

EDITORIAL

Disgusting display at the Capitol

It wasn't a coup.
It wasn't a revolution.
It certainly wasn't democracy.
What happened Wednesday at the U.S. Capitol was in fact a disgusting repudiation of one of the principles on which America was founded.
Only in their deluded minds were the people who invaded the building defending our Republic.
They were soiling its reputation, impugning its hallowed traditions that have served us so well for going on two and a half centuries.
In America the voters, free to make their choices as they see fit, decide who will govern them.
Mobs of disgruntled malcontents do not determine the course of our country.
On Nov. 3 a majority chose Joe Biden as president and Kamala Harris as vice president.
Many people have questioned the way the election was conducted in several states.
People did the same in 2016.
What they didn't do, four years ago, is storm the Capitol.
It is no coincidence that in 2016 Donald Trump won, and in 2020 he lost.
The president is not legally responsible for the criminal actions of those who, fortunately briefly, occupied the Capitol.
But he's certainly complicit.
Trump doesn't make reasoned requests for investigations into the election, as provided by law.
He levels ludicrous claims that not only did he win, but that he did so in a "landslide."
He belatedly urges "peace" and respect for police but waits for more than a day to condemn thuggery that he must know was carried out on his behalf.
Perhaps worst of all, Trump displays disdain rather than respect for the very institution that brought him to the highest office in the land.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



Your views

How did Trump fail us? Let us count the many ways

In regards to the letter sent by Jim Carnahan on Dec. 31, it seems that he just might be missing, or twisting, a few facts. In his letter he even states that the "Trump team" has been rebuffed in 59 of 60 lawsuits but evidently that's not enough proof for him? "Second hand claims" of voter fraud were investigated and proven inaccurate by each state's voting commission. That's still not enough? Trump's own Attorney General William Barr has repeatedly stated that there is no evidence of any widespread voter fraud. What will it take to convince Mr. Carnahan that Trump lost? Maybe Mr. Carnahan would be convinced if Mr. Trump, himself, were to actually admit that the American people have spoken and voted him out of office instead of acting like a spoiled teenage bully who didn't get his way?
In regards to the letter sent from Sig Siefkes on Dec. 31, it makes me wonder

if he's had his head in the sand for the last couple of years.
He doesn't recall Trump stating that "the one person who had the virus in the U.S. was quarantined and the whole thing would be over in a week, like magic?" He doesn't remember the World Health Organization issuing a COVID-19 warning in January 2020, that Trump ignored. He doesn't remember Trump saying, in late January, that we won't have to worry about the virus because "he" had "it" isolated and "it" was "under control and it's going to be just fine"? Does he remember Trump finally declaring a national emergency in mid-March and announced the "15 day to stop the spread" guidelines? Then, maybe he'll recall Trump stating on March 29, "if we have between 100,000 and 200,000 we've altogether done a very good job."
Does he recall that by May 27 we had 100,000 deaths in the U.S.? Does he recall Trump on June 17 saying that "It's fading away. It's going to fade away." Can the writer recall that on Oct. 2 Trump

and his wife were confirmed to have the virus. On Oct. 10 Trump claimed that, "We have rounded the final turn" again. Remember when on Oct. 18 Trump proclaimed, "if I listened totally to the scientists, we would right now have a country that would be in a massive depression ...?" The next day the death toll is over 200,000.
So, what could a clear minded, far thinking, caring person have done to combat the COV-19 virus in The United States? We won't find out until someone who actually cares about what is happening to our fellow Americans is in charge. I don't know how anyone can look at the facts and declare that Trump has done a good job concerning just the virus. He disputed experts from the beginning and forced states, by his inaction, to declare their own emergencies and deal with the virus on local levels. He's been a failure and now we all just have to admit it, count up our dead and go on.
Steve DeFord
Sumpter

Letters to the editor

- We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Customer complaints about specific businesses will not be printed.
- The Baker City Herald will not

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• The writer must sign the letter and include an address and phone number (for

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• Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.
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Trump fails again to provide real leadership

America needs a nickname for the cretins who busted into the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday and insulted our country in a way that the burning of a thousand flags would not.
Fortunately, for another 10 days or so we have, in our commander in chief, a man whose skill in this form of low art is formidable indeed.
President Trump, who has established his credentials with such witticisms as "Sleepy Joe" for the man who will replace him later this month, and "Rocket Man" for North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un, surely can conceive of an appropriately biting, but still sophomoric, term for the Capitol creeps.
("Rocket Man," to be fair, is actually pretty funny. Or at least as funny as something can be that involves two men who control nuclear weapons attached to ballistic missiles. I also appreciate the connection, whether intended or not, to one of the finest Elton John-Bernie Taupin collaborations.)
I'm not expecting much from Trump in this case, though, despite his lengthy record of juvenile creativity.
Given the chance on Wednesday to distinguish between the legitimate — and constitutionally protected — protest outside the Capitol, and the lawless and dangerous behavior of a relative handful of thugs inside that hallowed building, the president utterly failed.
It would have been so simple.
In a video message posted online about 90 minutes after members of



Congress were evacuated, Trump urged people to "go home" and said "we have to have peace." He also called for people to respect the "great" people who work in law enforcement.
That's all appropriate.
But the president, whose grossly exaggerated claims about fraud in the election inspired Wednesday's debacle, gave a generic and milquetoast appeal for moderation that, given the decidedly unmoderate circumstances in Washington, D.C., fell pathetically short of what a legitimate statesman would have said.
Indeed, Trump, by inexplicably failing to specifically condemn the actions of the few, impugned the many who, in support of his grandiose claims of a "stolen" election, acted responsibly, lawfully and in the best tradition of American protests.
I'm loathe to cast blame for violence and chaos on anyone but those who actually perpetrate it.
And it may well be that even had Trump issued a strongly worded message early Wednesday, imploring protesters to stay outside and remain peaceful, some people would have committed crimes.
It is no coincidence that the words "mob" and "violence" so often share space in a sentence.

But what happened at the Capitol was hardly ordinary.
The connection between the president's rhetoric and the storming of the building is as easy to assemble as a 10-piece puzzle designed for a kindergartner.
Trump's initial inability to chastise those who damaged the Capitol — or even to identify them as separate from those who did not commit a crime — is, if such is possible, even more indefensible when his words are compared with those of some of his fellow Republicans, many of whom are also troubled by aspects of the election.
Pennsylvania Sen. Pat Toomey: "We witnessed today the damage that can result when men in power and responsibility refuse to acknowledge the truth. We saw bloodshed because a demagogue chose to spread falsehoods and sow distrust of his own fellow Americans. Let's not abet such deception."
Baker County's newly sworn in congressman, Rep. Cliff Bentz of Ontario, issued a statement Thursday morning calling the events at the Capitol "a stain on the history of our country."
"There is absolutely no excuse for protests to turn into riots, and I condemn the actions of the rioters in the strongest terms possible," Bentz said. "I call on all Americans to choose peaceful protests over violence, chaos, and anarchy. I commend Capitol Police for their brave efforts to end yesterday's incident and enable Congress to return to

our important work."
Bentz's statement also offers a sharp contrast with the president when it comes to claims about election fraud.
Trump, in his video message Wednesday, resorted to the brand of hysterical hyperbole that is one of his trademarks. The president reiterated the claim that rather than losing to Joe Biden, he actually won in a "landslide."
For this to be true would, of course, require a conspiracy so widespread, and so obvious, that it could hardly be hidden.
Bentz, meanwhile, explained that he voted in favor of an objection to the Electoral College results from one state — Pennsylvania — because he believes the state, by extending the deadlines for the return of absentee ballots, violated the U.S. Constitution.
Bentz did not oppose the results from any other state, and he acknowledged that Biden won.
Whatever the case might be in Pennsylvania, it could not reverse Biden's victory — much less lead to a "landslide" for Trump.
A legal challenge to the extension of the ballot acceptance is pending, but it's also irrelevant to the presidential election because Pennsylvania didn't include the disputed mail-in ballots in its tally of votes for the presidential race.
Thursday was a better day.
Trump, though unrepentant in his belief he was cheated, finally acknowledged that he will be mov-

ing out of the White House later this month. The president also said what should have said the day before, strongly condemning those who committed crimes on Wednesday and calling for "healing and reconciliation."
The inauguration will not end the debate over how the 2020 election was conducted, of course.
Nor should it be the end.
Trump's ludicrous exaggerations notwithstanding, the election, due to the pandemic, was indisputably different, most notably the vast increase in Americans who voted by mail for the first time.
But as Oregon has proved for more than 20 years, mail-in ballots do not threaten the sanctity of the electoral process.
Still and all, I can't object to a thorough examination of the 2020 election — not because it could change the outcome, which is beyond dispute, but because it could identify possible flaws in the system in some states.
This is a legitimate task.
But this exercise will almost certainly fail, and likely continue to devolve into absurdity, if President Trump is its leader.
The president, as he proved yet again on Wednesday, is incapable of inspiring the sort of reasoned, sober opposition that is as much a hallmark of America as the right to peaceably assemble.

Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.