

# Opinion / Local

— GUEST OPINION —



Submitted Photo

Suzan Ellis Jones is Chair of the Baker County Republican Party; Alternate Chair of the Oregon Republican Party's (ORP) Congressional District 2, and ORP Chair for the Natural Resource Committee. She is pictured here with Jesse Watters of Fox TV at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio this year.

## Understand your County government before voting on 1-74

By Suzan Ellis Jones  
Special to The Baker County Press

Why you should vote no on Baker County Measure 1-74? The last few weeks of Letters to the Editor have shown how little most people know and understand our County Government and partisan politics—and how they both work together.

It seems sensible for people to at least understand the current system before they attempt to change it.

One letter compared the Baker County Republican party to Nazis. Well, history shows Nazis love a one-party system, and they called it nonpartisan! Baker Republicans support a multi-party system.

Oregon allows three forms of County government by Statute.

Baker is currently *general law*. The misguided “yes” crowd lumps in home rule, county court and general law into the same pot.

Nine of the current nonpartisan counties are *home rule*, meaning they have a charter that overrules statute on the replacement process. Much like the Baker City Council positions.

1-74 proponents are comparing apples to oranges.

Leaders in Union, Wallowa, Crook, Harney and Grant counties want their old system of county government back—not to mention other counties in our second Congressional District.

Voter participation goes down wherever there are nonpartisan races.

Commissioner nonpartisan races can become unwieldy with the glut of candidates, sometimes losing the best candidate in the

diluted vote.

Everyone can vote if they choose to—saying people can't vote is the most ridiculous argument yet.

When a candidate is tied to a party platform, you know where they stand on important issues. You know their core beliefs. Here in Baker County, natural resource issues are a prime example of needing to know for whom you are voting.

Baker County voters turned down this same measure in May of 2015.

The Baker County Republican Party was almost extinct five years ago.

Today we have 45 of 48 precinct committee people (PCP) slots filled. These PCPs are elected and do represent the voters in their precincts, continuing the history of being a representative republic.

Three years ago, we had a nominating convention to replace Dr. Stiff when he resigned, and it worked beautifully.

I much prefer 48 people making the decision of a replacement commissioner nominee rather than one, two or three individuals.

The “yes” group wants a “kumbaya” election. Yet these same people have hooked up with the Rural Organizing Project (ROP) group, which met at the Baker County Library last week. This same group, which receives funding from George Soros, also used armed members sporting New Black Panther T-shirts as security.

Kick the politics out of Baker County Business? That statement is certainly not aligned with this group, which is as militant of political group as you can find in the state. It's all a ruse folks.

Go to our website at [www.BakerRepublicans.com](http://www.BakerRepublicans.com) or our Facebook page, Baker County Republicans, to view the educational videos on our system of government and the history which shapes us today.

The Baker County Republicans want to see our county stay a party system.

Vote no on Measure 1-74.

## Hoopes

CONTINUED FROM  
PAGE 1

The third light duty release, said Hoopes was simply put in Ash's inbox, and the fourth faxed directly to SAIF.

By law, the Sheriff's Office is not required to put an employee injured on the job back on light duty, though SAIF strongly encourages that policy.

The law does state that a full release has to be followed—and last week, Hoopes received exactly that.

Hoopes first talked with Lt. Joey Jayo who, he said, began arranging this week's schedule. Ash stepped in and said the protocol was first to contact SAIF, DPSST, etc. and that he was unable to act until hearing from them, which he hadn't, according to Hoopes.

And so he waited. Then, Heidi Martin, executive assistant at the

County, asked Hoopes this week how fast he could make it to work and he thought the waiting game was over.

“I can be there in an hour,” he said.

But again, that schedule was not to be.

“I got a call from Warren Thompsen,” he said. “And he said I can't return until I got through CPR and First Aid training again.”

That training was scheduled for Wednesday, which officially became Hoopes' first day back on the job.

CONTINUED FROM  
PAGE 2

Thomas Patrick  
Christman

Richland, 1927-2016

Tom's passion was baseball and coaching girls fast-pitch softball. He also coached Pine-Eagle High school boys baseball. His proudest accomplishment was capturing the St. Louis Catholic Girls Youth League City Championship trophy in 1967.

Tom was an avid hunter and fisherman. He loved cutting firewood with family and friends. In his retirement years, in Florence Arizona, he got hooked on golf; was proud

of a hole-in-one.

Tom was a member of Halfway VFW and an American Legion member for 49 years. He was thrilled to be able to participate on the WWII Honor Flight in September 2015.

Tom is survived by his wife of 68 years, Virginia “Ginny”, four children, Thomas Jr. and daughter-in-law Laura Behr of Port Angeles, Washington; daughter Terry Christman of Halfway, Oregon, daughter Kate and son-in-law Robert Sprauer of La Grande, Oregon and son Mark Christman of Halfway, Oregon; 9 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren; brother Robert

Christman of Sun City, Arizona, several nieces and nephews.

Tom was preceded in death by daughter Julia “Sam” Christman and Granddaughter Jessie Rose Hutton, Father and Mother Charles and Minnette Christman and brother Donald Christman, all of St. Louis.

For those who would like to make a memorial donation in memory of Tom, the family suggests a charity of your choice, through Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home & Cremation Services PO Box 543 Halfway, Oregon 97834. On line condolences may be shared at [www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com](http://www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.com)

## Write-in candidate joins Sumpter mayor race

BY MEGHAN ANDERSCH  
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Sumpter has a new candidate for mayor. Greg Lucas, recently appointed to City Council, is running a write-in campaign against LeAnne Woolf, the only candidate on the ballot.

Lucas said political division is growing both nationally and locally, and he has realized that if he's going to be voicing his opinions, he needs to step up and take responsibility for them. He said though there are good-hearted people volunteering to help, not many are running for any office in town. Lucas cited political division, saying it is worse now than it has been in many years.

Lucas considers part of his heritage here, having spent much time hunting, fishing, and enjoying summer vacations. His folks have long owned property locally and Lucas said his family has been in the area on and off since 1867.

Lucas said many people have told him he would be a good mayor and that they believe he could remain unbiased. He believes that someone with a neutral reputation and not seen as siding with this group or that, would be to the advantage of the town.

Lucas said he has two sides to his personality. Away from business, he likes to make people laugh, especially those who are down. He also has his serious side and tries to approach issues as an unbiased problem-solver.

His philosophy of serving on Council is that council members and the mayor are responsible to the people of the town and that although they can't separate themselves from their personal opinions, that should not influence deciding what's best for the town. He said that being unable to keep perspective and too many emotions involved influences the ability to think outside the box and come to mutual understanding.

Lucas has worked as a construction project manager for large companies as well as owning his own company. He has worked with city, state, and federal agencies to come up with acceptable solutions to issues. Lucas said construction is about “finding solutions to get the job done” and politics is the same.

Lucas has had to learn to be neutral in accomplish-

ing construction projects. He said you can't force DEQ or the GSA to see things your way. “I had to see things their way and figure out how to accomplish my goals by incorporating their regulations and laws.”

Lucas also has done a “fair amount” of lay counseling over the years and said people seem to be drawn to bringing their life problems to him. Through that and his management experience, he has learned to present thoughtful solutions in a manner that does not alienate or offend others, even if they do not agree.

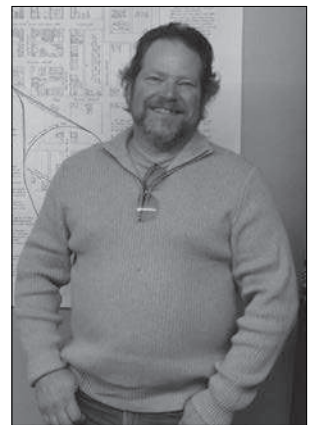
Lucas said there is a reason to have all five positions on Council since everyone brings different ideas and perspectives. He said everyone needs to be able to share, be respectful, and come to a consensus, incorporating ideas to solve issues.

Lucas said his role in meetings is to observe, listen, then participate. He likes to hear ideas around the table and then participate with informed, partially-thought through ideas to try and find a solution. He said in 40 years of work he has found that all different personalities and ways to communicate are needed.

Lucas said the mayor needs to show leadership by setting the example of openness, respect, and professionalism. He said the mayor must be able to lead by discussing issues and not reacting.

Lucas said Council should set the example of professionalism and that friendships must take a back burner to processes and leadership. He said Council must lead by example, and explained that it is not that others have been unwilling to do so, but that things are currently so dysfunctional that people don't want to get involved. Lucas would like to see Council work to honor the system of majority rule while still making a strong effort to be inclusive of minority concerns.

Lucas said he'd like to make sure people are informed of facts on both sides of issues so that they can make informed decisions for themselves and let the Council know what they desire. He said this would hopefully create a common understanding, leading to less divisiveness, and help the town



Meghan Andersch /  
The Baker County Press

Greg Lucas.

function more as a group or family. He acknowledged that arguments will not go away, but would hope that an atmosphere could be created in which everyone could feel respected and heard.

If elected mayor, Lucas would send out a monthly letter informing residents of problems, finances, goals, some kind of plan to address issues, and a proposed timetable. He commended the time volunteers take to do good things for the City and the people who live in it, but said that sometimes everyone gets so busy conducting City business, that they neglect to keep citizens informed of what's going on. He said it takes time to explain both sides of issues, including negatives and positives, and more information on processes, ideas, and possible solutions, but it draws people together better. The only way for people to know what's going on is to hear from City Hall. Issues that Lucas would like to see more transparency in include the City budget and finances in projects.

His first priority would be to create an atmosphere of openness where everyone could feel safe in voicing concerns. He said if not during a meeting, he would be open to talking to citizens anytime and bring their concerns to Council.

His second priority would be roads. Lucas said twenty years ago, the town oiled the main streets and graded roads to get rid of potholes. He said they need to get back to dust abatement and grading so the roads are not so hard on vehicles.

Lucas also would like to see the water system upgraded per state laws and DEQ requirements.

He believes resolving these issues would create more time in Council meetings to start dealing with other items and getting them worked out.