal voiced among patrons in the Corvallis, Victor and Hamilton districts in 1974-75? Trustees said plans did not materialize and, more importantly, there were major questions about financing such a facility.

3. How about consolidation? Board members said they still would be receptive to such a proposal, but pointed out Victor has recently approved a building plan and Corvallis trustees are working on an expansion project. In essence, there is no move afoot to consolidate, either at the local level or by the state legislature.

4. How many students from outside the district are presently enrolled in Hamilton High School? Principal Henry Hadt said HHS currently has 20 students from Corvallis, 8-10 from Victor and a few from Stevensville, making a total of about 30. State law stipulates the school cannot turn down students who seek admittance to any high school.

5. How long would the building alleviate the current enrollment crunch? Up to a maximum of 900 students, trustees commented, which should insure adequate classroom space for at least the next decade. As an aside, Johnson said the present rate of enrollment increase is expected to continue and possibly increase. Already, he commented, the district has 132 first graders in sight for the next school term, the largest in the district's history.

6. How much will the project increase local taxes? School officials said the projection is for an approximate five percent rise during the life of the 10-year construction bonds. They pointed out, however, the ever increasing tax base in the district may allow trustees to levy fewer than 10 mills per year to pay off the bonds.

Officials stressed that a large voter turnout is necessary to ensure that the building proposal will be a valid election on April 6.

Under state law, at least 30 percent of the 4268 registered voters must cast ballots. If 30 to 40 percent turn out, 60 percent of the ballots cast must be favorable to pass the issue.

If the turnout is more than 40 percent, then a simple majority of favorable votes will approve the issue.

Johnson said those who wish to cast absentee ballots may do so at the school administration center on Daly Avenue anytime between now and noon on April 5.

Streamlined voting

Three voting stations will be set up for the April 6 balloting in the high school, he added, which should eliminate the long lines of citizens that stacked up in last year's election.

Board members and administrators plan to appear at a number of club and organizational meetings in the next ten days, including the Kiwanis luncheon this Wednesday, the Jaycee meeting Wednesday evening, the Senior Citizens Assn. meeting Thursday noon and the Council on Aging Friday.

They decided not to hold another public meeting on April 1, however, because of Monday's slim turnout.

BYE, MOM—These words cause a lot of grief in many babysitting situations, but within the Hamilton babysitting co-op there are few tears. Youngsters enjoy staying at playmates' homes, and mothers enjoy the budget savings which the co-op offers. Above, Sue Schlechten leaves her son Matthew (at right) with Susie Moreland, shown holding her daughter Amanda. Jodi [illegible] and Matthew Moreland wait for the fun to begin.

Ravalli Republic

"Daily Serving the Bitter Root Valley"

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28 Hamilton area mothers solve babysitting problems

By Cheryl Young

It's a fairly familiar scene: Mother Hubbard at the grocery store, four kids in tow, with Johnny pulling out brightly colored cans from the lower shelves, Sammy wanting to go to the bathroom, Susie chewing up mama's grocery list and Junior crying for his blanket.

Sound like home? Need a babysitter? Can't afford one?

Well, there may be an answer. At least 28 women in Hamilton think they have found one, and a good one at that. It's a "babysitting co-op," and it works like this.

Anytime one of the members needs a babysitter — for a few hours of shopping time, an evening, or an entire day — she calls the "secretary" of the group (members alternate with this task) who has an index card for each co-op member.

From the cards, the secretary can tell who is "down" on hours, that is, who has received more babysitting time than she has given. She'll suggest one of these people as a babysitter and either do the calling herself or leave it to the person needing a sitter.

[illegible]

Membership grows

[illegible]

Anyone knows that shopping is about four times easier without little tykes along, and this is another common use of the co-op. Sometimes a mother will put out the call just to have a few hours of needed peace and quiet.

[illegible]

(Continued on Page 4)

Bitter Root summaries

No GOP forum

[illegible] Several GOP legislators who had been invited to come were unable to do so and the forum has been postponed indefinitely, according to John Milstead, outgoing chairman of the committee.

Lawmen are busy

Thefts and drug offenses were investigated Monday by local law enforcement officials.

Two juveniles enrolled at the Trapper Creek Job Corps center were cited Monday by deputy Rod Nielsen for illegal possession of dangerous drugs, a misdemeanor. Criminal complaints against two adult corpsmen allegedly involved in the incident are pending.

A 17-year-old Stevensville girl is [illegible] for illegal possession of marijuana and beer and referred to juvenile court. She had been gone from home for several days and was also cited as a runaway.

Two thefts were also reported to the sheriff's office on Monday. Harley Bauers of Corvallis reported the theft of 12 gallons of gas from an underground storage tank sometime last weekend and Jeff Brenneman of Hamilton reported that a $70 saddle had been stolen from his [illegible] Station on Saturday.

Highway patrolman Dallas Adkins investigated three accidents on Sunday, none of them resulting in serious injury.

At 3:30 p.m. Daniel Burke of Great Falls was forced off the road at the Como Lake turnoff by an oncoming car which was reportedly passing on a curve. No injuries or damages were sustained, but a black and white vehicle is being sought by the sheriff's department in relation to the incident.

A second accident occurred on the Como Road at 6 p.m. Eugene W. Kneuppel, 18, of Darby was reportedly driving too fast when he left US 93 on the Como turnoff, lost control of his vehicle and went into the ditch. He was cited for violation of the basic rule. No injury or damage was sustained.

At 9:30 p.m. on the Sweeney Creek Road near Stevensville, driver Thaddeus Wojciechowski, 36, of Missoula allegedly dozed at the wheel of his vehicle and ran into a power pole on the left side of the road. He was charged with driving while intoxicated and treated for facial cuts at a Missoula hospital.

Baden is speaker

County planning board chairman Phil Baden appeared as speaker at the Corvallis Grange meeting Monday night, explaining the revised version of the county comprehensive plan. Grangers, through their comments, expressed approval of the new plan.

In other matters, with master Bob Nicholson presiding, members heard a report from Madge Buck on Grange sewing projects and agreed to help sponsor Boys State delegates. Improvements to the Grange hall and county fair participation also were talked over.

Refreshments were served by Mr. and Mrs. Mike Turner and Mr. and Mrs. Donald Hall.

Joggers train

Signs of spring: meadowlarks, mud and those mad joggers.

Many Bitter Root runners are getting into shape for the second annual Bitter Root Marathon race, to be held May 9 at the Skalkaho Saunahouse. Three races are scheduled: a "mini-marathon" of 13 miles, 5.5 miles and a "fun race" of one mile.

There will be no 26 mile marathon this year, said race organizer Barney Lambert.

Entry fee for participation is 50 cents, payable at race time, but those interested in running should contact Barnes at the saunahouse in advance.

Land being restored to many tribal reservations

Outlook is brighter for American Indians

By Lee Roderick
Special to the Republic

WASHINGTON — Some Indians used to try to hide what they were. But that's changed in recent years. There's been a renaissance among America's Indians, a more prideful role for them. Now it's in vogue to say "I'm an Indian."

Morris Thompson is more qualified than most to make that assessment. He's head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). He's also half Indian himself, from the Athabascan Tribe in Alaska, and is one of only a small handful of Indians to have headed the federal agency.

In an interview, the [illegible]-year-old BIA commissioner traced the roots of the "renaissance" to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. He points to the years of the Nixon Administration, however, as the time when newly awakened hopes of America's first citizens began to be realized.

"The last five years have been very positive ones for Indians," said Thompson, seated in his comfortable office with native American art on the walls and plush wall-to-wall carpeting the color of reddish earth on the floor.

"Indians have always been America's favorite minority group. Many people have been interested in righting old wrongs. But a real [illegible] Nixon message [illegible] aggressive policy [illegible] which had been [illegible] Indians.

[illegible]

In addition, Congress recently passed a law giving 17 tribes trust title over [illegible] acres of "submarginal" land — generally considered of little worth for farming, yet sought by the tribes for over 40 years for reservation land consolidation and economic development programs.

"We have reversed the historical trend of eroding the Indian land base," explained Thompson. "And the climate is here to continue to right some of these wrongs."

[illegible]

BIA provides a range of services to Indians living on or near the nation's 267 reservations. Services include education — which accounts for nearly one third of the agency's budget — employment, social programs, housing, judicial, industrial development, road construction, and acting as trustee over Indian lands and natural resources. The lands total 50 million acres.

Directly affected by such programs are approximately 500,000 Indians of a total American Indian population of more than 800,000. The reservations these recipients call home range in size from tiny settlements in California of only a few acres to the huge Navajo Reservation of about 14 million acres sprawled across Arizona, Utah and New Mexico.

In the 1950s, says Thompson, there was an "impetus" to move Indians off reservations. "We were operating on a melting pot theory," he explained. "Thinking it would be better for Indians to move them into the nation's mainstream."

The country since then has changed its view of minorities, though. Today it's very popular to be a minority. So there has been a renewed interest among Indians in rediscovering their religion, language and cultural heritage. Accompanying this have been dramatic improvements on the reservations. "And that, in turn, has encouraged a growing trend to return to the reservations." Among improvements he noted were more job opportunities and higher income.

Thompson concedes that America's Indians still face formidable problems. Unemployment on the reservations is now about 30 percent — which is, however, a significant improvement over a 37 percent rate three years ago. But it also is more than triple the national average. In 1970, 38 percent of all Indians, both rural and urban, were estimated to be living on incomes below the poverty level. That, again, was approximately triple the national average.

Problems continue

Alcoholism also continues to be a perennially vicious problem among Indians. Economic factors and the emotional trauma of attempting to fit into both native and mainstream American cultures are cited by Thompson as key elements of Indian alcoholism. But he believes the renewed appreciation of Indian culture will make significant inroads into the problem over time.

"I also believe there are real employment opportunities for Indians in some parts of the country where the United States is now searching for energy sources," said Thompson. "The money from these resources on Indian lands will make tribal governments more self-sufficient and help strengthen the general economic base of our people."

He added that the Indian community wants to attract industries to reservations which will make long term commitments to operate there. "Those firms which have moved to reservations generally have found Indians to be excellent workers because they have a longer retention ratio, higher productivity, and greater loyalty than most other workers," said Thompson.

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