

Letters

Resist the Lies

To the Editor:

The Malheur Refuge occupation is not focused just on the unconscionable and malicious federal assault against ranchers whose land is coveted by the BLM. The Hammonds are the tipping point, the final straw for these peaceful protestors. No other known remedies remain to stop the loss of private rights, land, jobs, and resources for local inhabitants.

Over 100,000 signatures from across the nation have supported a Petition for Redress of Grievances, which has been ignored.

Further adding to the unrest is the unconstitutional federal plan to take two and a half million acres from neighboring Malheur County to create a National Canyonlands Monument. This proposed taking will destroy the ranching economy there, and Malheur County ranchers are also at the Refuge occupation.

Representative Greg Walden addressed Congress about this incident and admitted that the Refuge was indeed "public land". If the federal government owned the land he would say so. They only manage it for us. The occupiers are part of the public, and have not harmed one thing. They have not yet been given any order to leave the premises, so they are not trespassing. Court documents must be produced to evidence that the United States Government has actual TITLE to the land, and I do not believe it exists. BLM employees have been reportedly shredding documents. WHY?

Under the terms of the Enabling Act that brought The State of Oregon into the union of Several states, the federal government contracted to DISPOSE of public lands. And they have done so in all the eastern states. But, because the western states are so valuable in natural resources, a huge federal bureaucracy has sprung up to permanently control these resources. Thus, our local economies have suffered. Mills have been shut down. Mining is overregulated. Ranchers are bankrupted. We can't even enjoy the forests. So why are federal laws that simply DO NOT APPLY within the states tolerated?

These Refuge occupiers have pledged their lives and sacred honor to bring this perfidious federal scheme to the national stage. Please seek the TRUTH. Resist the lies.

James Iler, Baker City

Suggested New Year Resolutions for Commissioner Harvey

To the Editor

With all the negativity against Federal agencies in Harney County the past few days, and some of the same negative rhetoric right here in Baker County the past year, I have the following suggested New Year 2016 resolutions for Baker County Commissioner Bill Harvey:

1. Bill Harvey, resolve in the year 2016, as follows:

1. I will quit claiming that the USFS must coordinate planning on equal footing with Baker County concerning the County's Natural Resources Plan. Thanks to a well-documented letter from Wallow-Whitman National Forest Supervisor Tom Montoya dated November 19, 2015, I now realize that Baker County has only an advisory role and cannot veto actions taken by USFS.

2. I will quit denying that global warming/climate change is caused by human activity. I now believe that it poses an existential threat to the survival of humans and many other species; and I further resolve to work with County departments, commissions, and committees to see what Baker County can do to minimize pollution that contributes to global warming/climate change.

3. I will quit opening Commission hearings with an invocation, which is a religious practice I initiated upon taking office in January 2015. I agree with critics that, in a religiously diverse country such as ours, the practice discriminates against persons who are of a different religious belief, and that the practice broke a 160-year-old Commission tradition of just beginning meetings with the business County Commissioners are elected to address.

4. I will quit claiming that the Federal government should "give back" State and County lands administered by USFS and BLM. After doing some research, I now realize that Federal lands in the United States are owned by the Federal government, which acquired the lands through purchase, treaty, or conquest, and that Oregon and Baker County may gain ownership of those lands only via an act of Congress.

This writer hopes that if Commissioner Harvey follows these suggestions, it will improve the Commission's working relations with other agencies, will align the Commission with overwhelming evidence of the scientific community on global warming/climate change, and all who come before the Commission will be treated with equal respect.

Gary Dielman, Baker City

Concerned about Hardship on Animals

To the Editor:

It's hard to witness animals being abused by lack of food in the winter. Summer is a hard time also, but in winter there's no grass growing for horses and cows to forage on and help sustain them. I have been watching some horses with a small colt being abused for a lack of food. Not sure what the water situation is but some days there's very little food and other days they don't get anything! This is winter, everything is frozen, nothing growing and they (the horses) have no voice to say, "We could use some hay, it fills us up and helps our bodies produce heat to keep warm on these cold winter nights."

This individual that owns the horses needs to ask themselves, "Do I need them? Can I afford to feed them properly? If the answer to both is no, then do the humane thing and sell them! They (the horses) did not ask to be treated like this."

This individual has been turned in to the local authorities several times, but nothing seems to come of it. Do we have to wait for animals to die before the authorities do something?

They need to take all complaints of animal abuse seriously, whether it be dogs chained up with no food, water or shelter, or stacked in carriers living in their own poo! Or cats living in horrible conditions with little or no food and water. Horses, cows, goats trying to live on little or no food having to eat their own poop!

I have seen this, and it is not a pretty sight. So I'm asking anyone who has or is witnessing these abuses, speak up, write letters, call the local authorities. Maybe they'll do something if enough people stand up for animals that have no voice to speak for themselves.

It would be a great year if animal abuse at all levels is cleared up and the abusers held accountable!

Respectfully,

Linda Chandler, Baker City

When the Last Call Comes

To the Editor:

This poem was given to me some time ago, and sure seems real for today. The author is unknown.

'Twas the Night Before Jesus Came

'Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house

Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.

Their Bibles were laid on the shelf without care, in hope that Jesus would not come there.

The children were dressing to crawl into bed, not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.

And mom in her rocker with baby on her lap was watching the Late Show while I was taking a nap.

When out of the East there arose such a clatter, I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash, tore open the shutters and threw up the sash. When what to my wondering eyes should appear but Angels proclaiming Jesus was here.

What a light like the sun sending forth such a bright ray,

I knew in a moment this must be the day!

The light of his face made me cover my head, it was Jesus returning just like He said!

And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth, I cried when I saw him in spite of myself.

In the Book of Life which He held in His hand, was written the name of every saved man.

He spoke not a word as He searched for my name; when He said, It's not here, my head hung in shame.

The people whose names had been written with love He gathered to take to His Father above.

With those who were ready, He arose without sound, while all the rest were left standing around.

I fell to my knees, but it was too late, I had waited too long and thus sealed my fate. I stood and I cried as he rose out of sight.

Oh, if only I had been ready tonight!

There's only one life and when the last call comes, we'll find out that the Bible was true after all.

Richard Fox, Baker City

Postal Particulars

with Krista Dennis

By the time you read this, the first stamp of 2016, Quilled Paper Heart will be available for you to purchase. Another stamp that will make an appearance during the year will be, movie legend and diplomat, Shirley Temple based on her 1935 film "Curly Top". For those science fiction fans, stamps celebrating the 50th anniversary of the original TV series, Star Trek and for the first time ever, the USPS will issue a Halloween-themed stamp. Another American Flag stamp will be issued as well as Soda Fountain Favorites and Pickup Trucks. Something for everyone! On a side note, prices for shipping services (think packages) will change on Jan. 17.

Our Priority is: YOU!

Op-Ed

Speaking out for Rural Oregon

By Rep. Greg Walden

In recent weeks, the people of Harney County have become no stranger to national headlines. On Jan. 3, a group of armed protesters overtook a federal facility in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. And on Jan. 5, Dwight and Steve Hammond, father and son ranchers from Harney County who were convicted of arson for setting a backfire that burned 139 acres of federal land, reported to prison to serve the remainder of a mandatory five year sentence.

While these stories played out across every major media outlet, it's important to understand what is driving this anger and what steps we can take to improve the situation.

The thread that ties the Hammond family's case together with the calls of those who took over the Refuge is decades of frustration, arrogance and betrayal that has contributed to the mistrust of the federal government.

Too many people often don't understand the culture and the lifestyle of the great American West— and how much the ranchers and farmers who live in this vast, beautiful, harsh landscape care about the environment, their children's futures, and about America and the Constitution. Nor do they realize how hard they work to produce the food we eat. We're seeing now the extent they will go to in order to defend all that.

While I understand their passion, I cannot condone the actions of the armed protesters, led largely by people who are not from our state. They've made their point loud and clear, and local community leaders, including many ranchers, have asked them to leave. They should do so.

The day after the Hammonds went to prison, I went to the U.S. House floor intending to give a five minute speech on what was unfolding in Harney County. But when decades of my own pent up frustration with the federal government's treatment of rural Oregonians came to the surface, I spoke before my colleagues for nearly half an hour. (You can watch my full speech at www.walden.house.gov/speech).

In my years representing the people of Oregon's Second District, I have worked with local ranchers and the citizens of eastern Oregon to resolve disputes, to find solutions and to create a more cooperative spirit and partnership with the federal agencies. After all, more than half the 2nd District is under federal management, or lack thereof.

The Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act is a prime example of those cumulative efforts. But after it was signed into law in 2000, little by little, the agencies decided to reinterpret it and follow it at their own convenience, or ignore the law altogether. At the suggestion of local ranchers, the law created the first cow-free wilderness in the United States, but the tradeoff was a legal requirement for the federal government to provide the fencing. And yet bureaucrats within the Bureau of Land Management wouldn't listen and wouldn't follow the law. They told ranchers they had to build the fence. When I pointed out their error, they basically told me to stuff it. When I provided them with the documentation from more than a decade before that proved the intent of Congress, they doubled down. And finally, when I got Congress to pass a restatement of the original intent, they said they'd review it.

I don't get angry very often, but this arrogance really got to me. And while there are very good federal workers in our communities who do follow the law, and do work cooperatively to find solutions, it only takes a few of the others to cause us to lose faith.

A similar experience is taking place across the West through the so called travel management plans. Originally intended to minimize damage from off road vehicles, it quickly became a powerful tool to close roads and shut people out of their forests.

What happened in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is a classic case in point. After years of community meetings, public workshops and incredible efforts to update the government's faulty maps, a forest supervisor decided she knew better. Her choice of a management plan was such an affront that more than 900 people packed a meeting in La Grande in protest. I, too, was incensed and called upon the Forest Service to withdraw the plan, and they did. But the damage was done. How can people be expected to have faith in a public process when they see outcomes like these?

Meanwhile, other threats loom on these same people. From the onerous "waters of the United States" rules, to threats of more national monuments, the federal government is aggressively trying to get cattle off the range and people off their public lands.

Right now, it's strongly rumored that the Obama Administration will declare more national monuments, including one in Malheur County, next to Harney County. It could be up to 2.5 million acres—bigger than Yellowstone National Park. Ranchers and community leaders are being told either agree to a big wilderness area or plan on getting a monument shoved down your throat. Is it any wonder we feel our way of life is threatened by our own government? If the President wants to help reduce the tension, and try to restore a bit of trust, he would publicly back off this proposal.

The Hammonds made a mistake and went to prison for five years for lighting a backfire that burned 139 acres of federal land. We all know fire is a tool on the range to deal with invasive species and to stop other fires. In 2012, more than a million acres burned in Harney County, alone. All too often, I've met with ranchers who were burned out by backfires they say should never have been set by the agencies. And while I have the greatest respect for the power of a fire, and the courage and talent of firefighters, they make mistakes, too.

The Hammonds were tried and convicted under a law written after the Oklahoma City bombing. The presiding judge in the case made clear that it's penalties when applied to a fire on the high desert of eastern Oregon don't make sense. But a court found he lacked the authority to invoke a lesser sentence.

We need to revisit the 1996 law that landed the Hammonds with a punishment disproportionate to the severity of the crime. I'm working with my colleagues to do just that.

We need to have the President understand that more monuments may bring cheers from certain companies and communities, but in reality they leave behind more mistrust and mismanagement.

And those not familiar with the high desert of the West, need to understand what we face before they quickly condemn the frustration and anger that is so evident.

K9 Capa Helps Facilitate Arrest of Two Men

On Jan. 8, 2016 at approximately 2337 hours, Baker City Police Department (BCPD) Officers Smith and Pelayo stopped a 2015 Dodge Challenger, driven by Mr. Larry Dean Edison (born Aug. 3, 1955), for multiple traffic violations. Mr. Loren Dean Alexander Prevo (born November 5, 1992), of Baker City, was a passenger in the vehicle.

During the traffic stop Officer Smith deployed BCPD K9 Capa, who subsequently alerted on the vehicle. During the preliminary search of the vehicle, a loaded firearm was located.

Edison was arrested on scene for the charged of Felon in Possession of a Firearm and Unlawful Possession of a Firearm. Edison was lodged at the Baker County Jail. On Jan. 9, 2016 at approximately 0930 hours BCPD officers, assisted by Baker County Sheriff deputies, executed a search warrant on Edison's vehicle and residence, 2027 7th Street Baker City, due to information obtained during the traffic stop involving Edison on Jan. 8.

K9 Capa was utilized in the search of the vehicle and residence. During the search, approximately four grams of methamphetamine was located along with various other drug related items. The investigation is ongoing and additional charges are likely to follow.

Arrested: Larry Dean Edison: Unlawful Possession of a Firearm 2027 7th St Felon in Possession of a Firearm

Vehicle Passenger: Loren Alexander Dean Prevo: Passenger/ No Charges 2355 Carter



If you're looking for the perfect housemate "almost," look no further. My name is **Ozzie** and I just might be the most congenial fellow you've met. My heritage is Chihuahua and my disposition is very much relaxed. I am housebroken and I learned to use a doggie door in just one day. Pretty smart, don't you think? I am looking for a new home because there were simply too many dogs in my original home. I get along splendidly with men, women and other canines. I don't remember if I have been around children. I am so well behaved I've never had to be crated. I know commands "down" and "no" and hope you will tell me gently while I am getting used to my new people because I am very sensitive. I like to ride in a car. I am not a barker and rarely growl at anything. Affectionate should be my middle name. I love to cuddle, be held, spend the evening on a lap while watching t.v. If you have worn out your "velveteen rabbit", just call me! I am neutered and vaccinated for rabies and parvo/distemper and weigh 7 pounds. If you would like to learn more about me and meet me please call Best Friends!

Call Best Friends of Baker, Inc.

541-519-7387

