

EDITORIAL

# City needs to spend

Baker City has money to spend and a deadline for spending it. This is not a normal state of affairs for City Hall. But then 2020 isn't a normal year. City Manager Fred Warner Jr. told city councilors during their meeting Tuesday that the city received almost \$293,000 from the federal CARES Act, the coronavirus-aid bill that Congress passed in late March.

Warner told councilors the city needs to decide by the end of the year what to do with the money. Because the city's budget thus far hasn't been dramatically affected by the pandemic — most of the city's local revenue comes from property taxes, water and sewer fees and ambulance bills — he thinks the city should try to disburse the dollars to help people, businesses and organizations that have suffered.

The Council started by approving \$50,000 to Community Connection. That's a reasonable recipient. The nonprofit, in addition to operating the Senior Center, helps residents find and pay for housing and utilities, among other things.

Now, with the year more than half over, the city needs to start looking for other places to distribute some of the money.

Both Warner and Mayor Loran Joseph mentioned businesses. This is also sensible. Many locally owned businesses, particularly restaurants, bars and some others that have been most restricted, no doubt could benefit from a financial infusion. Helping businesses can create a sort of multiplier effect, as thriving businesses hire employees who have more money to spend locally. Distributing the CARES Act dollars should be a high priority for the city as autumn approaches.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



## Your views

### Maybe 'Move Oregon's Border' should just move

I felt so sorry for the Move Oregon's Border group. They were unable to collect enough signatures, for their cause, to qualify as a ballot measure. Apparently they wish to have Idaho's border extended to include 17 Oregon counties. They claim that the coronavirus pandemic made it impossible for them to collect more than 389 signatures. I have a simple solution and a way to put a smile on all 9,195 members of "Move Oregon's Border." You can move to Idaho! If I am free that day I can help you pack. Problem solved! Peace to all.

Mike Meyer  
Baker City

### Happy to wake up and still be living in America

I woke up in America ... Despite all the turmoil, violence and destruction, it's still America. Regardless of the latest pandemic and fear, it's still America.

### Letters to the editor

We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. 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.

For those who don't absolutely love it, you have the option to leave.

Let's not forget the sacrifice of those who fought for our flag, only to come home wrapped in it. Those who left behind limbs and buddies in the field to protect us. Those who stand guard during the night to keep us safe.

Sure, we have problems, no doubt, but we are a democracy that works. If you doubt that, show me a socialist government that works and I'll show you people controlled by that very government.

Let's honor our flag and proudly wave it, regardless of your ideology or beliefs. We can still stand shoulder to shoulder and resist those who's only desire is to destroy what we have, the greatest nation in the world!

Those who are killing and destroying in the name of "change" only do their cause harm. Terrorism, local or foreign, will be resisted by true Americans.

Violence does not bring about change, only more anger and hatred. Setting fire to our flag or someone's personal property does little to persuade people to change. It only hardens hearts and causes more racial & social divide.

Protest, if peaceful, can bring about change, but riots only cause division and anger. We do no honor to those fallen heroes by acting in such a way.

I'm blessed by God to wake up in America, I served and would gladly do it again.

Thomas Wilcoxson  
Baker City

# Facebook, for all its faults, can enrich lives

Facebook has much to answer for in making it simple to sow the rhetorical poison that has made so much public discourse so unpalatable.

But the dominant social media platform can also on occasion induce moments of powerful poignancy.

I don't believe this balances the books for Facebook.

But neither am I so jaded by my exposure to the torrents of bilge that often saturate Facebook that I can't appreciate its ability to connect people, to help us bridge our present and past in ways we didn't believe possible.

I had such an experience recently and even now, more than a month later, I feel that peculiar prickling sensation in my eyes, that narrowing of the throat, when I remember the moment. I suddenly felt as though the weight of nearly four decades had slid away, revealing another era with the crystalline clarity of new ice on a frigid January morning.

It all started with a Southern California garage band from the 1980s called the Surf Punks. And specifically with one song — "Shark Attack."

I hadn't listened to the Punks in probably 20 years.

But several weeks ago something plucked that particular memory from my organic files — I suspect boredom is ultimately responsible — and I hunted up the one Surf Punks CD I own. Which, I say with a considerable degree of confidence, is one more than almost everyone else owns. The title of the 1982 album is "Locals Only," a reference to the territorial nature of surfers on the beaches near Malibu, from which the band hails. The second track on the record is "Shark Attack."

I slid the disc into the player



in our FJ Cruiser on a Saturday morning before we left for a hike in the mountains.

I told my kids, Olivia and Max, that I thought they might find the song amusing. I wasn't exactly certain of this but I was optimistic, as the song includes such memorable lyrics as "Hey mister, where's my pup? I threw a stick in the water and he didn't come up."

I was surprised, then, and not a little delighted, when they laughed — nearly hysterically, in Max's case — when they heard "Shark Attack."

They demanded that I replay the song.

I suspect they would have listened to it over and over again for the whole of the drive had I allowed it.

(Needless to say, I did not. And even if I had agreed to put the song on a loop, my wife, Lisa, who was not exactly entranced by "Shark Attack," would have intervened.)

For the next few weeks, Olivia and Max requested "Shark Attack" with the dogged insistence of a beer-fueled audience pleading for "Free Bird" near the end of a Lynyrd Skynyrd concert circa 1974.

Max even insisted that I download the song onto the mp3 player he listens to occasionally.

This is no boon to the Surf Punks' royalties — I already own the CD, after all — but it still seems to me something of a renaissance for a band that is — and I'm being charitable here — a trifle obscure.

Indeed I'm certain I wouldn't be familiar with the Surf Punks if not

for a friend I had back in junior high.

His name is Steve and I can't, nearly 40 years later, recall how we became acquainted. I can't even say with any certainty whether we were fifth- or sixth-graders when we met. I suspect it's the former because I know Steve moved back to California before eighth grade, and I'm pretty sure we were buddies for at least two years.

We had quite a lot in common, Steve and I.

Music, most notably.

Both our fathers grew up in the 1950s and 1960s and both owned collections of LPs from rock artists such as The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, to name only two particularly prominent examples.

Steve played drums and I played guitar.

We would get together in his attic bedroom and try to hammer out '60s chestnuts such as The Yardbirds' "For Your Love" that didn't require especially obscure chords.

(Albeit chestnuts that were not quite so well-roasted then as they are today, so to speak. It seems to me surrealistic to consider that when Steve and I were working on that relatively simple tune, only about 16 years had passed since the English band had recorded it. Today the song is a hoary antique.)

We always jammed at Steve's house for the obvious reason that a drum kit is rather less portable than my Fender Mustang electric. The Mustang is sort of a scaled-down version of the company's famous Stratocaster model, and although one of its pickups was balky it was a beautiful instrument. I foolishly sold it when I was in college — a period, to be fair, when some of us are prone to foolish decisions, and particularly financial ones.

We never formed a real band — we had no bassist, among other challenges, and I certainly wasn't going to try to sing — but we were content to make a considerable amount of noise. I plugged the Fender into a Crate amp that generated a respectable volume. It also had an excellent reverb setting that approximated the distinctive hollow twang that was popular during the first half of the 1960s and makes The Ventures' instrumentals, in particular, instantly recognizable.

("Apache '65" is probably my favorite.)

Steve introduced me to the Surf Punks. So far as I know he was the only person in Stayton, the small town near Salem where I grew up, familiar with the band.

Our friendship, as I noted, was relatively brief. This of course is typical of the friendships we form as children, even those that don't end because, as Steve did, one half of the pair moves.

But over the years I've come to understand how profoundly my friendship with Steve affected the trajectory of my life.

Those afternoons we spent in his room, playing and listening to music, cemented my love for rock and pop that continues, unabated. That was a purely analog experience — LPs and cassette tapes — but a great share of the megabytes crammed into my mp3 player, a device I could not have imagined in the early 1980s, have some connection to those days.

I hadn't thought of that era, or of Steve, in years.

But my revived interest in the Surf Punks, prompted by my kids' affinity for "Shark Attack," led me to the place you go when you want to find a person, no matter that you feel slightly soiled doing so. Facebook.

I found Steve in maybe 10 minutes.

I typed a message. I put my phone down. It was evening. I figured I might get a response the next day.

But 5 minutes later my phone chirped.

It was Steve. He remembered what I remembered.

He asked about my guitar. He still plays the same drum kit.

He was delighted that my kids like "Shark Attack."

He sent me a photo of himself with his wife and their daughter.

I gathered Lisa and Max and Olivia on our back porch and took our photo and sent it to Steve. It was a wonderful evening.

Magical, in its way.

I don't believe I have had another experience that conveyed so clearly the persistence of friendships, the validity and the value of memories turned vague by time.

I haven't seen Steve in nearly 40 years.

It's quite likely I'll never see him again in person.

And yet those distant days, their details as dim in my mind as details on newsprint that's been exposed to many seasons of rain and scorching sun, still matter.

They remain vital — as vital as my son's joyful laughter when he listens to "Shark Attack."

He laughs now because two other boys met long ago.

And the sound of his chuckles — another sort of music, to my ears — is the link between eras, the proof that when we share a bit of ourselves with another person the gift we receive has a value we can't measure but which will, in the end, return to enrich us.

Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.