AUGUST 2019

The Malad Valley SCRUTINEER™ & Irreg'lar Times

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Welcome...

to the **third issue** of *The Malad Valley Scrutineer & Irreg'lar Times*. Presented are **alternative facts** and views on topics of interest to **voters, residents** and **property owners** of Oneida County.

This paper is

- mailed **free** to *every* household
- **linked** to an online version for updates and comments

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Articles & AD vertisers

33 Vote Vote Vote Vote 1
34 Wyrd 2
35 Wouldn't It Be Nice? 2
36 Whole-iness 2
AD **Singing Wolf Art Gallery** 2
37 Sewer Swirls 2
38 Community Property 3
39 Unilaterality 3
40 Blither 3
AD **Investment Opportunity** 3
41 "But, I don't care!" 3
42 Bond Equalization 3
43 Legacy 4
44 Wisdom 4
45 Appearances 4
46 Resistance Is Futile 4
47 Submissions 4
48 The Proper Role... 5
49 Gross Negligence 6
50 Not a Charm 6

33 Vote Vote Vote Vote

!VOTE!

Voting is the most powerful civil right you have. It's the *only* power you have over the **New Elementary School Bond** ballot on Tuesday the 27th of August... ***next week!***

READ THIS!

Even if you are **too busy** or **too tired** to open this paper. Or **too jaded** to be persuaded.

VOTING IS SEXY!

At least it's pretty important.

VOTING IS SECRET!

Vote *your* conscience, your friends and neighbors don't have to know.

VOTING IS EASY!

If you are not registered, bring proof of residency to the polls. Or vote early at the courthouse.

VOTING IS FREE!

Unless your vote *passes* the bond, in which case it will cost us all **$$$** for the next *twenty years!*

There are good **conservative** options, described inside this folio, that **preserve** and **respect** valuable resources, **improve the learning environment** *for the children* (and teachers!), are *very* **affordable, innovative,** and...

down right rational!

Only available if the bond fails.

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34 Wyrd

That the **New Elementary School Bond** *barely* failed in March is a very peculiar **event** in this possibly deterministic universe we inhabit. It *seems* it might also have barely *passed.* Our summer since would have had an extremely different complexion (independent of the great weather cycle).

That it *failed* gives us the opportunity to review the merits of alternative proposals. Had it passed we would be careening into an impractical financial future, destroying and otherwise wasting resources, just to *duplicate* one of them (!) at significant cost. (*Costs,* we are reminded by proponents of "build new," have apparently skyrocketed in six months... with such logic, by the time construction is finished, the bond amount won't even *cover* the costs... *even with* the fabled "bond equalization" subsidy!)

Is fate trying to convey anything significant by that **event?**

Can we wrest the *next* event out of the hands of fate by more decisively defeating the New Elementary School Bond?

35 Wouldn't It Be Nice?

Wouldn't it be nice, if the superintendent and school board were really interested in the welfare *of the children,* that in parallel with this grandiose new school notion, they had a **backup plan,** for a renovation?

Wouldn't it be nice, if the superintendent would direct the architect to prepare an analysis of my proposal for incremental renovation?

Wouldn't it be nice, if the architect was as excited about renovation, as about the plan and siting of the proposed new school?

Wouldn't it be nice, to see such an alternative plan at a community meeting in the venerable Elementary School Auditorium?

Wouldn't it be nice, to get something tangible done *for the children,* instead of waiting years to try another bond, *maybe* with a new superintendent, and *certainly* with a new school board?

Wouldn't it... *be nice?*

(Apologies to the Beach Boys.)

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36 Whole-iness

On-line-iness of the whole text archive of *The Scrutineer* is now in place... if all goes as planned after the print edition is in the hands of the printer.

I know, I have predicted as much before, but it *really is* almost live now, and once this edition is in the mail, hopefully... *"It's alive!"*.

Besides the print content, beginning with this issue some articles have *additional* content *(more* than fits to print!), and *any* content might be augmented after print publication. New articles might appear *only* online.

Yet most significant is the opportunity to respond with commentary to any article or other aspect of *The Scrutineer.* And you can comment on comments! Reply to replies! *Reply to replies to replies...*

The exchanges are moderated, so inappropriate behavior will be rescinded by the moderator.

The exchanges are reasonably anonymous, only a user-selected handle appears with the date of the response. Handles must be validated with a working email address, and terms of use agreed to, but email addresses will be considered confidential by *The Scrutineer.*

No passwords need be remembered, and your handle will be retained by your device after authentication. (If you are using a public computer, you will need to re-validate your handle each session.)

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37 Sewer Swirls

I only read about the new sewer plans in *The Enterprise,* so I was not in the decision loop. I did not attend city council meetings.

Like everyone else, I am most aware because I am impacted by the increased city water bill!

I wonder whether the decision power of the council, and even the county commissioners, ought

to be checked and more widely presented to the affected residents when the effect is... *so substantial.*

I do not know why the city did not anticipate such substantial increases years ago... I'm told even the former mayor was apprised of the insufficiency of the sewer ponds. A more moderate increase over those years would make it much easier to handle now.

I do not know why the city bought in to the recommendations of "their" engineering firm, without soliciting independent alternative analyses.

I do know the city had a judicial review that asserted no resident approval was required.

Yet it still seems the power to decide wielded by the small lot of council members could have been more public, with special public meetings pertaining to the sewer issue, instead of being buried in the agenda over those many city council meetings.

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38 Community Property

Emotional arguments notwithstanding, this bond vote is *not* just about the children, and the noble school board members doing their best to provide for them.

It's about the **community** also.

The community...
of users of the auditorium and the gym.
The community... *of property tax payers.*
The community...
of those living near the school block.
The community... *of children needing a positive learning environment.*
The community...
of teachers hired to help the children learn.

The buildings on the Malad School Block are unusual because they have broader uses than just the obvious education of children in grades K to 5. The high school and middle school draw community members out to the edge of town for numerous reasons, including sports, graduations, reunions... even for *voting* on certain occasions.

But the cozy central location of the auditorium is more amenable to presentation less suited to bleachers and reverberation. Malad does not have a large theater; the auditorium could function as one. Malad does not have comfortable exhibition space; the gymnasium could provide for modest needs. When the tents give way to the new fair building, it will still be a bleak setting except when the fair and rodeo and races are scheduled.

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39 Unilaterality

Yeah, that's not a word. But I hope it conveys the alternate reality that a board of decision-makers seems to fall into once elected to position.

I realize I might have asked better questions of the candidates when they put their signs out for the election. But it seems these positions are filled by willing community members with the most name recognition... *not* based on any rigorous examination of their attitudes or intents.

I respect those willing to serve on the school board. I sat through a meeting of such inane administrative items that I was fidgety trying to be polite and not jump up and leave.

But *sometimes* they have decisions to make with more gravity. Like the new elementary school bond.

Why is the election based on school board zones? Maybe Holbrook *does* deserve a reserved seat at the table, but on this side of the county divide, it seems artificial to expect that the aggregate of residents in each zone actually are homogeneous enough to benefit from a particular representative to defend their collective desires... which are likely not really identifiable, on a zone basis.

Since we do vote for all candidates, not just those emerging from our own zones, perhaps a more effective strategy would be to have at-large candidates for the Malad area. This might make more qualified candidates more effectively compete for the opportunities to direct the school district business.

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40 Blither

Charles Thurber is the author of this blather unless otherwise credited.

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41 "But, I don't care!"

Unless you're living in a tent on a remote corner of the fairgrounds, or in your parents' backyard, passing this bond *will affect* you.

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42 Bond Equalization

Bond levy equalization payments from the state are touted as free money that poor counties can tap into, to reduce the financial burden of bonding.

In spite of the inclusion of the word "levy" in the text of the law, it is *not* available to more conservative *levies,* only bonds.

The implication of this is that it is essentially a subsidy to the lenders on a bond... encouraging irresponsible indebtedness by school districts in

poor counties since the "interest" is paid by tax payers elsewhere in Idaho.

It would *seem* that if money is available to poor counties, it should also help with more responsible plans for *real* levies, to finance (for instance!) **renovation.** Such a levy has no investors in the loop (except county property tax payers!) and therefore incurs *no* interest payments, funneled out of the state's budget into private hands. Every dollar works for *us!*

Perhaps Representative Chad oughta look into this.

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43 Legacy

Imagine an elderly uncle, someone you've known all your life; he told you stories when you were a child, maybe about "what it was like" when *he* was a child. You are older now, and he is too. You don't talk about much anymore, you think you've heard all his stories, and he's quiet, doesn't push, and you take him for granted. Suddenly, he's gone, and you wonder... why didn't I ask him *more*, about his life, and experiences? Now, you can't.

The **Malad Elementary School** is like that uncle. It's always been there, you even spent *years* going to school there, it is so familiar it seems ordinary, old and ugly, out of touch. Yet like your uncle, there is more to it than that; it is actually a sturdy old building, a Malad institution, and it may need renovation, but it is willing and able to serve you (and your children!) still. It deserves *respect* for it's period architecture, and for enduring the 1975 Pocatello Valley earthquake intact (not all buildings in Malad did!). It should be *venerated*, and the pride of the community. It's **still here!** Let's enjoy this treasure of a school, which may be envied by other school districts. Even if they are richer in perpetual school bonds, they are *not* as rich without such a durable and classic school design.

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44 Wisdom

Wisdom cannot be taught.

Maybe it *can* be legislated!

The super majority required to pass an onerous bond is the law in Idaho. Perhaps the logic behind that is partly to quell the impulsive younger generation, which seems to "want it, and want it now" and is willing to go into debt for *whatever* they want. Sure, they are early in their careers, and reasonably expect to have a job, and if they do it well, *maybe* increase their earnings. Maybe they don't have much, so why **not** get *it* **now,** if they have the capacity to borrow, instead of saving for *it* and waiting. (Patience is also something that seems to accumulate like Wisdom.)

They are *so* young, that *every*thing seems old to them. In our market-driven world, success is measured by how many new things you can afford (or, at least, *borrow* and buy!). Our mass-market culture promotes mass consumption through overt and covert advertising. "Buy a new car *now.* Throw away that 'old' one! Look: it's *shiny* and *new!*"

Older generations are often more wary of the cultural hype (but, not *always!)* and are more frugal. They want true value for their money. It's hard for them to see it wasted.

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45 Appearances

Some in a certain generation, perhaps the one that grew up with the "new" Malad Elementary School in the 1950's, seem to think it is just an old eyesore. "Nothing worth saving, there!"

Even families new to Malad seem to discount the value of the venerable building. They have no history with it, and are stressed by the fickle heating system, and other aspects that have not been maintained.

Lynn Schow, a past superintendent of the Oneida School District #351, was sent a note attached to the roll of elementary school drawings returned from an architect in Pocatello:

"Just a note: the firm Hummel Hummel & Jones is a well known architectural office in Idaho. They have contributed greatly to our development. I expect that someday your school will be on the national Register of Historic Properties."

(signed) Carolyn Burke

This was sent in the early 1990's, almost thirty years ago!

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46 Resistance Is Futile

I participated in the Malad Elementary Renovation Investigative Committee, until the flawed survey was sent out. **I went** to the community meetings in the auditorium.

I stopped when I realized no "community input" could change the course of the "build new" mindshare...

Except no amount of hand waving, or unpaid promotional articles in *The Enterprise*, or emotional logic, or "experts" scoffing at the renovation prospects, will actually count in passing the bond.

Only *votes* count, and we each have only one. But *your* one vote is powerful. Yours is as powerful as anyone else's, whether you own property, or just rent and populate the school with fresh minds.

Make your vote *count* to decisively fail the bond!

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47 Submissions

Well-reasoned writings of likely interest to the valley will be considered for future issues...

submit to the editor via email
`in@scruta.com`
Anything not well represented by other media is of interest.

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48 The Proper Role...

The Proper Role of Government

ESSAY #2

The Moral use of Government

In my last article I covered what it means to be secure in our Personal Property[1]. Now I would like to address **the Moral use of Government**. In a letter to her husband John Adams, Abigail, considering the topic of the new government, wisely crossed out the word "them" and wrote "it." The Center for Self Governance[2], has organized around this truth, emphasizing that, **Government is not a "Them", but an "It"**.

Government as an "It," like an airplane, must be managed, directed, course-corrected, and even repaired. These operations fall to pilots, stewards, and mechanics. Similarly, our government is operated by Executives, Legislatures, Judges, etc. I ask you, **can Government**, "It", **be moral or immoral**? Can the airplane? What if the plane is used to deliver relief, is It moral? What if It is used to commit atrocities, does that make It immoral? It cannot be either. The **use** of said object or system **dictates** the **morality**. John Adams illustrated this when he wrote "We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion... Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

Consider the school bond. If passing a bond is moral, we should pass it, but if the bond is found to be immoral, what is the moral ramification if we go forward and support it anyway? Another aspect to think about: because a thing has always been done one way, does that automatically make it moral?

Thomas Jefferson wrote *(to William Plumer):*

"I, however, place **economy** among the first and **most important virtues**, and **public debt as the greatest of dangers** to be feared. To preserve our independence, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. If we run into such debts, we must be taxed in our meat and drink, in our necessities and in our comforts, in our labor and in our amusements. If we can prevent the **government** from **wasting the labor**[3] **of the people**, under the pretense of caring for them, they will be happy."

to Antoine Louis Claude Destutt de Tracy:

"It is incumbent on **every generation to pay its own debts** as it goes."

President Heber J. Grant[4] said, "From my earliest recollections, from the days of **Brigham Young** until now, I have listened to men standing in the pulpit... **urging the people not to run into debt**; and I believe that the great majority of all our troubles today is caused through the failure to carry out that counsel."

In Proverbs 22:7 7; 26 & 27 we read:

The rich ruleth over the poor, and **the borrower is servant to the lender**. Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts. If thou hast nothing to pay, why should he take away thy bed from under thee?

Consider the widow and the elderly, many of whom live on very limited means. What happens if they are **unable to meet** the **additional demand on** their **property tax**? According to the law, **they will lose their home** "*should he take away thy bed from under thee*". Is it morally sufficient to say, "it's for the children" even if *one person* loses their home?

Next, consider the farmer. Profit margins for farmers **have been tight** for at least four years now (through 2018)[5]. Most in the valley realize it only takes one drought, a season of excess bugs, or some world event and that margin disappears. Under these conditions, **what doesn't disappear is the bondage** created by the new school.

We live in uncertain times. Despite the rising stock market and home values, it wouldn't take much, to drive us into another '**30**'s **Great Depression**, '**70**'s **Oil Crisis**, or '**08**'s **Housing market crash**, causing property values to plummet, while **the bond remains safely the same**. With **retirements gone and low land values**, the bond would **increase** the likelihood of **people losing their homes, businesses and farms**.

One **counter argument** is, "**If we don't tax, we won't get enough contributions to pay for the school.**" If you can't get enough voluntary contributions, **is there truly public support?** Or is it easier to **spend your neighbors money**? **Is that a moral use of government**? And what if someone doesn't support your program, **is it moral to use government to force them to pay** for a program they disagree with? Is it moral to demand "**From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs**[6]?"

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin[7], in April Conference 2004[8], said "In spite of the teachings of the Church from its earliest days until today, **members sometimes fall victim to many unwise and foolish financial practices**. Some continue to spend, thinking that **somehow the money will become available**. **Somehow they will survive**."

If the bond measure has the **potential** of causing even one elder, one widow, or one farmer to **lose their property**[9]... if you **coerce even one person** to support your program: **is the measure moral or immoral**?

What is the proper moral use of Government?

[See more of this article online]

—Travis Whipple

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any other persons or organization.

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[1] See, The Proper Role of Government essay #1 – To be secure in our Personal Property (Aprille *Scrutineer)*
[2] https://www.centerforselfgovernance.com
[3] See, The Proper Role of Government essay #1 – To be secure in our Personal Property (Aprille *Scrutineer)*
[4] of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
[5] https://www.farmprogress.com/business/tight-profit-margins-likely-continue-2018
[6] Slogan popularized by Karl Marx [*author of the* ***Communist Manifesto***] in his 1875 ***Critique of the Gotha Program*** **(Wikipedia)**
[7] of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
[8] https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2004/04/earthly-debts-heavenly-debts?lang=eng
[9] See, The Proper Role of Government essay #1 – To be secure in our Personal Property from the last printing

49 Gross Negligence

Elementary School Bond: Tactic of Gross Negligence

In my 16 year professional career in the food industry, I observed many sanitation and safety inspections of the production facilities in which I worked. Responding to maintenance issues immediately is a serious matter- as failure to do so could result in temporary or permanent shutdown of the facility. Success with these inspections can only occur when management is seriously engaged in responding to issues quickly and have a trained eye for recognizing potential areas of concern, to alleviate them. The responsibilities of management in maintaining manufacturing facilities has a direct correlation with actions that should be taken by school administrators in maintaining our public schools.

Administration has been aware of the Americans with Disabilities Act and also the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act since they were passed in 1990[1] and have not resolved the issues. Residents of Oneida County were recently alerted of the outcome of a lawsuit wherein Oneida County School District 351 was ordered to pay a combined $1.2 million judgement to two families of children that were discriminated against[2]. Our administrators have been aware of ADA noncompliance issues for nearly 3 decades and repeatedly and recklessly chose to ignore the needs identified in numerous Individualized Education Programs (IEP's). In the best cases (because the school district would not), parents of handicapped children stepped in to do the action the district promised them in their IEP's. The actions of our school district have not been in support of our school and our children, but for their own agenda: obtaining a new elementary school, regardless of the cost.

Funding to resolve these issues has been given to the district in the form of no less than 6 emergency supplemental levies over the course of the last 10 years, for an amount in excess of 3 million dollars[3]. Financially, there is no excuse for the obscene gross negligence that has happened to these kids and to our elementary school. We the citizens of this county, as taxpayers, are also victims of this negligence. Our administrators have failed us by refusing to act responsibly with our tax dollars that were specifically intended for maintenance of schools. Punitive damages are reserved for cases of the crudest ignorance where in penalties and embarrassment are deemed necessary to focus attention to the root of the problem. Judge Nye in this case decided that the actions of our district deserve severe punitive damages and his decision does seem appropriate in this case.

The State of Idaho has also found fault with the district. In 2016, the Oneida County School District was ordered to return $114,431.82 of Medicaid funds and another $5432.90 in penalties for fraudulent use of public funds[4]. The district has not only been irresponsible with our local tax dollars, but with federal monies as well.

We hired and elected them, we empowered them, and we trusted them. Administration was given the money. It was their responsibility to use it right. They didn't. That's whose fault it is. Not ours! Should we trust them with a new elementary school? NO! Our administration needs to act responsibly by changing the way they respond to the issues they are confronted with. This is where our true problem lies.

How can we trust that this lack of responsibility and lack of respect for us, the citizens, will change just because we build a new school? Caving into the temper tantrum won't change this tunnel-visioned, negligent behavior. We must demand to be heard by voting "No" again on August 27th to END THE BONDAGE!

—Mary Young

REFERENCES

1. https://adata.org/factsheet/ADA-overview; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Individuals_with_Disabilities_Education_Act.
2. **Shelbie Harris.** *The Idaho Sate Journal.* "Logan attorney helps families of two disabled students win $1.2M in Idaho child abuse suit." May 15, 2019.
3. **Public Record at the Courthouse.** Two levies are currently open. Both were passed in March of 2018:
   (a) 2 year Supplemental School Levy under code 33-802 (maintaining and operating schools); $290K/year, $580K total.
   (b) 10 year School Plant Facilities Reserve Fund Levy under code 33-804 (safety and health standards for facilities); $120K/year, $1.2M total.
4. **Kevin Richert.** *Idaho Ed News.* "A Medicaid Morass: Who pays to help Idaho's special-needs students?- 'They're not trying to make mistakes.' February 23, 2017.

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50 Not a Charm

On August 27th you will be asked to vote for the *THIRD TIME* on a school bond that has increased in price from $14.5 million to $17.5 million. It is a huge wasteful spending spree.

Here are the reasons you should vote AGAINST the New Elementary School Bond:

1. **You have no control** over how much money is spent and how it is used. We, the voters, should tell the School Board what we are willing to pay, NOT the School Board dictating what they can take from us. This is Your Money... Your Choice!
2. **It will take 20 years** to pay for the bond. Students who are in first grade now will be paying for the bond for 8 years after they graduate from high school.
3. **We lose 6 million dollars** in interest. Bonds require that interest be paid to the bank. Wouldn't that money be better spent on teachers, classroom enhancements, field trips and after school programs?
4. **The interest rate is unknown.** We are told the rate will be 2.81% per annum (based on current market rates), but we really won't know how much the interest rate will be because it will be announced AFTER the bond passes.
5. **Ranchers/Farmers will be hit hard.** They are the smallest group of tax payers in Oneida County and they will be paying the HIGHEST percentage of the bond. They may wind up selling their property to pay for the taxes.
6. **A new school is unnecessary.** Things don't fall apart when they are taken care of, just look at the 2nd Ward Tabernacle, the Old Stake Building (built one year after the Elementary School) or the Presbyterian Church. These have all withstood the same natural events.
7. **We lose our auditorium.** It serves as a wonderful meeting place for our community but it will be torn down in the frenzy to make the new school. There are no plans to replace it and if it is replaced it would add to the stated costs.
8. **Our VOTE SHOULD BE HONORED!** The bond has failed TWICE! Let's listen to the will of the people and look at other solutions.

[See more of this article online] —Catherine Pettis

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