



Letters to the Editor, Jan. 31

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New leadership needed

It's a common occurrence for people from out of town and/or out of state to come to Ashland and immediately realize what a charming, cultural and educational place it is. The spirit of community is immediately noticeable as well as the incredible opportunities that are available for all ages. This applies especially to the senior citizen population, who find this a comfortable and comforting locale. This atmosphere used to apply particularly to the Senior Center with its professional staff who truly represented the spirit of Ashland. Here the seniors were able to receive all the benefits that one confronts in the aging process, i.e. compassionate staff, social activities and friendship in a homelike setting.

However, a new director for the Parks and Recreation Department was hired. He had the authority, but to all appearances seemed to lack the logic and sensitivity to Ashland that was so noticeable to the aforementioned visitors. For example, the compassionate staff that is one of the most important components of any senior center was gone overnight.

Within weeks the Senior Center became a hodgepodge of professionals who were trying to meet the needs of the senior citizens in an institutional manner by being available on specific days rather than on a daily basis. This method tends to become an item on someone's schedule rather than a personal knowledge of each individual available any day of the week.

What is not comprehensible is the fact that the parks commissioners knew that the Senior Center, a centralized, community-oriented place that was beneficial to the senior citizens, already existed. There was no need for change, yet they went along with the director, who to all appearances didn't grasp the Ashland community spirit.

The inability of these parks commissioners to speak up on behalf of the Senior Center and the needs of the senior citizens is reprehensible. The recall petition is the required statement that provides the message that we are truly a community who cares deeply about the senior population. They have given much and now have chosen to reside in an area that is beneficial for them at this vulnerable stage of life.

New leadership in the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department is a must before power and authority take over to create even more havoc!

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