

Forum

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Duby said on Tuesday, March 29, that he “doesn’t feel really comfortable” with what happened.

“It puts us in a bad situation,” Duby said.

He said he doesn’t believe police are responsible for ensuring people attending an event such as the forum, which took place at a privately owned venue, comply with the audience rules.

So long as people attending aren’t acting in a threatening way, Duby said he doesn’t believe police officers should be involved.

Greg Baxter, Baker County district attorney, said he is awaiting reports from the Baker City Police to determine whether there is anything to pursue with possible charges.

Rick Rienks of Baker City, who along with his wife, Penny, was escorted from the Elks Lodge by Officers Prevo and Parsons, contends that the situation didn’t warrant summoning police.

Rienks said he and his wife, who are registered Republicans, attended the forum because they wanted to hear from the candidates.

The conflict stemmed in part from rules that the Baker County Republican Party, which organized the forum, set, including a prohibition on people videoing the event or applauding while candidates were speaking.

Kerry McQuisten, Baker City mayor and a Republican gubernatorial candidate who attended the forum, said some candidate forums this year, including one in Pendleton on March 24 and one on March 26 at Vale, had similar rules.

McQuisten said in a phone interview on Monday, March 28, that she believes the “disturbance” during the forum at the Baker Elks Lodge was “scripted and pre-planned.”

McQuisten, whose mother, Suzan Ellis Jones, is chair of the Baker County Republicans, said that prior to the forum she overheard a group of people talking about their plan to speak out in opposition to the rules.

In a post on her campaign Facebook page, McQuisten wrote that “the minute the format for the evening was read aloud, they began heckling.”

In the phone interview, McQuisten said some of the people she overheard were carrying campaign signs for Marc Thielman, who is also seeking the Republican nomination in the May 17 primary.

Thielman, in a phone interview on Monday, March 28, called the forum rules “weird.”

Thielman said he was disappointed that some candidates drove for hundreds of miles to attend the forums with a goal



Thielman



Duby



McQuisten

of “getting their message out” and meeting voters, only to have disturbances interfere.

Thielman said there’s “no validity” to McQuisten’s implication that his supporters conspired to disrupt the Baker City forum.

In a post on his campaign’s Facebook page, Thielman wrote that “the Baker County Republican Party hosted an entirely disrespectful and un-American gubernatorial candidate forum.”

“In these low-attendance, remote-location events which cannot be accessed easily by the majority of Oregonians, providing streaming coverage is a useful tool to voters,” Thielman wrote. “It is understood among earnest people seeking information that the sharing of candidate positions is beneficial to voters.”

“One must wonder why a candidate, via her mother/campaign manager, would be so determined to stifle the respectful coverage of candidate positions,” Thielman wrote. “What is there to hide? Why is the flow of information to voters stopped at the dictate of one county chair? Is the candidate afraid to have her performance recorded and compared to that of other candidates?”

McQuisten, on her Facebook page, wrote: “The hue and cry on social media from such people is that their first amendment rights were infringed upon. The setup to make these claims, of course, was always part of their plan as this was my home county. No part of our wonderful Constitution gives any individual permission to cause harm simply because they feel entitled to. This behavior isn’t patriotism; this is thuggery.”

In a March 28 letter responding to the incident at the forum, the six-member executive committee of the Baker County Republican Party blamed the disruption on Baker County United, the local group formed last summer that has objected to Oregon Gov. Kate Brown’s executive orders requiring mask wearing and vaccinations during the pandemic.

“Law enforcement was made aware that we may have an issue at this event,” the letter reads. “We hoped not.”

The executive committee consists of Jones; vice chairman Julie McKinney; treasurer Joanna Dixon (who is also treasurer of McQuisten’s campaign committee and, like McQuisten, a member of the Baker City Council); secretary Justin

Langan; and delegates Tom Van Diepen and Keith Jones.

The letter states that the ban on livestreaming the forum, except for hosts, was added after “ugly behavior” at a forum in the Portland area when someone “used their recording/livestreaming to bash other candidates with slander and name calling.”

Jones said the organizers’ video of the forum will be posted online.

The letter states that during the Baker City forum, one couple was recording the event and, after being asked to stop, declined.

Jones said in a phone interview on Tuesday, March 29, that she believes Langan, who was part of the security detail along with Van Diepen and Sharon Bass, then called police.

“Allowing a disruption is unfair to ALL candidates and ALL who were there to watch the forum,” the letter states. “By allowing a faction to be disruptive is not supporting the rights of the whole. While this group screams first amendment rights, their rights do not overcome our right to assemble peacefully, or the rights of who we choose to have on private property at a private event.”

Rienks said that when officers Prevo and Parsons arrived, he told them that he was there to listen to the candidates and did not feel there was any reason for him and his wife to leave.

Rienks said he eventually decided to go along with the officers. While walking out of the Elks Lodge, he said he started chanting, “hell no, we won’t go,” and that some other audience members started repeating the slogan.

Rienks said others yelled “let them stay.”

He said some other participants, who had not been asked to leave, also exited in

what he considered a show of “solidarity.”

The executive committee’s letter also notes that “others chose to leave as well.”

Rienks said that outside the Elks Lodge, he shook hands with the police officers and left.

He said he considers the episode a “betrayal” of the candidates who attended, and he intends to send an apology letter to each of them.

Other interparty disputes among Republicans

Thielman isn’t the only Republican to reference the relationship between Jones, the longtime Baker County Republican chair, and her daughter, McQuisten, who is seeking to become the first governor from Eastern Oregon in more than half a century.

In a February letter, Dallas Heard, then the chairman of the Oregon Republican Party (Heard resigned the position in early March, citing “wickedness” in the party), asked Jones to respond in writing to a series of complaints, including that the county party donated \$2,500 in November 2021 to McQuisten’s campaign.

In the letter, Heard writes that the Oregon Republican Party’s bylaws require the party to treat all GOP candidates equally prior to a primary election. To comply with that bylaw, Heard wrote, the Baker County Republicans would need to donate \$2,500 to each GOP candidate, rather than contributing to McQuisten’s campaign alone.

But Jones contends that the Baker County Republican bylaws allow members to override chapter bylaws by a vote of a majority of those present, and that doing so, in the case of the donation to McQuisten’s campaign, does not violate the state GOP bylaws.

Jake Brown of Halfway, an

elected precinct committee person for the Baker County Republican Party, also filed a complaint with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission regarding the \$2,500 donation.

Brown sent the complaint to the state agency, which is responsible for reviewing potential violations of Oregon’s government ethics laws, on Dec. 31.

The Ethics Commission did not open a case based on Brown’s complaint, however, because members of county political parties, including Jones, are not considered public officials and thus not under the Commission’s jurisdiction, Susan Myers, the Commission’s compliance and education coordinator, wrote in an email to the Baker City Herald.

In his written complaint to the Commission, Brown wrote that the \$2,500 donation, which was approved at the GOP Central Committee’s Nov. 29, 2021, meeting, was not listed on the meeting agenda.

He believes that omission violates the Committee’s bylaws.

According to the bylaws, “Material changes in the agenda or a substantial substitution of a new agenda shall be treated as a new meeting, and will require the mandatory ten (10) days’ meeting notice. Minimal agenda additions or deletions are allowed by majority vote of those present. The Chair or Vice-chair, in their sole discretion, will determine which agenda changes are truly ‘minimal.’”

Brown contends that the \$2,500 donation does not constitute a minimal change to the agenda, since that amount equals about 66% of the \$3,799.87 the Committee had on hand at the start of November, according to its treasurer’s report.

Brown’s complaint was the

latest in a series of contentious exchanges between him and the executive committee of the Baker County GOP.

In September 2021, a majority of the members of the Baker County Republican Party approved a resolution censuring Brown for, among things, allegedly “maliciously commenting about Gubernatorial Candidate Kerry McQuisten with the intent to hurt her campaign” during the Miners Jubilee event in Baker City in July 2021.

The resolution states: “Be it resolved by the Baker County Republicans that Mr. Brown cease and desist his constant barrage of libel and slander.”

Heard, in his letter to Jones, questioned a screenshot regarding Brown’s censure that was posted on Jones’ personal Facebook page, and Heard asked Jones to provide a copy of the Baker County GOP bylaws allowing for “such public censure.”

Brown and Jones also disagreed over Senate Bill 865, which was introduced in the Oregon Legislature in May 2021.

The bill, which passed and became law on Jan. 1, 2022, makes it a fineable offense to serve simultaneously as a state officeholder and an officer of a state central committee of a political party. Violators can be fined \$250 per day.

The bill challenges Heard, a Republican state senator from Roseburg, who earlier in 2021 was elected chair of the Oregon Republican Party.

The bill says it was introduced “at the request of Malheur, Baker and Morrow Counties Republican Executive Committees.”

Brown said in May 2021 that he did not support the bill, and that he was disappointed that Jones and other members of the Baker County executive committee backed the bill.

Norma Jean Magill

August 10, 1936 – March 22, 2022

Norma Jean Magill of Baker City fell asleep in death in the privacy of her home on March 22, 2022.

Norma was born on August 10, 1936, in Bell, California. She married her childhood sweetheart, Donald Magill, on July 1, 1955, and they enjoyed 49 years together until his death in December 2004.

Norma was baptized as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses along with her husband in December 1957. They settled in Long Beach, California, where they raised their three daughters. She was a devoted wife and loving mother, unselfish and generous to others, and a zealous, faithful servant of Jehovah God. Norma spent many years as a full-time volunteer in the public ministry helping others to be better acquainted with the Bible and to come to know the only true God. She will always be remembered for her smile and sense of humor along with her positive, cheerful disposition.

Norma is survived by her three daughters, Lori Carrington (son-in-law Miles) of Middletown, NY, Lyndi Hutchinson of Grass Valley, CA, and Laree Snyder (son-in-law Marlin) of Baker City; her granddaughters, Megan Walter (husband Bill) of Logan, Utah, and Brandi Bybee of Graham, WA, her brother, Tom Smith (wife Sandy), her nephews, Daniel Smith and Scott Smith and their families. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Donations may be made at www.JW.org. Online condolences can be shared at www.tamispinesvalleyfuneralhome.com.



David Anderson IV

April 21, 1986 - October 1, 2021

David T. Anderson IV of Gig Harbor, WA, passed on October 1, 2021, as a result of injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident while visiting Baker City, Oregon.

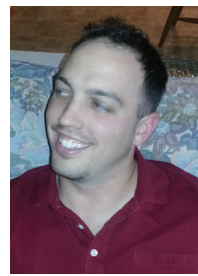
David was born to a military family on April 21, 1986 in San Diego, CA, and married his wife Alexa Anderson (Robles) from Fort Worth, TX on June 2, 2013.

David served as a US Marine for over six years, ultimately seeing duty in eastern Europe. Most recently he had worked as a warehouse manager for the Packrat Moving and Storage company in Tacoma, WA.

David rose to the rank of Eagle Scout as a member of the Boy Scouts USA, and he enjoyed various activities with family and friends. He and his wife, Alexa, supported their church through various endeavors.

David is survived by his wife, Alexa Anderson of Gig Harbor, WA; mother, Cindy Bock of Peoria, AZ; father, David T. Anderson III of Vancouver, WA; half-sister, Melissa Francis of St. Joseph, MI, half-brother, John Sienmsen of Gig Harbor, WA; and half-brother, Timothy Sienmsen of Erie, PA.

In honor of David’s military service, a memorial service will be held from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on April 21, 2022, at Tahoma National Cemetery, 18600 SE 240th Street, Kent, WA, 98042.



Church

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Baker City’s First Presbyterian Session has agreed to match donations dollar-for-dollar up to \$10,000 from the church mission budget.

“We’re happy to match whatever we can,” said Jean Simpson-Geddes, a member of Session.

To donate online, go to <https://firstpresbaker.blogspot.com/>. Click on “Ukraine Fundraiser” to donate through PayPal.

Donations can also be mailed to First Presbyterian Church, 1995 Fourth St., Baker City, OR 97814.

Include “Ukraine” in the memo line so the church knows where to direct the funds.

According to its website, <https://pda.pcusa.org>, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance focuses on these areas:

- The long term recovery of disaster impacted communities.
- Provides training and disaster preparedness for presbyteries and synods.
- Works collaboratively with church partners and members of the ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) internationally, and nationally with other faith based responders.
- Connects partners locally and internationally with key organizations active in the response — United Nations, NVOAD (National Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster), World Food Program, Red Cross, FEMA and others.

To learn more about the

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance work in Ukraine, visit <https://pda.pcusa.org/situation/ukraine/>.

Gary Wentworth

November 21, 1948 - March 20, 2022

Gary Wentworth, 73, died March 20, 2022, at Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center in Boise, ID, with his wife and family at his side. There will be a celebration of his life at a later date.

Gary was born in Ashland, OR, on November 21, 1948, to Norman and Viva (Matteson) Wentworth and was one of three brothers. He attended school in Ashland before the family moved to Southern California where he continued his education and held several jobs before he hired on with Maas Hansen Steel, where he learned to drive trucks and do maintenance. This led to a career as a millwright. He married Roberta (Bobi) Mordel and they had a son, Cliff. He later married Laura McCoy. In 1980 he moved to Oregon, but returned to California where he started his own millwright business. In 1992 he moved to Ohio where he hired on with Unimast to set up new steel plants. They later transferred him to Texas. In 1996, he moved back to Oregon and started his own millwright business in Bend. In 2004 he moved to Baker City after meeting his future wife, Linda, in an online chat room. He went to work for Louie and Donny Tholen at Farm & Industrial where he was an ace fabricator until his retirement in 2019.

Gary was an avid hunter, loved to cook for guided hunting parties, and was heavily involved in the Oregon Hunters Association and served as its president while with the Bend chapter. He volunteered his skills as a machinist to run the antique sawmill at the High Desert Museum when he lived in Bend. He was a member of Elkhorn

Muzzle Loaders Club and the Powder River Sportsmen’s Club and was a proficient shooting enthusiast.

Favorite pastimes were camping with his family (especially making them fabulous breakfasts), whittling/carving and teaching the grandkids camping skills, drives in the mountains, reading, creating useful furniture, tools, fold-up tables, etc. He loved his dog friends, Kirby and Sadie; they were included in most of his adventures. Gary was a big guy with a big heart, generous and caring, with the adoration of his children and grandchildren being a testimony to his loving nature. He loved living in Baker County and is leaving many friends.

Gary is survived by his wife, Linda Evans Wentworth; his son Cliff Wentworth (Heather) of Bend, OR; mother-in-law Myrna Evans of Baker City, OR; stepchildren Jarond Browning (Lexie) of Vale, OR, Tricia Price (Paul) and Aimee Shepherd of Baker City, OR and Matthew Shepherd (Rebecca) of Fruitland, ID; and his brother Tom Wentworth (Evelyn) of Bend, OR; sisters-in-law Diana (Paul) York of La Grande, OR and Eileen Lewis of Oregon City, OR; He has 15 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren with another one on the way in July. He was preceded in death by his parents; brother David and his father-in-law Lloyd Evans.

The family suggests memorial contributions to the charity of one’s choice through Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, OR, 97834. Online condolences may be made at www.tamispinesvalleyfuneralhome.com.



Catherine “Elaine” Wood

October 21, 1924 - March 23, 2022

Catherine “Elaine” Wood, 97, a longtime resident of Baker City, Oregon, died March 23, 2022, with her family at her side. A private family graveside will be held.

Elaine was born on October 21, 1924, to parents Louis and Johanna Osborn in Baker, Oregon. At 12 years old, she began attending St. Francis Academy where she graduated in 1942.

Elaine worked at the Eltrym Theatre where she met her future husband, Hershel Wood. They were married June 10, 1945. She later worked for the county clerk as an assistant city recorder at the courthouse. Soon after, Elaine ran a childcare service for 19 years, caring for a total of 104 children, many of whom she kept in touch with over the course of her life.

Elaine was a devoted Catholic and member of the St. Francis Cathedral and Altar Society. She was also a “Lady Elk.” Elaine took pride in baking and tending to her flower beds and roses. Her favorite colors were pink and blue. She cherished many lifelong friendships, staying in contact by writing letters, also a hobby of hers.

Memorable moments in her life included her marriage, and the birth and raising of her two sons. Elaine especially loved the company of her family and lived by the philosophy that family always comes first. Elaine was treasured by those who loved her. She was the most kind, caring person.

Elaine was preceded in death by her husband of 78 years, Hershel J. Wood, both parents and a brother, John Osborn.

She is survived by her sons, Daniel Louis Wood of Nashville, TN, Timothy R. Wood of Baker City, OR, and granddaughter Taylor Catherine Wood of Baker City, OR.

For those who would like to make a memorial donation, Elaine asked they be made to St. Francis Cathedral, through Tami’s Pine Valley Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, Oregon 97834. Online condolences can be shared at www.tamispinesvalleyfuneralhome.com.

