

## Our City

We lost another good one this week. But, I suppose that is the nature of the beast that is small town government, as it is difficult at best to compete with County and State entities, let alone private industry, for employees. Marcus Kettl came to us via Erica Meadows-Kettl when she returned home to teach at Hillcrest Elementary after teaching school and meeting Marcus in Germany. Marcus has been an exemplary employee and a valuable asset at the waste water treatment plant. His new position in private industry is certainly a positive career move for him and one that I know he will excel at. The good news for American Falls is that he and Erica will still live here and continue to call this place home. While his insight and knowledge of the new treatment plant will be missed, I certainly wish him all the best in his new position. Thank you Marcus for what you were able to give to the City of American Falls. I know you will surpass the expectations of your new employer, just as you did mine.

I met with Superintendent Pete Cortez after finding out Marcus would be accepting a new position, to discuss his replacement. Pete was headed for a much deserved vacation and we didn't quite get everything nailed down; however he left things in the very capable hands of his second, Lee Love. I met with Lee early last week to discuss the possible transfer of Dale Mounce from the Street Department to the Waste Water Department. Dale was looking for a career challenge. He will certainly get that through all the courses and certifications that come with working in the Water and Waste Water Department. Dale's transfer will leave a position vacancy in the Street Department. You will find the advertisement for the position in this and next week's Power County Press.

As Lee was leaving the meeting I told him how proud I was of him. He has come a long way since he was one of my students a "few" years ago. Those of you who have the good fortune to know Lee understand that his life these past ten or so years has not been the easiest. Life's personal struggles either make us bitter or better; the only difference is "I." In the case of Lee Love I am so proud that he has chosen the latter. Later that night I received a text from Lee expressing what my words had meant to him. No, we often can't pay our employees what they are competitively worth. But, as Mayor and even more so as a citizen I do my very best to express to each the value they truly have in our community.

This past weekend was a busy one for the community of American Falls with the annual Harm's Memorial Fun-Run, the Carp Derby on American Falls Reservoir and Helen Tiede's funeral. The weather Saturday wasn't very conducive to any of the events. However, as I walked the 5K route of the Fun Run in steady rain I knew it was welcome by many, including me. The walk felt good as physical activity for the sake of exercise has been scarce in my life lately. As I walked, I wondered at my pace, not wanting to look at my watch. A few years ago I was doing this distance in about 42 minutes with an 80 pound pack on my back. I knew I was off the pace a bit and my time of 44 minutes at the finish line confirmed it. I have a lot of work to do. The man I used to be is in there, he just needs to get out more.

Prior to the Fun Run I went out to Willow Bay before they started launching their boats for the Archery Fishing Carp Tournament. I wondered how they would fare in the rain and wind. I know Candice at the Willow Bay Café was expecting a big crowd for biscuits and gravy; the fishermen would need something that stuck to their ribs if they were going to brave the rain,

wind and waves. As I drove through the camping areas I saw vehicles from southern Idaho and Utah. I stopped and talk with a few on Sunday morning and Saturday had been mostly a bust. More contestants showed up as we talked, and something about fair weather fishermen was mentioned. Sunday was definitely better than Saturday weather wise at least.

I made it to Helen Mae Deeg-Tiede's funeral just before it started at 11 Saturday morning. It was a beautiful service. Surprisingly to me at least Helen had selected all the readings and hymns for the service; so besides being beautiful it was exactly what she wanted. As I sat and stood through the service I pondered my mortality much as I did upon hearing of Helen's husband Otto's passing two weeks prior. I heard repeatedly both at Saint John's and at Helen's grave side, "American Falls has lost two of its best." It is difficult for me not to feel woefully inadequate when I attend funerals for such stalwarts. They have set the bar so high when it comes to giving the gifts of self-sacrifice, service, love of family and the true belief that we each must serve something greater than ourselves. It is not unlike an oppressive weight that I dare not put down, for to do so would admit failure. While many strive to live up to the example set by Helen and Otto; too often so many more never even try as these values were never taught to them. They are content with the "my, I and me" so rampant today.

In my day job, beyond the required curriculum I teach, I try and instill the values lived by the Tiedes. I was so proud of my FFA members last Wednesday as they volunteered to teach farm and recreational safety to all the second graders at Hillcrest. I would like to thank Christiansen Implement, Pioneer Equipment and Lance Funk Farms for contributing the equipment used during the Safety Fair. I also need to thank the teachers and administration at American Falls High School for their patience as Spring is a brutal time for keeping students in class and on task, and May is the worst, with all the District and State athletic tournaments. I would like to specifically thank those FFA members and other students who choose so often to put service above self. You give me hope that the gifts of Otto and Helen will be returned in the years to come.

As the Safety Fair was concluding, we were joined by Rick Phillips of the J.R. Simplot Company. I have had the pleasure of knowing Rick for a number of years and have gotten to know him through his participation on the American Falls FFA Advisory Committee and work with the Idaho FFA Association and Agricultural Teachers Association. Rick also lives the values of Otto and Helen. Rick had joined us in order to congratulate the FFA Chapter on the First Place finish in the State's National Chapter recognition program. He also spent some time with Riely Geritz, the Idaho FFA Association President. As Rick concluded his remarks to the Chapter, he was met with a hearty thank you from the members. What gives me hope for the future in light of the "my, I and me" attitude is what I saw as Rick was leaving. A student who has been one of my "projects" walked up to Rick, stuck his hand out, and shook Rick's, like the man he wanted to grow up to be. He saw the right example in Rick Phillips, recognized it for what it was and made a personal effort to say thank you. I cannot tell you how big of a step that was for this student. Like so often happens, either at the City or at school, grown men, women and children continue to surpass my expectations.

Until next week...