

A letter to anonymous

VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

Dear Anonymous Wallowa County Community Member, On July 25 you took the time and trouble to respond to the Chieftain's editorial "Clearing the trail along the urban rural divide." Thanks for writing. In your letter, you noted that what drew you to Wallowa County from a more urban life was the "special community essence that is instantly felt when visiting a place like Enterprise, Joseph, or Wallowa." And yet you chose to write anonymously "out of fear of a metaphorical scarlet letter that could otherwise be attached to my name in this community as a formerly urban newcomer." These two statements seem antithetical. I'd love to talk with you about your letter over coffee, but I can't because you provided no contact information. And I can't publish it because it's anonymous and also far exceeds our 300-word limit. So in the hope that you'll read this, I'm inviting you to call, email, or stop by The Chieftain so we can chat. This is what neighbors do.

You took umbrage at my question about whether a trail-runner who mistook a pruning saw for a fishing rod was also cognizant of the condition of

the surrounding forest, and whether she was able to recognize the tree species in the woods. "The larger question," I wrote, "is whether she was connected to the landscape." This does not castigate urban-dwellers. It just asks whether a person, who could live in Enterprise or New York City, has taken the trouble to observe, learn and think about the landscape — the trees, forests, animals, and ecosystems — that support us. And when I say "support" I mean holistically — supply clean water, clean air, wildlife habitat, and open spaces for recreation, as well as economic sustenance.

"New people, some of them urban, some of them wearing Nikes, are today uprooting their lives and investing in Wallowa County....seeking a connection and building prosperity," you wrote. "We have come because

of the incredible community you have built; we respect your rural way of life and want to be a part of that, not as outsiders or "urban people" but as 1st generation Wallowa Countian's rolling up their sleeves and in unity." Yes, indeed. You should know that we welcome your contributions to our community. The energy and vision of newcomers provide a vitality that small

communities need to prosper and grow.

Also, lots of Wallowa County residents of all generations — first through 6th — wear "Nikes" — aka

trail-running athletic shoes—use earbuds and recreate in the backcountry. This is in no way a distinction between urban and rural. But lots of us — and lots of recent arrivals such as yourself — also observe, listen to, and think about the places we traverse.

The "unity" that you seek is a two-way street. And this is where the "urban-rural divide" often lies. We will learn from you. And, as a new

resident you are learning from us. If you want to "be part of our rural way of life," it's more than just admiring the majesty of the Wallowa Mountain skyline. It's the capacity to understand your wild as well as your human neighbors. It's a commitment to preserve open spaces, private and public, both for scenic value and their vital economic contribution to Wallowa County. Why? First, because this living landscape is an important part of our community. And second, because newcomers and 6th generation-ers alike will face ballot initiatives, elections, and land use planning decisions upon which the survival of the economy, ecosystems, and yes, scenic beauty that brought you here, depend. Will we all have the same opinions? Of course not. But we all, including ear-budded, Nike-shod trail-runners, need the forests and grasslands and rivers. And to have them, we need to observe them, learn about them and understand them, just like any other valued community member. The number at the Chieftain is 541-426-4567. I hope we can sit down over coffee and talk sometime soon.

Another summer, half gone

Another Chief Joseph Days has come and gone probably marking the midpoint of summer for us. The week of CJD is pretty frantic for a lot of people in the county. Hard to believe a bunch of committee men and volunteers can pull it off. Thanks to all, it wouldn't happen without you and brings a lot of money into the county. Pendleton goes through a week of mayhem during the roundup and after the festivities are done you could shoot a cannon down main street and never hit anyone. I recently read that Hamleys has gone broke and been sold to the Indians. I hope they can make it work. Hamleys has been an icon in the Northwest for many years and it would be like closing a museum if it failed. Parley Pierce and his partner had a great vision for Hamleys and the great steak house they attached to it. They did a wonderful job building a destination spot for fine dining and top notch cowboy gear. It seems they were just a little too big for a town the size of Pendleton to support. Best of luck to the new owners, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla.

Unlike Pendleton, Joseph and the rest of this county do not turn into a ghost town after the rodeo. We still have another two months of lots of visitors and then a month

OPEN RANGE

Barrie Qualle



or so of hunters. At my house we have had three weeks of visitors. Two weeks before CJD our daughter and son in-law along with 2 grandchildren ages four and seven arrived for a visit. After two days the daughter and son in-law left for a week in Montana and left the kids with us. The kids were great till their parents returned and then became evil. The first wave of visitors left and the next one began arriving with CJD week approaching overflow. Five grandchildren ages 19 to 22, one friend of my grandson, one rodeo family and old friends from California camped here for the week. I guess it was a lot of work for my wife but I thought it was a great time. Scott McCulough from Idaho and his wife and two boys aged 4 and 7 were the rodeo family visiting and the two boys had a ball. They spent mornings fishing at Kinney Lake and the afternoons floating the ditch above our house.

Evenings they built a fire in the teepee I set up in the pasture and roasted marshmallows. Ryle, the seven year old, stood on the deck with his hands on his hips and looked around. He smiled and declared he loved this place and Oregon was his favorite place. The boys brought bows made out of half inch PVC and arrows and pretty much shot up the place. Ryle proudly showed me his new teeth coming in the front of his mouth. I have heard of pulling teeth by tying string to your tooth and then to a doorknob and slamming the door to jerk the loose tooth out. Ryle has a great imagination. He tied the fifteen foot string to his tooth then to an arrow and shot the arrow which took the tooth with it. The first one was a success so he did the same for the second. Ranch kids are pretty tough but it's a wonder any of them survive.

It appears this might be a pretty good year for irrigation thanks to a not bad snowpack. I feel sorry for the ditch walkers when the water starts to get short. They have a bunch of irrigators they have to juggle water to and the logistics can get tough. Unfortunately, people can become pretty irrational about irrigation water and an otherwise sane neighbor can become a hated enemy. As they say whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting over.

WHERE TO WRITE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The White House — 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500; Phone-comments: 202-456-1111; Switchboard: 202-456-1414.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D — 516 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. E-mail: wayne_kinney@wyden.senate.gov Web site: http://wyden.senate.gov Fax: 202-228-2717.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D — 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. E-mail: senator@merkley.senate.gov. Fax: 202-228-3997.

Oregon offices — 121 S.W. Salmon St., Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; and 310 S.E. Second St., Suite 105, Pendleton, OR 97801. Phone: 503-326-3386; 541-278-1129. Fax: 503-326-2990.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R (Second District) — 1404 Longworth Building, Washington D.C. 20515. Phone: 202-225-6730. No direct e-mail because of spam. Web site: www.walden.house.gov Fax: 202-225-5774. Medford office: 14 North Central, Suite 112, Medford, OR 97501. Phone: 541-776-4646. Fax: 541-779-0204.

Pending Bills — For information on bills in Congress, Phone 202-225-1772.

SALEM

Oregon Legislature — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Web site: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

State Rep. Greg Barreto, R-Cove (District 58) — Room H-384, State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1458. E-mail: rep.gregbarreto@state.or.us. Web site: http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/barreto

State Sen. Bill Hansell, R (District 29) — Room S-423, State Capitol, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1729. E-mail: Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us. Web site: www.oregonlegislature.gov/hansell.

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Rails to Trails: Don't burden farmers with more problems

In the Trail project article 7/31 edition, Ms Millar states one reason they decided to withdraw the appeal was "the decision of the commissioners to keep the record open until July 1 for the submission of new/clarifying evidence." However when JBTC filed their appeal, THEY requested that process. At the June 17 commission meeting Commissioners decided to grant this JBTC request. Proponents and opponents of the Trail could submit materials. Only opponents of the Trail made the effort to submit information. Trail proponents did not use the opportunity THEY asked for.

It's hard to "disprove negative possibilities" that ranchers brought up because it is difficult to disprove facts. She states they are working on "grants" to hire an employee to "manage this project and get it where we want to go." Do they plan to change the law regarding EFU Zones? Repeal the Supreme Court decision which affirmed the decision of the Planning Commission? Where do farmers in this county go to get grants and free attorneys to fight to keep our farms in business? Materials from the Ag sector note serious conflicts between the proposed Trail and the viability of working farms. Special interest groups have many sources of funds to fight your farming neighbors. Farmers spend their OWN time and money. People trying to make a living and keep farmland viable are being forced to defend their livelihood from those who want another place to recreate.

Do you really want to burden farmers with more problems?

Rebecca Wolfe
Wallowa

Better coverage due Wallowa's Fourth of July Celebration

I told myself before July 2019 is history to write the Wallowa County Chieftain about a matter that has been in my mind and on my heart for quite some time!

The City of Wallowa has celebrated July 4th—our nation's birthday—with a parade, BarBQ, quilt show and vendors for a number of years now!

However, I have yet to see front page cover pictures and writeup; continued on another inside page-with more pictures, in the Chieftain—next issue following this grand occasion.

After all—shouldn't the birthday of "The land of the free and the home of the brave"—the "United States of America" warrant such newspaper coverage?

Aleta Neal
Lostine

Speak out against cruelty and injustice

The senior clergy of the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. recently issued

a statement asking all sides of the political spectrum to respond to the racist rhetoric coming from the President of the United States. They ask the question: "When will Americans have enough?"

They recall a time in America's history when Senator Joseph McCarthy stoked fears of Communism, destroyed the careers of many, and bullied a submissive nation into silence until U.S. Army attorney Joseph Welch asked one of the most famous questions to come down through time: "Have you no sense of decency?"

In retrospect, the clergy think the question was directed at the American people as much as it was McCarthy. Out of fear, most were silenced then. But this question woke the populace and McCarty ended with his career and reputation in ruins. As it should.

The clergy continue: "As leaders of faith who believe in the sacredness of every single human being, the time for silence is over. We must boldly stand witness against the bigotry, hatred, intolerance, and xenophobia that is hurled at us, especially when it comes from the highest offices of this nation. We must say that this will not be tolerated. To stay silent in the face of such rhetoric is for us to tacitly condone the violence of these words. We are compelled to take every opportunity to oppose the indecency and dehumanization that is racism, whether it comes to us through words or actions."

We present these words as citizens of

this country and this county who have full faith in the promise of America, and in all citizens to come together in tolerance and love of neighbor and speak out against cruelty and injustice in all its forms.

Catherine Matthias
and Stewart Jones
Joseph

Free CDs much appreciated!

Reflections on the Lostine Dump
As we write this, we are listening to "Pink Flamingos" by Rickie Lee Jones from her CD, Traffic from Paradise (1993). Running from Mercy is a phenomenal cut as well. Being of an advanced age, the last song we remember by Rickie was Chuck E.s in Love (1979).

There have been many reflections in the Chieftain over the 8 years that we have lived here, extolling the beauty and benefits of Wallowa County life. This letter is to thank the anonymous donor who left a brace of CDs at the Lostine Transfer Station with a small, hand-written sign, "Free CDs." If you are having second thoughts about your decision to unload Rickie (not to mention The London Howlin' Wolf Sessions), we are sure we can work out a shared arrangement to our mutual satisfaction.

Ron and Terry Polk
Lostine

WALLOWA COUNTY
CHIEFTAIN

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