

Opinion / Local

— EDITORIAL —

The spirit of the law

We're thinking this holiday season of the gentleman who shot and killed a wolf by accident in adjoining Grant County and is now facing jail time and a severe financial penalty for the crime.

The hunter mistook the crouching animal for a coyote, and when he realized his mistake, he proved himself so honest that he did something we'd bet 99% of those who might shoot any animal by mistake would never do—he turned himself in.

Only a month after the accident, the wolf in Oregon was removed from the endangered species list, and although one would think this change would lessen the charges the hunter faces, it doesn't. ODFW says the penalties for a delisted wolf are the same as for one

on the endangered species list—which is a baffling fact in and of its own, and probably the topic for a different editorial altogether.

Then we think: How many times have ODFW officials themselves been unable to concretely verify that a wolf was a wolf based on tracks or images captured on a trail cam? They're the experts, right?

Someone we respect pointed out today that this hunter may not have adhered to the letter of the law, but he certainly adhered to the spirit of it. He didn't intend to commit a crime, and when he realized his mistake, he attempted to make it right.

If this man is punished to the full extent of the law, anyone remaining outside the “shoot, shovel and shut up” camp will surely switch sides over to it afterward.

2 Corinthians 3 flashed through our minds, where we're told (loosely paraphrased) that the letter kills, but the spirit gives life.

We're hoping the spirit is considered, and these charges result in justice tempered by mercy.

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Fighting ISIS

To the Editor:

As we head toward the future, which looks like some kind of war, I'm reminded of the Vietnam era. One of the conventional sayings was, “if we don't fight them over there we will have to fight them over here.” I'm hearing it again. Sounds profound and wise but is it? A little geography might be appropriate here. The U.S.A has a big ocean on both sides, a weak southern neighbor and an ally on the North. Last time I checked ISIS was lacking a Navy and an Airforce. So how would it be that we would have to “fight them over here?” Well they have to get here and it seems like the way they travel is by air on commercial airlines that land at an airport. It would seem logical that before they get on that airplane they would be vetted and when they landed at one of our airports we should check them out again and keep track of where they went and if they overstayed their welcome. If they can't come we don't have to worry about them fighting over here. If we control our borders we don't have to fight them over here. If we start restricting the numbers coming over here the less we have to worry about fighting them over here.

We should hold off on the boots on the ground push because they are over there and they are changing the way the leftist governments of Europe think. They might have to fight them over there and might just decide to drop the disarmament of their populations. Possibly those coalitions to fight Radical Islam might actually end up being coalitions instead of America and some tokens.

Steve Culley
Baker City

Bazaar Time of the Year

To the Editor:

It is time for us all to check out all those homemade goodies and gifts at local Christmas bazaars and shops. What wonderful things can be found! But one needs to remember to carefully check items you are going to purchase as gifts to assure that the knit or crocheted item is done well, clean, and not going to unravel when washed.

How about those nice soft pillows with the hand-sewn appliques? Are the seams finished well and going to hold up or fall apart completely when washed? Take this advice from one who has had that experience—these are things that need to be kept in mind while shopping, to ensure that not only will your loved one be delighted by the gift you purchased, but will be delighted with their gift after the test of time. Nothing is worse than picking up the

pieces after that first wash!

Christmas gifts, especially handmade ones, are wonderful examples of the season. But those making the items for sale as well as the ones purchasing them should keep this advice in mind to assure buyers will be back again.

Missy Baine
Sumpter

Pot Odors are Subjective

To the Editor:

I have thought almost endlessly for days about the idea of an ordinance against marijuana odor. I have researched what other communities have done in response to a few complaining citizens. I've come to the conclusion that it would be ridiculous.

I sympathize with the handful of residents that may be allergic to marijuana pollen. However, there are many residents allergic to a myriad of substances we frequently have in our air—cottonwood, lilacs, wood smoke, roses and grass clippings just to name a few. We don't find ourselves discussing at length as a community how to handle these irritants. We don't threaten to force people to remove trees, or bushes, or lawns, for that matter, because the neighbor has a health problem.

We leave it up to the individual to either obtain allergy medication, stay indoors, or move away from the problem. Why would we treat marijuana any differently? Why the vendetta against a single plant? Like it or not, marijuana is legal to produce (excepting a couple of age and quantity related limitations) and should be treated as such.

I am concerned that if a code is enacted it will be too subjective. I found Pendleton's way of handling it (amending an existing public nuisance ordinance) to be very unreasonable. It's only directed toward marijuana; the level of odor is not quantitatively measured. It is simply left up to whichever officer responds to decide on case-by-case basis whether or not it's too odoriferous. How is this fair?

In regard to the idea of mandating only indoor grows to control the spread of odor, there are already concerns about the ability of our power grid to handle it. I also discovered much evidence that covering a crop or moving it indoors simply condenses the scent, making it stronger than if the plants were raised in open air.

I urge you not to open this proverbial can of worms. It should not be the business of legislators or law enforcement agents to manage. It teeters on the verge of a civil rights violation and will likely cause more trouble than it is worth!

Sarah Heiner
Baker City

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— GUEST OPINION —

Terrorist infiltration prevention critical

By Sen. Ted Cruz

The self-proclaimed Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or ISIS, has emerged as the new face of the radical terror that has bedeviled the West in recent decades. As the American people are now painfully aware in the wake of ISIS's murderous rampage in Paris last Friday, they have apparently now directly threatened both Washington and New York. Their attacks and threats serve as reminders that ISIS can and, given time and opportunity, will strike the West again.

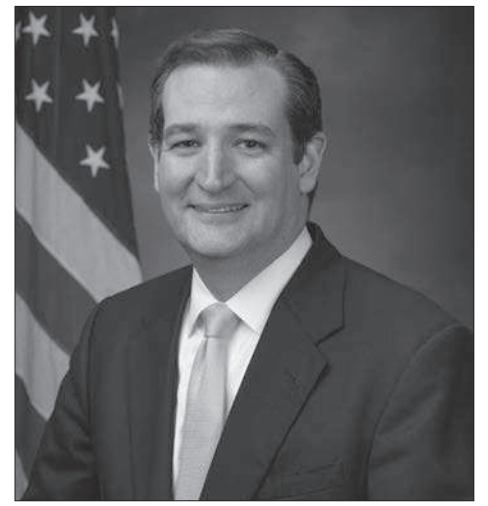
This jihadist organization is intentionally infiltrating the flood of refugees that are currently entering Europe through Turkey, Greece, and points west. Rather than taking the threat seriously, President Obama has doubled down on his dangerous open-borders policies by proposing to welcome thousands of refugees who have potentially been infiltrated by terrorists to the United States. This headlong rush toward a careless policy comes just weeks after FBI Director James Comey told Congress, in no uncertain terms, that our government lacks the tools to properly screen these refugees.

Since the beginning of the Syrian refugee crisis, more than 2,100 refugees from Syria have already been admitted to the United States. President Obama now wants to accept at least 10,000 more this fiscal year. That's roughly a third of the 34,000 total refugees President Obama proposes to accept from the Near East and South Asia.

This policy makes no sense. Given the existential nature and scope of the threat posed by radical Islamic terrorism, the limitations on our ability to screen the flood of refugees, and the obligations of our government to provide for the safety and security of all Americans, we simply cannot accept refugees from countries that have a significant terrorist presence until the terrorist threat has been eliminated.

As an unapologetic proponent of legal immigration, it brings me no pleasure to advocate for limiting the flow of refugees to America. But the first duty of our government, which President Obama and Hillary Clinton are ignoring, is to protect the American people. And if that means temporarily suspending the admission of high-risk refugees from countries beset by jihadist groups, then so be it.

This is why I have introduced the Terrorist Refugee Infiltration Prevention Act of 2015. This constitutionally sound, common-sense measure would immediately bar any refugee who is from any country that contains territory controlled in substantial part by ISIS, al Qaeda, or any other designated foreign terrorist organization ascribing to the



Submitted Photo
Senator Ted Cruz from Texas is a candidate for U.S. President.

radical, totalitarian Islamism dedicated to the destruction of the United States and our allies, and whose proponents find anyone who does not share their faith—from couples dining in cafes to Jews shopping in a kosher market to satirical cartoonists—equally offensive. The bill specifically names Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen as countries from which refugees cannot be accepted, and empowers the State Department to identify and designate additional countries as potential sources of terror.

It is important to note this refugee ban would be temporary. It would sunset after three years, and allow Congress to reevaluate the global situation and make necessary adjustments, or let the law expire. It would in no way prevent the United States from providing assistance to humanitarian disasters in a way that is consistent with our national security.

The bill would also allow a narrow exception to the refugee ban in cases that involve victims of genocide like the Yazidis and certain Christian sects, including Assyrians, who, amazingly, still speak a form of Aramaic that is believed to have been spoken by Jesus Christ. This exception would only be available for the severest cases of persecution, and would require a high bar of proof.

The American people already know the truth President Obama will not utter, which is that the threat we face is radical Islamic terrorism, not random violence. The fact of the matter is that no Christian or Yazidi has systematically executed concert-goers while shouting “Allahu Akbar.”

Pretending all the refugees are equally likely or unlikely to commit terrorist acts prevents us from helping those we can while protecting ourselves from a real threat. And the insistence of the Obama Administration that the terrorist threat is “not Islamic” gives no confidence that any screening mechanism they would design would actually identify the radical Islamic terrorists whose stated goal is to murder Americans.

After the horror of Paris, it would be downright reckless not to take basic steps to protect ourselves from the threat of terrorist infiltration. It takes just one jihadist to cause enormous damage and take countless lives. This is a small, first step toward protecting America, and I will never apologize for defending this nation.

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