

# EAST OREGONIAN

Founded October 16, 1875

**KATHRYN B. BROWN**  
Publisher

**DANIEL WATTENBURGER**  
Managing Editor

**JENNINE PERKINSON**  
Advertising Director

**TIM TRAINOR**  
Opinion Page Editor

## OUR VIEW



# Dark days

January 26, 2016, will rank among the darkest days in modern Eastern Oregon history. And that darkness is far from over.

One man was killed, eight others were arrested, and tension has been ratcheted up once again at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns. What for 24 days was an occupation and protest can now only be described as a standoff between insurrectionists and the government.

Our ability to navigate this tense situation without further bloodshed will be put to the test.

The chances are not good. Armed protesters have sworn to die before they surrender. And federal authorities have brought in concrete barriers and flood lights, and have cut off reinforcements and physical contact with the outside world.

Bloodshed is what everyone has been trying to avoid from the beginning of this protest, but on Tuesday night they were unable to do so. Robert "Lavoy" Finicum was killed while en route to a community meeting at John Day. The details of that event are not yet known, though it hasn't stopped thousands from speculating on it.

We live in a snap judgment world, and the Internet doesn't have time for facts. They can be made up to fit a narrative, and then passed along and shared enough times that they begin to carry an air of truth. It's the telephone game on steroids, and few will stick around (and then trust) what is eventually released by law enforcement through the slow-moving wheels of the justice department.

It's terrible that a man died. He shouldn't have. However, we will hold off on assigning blame.

The last three weeks have been hell on Harney County, and the highways that surround Burns look more like Baghdad. Few Oregonians are among those remaining in the national wildlife refuge. With the loss of their leaders, who knows how this will play out and what damage to life and property and environment will be done.

America must support the right to protest. It's the First Amendment for a reason.

No one should be injured or killed or threatened or jailed because of something they believe.

But, as was said by the FBI in Burns on Wednesday, actions have consequences. The occupiers are the reason why Burns looks more like a war zone. They stole and used vehicles that did not belong to them. They took property that was not theirs. They destroyed fences without permission. They built roads unbidden and rummaged through countless Native artifacts that they had no right to. This vandalism needed ending.

We can argue — and we should argue — about the finer points of the Hammonds case, the Bundys case, about the BLM's grazing policy, the decline of rural economies, the importance of peaceful protest and armed demonstration. We need to have those discussions.

But this is America, and we make those changes through a democratic system.

We all have our problems with this country, and everyone has a list a mile long of things they would change. So we vote for people we like and we think will make things better. We convince our friends and neighbors to do the same. And if we're being mistreated or not being heard, we have the courts and we have marches down Main Street.

We do not arm ourselves to the teeth, take things that are not ours, intimidate and harass those we disagree with. We especially cannot allow that to be the status quo for the difficult slog of public lands management, which will forever be a contentious issue.

Tuesday's events have a chance to spiral out of control and leave Eastern Oregon a more desolate, bitter, angry and violent place than before.

It will take the strength of our communities, our love of country, and our trust in one another to rise above it. We must do it.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors.

## OTHER VIEWS



# Does Sarah Palin still matter in presidential politics?

AMES, Iowa — In September, when Donald Trump appeared before a giant rally in Dallas, a person in the Trump circle described the coming months of the campaign. Sure, a big event like Dallas got headlines, but Trump knew he couldn't do the same rally, rally, rally for the next several months and expect the public to remain interested. Even then, TrumpWorld was planning a varied (and secret) schedule of special events, bold policy rollouts and other attention-getting gestures to keep the voters' and the media's attention over the course of a long campaign.

A recent night in Ames was a prime example of Trump's timing and showmanship. Bringing Sarah Palin to Iowa grabbed all eyes in the Republican caucus race. And it seriously undercut the notion, growing in some political circles, that GOP rival Ted Cruz has nailed down the support of all of Iowa's conservatives.

Palin, whose last highly publicized visit to Iowa was a poorly received speech at Rep. Steve King's candidate summit in January 2015, was her most Palinesque self.

Discussing who is and who is not a conservative, for example, she said, "How about the rest of us? Right-winging bitter clinging, proud clingers of our guns, our God, our religions and our Constitution..." That's classic Sarah.

But Trump was happy to have Palin for more reasons than her ability to entertain a crowd. Even though she is much diminished from her heyday a few years ago, Palin still has influence among some conservatives. Trump now has that on his side, and just as important, Cruz doesn't.

At the rally I talked with Jamie Johnson, a veteran Iowa politico who supported Rick Santorum in 2012 and Rick Perry earlier in this race, but is now unaffiliated. Johnson saw the Palin move entirely in terms of persuading voters at the margins of the Trump vs. Cruz contest.

"I think the Palin endorsement is important for all of the tea partiers who were deciding which of the two they were going to vote for," Johnson said.

Does Palin still have clout in Iowa?

"To tea partiers, she does."

"How big a part of the electorate is that?"



BYRON YORK  
Comment

## Bringing Sarah Palin to Iowa grabbed all eyes in the Republican caucus race and seriously undercut the notion that GOP rival Ted Cruz had nailed down the support of Iowa conservatives.

director who founded the Iowa Republican blog. "And if there is any strategy to the Trump campaign, it is to dominate the media coverage of the race, and Palin's endorsement will certainly help with that."

That's an understatement. Palin's appearance with Trump immediately captured nearly all the media's attention. In the hours and days that followed, it inspired impassioned debate, made talking heads explode, and caused fevered speculation across cable TV.

And for Cruz, there is one final, indirect effect of Palin's Trump endorsement. In the days ahead, the Cruz camp is left to wonder what Trump has coming up next.

"He has to have another couple of tricks up his sleeve before the caucuses," said one Cruz supporter recently.

The problem is that Team Cruz doesn't know what those tricks are. They'll find out when Trump wants them to.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Refuge needs support, occupiers need to leave

I'm writing to express my support for national wildlife refuges. I am one of many volunteers that help maintain our local wildlife facility at the McNary National Wildlife Refuge education center located at Burbank, Wash. We volunteer our time to help with cleanup, maintenance, research and assist daily visitors including parents, teachers and numerous school children.

With the armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Oregon, our nation's wildlife refuges have been thrust into the spotlight. It's apparent that few are aware of the incredible benefits wildlife refuges provide to communities and the local economy.

For every \$1 Congress appropriates to run the refuge system, nearly \$5 is returned to local economies in jobs, sales, income and tax revenue. And that's on average. In many areas, wildlife refuges provide an even greater boost to the economy. Malheur is one such economic engine, returning more than \$7 for every \$1 appropriated by Congress.

National wildlife refuges are special places. These lands consist

of the rivers where veterans fly fish to assist in the healing process from PTSD, marshes where a parent takes their child hunting for the first time, open grasslands that become a child's first memory of an outdoor classroom and the lands where ranchers teach their children about the history of responsible land stewardship.

The illegal occupation of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge has stripped us of our rights as American citizens to make memories at this wildlife refuge. This needs to stop. National wildlife refuges belong to all Americans and we want Malheur back.

George Stotz  
Pasco, Wash.

### Protesters have gotten out of hand, put gun rights at risk

The whole wildlife refuge occupation drama has been blown out of perspective. Land owners are under attack from big business and dubious relationships between government officials or their children to take away land and land rights for kickbacks.

The occupants of the wildlife refuge could have been starved out. They could all be handed

summons for trespassing with daily escalating fines. They could have been given a deadline to leave peacefully and then been told that the roads would be severed to and from the location and that any cost to deal with them would be their responsibility. The media could be banned from giving them a platform to grandstand.

As much as I feel for these people, unless they wanted to be martyrs, which is their right, they are acting stupid.

If this gets out of hand, their actions could effect the gun rights of all of us. They will become the image our government wants all of us supporters of the U.S. Constitution to have. Give it up, guys, before you make it worse for everyone.

Joseph DuPont  
Towanda, Pa.

### Anthropological Association supports Burns Paiute Tribe

The American Anthropological Association supports the Burns Paiute Tribe and our professional colleagues in expressing a deep concern for the protection of thousands of archaeological artifacts — and records detailing where more can be found —

curated at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, which, despite its leaders being arrested, is still being occupied illegally by an armed group of protesters angry over federal land policy.

More than 300 recorded prehistoric sites are within the refuge, including burial grounds, ancient villages and petroglyphs. Some of the artifacts — including spears, stone tools, woven baskets and beads — date back 9,800 years.

The artifacts and remains are claimed as ancestral by the Burns Paiute and are priceless to science and the tribe, which collaborates closely with archaeologists protecting its heritage. The problems with these artifacts being held hostage are numerous, and our fear is that they may be altered, destroyed, or sold illegally, despite their cultural and historical importance, and despite the legal protections they enjoy.

In an ironic twist, the

protesters' actions are effectively undercutting the positions they claim to champion, and the public and private interests they claim to defend. We regard this illegal protest as a misguided and ill-informed action that disavows the federal government-to-government relationship with the Burns Paiute Tribe and threatens the legitimate public interest in understanding and preserving our shared human past.

These historical treasures help tell the story of all the peoples of the region and throughout the West who came before. We are hoping for a peaceful resolution with no further loss of life, and strongly urge you to protect these artifacts and prosecute the Malheur protesters if any artifacts or maps are damaged or missing.

American Anthropological Association  
Arlington, Va.

## LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.