

# Opinion

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## EDITORIAL

# Walden's legacy

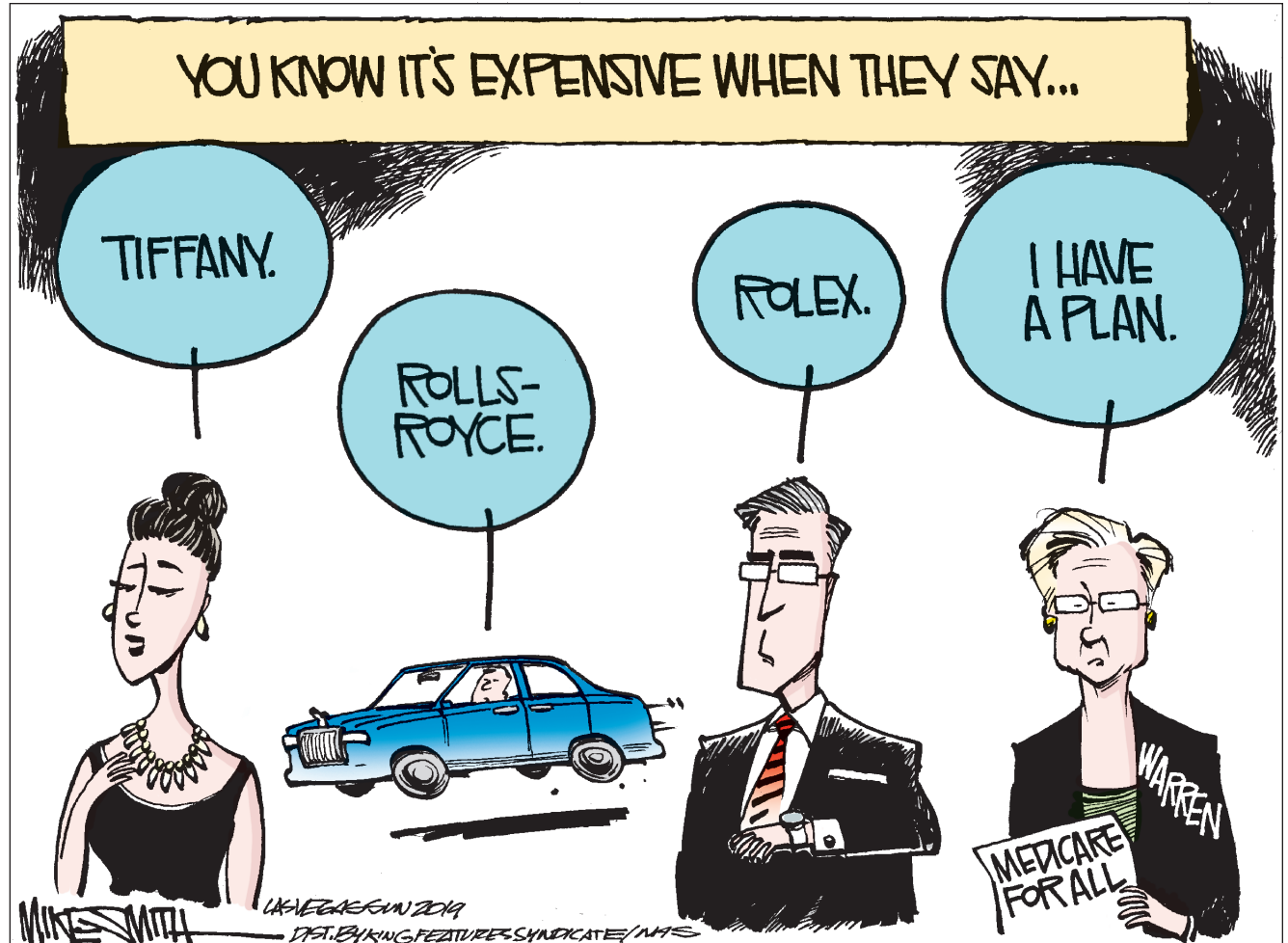
Greg Walden has effectively advocated for the beliefs of a majority of his constituents during his nearly 21 years representing Baker County and the rest of the 2nd Congressional District, which covers all of Oregon east of the Cascades. Walden announced Monday that he won't run for a 12th term in the 2020 election.

Some examples that illustrate Walden's support for the interests of his district:

- In 2012, when the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest proposed to ban motor vehicles from about 3,600 miles of roads, Walden, responding to widespread opposition, including from Baker County residents, sent a letter to Forest Service officials urging the agency to withdraw the proposal. That happened about a month later.
- Walden has been a consistent advocate for various legislation, some of which has become law and some that hasn't, intended to reduce the wildfire danger on public lands in his district and across the West, in part by increasing the amount of commercial logging.
- In 2008 Walden, to the chagrin of some Republicans, voted for the \$700 billion financial bailout bill, in part because it included an extension of the federal program that compensates counties, including Baker, for the loss of property tax revenue due to large amount of federal land within their borders (the feds don't pay property taxes). That program is crucial to Baker County's ability to maintain its roads.
- Walden has staunchly defended Ash Grove Cement Co., a major employer in Baker County, against proposed federal emissions standards that put the Durkee plant in jeopardy.
- Walden has been a leader in Congress in working to curb the epidemic of opioid abuse.

Some Republicans worry that Walden's retirement creates an opportunity for a Democratic candidate to represent the 2nd District for the first time since 1980. But Walden's record of easily winning re-election is strong evidence that District voters will send to Washington, D.C., a Republican who respects, as Walden has, their values.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



## OTHER VIEWS

# Speak up on forest fees, permits

Editorial from The (Eugene) Register-Guard:

Anyone who enjoys hiking or camping in Oregon's national forests should take a minute to comment on a proposed permit and fee system that will make it harder to spontaneously decide to spend a sunny Saturday in the woods. It's far from clear that the folks who will run the program have figured out how to make it the seamless experience it needs to be.

Under the proposal, some of the most popular trailheads in the state will have caps on use and fees for those lucky enough to get a permit. The permit system will apply to trailheads in the Deschutes and Willamette National Forests. Specifically, they'll hit the Central Cascades wilderness areas, including Mount Jefferson, Mount Washington, Three Sisters, Waldo Lake and Diamond Peak.

The U.S. Forest Service proposes charging \$3 a person for day-use permits on 19 trailheads and \$5 per person a night on all 79 trailheads in the specified areas. There also would be processing fees on top of that.

Make no mistake, limiting access to the trails is necessary. They have become victims of their own popularity. As more people hike or camp, they

cause more harm to these irreplaceable natural spaces. Most people don't willfully abuse the forests, but a few bad actors leave behind human and animal waste and cause other damage. Even those with the purest "leave no trace" intentions are not harmless. Thousands of steps on a trail wear it down, widening the trail and creating opportunities for erosion.

Most of the money that the fee program raises — 80% to 90% of it — will go into forest maintenance and restoration. Think of it as a user fee. Sure, it would be great if the federal government funded national forests and other federal lands well enough to fully preserve them and keep them accessible, but that hasn't happened in decades. User fees are common.

But the permits and fees need to work as seamlessly as possible. Too many questions remain about how the Forest Service will implement the program.

How far in advance will permits go on sale? How will officials ensure equitable access to them? Will there need to be a lottery for the most popular weekend days? How many passes will be held for people to be able to hike spontaneously?

We suspect more people decide to hike or camp for a couple of nights spontaneously when the weather is nice than plan it months in advance.

It's important, too, to think about these questions broadly. Hiking and camping are for more than just Oregonians. The Forest Service must develop effective communication strategies to get the word out to visitors from other states. If tourists become disgruntled because they didn't know they wouldn't be able to hike to the top of South Sister, the state's reputation as a great destination could take a hit.

The Forest Service has smart people developing this plan, but they need to hear from users if they're to find a management strategy that will work. Check out all the details online and share your thoughts before the comment period closes Nov. 25.

### Letters to the editor

We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Letters are limited to 350 words. Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days. Writers must sign their letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Email letters to news@bakercityherald.com

# Baker's history lurks in some unexpected spots

Some pieces of Baker City's history haven't been exposed to sunlight for decades.

Or been seen by any eyes except perhaps the beady ones of a mouse or a spider.

I'm writing here not of memorabilia tucked into cardboard boxes or trunks and then forgotten for a couple generations in the dusty corner of an attic or basement.

The items I mean have been hidden, and not necessarily by intention, in places where not even a curious child, bored on some afternoon when a chilly wind makes it unpleasant to play outside, would likely come across them.

The recesses I refer to are the spaces behind the walls, the places we don't as a rule see unless we're remodeling or we've had the misfortune of busting a water pipe or driving a nail into a wire.

A couple of recent experiences prompted me to consider this trove of, well not necessarily treasure, but at least compelling finds.

In one case the owner of a south Baker City home, while remodeling the structure, discovered that the walls had been lined with newspapers from 1902.

Most of these issues were from the St. Louis Republic, but a few pages had been plucked from the Baker City Herald.

I suppose we can be thankful that fiberglass insulation wasn't invented until the early 1930s.



JAYSON JACOBY

Prior to its widespread availability, builders, if they insulated walls at all, used a variety of materials for the purpose, newspapers being a common — and obviously readily available and cheap — option.

Sometimes this simple insulation was in the form of shredded newsprint, which, in addition to making ideal bedding for rodents, is pretty effective at keeping out frigid drafts.

But in other cases workers simply hung sheets on the walls.

It happens that the space between the inner and outer walls is a relatively hospitable environment for newsprint — hardly the most robust stuff, to be sure.

The 1902 issues of the Herald that the homeowner uncovered bear a few minor water stains but are otherwise intact. They're perfectly legible, in any case.

Newspapers published 117 years ago are for me endlessly fascinating documents.

I particularly enjoy the advertisements, which seem to me to betray the passage of time more blatantly than the articles do.

A 1902 reader of the Herald, for instance, would have been enticed

by such products as Dr. Coe's Electric Catarrh Balm, free samples of which were available at Levinger's Drug Store.

(Catarrh, a term you won't often run across these days, basically means a stuffed up nose, although it was commonly used to describe what we would today call hay fever.)

Readers also could learn about Shiloh's Consumption Cure and choose from multiple purveyors of a product we wouldn't today deign to spend money on unless we were going camping — ice.

Newspapers aren't the only artifacts, though, that can end up in the forgotten crannies of our homes.

Richard Taie told me recently about an eclectic bunch of items he and his wife, Bonnie, found while replacing the fireplace in their Myrtle Street home in 2000.

(Bonnie Taie died in December 2014 at age 73.)

Richard said he decided to replace the fireplace, which was built around 1929, because he and Bonnie had begun to smell smoke when a fire was kindled.

He examined the fireplace and found that its supports were failing, causing the fireplace to slump and pull away from the wall, and allowing woodsmoke to seep into the couple's home.

During the replacement he and Bonnie found more than a dozen

things on the floor behind the fireplace. So far as Richard could tell, they had fallen through gaps between the fireplace and the wall rather than placed there, as if in a time capsule.

The items include a note to customers of Baker Loan & Trust Co. offering them a 1930 calendar for free, pencils bearing the name of Silven's Laundry and Dry Cleaning, and an invoice, dated October 15, 1929, for several books purchased by the St. Stephen's Church School.

There is a matchbook listing four lodging establishments — the Baker Hotel, the Washington Hotel in Pullman, Washington, Evergreen Hotel in Vancouver, Washington, and Lithia Springs Hotel in Ashland.

There is a shotgun shell, a container of wooden matches, a small light bulb of the sort that might fit a table lamp or wall sconce, a few metal washers, a button, several sewing needles and a single playing card (it's a joker, which suggests somebody might have lost out on a potentially lucrative hand when the card went missing).

Perhaps the most notable item in the collection — and in my eyes the most poignant — is a program for a piano recital presented by the pupils of Birdie Bushnell on the Friday evening of May 29, 1931.

I can say with a fair amount of certainty that many of those at-

tending might have dispensed with a jacket on that night 88 years ago. The recital started at 8 p.m., but the temperature that day topped out at 79 degrees at the KBKR radio station, where weather data were collected from 1928 until 1981.

The young pianists performed at Nevius Hall, which was south of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, on First Street off Broadway.

Phyllis Badgley wrote about Nevius Hall in one of her historical articles published in the Herald. The building was used for many purposes, Phyllis wrote, with piano recitals being a prominent example.

Phyllis wrote that she remembered practicing on the Hall's Steinway grand piano, which is also mentioned in the 1931 recital program. She listed several piano teachers, among them Birdie Bushnell.

Richard showed me the display that Bonnie made of the items they found behind their fireplace. I find it fascinating.

And as I ponder the dozens of homes and other buildings in Baker City that predate Richard's, it strikes me how likely it is that other compelling glimpses into our city's history lie in darkness, or the whack of a sledgehammer or the slice of a saw to reveal themselves and tell their long-hidden tales.

Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.