

Our City

When the smoke cleared after last Wednesday's City Council Meeting, not much had changed. There had been good Council debate on the proposed no smoking ordinance around City playgrounds, ball fields, shelters and restrooms, even after a special committee further defined the ordinance. When it was time to vote, the Council remained split; and my vote put a new revised ordinance on the agenda for a public hearing on February 18th. This puts the issues back in your court - where it belongs. But, here is the thing: I voted to put the issue back in your hands in hopes that you would show up to express your opinion on the need or lack thereof for the ordinance. Like so many things that revolve around governance, only those who feel adamantly about something show up to voice their opinions. So far the voiced and written opinions concerning this proposed ordinance, in City Council meetings, have been against it; while the comments made outside Council meetings are mostly in favor of it. To make the Council's decision clear, both views need to be represented at the public hearing. While appreciated, your expressed views outside a public hearing do little to sway either side. So on February 18th, please show up and take part in a very important part of the democratic process; I will try to make it easy for you.

My heart sank last Sunday as I came upon huge pile of trash that some son-of-a-biscuit had found a not-so-easy place to dump along the Snake River near one of my favorite spots. In my mind it must have happened the Sunday before the last storm because the "road" they had to drive down would have been impassable otherwise. The load's contents included a foosball table, TV, insulation, lathe and plaster, a hammer, and fortunately for me, a packing slip with a very clear name and address. I took pictures and sent them and a brief report to Sheriff Jeffries and then contacted the property owner. Time will tell if anything happens to the biscuit who chose to blatantly desecrate one of the prettiest spots along our river. It pretty much ruined my entire three-day weekend; I probably shouldn't let things like this get to me, but they do. Luckily for me a few very nice rainbows and cutbows staved off my very foul mood.

Because I went postal on you last week, I was unable to share the above incident and the reason I found myself where the biscuit dumped his garbage. The Ferry Hollow Trail Committee is making progress. Corey Wight, the owner of the Sand Trap in Pocatello, and I have been tasked with mapping the proposed trail from Willow Bay to Massacre Rocks State Park. Corey has the lower half, I have the upper; which is one of the reasons I found the garbage. At our last meeting we conferenced with Susan Abott of the National Park Service. She is helping with the design and engineering of the trail. The gist of the meeting was to get a timeline in place that with some luck and hard work will have the trail built and usable by the end of this summer. Part of the process will include a series of two or more open houses; the first of which is scheduled for February 26th from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. at American Falls Library Community Room. The purpose of the open house is to share the proposed route of the trail and the features and accesses along it. Just like the proposed smoking ordinance, your input will be valued and welcome as we do our best to help make public recreation and sightseeing more available to all. Please attend.

Kristen Jensen brought a bit more good news to last week's City Council meeting. She reported that a \$500 grant had been awarded to the American Falls Birding Committee for the purpose of developing and printing trifold brochures that publicize the many recreational and birding

opportunities that await those who visit the Snake River and American Falls Reservoir between Willow Bay and Massacre Rocks State Park. While the grant is for \$500, the committee still needs about \$350 to print the quantity of brochures needed. If you have a hankering for birding, hiking or trail biking, please consider a modest donation to the American Falls Birding Committee. Donations can be sent to me at City Hall, 550 North Oregon Trail, American Falls, Idaho, 83211 and I will see that it gets to the committee. It is going to be too cool when we are able to walk or bike from Willow Bay to Massacre Rocks, but again it will take your input and help.

I will be meeting with our State legislative delegation later this week to learn what issues maybe in the works that could affect each of us. I know Senator Guthrie's schedule has changed since he became a member of the JFAC. However, one of the things I will be speaking with our delegation about are the weekly conference calls our local leadership has enjoyed with Guthrie and Representatives Andrus and Packer. It makes a difference to both groups of leaders when decisions have to be made that we are both informed and on the same page. Personally, I believe it has made each group more effective and provided better representation to all of American Falls, Power, and rural Bannock County. That is how the system is supposed to work. My voice is only one; and it may not always be in agreement with the majority. But it is heard, and at times does make a difference. Yours should too.

Until next week...