

Opinion

— GUEST OPINION —

That social experiment called Facebook!

By Jimmy Ingram
Special to The Baker County Press

After several years of participating in this social experiment called Facebook, I've noticed some things.

I love seeing what 99% of you have to say, pictures of family, interests, humor, etc. But sometimes when I get on there, I have to laugh to myself about what I see. Bear with me.

The "Over-Sharer." I'm impressed at your commitment to navigate the deep, dark edges of the online universe to bring us all these tidbits.

However, your sharing at times reminds me of FM radio: I'm not about to sit through 30 crappy songs to hear one good one. The good news is your links always remind me to update my antivirus software.

The "Non-Stop Political Poster." I know where you stand. I get it. I may or may not agree, but deep down I wonder if you want me to disagree so you can show off your debate skills. And if you're using this as some sort of tool to keep only politically like-minded friends you may be let down.

The "Never Ending Selfie Poster." You look nice. Your haircut looks good. I like the shirt. Just like the one earlier today, last night, yesterday afternoon, and last week. Ever changing lighting and photo effects do add a nice touch but you're toying the line of full-fledged narcissism. Also, no one wants to see your bathroom.

The "Whiny Self Loather." It's clear you need support and that's fair. You also need compliments, and that's okay, too. But airing your baggage for 500 people to see may not be the most effective way to deal. Also, when you post things like, "God is great!" on Tuesday and, "I hate my life" on Wednesday, it makes you look cuckoo.

The "Long Poster." (I know that's me right now.) You certainly have a lot to say and I respect that. However, clicking the "see more" prompt is more commitment than I find myself ready for at times.

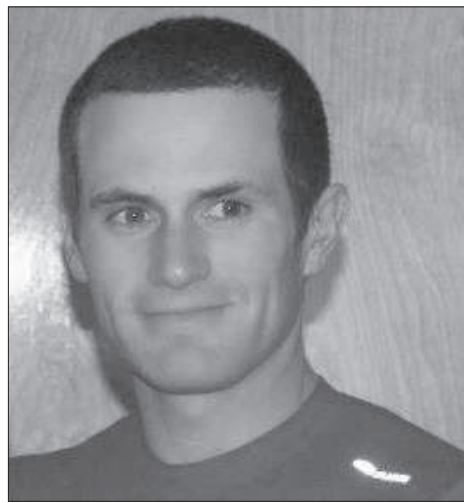
It's too bad because somewhere in your novel I'm sure there are some really interesting or humorous things. FYI: separating long-winded thoughts into paragraphs helps alleviate eye fatigue for your fully invested viewers.

The "Perpetually Over Happy Poster." I admire your positive outlook on life, enjoy your motivational quotes, pictures of flowers, sunsets, unicorns and rainbows.

But at times I find myself a few minutes removed from just having stepped on a pile of my son's Legos and I just can't feel inspired. I hope you're not let down now that you know that. As the famous break-up line goes, "It's not you, it's me."

The "Super Tagger." I'm not sure why you being at the dentist involved tagging 52 friends. The only thing I can think of is that you're reminding them to get a checkup—which is nice of you. I guess?

The "Facebook Quitter." You're sick of Facebook for reasons X, Y, and Z and are letting all of us know you're ending the relationship. Sorry to see you go. But then we get a friend



Submitted Photo

Jimmy Ingram is a local farmer and father of two who enjoys people watching within our wonderful community and beyond.

request from you a month later, and a month after that and year after that. Something tells me you have commitment issues.

Also, it is possible to have an account and only log on periodically. It works okay for most of us.

The "Button Pusher." While off-color, unapologetically offensive humor is funny to some, it's not funny to everyone. Odds are if you have an audience of several hundred people, someone is bound to be offended or hurt.

You may want to tailor your jokes accordingly. We know you're you and have "zero (insert F-bomb here)" to give, but it's 2015.

Try and offend in small groups.

The "Friend Deleter." You randomly sent me a friend request six months ago and I just happened to notice I've been deleted. I'm sorry that I haven't met your criteria for being a non-interactive, zero-responsibility, no-expectation cyber-friend. I just feel bad that you put yourself through this taxing two step process. Mmm, never mind, I don't. You're behaving like a child.

The "Cryptic Poster." You keep us guessing with your two-word posts like, "Yeah whatever," or, "Not again!"

We don't know if your car spontaneously combusted and you need help or if you just found out that *CSI Miami* was cancelled.

It's like a game show, only we never find out if we've won the grand prize because when someone asks what happened you respond with, "Don't wanna talk about it on here," or, "Too personal for FB."

The "Play-by-Play Poster." You keep us all on the edge of our seats with 10 posts a day like, "Gonna eat breakfast," "Better go rake some leaves," "I just finished raking leaves," and, "I'm bored, think I'll watch a movie."

Checking in at every location you go, including your own home lets us all know you're safe, which is important. Something tells me you really liked "The Truman Show."

The "Food Poster." Your dinner looks delicious. Way better than mine. My concern is that your food got cold while you took the photo.

And ... the least you could do if you're going to make my culinary skills feel inadequate is bring me some of your food.

(Thanks, Facebook friends. Love you guys and love getting to see and hear from friends and family near and far on here. Just thought I'd throw my own brand of comedy out there to poke fun at a select few. I'm sure we've all been guilty of one or all of these at some point!)

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— EDITORIAL —

The Hammond family situation

Have you heard the story about Harney County's Hammond family? If you haven't, you should.

Back in 1999, Dwight Hammond, who is now nearly 80 years-old, along with his son Steven, who is now 46, set a small fire on their own property in the Steens Mountain area with the intent of burning off a little sagebrush and encouraging grass growth. Burning off fields, ditches, etc., as most of us in eastern Oregon know, is common practice among farmers and ranchers.

The fire, however, skipped over their fence line into adjoining Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed property, and scorched a handful of acres.

Now, bear in mind that the Hammonds actually leased that property from the BLM for their own grazing use. And bear in mind that the burn-off improved that particular few acres of grazing land.

In 2001, while burning, a similar situation happened with a few more acres of BLM land burned—land the Hammonds were leasing. 139 acres to be exact.

Fast forward a few years to 2006 when a thunder and lightning storm struck, and the Hammonds were in the position of fighting back a series of lightning-strike-caused fires that were advancing uncontrolled from that same BLM land onto their private property. The men set a back-burn to save their land, and in the process scorched one acre of BLM

land. One. Acre.

The Feds filed criminal charges.

In 2012 after a two-week trial, Steven received a one-year sentence to prison for setting the 2001 and 2006 fires. Dwight got three months for the 2001 fire setting.

As the years-long stress of fighting federally-brought criminal charges proved hard on their ranching family, the two opted to simply serve out the time with the agreement that the case was closed, no more charges would be filed, and the situation was done.

This year, the Feds went back on their deal and filed paperwork with the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, stating that not only did the sentencing judge in 2012 rule illegally, but that the Hammonds acted as domestic terrorists in their arson, and that it was all intentional and malicious.

The 9th Circuit Court, known far and wide for its rather "unique" decisions, agreed with the Feds.

This October, the Hammonds were each sentenced, more than a decade after the fact, to five years in prison for arson. This is a sentence, which due to the senior Hammond's age and health, he may not survive.

It's important to note that the statute of limitations had long since expired on the original arson charges.

It's also important to note that even the BLM's range experts testified that the Hammond family's prescribed burn methods had actually positively improved the condition of the range land in each instance.

We also might mention, as it turns out, that each time, the family had called the local BLM office and obtained verbal permission before lighting their fires. That permission doesn't count, argues the U.S. Department of Justice, because that permission wasn't written down in the form of a permit.

If ever a presidential pardon was in order, it is in the Hammond case. If our current president won't, which we'd bet on, maybe the next will.

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

FDA not always right

To the Editor:

In reference to a recent article in another newspaper about the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) approval of genetically engineered salmon for our consumption—as if the FDA really knew, or even cares what is good for us or the environment.

It reminds me of our government allowing farm raised salmon to be raised in Alaskan waters in crowded pens, poured full of antibodies to keep them from getting diseased in such conditions, and then dumping the fish in our markets.

I'm sure the FDA approved of this

also. Not only are the farm-raised fish not healthy looking in the market, they don't taste anywhere near as good as fresh, wild-caught salmon.

Also, allowing them to be raised in pens in open waters has been known to cause huge problems with wild salmon runs that have to travel through waters polluted by farm-raised fish on their way to spawning grounds.

Oh yeah, we can be sure that the government agencies are looking out for us. It's all about money and greed here, folks, not about us or the environment.

Peter Claffin
Baker City

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