

Coffee with the Mayor

Ser 31 (2025-5) Humphreys Park

Highland grog seems to be a flavor I'm drawn to when I purchase coffee outside the home. It's good with good flavor. At home, which is most of the time anymore, I select either Sumatra or my standby Gevalia.

During a trip last fall to Portland to visit my daughter's family and two grandsons I enjoyed some time on the porch swing with my five-year-old grandson. He's pretty observant for his age. We were swinging and talking on various topics when two boys went up the street on their scooters. Their age was hard to determine but they were probably around the 9-11 range. My grandson and I watched as they wheeled past. As they went by, my grandson, age 5 remember, remarked "Where are their parents!". Pretty astute for a 5-year-old! I have often quoted my grandson several times since then.

There continues to be issues with disruption, vandalism and damage to facilities and areas at Humphreys Park. A concerned community member spoke of this at the last city council meeting. This is not a new issue! The previous administration tried to address this issue as well. Restroom facilities, when opened, have been severally damaged on an almost regular basis requiring funds and time to restore. Considerable time is spent in the mornings collecting trash strewn throughout the park. Vehicles doing donuts in the gravel areas or causing ruts require more resources and equipment to level out. When I hear of the almost daily issue, my first thought is "Where are their parents!".

Humphreys Park is a huge asset for the community! When the weather is pleasant I notice several families, many with children, enjoying the playground equipment or having a picnic. The shelter houses and the girl scout cabin are reserved and utilized on a regular basis. Several updates have been accomplished on both shelter houses. New insulated windows have been installed and the floor painted on the east shelter house. The west shelter

house has been undergoing a makeover both inside and out making it more energy efficient and maintenance free! Both shelter houses have new tables and chairs. The actions make each location worth the cost to rent.

The Roy Clark community building is no different. The tile floors have been repaired in certain locations and thoroughly cleaned to make them more presentable. Currently the bathrooms are being renovated for a number of reasons. When used, the hand dryers sounded like a jet plane preparing for takeoff, making it hard to hear. The access and stalls were not easy to use for handicap situations. Lighting and venting were not the best. In several ways it was almost an embarrassment for the ones renting the building. The end product will make the building more appealing and handicap accessible, which was long overdue.

The availability of trash dumpsters at the park is another issue. These dumpsters are available for the people renting the buildings only. For whatever reason, people seem to think they are free for anyone to use and take advantage of the opportunity by dumping their bags of trash. The recycle area next to the Gas and Water building on 12th is open on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 10:00 to 4:00 for anyone to drop off recyclable plastics, cardboard and metal. In addition, trash bags can be deposited in a dumpster for a minimum charge of \$2 per bag. Seems like extra work to avoid a \$2 per bag charge.

To sum this coffee with the mayor, the park is open to the community! It is for the community to enjoy, with some responsibility. Chances are the ones reading this are respectful when enjoying the park and for that I thank you. It is harder to identify the ones causing the damage. I understand from police reports several causing the damage are local teenagers. It is then I remember my grandson's comment, "Where are their parents!". All too often I've heard, over several years, the comment "boys will be boys". While that may be true, it isn't justification to destroy property meant for all to enjoy! If anyone has suggestions on how to deal with this issue, I'd be glad to listen!