

So, Ms. Arkin, for the past 11 years, hundreds of tons of hazardous waste have been produced by these two “organizations” in Eugene, and you have not accounted for a single pound of it. It is not a joke, but a tragedy! I guess you know which side your bread is buttered on.

Dick Walker  
Eugene

**FANTASY SOLUTIONS**

Ellen Furstner’s letter Jan. 7 made most eloquently my point of how we are doing the homeless in our society as a whole and our community here in Eugene-Springfield a disservice by thinking that the warming centers, camping villages and cots in a church basement are going to solve this situation. They will *not*. As I read every week about some homeless person or family, at least 80 percent of them couldn’t take care of themselves, let alone a house or apartment if given to them. Perpetuating this fantasy is folly at the least and a waste of money at most.

The money (donated, from grants, taxes, lottery) would be better spent investing in dorms or group homes all staffed with counselors and caretakers, just like assisted living centers for seniors. The homeless, without families to help them, would then be supervised and offered real-life opportunities to attend support group meetings, get off illicit drugs or get the right kind of prescription drugs so that their lives could get back in balance again. I’m sure many homeless people just need

someone to show them how to cope and they would graduate out of the dorms to be good citizens again.

Doesn’t doing something concrete sound better than the feel-good bandages that we are trying? The homeless need serious help, not a Thanksgiving dinner once a year. If we offer warming places, camping villages, etc., all that does is mark our community as a soft touch; the homeless or itinerant know Eugene is the place to come to flop.

I won’t give money to a bum on the street and I won’t give a dime to any local organization that is playing “feel good” games with people who are physically and mentally incapable of getting their lives back in order. Homelessness is not going away.

Annie Kayner  
Eugene

**EXPLOITING THE LAND**

Armed militia occupying Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters should be seen for what they are: agribusinessmen seeking to enhance their taxpayer subsidies at the expense of biological diversity including greater sandhill cranes and western sage grouse.

Ranchers like the Hammonds torch their grazing allotment to further overgraze it and then expect to reap the financial rewards from dirt-cheap historic grazing leases. The Hammonds were rightly prosecuted as arsonists. They should serve time and lose their grazing lease as an

example to others who would exploit the public trust and flout the law.

Cattlemens’ interests (hardly benefiting wildlife!) have actually been well served over the years by Malheur Refuge grazing policies and leases. Burning vast BLM and Forest Service upland acreage reduces important sage grouse habitat. Agency policy further gives grazing subsidies on arson-burned sagebrush areas through planting crested wheat grass, drastically reducing biodiversity. This long-term habitat degradation significantly contributes to the decline of western sage grouse populations. It must be ended.

Our federal agencies should team up with the many responsible ranchers who protect wildlife resources. Greedy ranchers who poach deer and despoil habitats on their leased lands must be held accountable; their leases should be forfeit. Federal grazing leases should be based on going rates for similar private leases. No more sweet deals favoring existing leaseholders like the criminal Hammond gang or gun-toting hooligans!

As the *Tulsa World* recently put it, “When the knuckleheads get through with their show, we think they should be prosecuted vigorously.”

Ethen Perkins  
Eugene

**ON GRAZING FEES**

That \$1.35 per month grazing fee per head on federal lands doesn’t include required fences and water troughs, which,

when added in, come close to the \$15 for private lands that already have strong fences and troughs that keep cattle from trampling sensitive riparian zones. Not siding with the Hammonds or Bundys, just saying.

Stephen Cole  
Eugene

**LEASES ARE FIXED**

Before coming to Oregon in 2009, I had a small, 50-acre, horse breeding and training operation in Montana for a couple of decades. As a small-scale ranch, I was very interested in leasing extra grazing land, and the AUM fee (Animal Unit Month — for instance a cow/calf pair) on the public lands was very low. The lease ran for fixed amounts of time, and at the end of the lease period, there was an open auction to buy the lease for the next span of time. The hitch was, that at the close of the auction, the current leaseholder had the opportunity to match the high bid, if it wasn’t his, and keep the lease. Thus bidding against the current lease holders was futile, unless one could bid the lease up high enough that it was unfeasible to the current holder to pay that much for it.


The only bidder that was able to do that was a conservation group. Later, their winning bid was overturned in court because the “conservation” use was counter to the “grazing” use that had been set for the land. Thus, the land was never available for local ranches, and it wasn’t possible to keep its ecosystem from being destroyed by overgrazing. The leases were

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