

## Quick takes

### Brouhaha boils in Burns

People are sick and tired of the Federal Government interfering and grabbing our land, they are shutting us out more and more every year. There will be more and more of this if some things don't change.

— Jo Jean Culley-Nelson

These thugs are just a bunch of self glorifying outside agitators who do not want to pay already low grazing fees and who are making up all kinds of excuses for it. Ranchers already have huge access to public lands. This is a land grab, nothing more. Arrest them.

— Stephani Stephenson

Best thought so far: hold them there until mosquito season does us all a favor.

— Colleen Blackwood

Ridiculous. The family has made their wishes clear. This is going to end badly. Mitilia, go home, please, before this escalates.

— Robbie Eidson

Don't these people have jobs? What a terrible drain on society they are.

— Chuck Saari

I am glad there are people out there willing to stand up for what is right, because this land grabbing is really really wrong.

— Dawn Murphy-Lewis

Surround it, cut power, starve and freeze them out, then charge with a felony. Make each pay full amount of damages and call them terrorists and put on the no-fly list.

— Les Brooks

One of the great lessons of the Twitter age is that much can be summed up in just a few words. Here are some of this week's takes. Tweet yours @Tim\_Trainor or email editor@eastoregonian.com, and keep them to 140 characters.

# Sagebrush rebels recycle Old West fantasies

By PAUL LARMER  
Writers on the Range

Ammon and Ryan Bundy, sons of scofflaw Nevada rancher Clive Bundy, appear to have made an ambitious New Year's resolution: Force the federal government, which has managed more than half of the American West's lands for the past century, to relinquish them, at gun point if necessary, to the locals.

Last weekend, the Bundy brothers and a group of a few dozen or so militiamen and their sympathizers took over the headquarters of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Eastern Oregon and declared it a safe haven for well-armed "patriots" who oppose federal land management.

The group is demanding that the federal government release local ranchers Dwight Hammond and his son, Stephen, who reported to federal prison Monday to finish serving time for intentionally setting fires in 2001 and 2006, burning up thousands of acres of public lands. They also want the government to hand over the 1.7 million-acre Malheur National Forest. According to OregonLive, Ryan Bundy said, "many would be willing to fight — and die, if necessary — to defend what they see as constitutionally protected rights for states, counties and individuals to manage local lands."

This latest action, like the Bundy affair of 2014, is little more than the recycling of old gripes from a small cadre of ranchers and miners. Their main complaint: They don't want to play by the rules that tens of thousands of other public land ranchers and miners abide by every day of the year, mostly involving minimal fees for the right to use federal lands owned by the public. Cliven Bundy started refusing to pay grazing fees in 1993, and the Hammonds

began their "rebellion" against the feds in the early 1990s, when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service built a fence to keep their cattle from trespassing on the (now-occupied) Malheur refuge.

Though the militia folks attracted to the Bundy and Hammond tales of woe may not know it, the Sagebrush Rebellion is really a century-long pout over the end of the open and unregulated frontier. Its modern incarnations begin in the 1960s and 1970s, when Congress passed a slew of national environmental laws, including the Endangered Species Act, the Wilderness Act and the National Environmental Policy Act, and the agencies reluctantly began to implement them.

By the early 1980s, disgruntled ranchers, who largely ran local and state politics, formed the "wise use" movement. Backed by opportunistic mining and logging companies, they pushed against environmental regulation and for increased resource extraction. For a while they found a sympathetic audience in the Reagan administration, but their dream of wresting the public lands from the feds gained no national traction.

The rebellion flared again in the 1990s, when President Bill Clinton and Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt tried to increase grazing and mining fees, brokered a spotted owl plan that ended the Pacific Northwest's logging spree, and protected tens of millions of acres from development through executive orders. The "rebels," led by ranchers from New Mexico, Oregon, Utah and Nevada, pushed back with a "county supremacy" movement. Dozens

of Western county commissions approved cookie-cutter ordinances declaring that the federal government had no authority within their borders, and they enlisted lawyers who thought they could, on constitutional grounds, "take back" the federal lands. The courts repeatedly rejected their arguments.

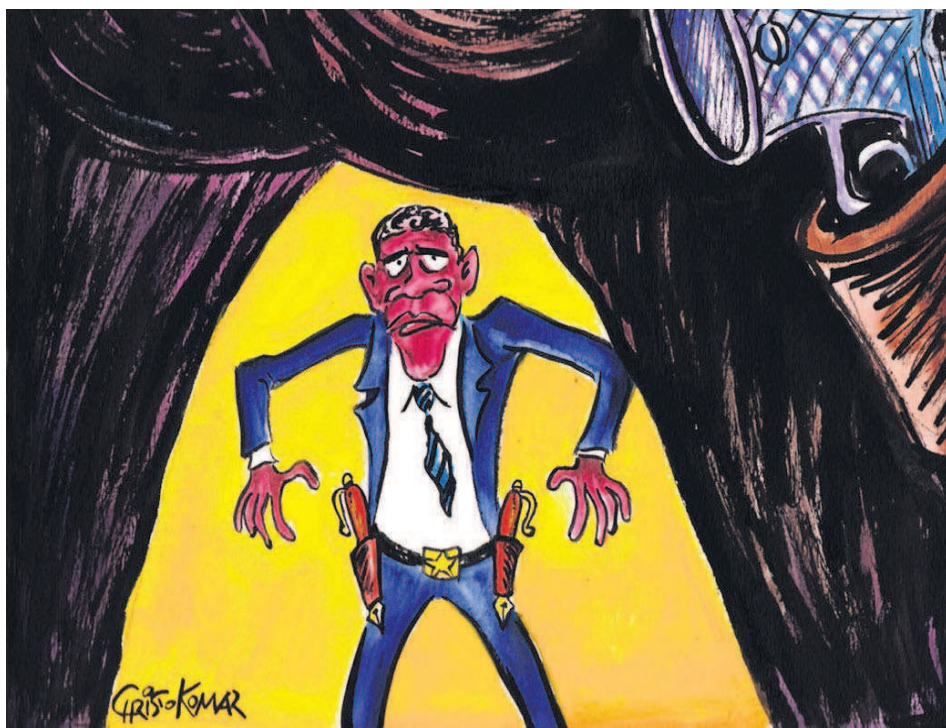
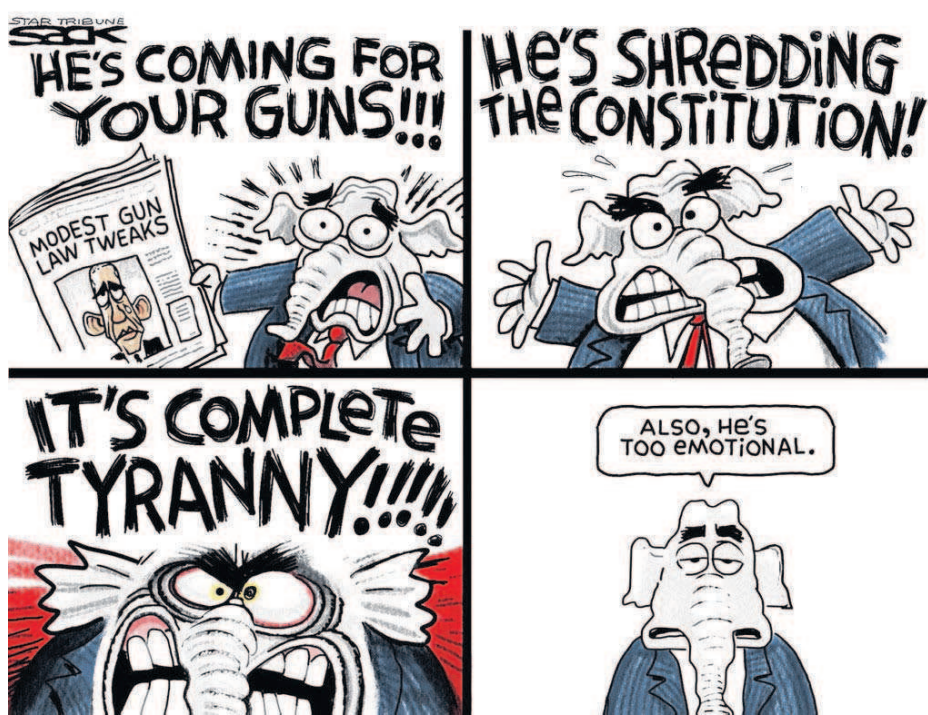
### This latest action is little more than a recycling of old gripes from a small cadre of ranchers and miners.

Now the rural West is going through yet another wave of rebellion, sparked by the anxieties of a recession-scrambled, increasingly multicultural world, one that has left places like Eastern Oregon grasping for a future. The rhetoric the Bundys are serving up this week sounds mighty enticing yet all-too-familiar.

In a video posted on OregonLive, Ammon Bundy says the refuge takeover, which could last "several years," aims to get "loggers back to logging, ranchers back to ranching and miners back to mining. At one time (Harney County, Oregon) was the wealthiest county in the state; today it is one of the poorest," he says. "We're going to be reversing this in just a few years by freeing up these lands and resources ... by getting them back to where they belong."

A new and noble New Year's resolution? No. Just a worn out fantasy that should be rejected by anyone who understands that the public lands are an irreplaceable national asset and that the West has moved on.

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## Views from around the state

### On Oregon's big decisions in 2016:

The Oregonian

Each new year brings a measure of both excitement and uncertainty. But rarely is it as clear on January 1 that a year will have historical consequence as it is at the start of 2016 in Oregon.

Before the year is over, Oregonians will decide whether Gov. Kate Brown gets to serve the rest of the term that she inherited when Gov. John Kitzhaber resigned amid influence-peddling allegations. We also likely will vote on measures to increase the minimum wage and raise corporate taxes— unless the Legislature brokers compromises that keep those issues off the ballot. In Portland, voters will choose a new mayor after incumbent Charlie Hales decided not to seek another term. Legislative elections could push the Republican Party further toward irrelevancy. And there's a presidential election, too.

This is not the time to tell Oregonians how they should handle the decisions ahead of them, though you can expect plenty of information and opinions as the year progresses. It is a good time, however, to urge all of the state's voters to make a resolution to be at the top of their game this year. If ever there was a year that cried out for peak citizen involvement, this is it. It will require work for voters to filter through the rhetoric that is sure to flood airwaves, social media and mailboxes (traditional and digital) for groups on all sides of these campaigns.

Consider that Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, has already compared the looming tax fight to the Battle of Antietam in the Civil War, and Sen. Mark Hass, D-Beaverton, has labeled it a potential Armageddon. And those are the words of two legislators who would like to see a compromise. So imagine the verbiage soon to come from the unions pushing the ballot measure and the business groups dedicated to its defeat. To make good decisions, voters must ignore the

emotion and seek facts.

The debate over the minimum wage poses a different challenge to voters. The disagreements are more subtle. Few deny the need for higher wages in Oregon. The challenge is finding the best way to achieve that goal. And even among those who believe a higher statewide minimum wage must be part of the solution, there are myriad opinions about how big the increase should be and the best way to set it. Should it be \$13.50, \$15 or something lower? Should the minimum be the same statewide, as is the case now, or should cities and/or counties be allowed to set their own higher rates, as has happened in places such as Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles? The answers aren't clear cut.

The Portland mayor's race, likewise, will require careful consideration. The differences between the two highest-profile candidates, state Treasurer Ted Wheeler and Multnomah County Commissioner Jules Bailey, are subtle. They mostly agree on what issues are important and the general direction in which the city should go.

Unfortunately, it's not clear whether Oregonians will have much of a choice in the governor's race or how many legislative seats will be competitive. The Oregon Republican Party, in disarray, has yet to field a gubernatorial candidate with elective experience and likely will struggle to hang on to the seats it has in the Legislature, much less pick up new ones. Those who think a viable opposition party is important should look for ways to become more active. Some are doing that through the Independent Party of Oregon, which appears poised to field competitive candidates in a handful of races.

This year could unleash the state's potential or doom it to repeat past mistakes. One way or another, the decisions made by elected officials and voters in 2016 will write an important chapter in Oregon history. The question to be answered is whether the title of that chapter will be Groundhog Day or The Force Awakens.

### On financing major track and field events:

The (Eugene) Register-Guard

Some state resources will undoubtedly be required when the University of Oregon hosts the International Association of Athletics Federations' world track and field championships in 2021. Persuading legislators from Portland or Klamath Falls to support a state contribution will involve making the case that the money will bring statewide benefits. That case is not convincingly made by the UO's draft plan for financing the championships, released by Gov. Kate Brown's office after a public records request.

The draft states that hosting the championships will cost \$108 million, with \$45 million coming from state government. To get that amount of money, UO officials will have to be able to characterize the contribution as an investment, not an expense. In return for its \$45 million the state should expect to receive improvements at the UO that will serve Oregonians long after the championships are over. Instead, the preliminary budget would have the state paying \$7.2 million for athletes' prizes, \$6 million for a festival outside the gates of the event, and millions more for other ephemera.

There are problems with the source of the state contribution as well as its purposes. Most of the state money would come from an increase in the state's transient lodging tax. The tax, approved by the Legislature in 2003, is collected from people who stay in motels, hotels, vacation rentals and other short-term accommodations. The current rate is 1 percent, and in 2014 the tax raised \$14.8 million to support programs run by the Oregon Tourism Commission.

The UO proposes doubling the tax to 2 percent, and using the increased revenue to help finance the championships. Presumably any increase could be temporary — revenues from the lodging tax are growing, and an increase of 1 percentage point would probably

yield \$30 million or more over a two-year period. If the UO remains intent on obtaining revenue from this source, it should make the idea of a temporary increase a central part of its argument.

But even a temporary increase in the lodging tax would be hard to sell to legislators from anywhere but Lane County. The bulk of any increase in tourism directly associated with the championships will flow to Eugene and surrounding areas, while the entire Willamette Valley accounts for only 12 percent of lodging tax revenues. Forty percent comes from Portland, and 22 percent from the coast. Just over half of this revenue comes from Oregonians, because in-state travel accounts for half of overnight stays. Hotel and motel owners in those areas would be charging their guests, including many Oregonians, to finance an event they will not attend.

A connection between the championships and the state lodging tax can be claimed — the event will burnish all of Oregon's image as a tourist destination. But resistance can be expected. A 1 percentage point increase would come on top of existing city and county taxes that add noticeably to the cost of a hotel or motel stay — 14.5 percent in Portland, for instance. Any tax increase would require the approval of three-fifths of the members of both legislative chambers, some of whom will see the championships as a low priority for their constituents.

The draft plan was prepared when TrackTown USA, the non-profit group that promoted Eugene as the site of the championships, was bidding for the 2019 IAAF championships. The financial picture for the 2021 championships is probably much the same, but TrackTown USA, the UO and the state of Oregon have a little more time to get the budgetary details nailed down.

Judging from the draft, the extra time is needed. For Eugene and the UO, the IAAF championships present a great opportunity. All of Oregon will need to see the event in the same light before signing on as a major financial partner.

### On increasing access to anti-overdose drug:

The (Bend) Bulletin

State Rep. Knute Buehler, R-Bend, heads into his second session in the Oregon Legislature hoping for approval for his measure that may save lives in a state with one of the highest national rates of abuse of opioid drugs such as heroin and morphine.

Narcan works where opioid overdose is concerned. Given to an overdose victim, it quickly reverses the impact of opioid drugs and can save lives in the process. Moreover, according to physicians familiar with the drug, Narcan does nothing when given to someone without an opioid overdose.

Though a final bill has yet to be written, Buehler hopes to persuade lawmakers to rewrite Oregon law. He wants to make Narcan available without a physician's prescription to family members, shelters and others who routinely come in contact with opioid addicts.

If he's successful, Oregon would join 14 other states with similar laws. In 2012, about 900,000 prescriptions for opioid medications were written in Oregon, or one for every four persons in the state.

But what's critical about those numbers is some 15 percent of Oregonians between the ages of 18 and 25 were using the drugs for nonmedical purposes, such as getting high, according to a 2012 survey by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Overall, the survey found, Oregon led the nation for nonmedical opioid use.

There have already been some changes at the state level. A drug database helps doctors check on those who may be prescription shopping for opioids. The Oregon Health Plan begins paying for many alternative pain-management treatments this month. And so on.

Making Narcan available won't end opioid abuse, but it should save lives in a state where more than 200 people die of opioid overdose each year. For their loved ones, that's money well spent.