

Editorial



Ah, December. In the middle of the holiday season, now, and like every other year, it has snuck up on me again. It's funny how the Merry season of Joy affects us over the course of our lives. As a child you are wide eyed as the senses are bombarded with the wonder of food, presents, family gatherings, Church and social events and all the trappings that abound. A child's perception is highly impacted and the effects set the stage for a lifelong interpretation and the administration of their own holiday spirit.

As a young adult, we initiate our own branding on the establishment of newly formed traditions and expectations of ourselves and the world around us. When the kids come, it takes on a very new and personal inspiration and interpretation. The spirit usually grows 10 fold as the family dynamic ages and changes, fostering love and care of family and friends. We express these feelings with faith, good cheer, gratitude, giving, service and love.

But as the time wanes, we continue to evolve in our holiday personas and the intentions and attention we pay to ourselves and others. With the advent of age we double down with our own view of holiday priorities and how to navigate the inevitable changes of time and still negotiate the feelings and emotions of ourselves and those around us. It may be a mature reflection of the passing of time and the onset of a more "laid back" view of the maze of distractions that

sort of rounds out our tolerance and acceptance of "how things are and how they should be". It's a journey, they say and the journey leads us to the same deduction hopefully. Simply put, "Peace on Earth and Good Will towards Man". Merry Christmas to all, and please have a Happy New Year in 2024!

End of the year issue is now in the can as they say. Thanks for sticking with this little publication, your support is appreciated. Don't forget to support our Advertisers, they make this newspaper possible. We are looking for your input here at the Herald. Tell us about your issues, your pet peeves or your favorite things. Show off your kids school work and Sports. What is bugging you and what do you just love about the world?

We are following a few items here at the Herald, some things happening in your government and your neighborhoods and in your environment. Follow us as we delve into some of these topics and try to bring them to light and to your attention.

As the December issue is heading to the presses, I'm glad to say that the North Douglas continues to grow. Since the September issue, we have added nearly 500 new subscriptions and 20 new distributors across North Douglas and South Lane counties.

If you see news or interesting phenomenon, maybe have a bone to pick - drop me a line, I'll look into it. You can send letters, emails or call me anytime. I'm the editor@ndherald.com.

Drain Mayor's Response

Members and friends of the Drain Civic & Cemetery Committees have voiced concerns that have been expressed towards to the "dissolving" of Committees as addressed in the ordinance proposed at 4 different City meetings. A letter in the last issue outlined inconsistencies a member has sited. To be clear, 100% of public opinion was against this ordinance. The Mayor made a statement at the November Council meeting and was given an opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings. Mayor Sparhawk responded with a copy of the speech she gave at the November Council meeting..Here is that statement.

Thank you all for coming tonight. Before we get started, I would like to clarify some of the inaccuracies that have been going around the rumor mill and printed in the local paper regarding the Civic Center and Cemetery Committees. Such things as: enough time hasn't been spent on this subject, that I lied about asking a chair to call the city administrator to schedule a work session, suggesting that council has other plans for the building that they aren't sharing, that the committees are being eliminated, cut out or have been disbanded, that council is removing citizen input, that no citizens spoke in favor of changing these committees, and the list goes on. One of our council members was even called disgusting after the October meeting, simply because she had a different opinion. Lies, rumors, finger-pointing, assigning blame, hateful words, all promote division and it needs to stop.

Council has been talking about these committees for 4 months, I indeed asked the chair to call and ask for a work session and they didn't, council has no other plans for this building and cannot make changes behind the scenes, council welcomes and encourages citizen input and requests. There have been numerous citizens that have spoken with some of the council members in favor of getting rid of these committees and see no reason they should be public officials. These people didn't speak publicly because they didn't want to start an argument with their friends and neighbors. And finally, these committees are NOT nor have they been eliminated, cut out or disbanded.

I brought the idea up in the June City Council meeting as a discussion item to talk about possibly changing these committees so the members would no longer be public officials. My intentions were to delegate more responsibilities to the committees by making them informal and not Public Officials in which all rules and regulations would no longer have to be followed. Light discussion was made, and it was then added to the July council meeting.

The word "dissolve" was an unintentional use, and it was never intended to make all the work of the committees disappear or be forgotten about. Advisory is what they are and will continue to be.

By making this change it would allow citizens serving more room to maneuver their routines as in "meetings, members, time-frames, etc. "...

To make sure everyone is clear, the cemetery committee is continuing as a city led committee, however, through this process, it too has changed. It has a new mission and direction that every member and council embrace. These members will continue to be public officials and must follow all public meeting laws. I personally do not agree that this committee needs to remain as public officials, but the council voted against my idea. I do not think they didn't listen me or my recommendations, they simply disagreed with me.

The civic center committee was changed and is continuing as a citizen led group. We are looking forward to working with this group of citizens and hearing their ideas and suggestions. I would like to point out that history has shown that just because a committee or group isn't led by the city doesn't mean they aren't supported. In the past couple of years, council has made numerous donations of money and staff time to community groups that are not city led. These groups include Mildred Whipple Library, the Chamber of Commerce, ND Parks and Rec, ND School District to support the track team and the volleyball team and ND Fair Board.

We are all friends or neighbors, our kids, grandkids, nieces and nephews go to school together or we attend church together. I hope moving forward everyone will choose to be kind to one another and work in a way that promotes collaboration and not separation. We don't have to agree on everything but we need to treat each other with kindness and respect. The words we use leave long-lasting impressions.

Thank you, Mayor Sparhawk

Letters to the Editor

Hello;

I appreciate your publication. It's more than I would have expected from a local newspaper.

If you live in town you may not of noticed the work on the county roads in the ND area. The county public works guys are clearing vegetation with a mastitator which I describe as a large stump grinder on an articulated boom. These things have been used to clear forest roads for years. I've never seen them used on county roads in front of peoples homes. The work is exceptionally ugly, with no clean-up.

I sent a letter of complaint to the county commissioners. I had some back and forth with one of them, a Mr. Cress I believe. My position is that they are using the wrong tool for the job. Frankly, I believe the decision is to give the road dept. crew a tool they understand and are willing to use, rather than to contract out the work to people who do it well. Namely, about any tree service company.

I'm hoping that you will consider this a news story worth developing. I'm attaching the original letter to the commissioners and a picture of the work at my mail box.

Brad Drees Smith River Rd.



From; Brad Drees
1665 Upper Smith River Rd.
Drain, OR. 97435
To; Douglas County Commissioners

I write to inform you of a public works issue. At the address above we have about a quarter of a mile of road frontage. We have been here for 17 years and have endeavored to make the grounds nicer with extensive plantings of native tree and shrub species and creek restoration work with the goal of improving salmon habitat. Much of this work was aided by

the Elk Creek Watershed Counsel. Our house is set back a couple of hundred feet from the road and while it's not closed in we have made the place more private over the years.

The county road dept. is working on our road and has completed what they intend to do in front of our home. Their current work is tree and brush removal which they are accomplishing with heavy equipment. The primary tool can be described as a large stump grinder on an articulated boom. It's a very rough tool and the operator freely admits that the work is ugly. In my view such tools are designed to maintain forest roads and their use in front of rural residences is wildly inappropriate.

In the conversation with the operator he mentioned their small crew size and asserted that the machine does the work of five men. My response was that I would not hire five men that do such lousy work. I suggest that there are many tree service companies that are capable of doing such work well, and that the county would be providing a much better service to the taxpayers by contracting one out to do this work properly in front of rural residences at the least.

I have noted 5 or 6 trees and shrubs that I planted that were killed or compromised by the monster stump grinder. While I don't recall the width of the easement I know the reach of that thing exceeds it. There is only one demise that really gets my goat, a large holly

stump in a blackberry patch that was pulled out of the yard and put out there with a neighbors tractor 15 years ago. It was set back from the road adequately and holly is slow growing. It was put out there to compete with the blackberry. I mention this less to complain, but more to point out that these tree service companies hire a different kind of worker than the road department. Many of those guys consider themselves arborists, and some of them are. They know a lot more about tree species and growth habits, fast growing or slow, desirable or no. Those kind of guys are much less likely to destroy something that will rile up a home owner.

I do recognize that most of the neighbors don't feel as severely impacted by this work as we do. If one were to ask them I don't believe anyone would think it a good job. I also realize that when it comes to paying taxes most of us are truly cheapskates. For my part I would rather pay more for a good job that does not cause me work. At a minimum I'll be repairing a couple of maple trees with the pole saw. If my wife's Germanic sensibilities have their way I'll be spending the better part of a week in the creek pulling out the debris so it doesn't clog the culvert and flood the field. Tree service companies chip up the debris, much nicer than throwing it at the creek. It also truly reduces the fuel load rather than just moving it down slope.

Loosen up those purse strings and pay for a decent job.

Truly, Brad Drees