

EDITORIAL

Appoint Daugherty to Council

The six members of the Baker City Council have reached an apparent impasse in trying to fill the one vacancy on the Council, created by Lynette Perry's resignation in August due to health issues.

But there's a simple solution to the deadlock.

Councilors should appoint Randy Daugherty to serve the remainder of Perry's term, which continues through the end of 2022.

The two attempts to appoint Perry's replacement have failed, and in exactly the same voting pattern.

During the Council's Sept. 14 meeting, Daugherty got three votes and Thomas Hughes got three votes. Councilors Shane Alderson, Jason Spriet and Heather Sells voted for Daugherty. Mayor Kerry McQuisten and Councilors Joanna Dixon and Johnny Waggoner Sr. voted for Hughes.

Then, during the Sept. 28 meeting, Alderson made a motion to appoint Daugherty, who was also endorsed by Perry. As could have been expected based on the Sept. 14 meeting, Alderson, Spriet and Sells voted in favor of the motion to appoint Daugherty. McQuisten, Dixon and Waggoner voted no.

Although Hughes is certainly qualified, and would be a good candidate during the next Council election in 2022, Daugherty's credentials, which include experience in all facets of city government, make him the ideal person to take Perry's seat now. Daugherty is a former city councilor. He's the current chairman of the city's budget board. He also previously served on the city's planning commission.

But rather than make the obvious choice to appoint Daugherty, McQuisten and Dixon both said they had heard, though neither named anyone, that Daugherty allegedly made statements critical of current councilors. Daugherty denied the allegation.

McQuisten and Dixon would better serve their constituents by bringing the Council to its full complement, and they're fortunate to have such a qualified person as Daugherty willing to serve.

— Jayson Jacoby, Baker City Herald editor



Your views

River Democracy Act shows vision for a cleaner future

I am writing to give voice to those who have none, our nonhuman relatives, and many other members of our community who support protections that would be provided by Senator Wyden's River Democracy Act. As a resident of Halfway — Nimipuu Lands — I am happy to be joined in that support by many friends, neighbors, and, importantly, the Nez Perce Tribe.

Clean, cold waters sustain rich aquatic habitats that produce fish and wildlife in diversity and abundance. That so many rural voices have nominated not just big iconic rivers, but also smaller tributaries for protection bespeaks a collective wisdom in seeing our water cycle in a holistic manner.

Opposition to including these reaches is not unlike treating a cardiovascular problem by solely focusing on the arteries; a bad practice with a likely

sorry outcome.

I invite readers to consider a case study I observed in the mid-2000s while working on salmon recovery with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) in Pendleton.

Studies of the Umatilla River demonstrated railroads and highways blocked the flow of surface and groundwater into the main channel. This disconnection prevented the mixing of cooler waters with the warming waters of the main stream, and degraded the habitat for cold water fish species.

The Tribe's salmon restoration strategy aimed to reconnect these flows by protecting headwaters and breaching barriers across the flood plain.

Thermal pollution is a leading factor impairing the quality of our surface waters. This is a problem for humans and non-humans alike. If we genuinely care about protecting the values of our

waterways, it would be irresponsible to exclude tributaries, intermittent streams, and wetlands from the protections of the River Democracy Act. I applaud Senator Wyden and his river nominators for their vision!

Michael Beaty
Halfway

How is a mandate to wear a mask a violation of rights?

Will somebody please explain why a mandate to stop at a stop sign to greatly reduce the chance that you may injure, maybe even kill someone, is not interfering with your Constitutional rights, while a mandate to wear a mask to greatly reduce the chance that you may spread a virus that can cause grave illness, maybe even kill someone, IS interfering with your Constitutional rights?

Kirsten Badger
Baker City

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 knowingly print false or misleading claims. However, we cannot verify the

accuracy of all statements in letters to the editor.

- Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.

- The writer must sign the letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Letters that do not include this information cannot be

published.

- Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.

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Waving to strangers; and the Wilhelm Scream

We were walking in a neighborhood in Ellensburg, Washington, when I waved to the woman who was standing on her front porch.

She was tending to her flowers as we strolled past on the sidewalk.

I caught her eye, smiled and briefly raised my right hand.

It was the sort of gesture you use when you encounter a stranger — slightly hedging, as if to concede that you are, indeed, strangers, but also to indicate that you value even minor meetings of a pleasant, friendly nature.

The woman did the same, looking away briefly from her bright blossoms.

The episode lasted just a few seconds. But it was for me a memorable moment from our recent vacation.

Not nearly so memorable as watching my kids cavort in the Pacific surf, to be sure.

Or seeing my son Max's grin when he tossed a balsa wood glider from the Astoria Column and watched it spiral down for 130 feet or so.

Still and all, one of my favorite things to do while traveling — between stints of acting like a regular tourist, who samples the sights depicted in brochures and described in the cloying language of the genre — is to amble through a town I have never visited.

I like to compare house styles,



JAYSON JACOBY

to examine landscaping, to see if people in other cities and states share my affinity for ruler-straight edges between lawn and flower bed, and my disdain for dandelions.

I seem never to get tired, or bored, not when every block is fresh to my eyes.

But what I especially enjoy about these walks is when I tip a wave and offer a smile to someone and receive the same in return, as happened in Ellensburg.

I find these encounters, so brief and so unpredictable, always compelling.

I think it is the unique nature of the event that intrigues me — the reality that I am, in the most abbreviated way possible, making the acquaintance of someone I have never seen before and almost certainly will never see again.

There is a certain poignance, even though this relationship is the antithesis of those we have with family and longtime friends.

These chance meetings with people also enhance my affinity for the places where they live.

It was my first visit to Ellensburg — aside from driving past on

Interstate 90 — and I was quite taken with the city.

We had gone downtown the previous evening, a Friday, to find dinner. Although Ellensburg is about twice the size of Baker City, with 20,000 residents, its downtown had something of the charm that Baker City's does.

Ellensburg's Davidson Building, in particular, caught our attention. It was built the same year, 1889, as the Geiser Grand Hotel, and, like the Geiser, one corner is topped by a cupola.

We also walked through the campus of Central Washington University, tranquil in its summer somnolence, and with a collection of fine old buildings.

My exchange of waves and smiles with the flower-tender happened in a neighborhood west of the campus, an area featuring mostly large, two-story homes, all looking as though they were built before World War II. I suspect, based on the prominence of the homes and the proximity to CWU, that this neighborhood has for decades been a favorite among faculty and other Ellensburg professionals.

I would love to visit again, to stroll the same sidewalks in autumn, when the grand maples and other trees blaze with color.

But I suspect I will have to be content with my memories, of the beautiful old homes, of a classic

campus, of the resident who greeted a stranger with a smile and a wave.

Whether or not you've heard of the Wilhelm scream, it's all but certain that you've heard the Wilhelm scream.

I recently introduced my kids to this snippet of sound, a curious part of cinema and TV history. Now they tell me every time they hear it.

Max, who's 10, is especially fond of the Wilhelm scream.

It is, as the name implies, a human scream.

The Wilhelm scream has a name — which, after all, is hardly typical of screams in general — because it has been featured, albeit often inconspicuously, in hundreds of films and TV shows over the past 70 years.

Its first appearance — audibly speaking, that is — was in the 1951 film "Distant Drums."

The scream didn't get its name until a bit later, however. The titular Wilhelm is a character in "The Charge at Feather River," a 1953 western in which Private Wilhelm is shot in the thigh with an arrow.

The Wilhelm scream is deployed most often when a character either falls a long way, is shot, or is tossed by the blast wave from an explosion.

Its popularity among sound designers, as far as I can gather, is due largely to its ability to fit easily

— and cheaply — into a variety of scenes.

Although this doesn't seem to be definitive, the person most often credited for uttering the Wilhelm scream is Sheb Wooley, the American actor who also recorded the famous 1958 novelty song, "The Purple People Eater."

Perhaps the scream's most famous placement is a scene in the original "Star Wars" film from 1977. When a stormtrooper, shot by Luke Skywalker, plunges into the depths of the Death Star, the hapless minion of Darth Vader is trailed by the inimitable tone of the Wilhelm scream.

The sound effect is also in "The Empire Strikes Back" and "Return of the Jedi," in "Raiders of the Lost Ark," and in Peter Jackson's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

Once you know the scream for what it is, you'll almost certainly start recognizing it in movies and on TV.

I chuckle every time it blares from the speakers in our living room — or, more frequently, when Max runs in to tell me that he heard it again.

It's a minor thrill.

But anything that provokes laughter seems to me worth cultivating, and appreciating.

Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.