

LETTERS

Continued from page 2

The existence of the refuge is not in question just because of his grandstanding and inflammatory monologue.

I certainly hope some leadership emerges soon to deflate this frightening situation.

Nancy Louise Clayton



To the Editor:

Excellent editorial — again! (“*America is turning tribal*,” *The Nugget*, January 6, page 2).

Most folks bemoan the foibles of their aging brain and fail to recognize that their crystalline intelligence has become quite large and is still expanding. That is, their knowledge, experiences and life situations are still there inside and constitute a personal wisdom that should not just be enjoyed, but shared with others. You do that well.

One of the last functions to appear in the development of the brain is empathy in the frontal lobe, usually around age 20. Like all areas it grows best with experience and instruction.

From the perspective of my own aging brain, I disparage and don’t use social media, but social scientists point out that today it is Facebook, Twitter, texting (are there more?) that provide the raw material for developing empathy and tolerance. Because there is so much of it, there is great opportunity for parents, teachers and communities to help youth learn and develop capacities for empathy and tolerance — preventive medicine for tribalism.

Bob Collins



To the Editor:

Regarding the Malheur takeover issue:

I started visiting the Steens area in the ‘60s while I lived in Boise, and I’ve continued for over 45 years, including the last 35 in Oregon.

For approximately 2-1/2 years (2010 – 2012) I was on the Steens Management Advisory Council (SMAC). I love the Steens, eastern Oregon and southwest Idaho, but the drive for meetings was very tiring; so when I was due for reappointment to SMAC I decided to not reapply.

The BLM provided the staff for the SMAC

meetings and made the arrangements for the meeting places, so I became familiar with their work. I was very impressed with the BLM and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Malheur Refuge staff and the work they performed. As usual I connected with the ranchers very well, probably because they love open landscapes as I do. Twice, while exploring the Steens, I got myself into problems and in both cases a local rancher came to help. There were four on the Council and I met a number of others who came to our meetings, including Mrs. Hammond.

The current controversy is very unfortunate. The Malheur refuge provides superb wildlife habitat and is managed well. The surrounding BLM lands are well-managed, too. The protesters want lands that belong to all of us turned over to private owners and local governments. The reason is to benefit logging, ranching and other commercial activities that benefit only a few.

As I understand the background, the Hammonds made some unfortunate mistakes, as all of us do in our life, but theirs damaged public property, violated federal law and mandated prison-term sentences.

In my opinion the Bundys and their followers should quietly leave. It sounds like most Harney County residents agree, including the Burns Paiute Tribe.

“We as Harney County people can stand on our own feet,” said Jarvis Kennedy, a member of the Burns Paiute Tribal council. “We don’t need some clown to come in here and stand up for us.”

H. Tom Davis



To the Editor:

I am a U.S veteran who supports our government, but do not agree with the additional imprisonment of the Hammonds. I believe they are being bullied by an arrogant BLM and U.S attorney in an attempt to acquire their land.

The infraction they are charged with is certainly not an act of terrorism, and did little or no harm to a very small portion of their allotment. The punishment should fit the crime.

As a life-long recreational user of these federal lands in rural Oregon, I also support the rights of grazing, mineral, and timber interests holding legal grants and allotments, as their fees support the administration of these lands.

Don Young
Sisters



To the Editor:

This January marks the 15th annual National Mentoring Month, and Circle of Friends is participating in this campaign aimed at expanding quality opportunities to connect more of our community’s young people with caring adults

There is a powerful mentoring effect demonstrated by research and the experiences of young people who are connected to a mentor in real life. Mentoring is linked to improved academic, social and economic prospects for young people, and that ultimately strengthens our community.

Research has shown that when matched through a quality mentoring program, mentors can play a powerful role in providing young people with the tools to make responsible decisions, stay focused and engaged in school, and reduce or avoid risky behavior like skipping school, drug use, and other negative activities.

For example, in a recent national report called The Mentoring Effect, young people who were at-risk for not completing high school but who had a mentor were 55 percent more likely to be enrolled in college than those who did not have a mentor. They were also:

- 81 percent more likely to report participating regularly in sports or extracurricular activities.
- 78 percent more likely to volunteer regularly in their communities.
- More than twice as likely to say they held a leadership position in a club or sports team.

This same report found that one in three young people in our country will grow up without a mentor. Today, in our community, there are many kids who could benefit from having a mentor.

As we focus on engaging more community members in volunteering as mentors, we will share a simple message: Mentor IN REAL LIFE. Mentoring relationships are basic human connections that let a young person know that they matter, and mentors frequently report back that their relationships make them feel like someone is there to help them make the right choices in life.

Beth Hanson
Program Director
Circle of Friends




Sisters Science Club Schedule of Events

HOW DID WE GET HERE – CLUES FROM THE SOLAR SYSTEM: Tuesday, January 26. Scott Fisher, Department of Astronomy and Pine Mountain Observatory, University of Oregon. All elements are manufactured in exploding stars, many combine to form molecules, some travel through space on asteroids and reach planets. What can we learn about life on earth from our own solar system? The Belfry, 6 p.m. \$5 at the door. Club donors, teachers, and students are free.

FIFTH ANNUAL SISTERS SCIENCE FAIR: Saturday, February 20. Student and community exhibits, experiments, mouse-trap car contests, sci-art photography and much more. Sisters High School. 12 p.m.

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY: Tuesday, February 23, Jon Renner, Sisters High School. Science is a social, human phenomena ... an evolutionary process in which, as members of a global society, each of us has choices about the kind of lives we lead and the future we all might share. Some of us have choices that can affect billions at once, while others have much smaller ranges of choice ... choices that only affect a few, or even just our own selves in perhaps very small ways ... but each of us has choices. Understanding the natural world and the science that is used to investigate it is essential if we are to properly understand our place, and make choices wisely about our next steps. The Belfry, 6 p.m. \$5 at the door. Club donors, teachers, and students are free.



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