

# Opinion

## BAKER CITY Herald

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### Your views

#### Harvey has kept promise to stand up for county

Looks like Bruce Nichols had joined the national ranks with absurdities. Apparently he now claims two positives make a negative. Two very positive actions: 1) demolition of the old lime plant structures; and, 2) accepted an invitation to go to Washington, D.C., to testify before the Congressional Oversight Committee on how coordinating with land management agencies improves the health of our federally managed lands and Baker County.

Bill Harvey has cultivated a very strong voice for utilizing our natural resources and it is resonating at the national level. How silly would it have been to pass on this invitation? The vague criticisms that Bruce gives during the debates claims that he hurt people's feelings. God forbid someone's feelings got hurt because they were told they had to obey the law. Bruce's motto, "minding the county's business," actually means let the city and federal agencies run the county which questions the need for his existence in that commission seat.

Bruce grades himself as an A+ according to his flyer. After attending the debates my score for Bruce is an F-. Bruce made it very clear that he will evoke a "play along to get along" way of doing business. This approach has not worked the last few decades and it will not work for our children's future. When I elect somebody I want to know they are acting on behalf of my best interest and the betterment of the county. That is why Bill Harvey was elected and that is why Bill Harvey needs to be re-elected.

No one who drives past the site of the old lime plant will say that this is not a great step for our county. The county can finally benefit, not only from the liability risk those structures caused, but revenues generated from the sale of property will be worth every cent!

Bill Harvey also played an integral role in the Grocery Outlet that has been tremendously successful.

Please join me in voting for Bill Harvey. An unnecessary revolving door of this county chair position is bad for business and bad for this County.

Trudy Matthews  
Baker City

#### Pharma money raises questions about Walden

This Oct. 22 Lund Report headline caught my attention: "Walden A Top Recipient In Millions Funneled By Pharma To Lawmakers." Greg Walden, the report stated, citing Kaiser Health News, has received contributions from drug-making corporate PACs totaling \$269,800 since January 2017 and \$851,042 since 2007. Who is Greg working for?

Every year, pharmaceutical company political action committees (PACs) contribute millions of dollars to U.S. senators and representatives in a multipronged effort to influence health care lawmaking and spending priorities.

Pharma money flows to congressional committees with jurisdiction over pharmaceutical issues like drug pricing and FDA approval. Walden has watched his coffers swell with drug-maker PAC money since he became chairman of the powerful House Committee on Energy and Commerce in early 2017.

With six months to go in the 2018 cycle, Walden had already raised an additional \$71,000 over the 2016 cycle — or 11 times more than drug-makers gave him a decade ago.

While PAC contributions to candidates are limited to \$5,000 per primary or general election, a larger donation frequently accompanies individual contributions from the company's executives and other employees. It also sends a clear message to the recipient, campaign finance experts say, one they may remember when lobbyists come calling: There's more where that came from.

Pharmaceutical companies also wield their political power in ways veiled from the public, giving to "dark money" groups and super PACs — independent groups barred from directly donating to or coordinating with campaigns — bent on swaying lawmaking.

Given the drug-makers' money flowing into Walden's coffers, it is unsurprising that he has consistently voted against efforts to control prescription costs.

It's time to free Congress from corporate control. Unfortunately, Greg Walden works for his corporate sponsors — not for his Eastern Oregon constituents. This is why I'm

#### Letters to the editor

- The Baker City Herald will not knowingly print false or misleading claims. However, we cannot verify the accuracy of all statements in letters to the editor.
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voting for Jamie McLeod-Skinner for Congress.

Bill Whitaker  
La Grande

#### Nichols best choice for commission chairman

I am writing to encourage everyone to consider electing Bruce Nichols to Baker County Commission Chair.

Mr. Nichols possesses fiscal knowledge as a CPA and a management style based on cooperation, openness, honesty and integrity. These skills and attributes are the type of representation that we all should demand and deserve from our elected officials.

Please vote for Bruce Nichols, our best choice for County Commission Chair.

Mark Pollock  
Baker City

#### Passing school bond will reduce maintenance costs

I've been following the effort to obtain a bond measure to improve our schools for quite some time; I'm surprised by the lack of research done by some who oppose the measure.

The District released a Facilities Assessment Report in August 2016 that details the condition of each district-owned instructional facility. I admit that I expected to find skewed information that would fit with what district facility goals were; I was wrong. This report was very important in my understanding of current district conditions and capacities.

My question to people who think the school district neglects maintenance is this:

Why hold the current district

administration, school board, and students responsible for facility issues that arose decades ago, and that are still ongoing? This is not a fair argument in my opinion. The district currently spends double what many other districts in the state spend for the maintenance of aged, outdated, and in many cases crumbling, buildings. I appreciate spending within the budget allotted for maintenance.

When remodel of an aged building is undertaken there will always be increased cost due to unknown structural and other issues, and usually a need to expand or modify a building's footprint and cost is straightforward, and increased building costs can frequently be mitigated. The maintenance budget need will also decrease due to a more efficient building, and more closely located schools.

I understand the increase in taxes is burdensome to many, and it will increase my own property taxes as well. In order to attract families to our beautiful valley, we need to attract businesses to employ them.

If we aren't willing to contribute to the development of a vibrant community, we cannot expect to attract business — and help our other industries and families thrive. Everything is connected and dependent on what we do with our schools. The current proposal is one I support, and I encourage your support as well. Vote Yes on 1-88.

Farrah Chastain  
Baker City

#### I don't trust 5J's numbers; vote No on school bond

The 5J School District has failed to be honest and transparent with the public since the first announcement

of this school bond. At first in the newspaper it was \$68 million. Then later on it was \$42 million. Then there was a flier around town stating \$52 million, now in the voter information the number is \$48 million. At first announcement the term was 20 years, then all of a sudden I was told it was 30 years, and now in the voter information it is not to exceed 31 years. I would be willing to bet that the payback of a \$48 million bond over 31 years will exceed well over \$100 million. Now comes the cost to the taxpayer. It was to be \$1.97 per thousand dollars of assessed property value, now it is only estimated to be \$1.97. What the heck does that mean? Somewhere between \$1 and \$7 per thousand of assessed property value?

I feel the 5J school district can't be trusted when they can't tell the same story twice. I know when I was growing up what they called a person that couldn't tell the truth. I say no to this school bond, and no to anyone else that proposes to acquire public monies in a vacuum and under a cloak of darkness.

Bruce Morrison  
Baker City

#### Races are close, so every vote really counts

Has anyone else noticed how relatively quiet this local election is for County Commissioner? The past few have seemed to cause so much divisiveness in the community. There has been lively debate and interesting letters to the editor, but nothing like before. Then I figured out what was missing.

It's the usual and customary endless stream of letters to the editor filled with vitriol from Ms. Suzan Ellis Jones, chairman of the local Republican party, and her loyal minions. She is usually on the attack, but now there's nothing but the sound of crickets. It's kind of nice!

Some of those in the know tell me she's still whipping the elected slate of PCPs (otherwise known as Suzan's Secret Society), into shape, which may be true.

Republicans, Democrats and non-affiliated voters especially, get those ballots completed and mailed in (or dropped off)! Local and state races are razor thin and your vote really could make all the difference!

Vote!

Amy Bird  
Baker City

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