

Opinion

— EDITORIAL —

Meeting loss with love

It has been a week of death and sadness for so many of us associated with both the production of this newspaper and its closest readers. From family members to friends to beloved pets, the losses have piled up in the past few days. We offer our heartfelt condolences, for what they're worth, to all those who might take a bit of comfort from them.

For us, these past days have served as a wake-up call to treasure real love when it is given to you and hold on to it while you can. We're only ever given a little bit of time here anyway.

It seems counter-intuitive to actively choose death, to create pain and loss. Two nonsensical deaths affected us and those around us this week—one a tragic suicide, the other the spiritual and emotional equivalent of it.

While actual deaths are usually out of our hands, the death of a connection to a loved one by choice takes more analysis to grasp. People make life more complicated than it is sometimes, and often stop seeing what's true even when it's right in front of them.

We are all so very flawed, and in the latter circumstance, the imperfect actions and inactions of someone dear to us led to ever-increasing problems, and when these problems escalated, the pain became too great to face. To remove himself, he chose to kill himself emotionally rather than physically, sacrificing one of the very few things in his life that had ever been real for him or brought him joy.

He cited Christianity as the reason for his choices, based upon the argument that because problems had been created, that Satan must be attacking. This man's family members had piled guilt and anger onto him in the name of religion, along with this warped view and their own desires for his life without understanding him in any depth.

We all get so weary of religion being twisted to manipulate and actually create loss, when it should be used to comfort and lead toward joy and forgiveness in hard times, as Christ intended.

Our spiritual beliefs should be what we depend upon, not what constantly pull the rug out from under us, leaving us bruised

and battered. Fundamentalist extremists of any kind tend to create that effect, though. Perfection is unobtainable, and the expectation of it can be soul-crushing.

It's hard sometimes to remember that just because a believer's opinion is upside down in the name of God, that the beauty of the religion holds true in spite of it. Actions like what we've seen this week are what chase people who want to believe, people who are looking for their faith, away from the church entirely.

In the Bible and in our experience, Satan does not attack the bad. Satan attacks what God sets up, what he knows to be good.

Things Satan does his best to prevent? Love, growth, joy, truth, health ... Things Satan thrives on? Indifference, apathy, hate, stagnation, blame, misplaced guilt, lies, sickness, anger ...

The voice of Satan is one of condemnation, of breaking and crushing. The voice of God, for us, is one of gentle direction, of opening doors and affecting much-needed growth and change.

If you're deliberately hardening your heart toward someone you deeply love, it's a good indicator not of God at work, but of the other guy.

If you're assigning blame and tossing accusations at someone who never did a thing to you, you might look toward what planted those suspicions in the first place—and what you're being pushed toward.

If you're treating another person with cruelty and contempt and coldness, that ain't God, folks. Don't think it is.

If you believe life is to be led in suffering and you're adhering to one bit of scripture, but you're blind to the overarching themes of the Bible and all the rest of the scripture it contains, you're probably not seeing the bigger picture.

And if you think God is petty and punitive and sitting up in the heavens waiting to cast misfortune upon you for your sins, or for not properly glorifying Him, then it's a definite indicator you've missed the point of Jesus Christ entirely.

If you're on the receiving end of such insanity, however, it's tempting at first to sink into the same level of blame and hate. But upon deeper thought, we realize that would be to sink into the same empty place where the confused Christian has sunk.

It's far more difficult to continue to offer up unconditional love even when the recipient isn't capable of recognizing it and may not think they deserve it. We hope this message gets across.

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

No guns outside home?

Submitted by the Oregon Firearms Federation

To call last week's 9th Circuit Appeals Court ruling "tortured" would be to elevate it well above any status it deserves.

The ruling in *Edward Peruta v. County of San Diego* concluded that there is no Constitutional right for a member of the public to carry a firearm concealed outside their home. The Court did not address the constitutionality of carrying firearms outside the home openly, but in California where this case originated, open carry is outlawed as well, so this decision could well eliminate the rights of Californians to "bear arms" outside their homes at all.

Imagine this reasoning extended to other rights articulated in the Bill of Rights.

Amendment 1. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press ... as long as they do not leave their homes.

Amendment IV. The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause ... provided the people do not leave their homes.

Amendment V. No

person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process ... provided that the person in question remain in his home at all times.

Of course it sounds absurd. The notion that one gives up a fundamental right when one steps through his front door is so non-sensical as to be the stuff of parody and farce, but it is actually not a surprise coming from the most liberal and overturned court in the nation.

How will this affect the states unlucky enough to be within the Circuit? Time will tell. Three of those states; Idaho, Alaska, and Arizona already recognize a person's right to carry a concealed firearm with no requirement to ask permission from the state. Montana allows persons to carry concealed firearms with no state issued permission if they are outside cities or towns. But Nevada, Oregon, and Washington, like California, already do not recognize a person's right to carry a

firearm concealed without requesting permission from the state.

Unlike California however, none of those states allow the issuing authority to arbitrarily decide if your life is worthy of protection. If you meet the qualifications, you get a license to exercise your "right." That's what this case was actually about. Whether a state agency or actor has the authority to determine who is worthy of self defense.

The 9th Circuit agreed with the state and said that the value of your life could be determined by a government bureaucrat who could simply decide that person A's life was worth protecting and person B's was not.

What this ruling means for Oregonians is that the far left, anti-gun axis that controls our legislature and the executive branch, will feel emboldened to continue its assault on license holders. While there is nothing new about this (Prozanski and Burdick have been trying, unsuccessfully, for years to attack license holders) what it all but guarantees is a tidal wave of new proposed restrictions on all gun owners.

For the first time we have a candidate who has built almost her entire campaign around destroying what is left of the Second Amendment, and while almost all candidates are question marks, Clinton is a drop-dead sure thing who simply must be stopped.

So I was thinking ... A letter to a friend

By Jimmy Ingram
Special to The Baker County Press

I still remember when I picked you up sight unseen. The unexpected result of a friend's golden retriever hopping the fence to romance a black lab.

You had a smooth black coat, floppy ears, and feet that I swore you could never grow into. You were a happy dog and learned to obey far faster than I probably deserved.

You slept comfortably at the foot of my bed in my cold college apartment and though I appreciated you keeping my feet warm, the incessant squirming of your 80 pound body (you *did* grow into those feet) made it hard to sleep. I didn't ever have the heart to kick you out though.

You eventually moved back to the family farm with me and made yourself right at home. Daily dives into the pond, hunting the pastures for hours and getting as muddy as you possibly could kept you occupied.

You made friends with the other family dogs, even acting as a "spokesman" for them when you knew they wanted outside on an early summer morning or inside on a cold winter day. You loved a good scratch on the back and lived to clean out the last bit of a peanut butter jar or catch a frisbee. Then you would eat the frisbee as though it was a jar of peanut butter.

You proudly delivered the wedding ring in my sister's wedding in the front yard of the family farm. You sat patiently watching from that same spot years later as I got married. You were there waiting when my wife and I brought home our newborn son, always remaining gentle and loving with your curiosity.

You started getting gray and moving slower, which made me feel bad, but at moments you'd gallop across a field like you were still two years-old.

You were patient when the younger dogs annoyed you to play, much like a tired parent would do with their energetic kids.

You wanted to spend more time inside the garage as time went on and I don't blame you. It was comfortable for you in there.

As time went on I could feel your senses lacking. You wouldn't always come when called, not because you were disobeying but because you



Submitted Photo

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



Submitted Photo

Rudy.

couldn't hear.

Occasionally you would wander off and need to be brought home, not because you meant to wander off but because you couldn't see. It was hard for me to start facing the inevitable but I had to.

So Rudy, my loving, dedicated dog of 15 years—I feel a tremendous sense of loss today. I know you were just a dog but you were family.

You watched me grow from a naive 23-year-old "kid" into a 38-year-old man with a family, a career and a sense of purpose.

You greeted me with a wagging tail on my best days and my worst days and provided me with a tremendous amount of joy and companionship for the better part of my adult life.

I hope wherever you are now you feel like the energetic puppy you were when I picked you up that day. I hope you feel right at home with all the other wonderful companions that people like me have lost over the years.

It's been said it's unfair that our time here is so long and those of dogs is so short ... and it's true.

I'm sure many of you have a story similar to mine. And while it's incredibly hard to lose what many of us consider part of our family, it teaches us all a good lesson on the meaning of what love, loyalty, and companionship really is.

So thanks, Rudy. Your 15+ years with me made my life a better place. I'm going to miss you.

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Published weekly every Friday.
Subscription rates per year are \$29.95 all areas, e-mail delivery. \$39.95 print issue, home delivery, Baker City city limits only. \$49.95 print issue, mail delivery, outside Baker City city limits only.
Payment in advance.

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Black Lyon Publishing, LLC

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