

Our City

I was headed south last Friday morning and had left Roy Summit and the Curlew Grasslands behind me a few miles back when a waving cowboy hat brought me to a stop and memories flooded my mind. When the hat was donned, under it stood what I took to be a legitimate wearer, complete with long handlebar mustache. They were moving cows across the road and he asked me to wait, I complied as I wasn't in that big a hurry to get to Malad for six hours of seat time. He left me suddenly and scooped up a handful of rocks and chucked them at the horses and dairy cows in the awaiting corral. It didn't have the desired results so he did it again. Interesting. It was not the way I had been taught to do it nearly fifty years ago. Maybe I would learn something.

Off to my left I saw a growing cloud of dust crest the ridge. It must be a quite a large herd. I could be here a while. I looked at the corral and back at the dust and wondered if the corral was big enough as another fistful of rocks flew. What I saw next caused Gris, Roy and Stan to rollover in their graves as six head of dry cows crested the ridge at that full trot cattle do when they are being pushed pretty hard. Behind them came four four-wheelers and four dogs hell bent for Naugahyde. Times change I guess. It is best that Grandpa and his two best hands have moved on. The six head slowed, trying to figure out what to do as the engines roared behind them and the dogs leapt from a four-wheeler carrying racks giving the cows no choice but to enter the awaiting pen. As the dust settled, I slowly moved on and like the cows behind me tried to figure out what was in front of me as I continued on to Malad where I would be joined by two mayors, several county commissioners and others.

On paper it took me weeks to sort through the task before me. I had hoped that Friday's process would be easier. It wasn't. It was harder. I have sat through plenty of similar meetings. Typically things tend to sort themselves out in a pretty straightforward fashion. Not so last Friday. It took good old fashioned honest deliberation and consensus building by all to finally conclude the day's business. It is not my place to tell you what was discussed or decided. I tell you this short story to let you know that at least in my opinion and in this circumstance the process worked. It was thoughtful and methodical; like moving cattle used to be. There was nothing overpowering, pressured or hurried about it. In the end each of us had an equal chance to discuss the merits of our opinion and beliefs as a decision was reached. I would like to thank those involved with the process. It is reassuring to me that folks from very different backgrounds and views can still come together and work through tough decisions for the good of the whole.

A few days prior, Wednesday, April 29th, the dedication of the Silver Horseshoe community area was conducted. I apologize for editorializing, but too often many seem detracted from the positive things collaborative efforts by all levels of government can achieve. Granted the large degree of cooperation that was required between Federal, State, Regional, County and the City agencies produced something relatively small in the grand scheme, but it is significant to the senior citizens and others who use the American Falls Community Center on a regular basis. The parking lot, landscaping, grassy area and the restoration of the historic sign would not have been possible had just one of those agencies balked or pulled out of the deal; and we would still be stuck with an eyesore and safety liability that no one could or would address. In the end it took a little extra effort by the right folks to make a positive out of negative. To be

quite candid, it is what I love about this position; with a little will and effort some pretty cool things are possible; making life just a bit better for those who could use it. Idealistic? Possibly, but then I have always been more of an optimist than a nay-saying pessimist; eight years of riding drag while looking at the south end of hundreds of north bound cows will make one ponder how to improve the situation around him. Gris, Stan and Roy were always very good at making me figure out how to improve the things around me. They would have appreciated Wednesday's significance.

Last Wednesday was also the day my daughter Frances had organized a community service day for Lamb Weston employees. They were to scrape and repaint the deck at the Willow Bay Café. Something that the City has been meaning to do for a year or so. Frances learned a valuable lesson, and practiced another, last Wednesday as she was the only one who showed up to volunteer for the service project. I was very proud of her when Superintendent Jeremy Peirsol told me she did the entire project by herself. She set the right example. Perhaps next time others will follow her lead.

There is something to be said about the person who automatically chooses to do the right thing when it would be just as easy to look the other way and ignore what should be done. Thank you Todd Steinlicht for choosing to help my father-in-law Saturday afternoon as his old dog, Mo, collapsed on his last walk. It has been a tough day and a half since Todd helped Don get Mo back home. Don and I laid Mo to rest early Sunday morning. It was tough for both of us as Mo was the last in the lineage of my best friend Doc, who passed seven years ago. Thank you Todd for being a wonderful neighbor. You made a very difficult time for someone you didn't even know just a bit easier. Todd Steinlicht, a genuinely Good Neighbor!

Sometimes doing the right thing is as simple as seeing something or someone who needs help and making that choice; sometimes it is harder and takes the help of many willing souls but it is still possible. It is something all our parents and the others who helped us grow up tried to teach us along the way. Great job Bob and Faye Steinlicht, you taught your son well.

Until next week...