

Dallas slayings hit home

Whenever there is such terrible national news involving law enforcement we are reminded of how lucky we are here in Wallowa County to have friends and neighbors fulfilling the oath to protect and serve.

EDITORIAL

Voice of the Chieftain

Our rural way of life here often seems a world apart from the concrete and steel settings we see on TV or read about that are filled with the anger, chaos and violence reaching dangerous levels in our country.

But are we really that removed? Local law enforcement officers — Enterprise police, the Sheriff's Office, State Police and others — know the job comes with great risk. They are accustomed to that risk, and equally accustomed to mourning their fallen brethren across the nation. Or sometimes right here in Oregon; just last February, Seaside Sgt. Jason Gooding was killed while trying to arrest a transient on a probation violation warrant.

The Dallas shootings are far from business as usual, however. It's one thing to place yourself in danger to serve the public. It's quite another to be randomly targeted and murdered in the streets simply for wearing the badge.

Sadly, that was exactly the fate of Dallas officers Lorne Ahrens, Michael Smith, Michael Krol, Patrick Zamarripa and Brent Thompson.

It has been our experience that local enforcement officers tackle their jobs with the utmost respect, even on the rare days when that job has required lethal action. When every second mattered, they stepped up to the responsibility because they had sworn to protect their communities.

These men and women are human, with all of the foibles and frailties of the condition. But we have witnessed them shouldering incredible responsibilities.

They are our neighbors. We see them outside of their jobs, volunteering or competing at the local rodeos, interacting with children and enjoying our local festivals and celebrations. We know their wives, teach their children and often know their family history going back generations.

Shortly before the Dallas shooting, a young boy at the Enterprise Library was holding the door open for other patrons, including new Enterprise Police Chief Joel Fish.

Chief Fish, entering the library, immediately stopped to acknowledge the youngster's thoughtful actions and gave him a police sticker.

Chief Fish's wife Katherine said the incident sums up her husband in many ways.

"He feels that children are our future and wants to show the positive side of law enforcement. It's really hard for law enforcement right now. ... We are very thankful to be here (in Wallowa County)."

We all can agree that American citizens shouldn't be dying during routine traffic stops. We also can agree that officers attempting to keep the peace shouldn't be targeted by snipers.

The path out of this mess is complex and difficult. It forces all of us to dig deeper for root causes and re-evaluate our standards for multiple aspects of society. We suspect that most solutions will come at the community level, particularly as our national leaders are so focused on arguing over who is most corrupt.

We're OK with that. Our community is exceptional, as are our friends and neighbors who are sworn to protect and serve.

This week is an apt time to acknowledge them and offer our profound gratitude for their service.

— Chieftain staff



Growing up tough, like Sonny

I lived in a county that had a population of over 600,000 and I was over 50 years old before I knew anyone who had written a book. I moved to a county that has a population of 7,000 and I have met and become friends with a dozen people who have a published book. The same goes for artists, sculptors and musicians here. So much for my kids telling me that I was moving to a cultural wasteland.

Lately I have read two really great books by local authors — "Temperance Creek," by Pam Royes and "Damn, I Shot My Horse," by Fred Hauptman.

Pam's book has a lot about the Snake River country and is beautifully written. Fred's book is about growing up pretty much on your own. Fred's parents dropped him off in the middle of nowhere Nevada and left him alone to prove up on their homestead in his early teens. Child protective services would be on that in this day and age.

Fred's book reminded me of a friend I used to cowboy with, Sonny Tureman. Sonny was from around John Day and was older than me. He was a real hard case, probably a product of the times and his upbringing. Sonny was a tough as anyone I ever knew. When he was a kid growing up in Grant County he tended



OPEN RANGE

Barrie Qualle

to get into trouble occasionally. Unfortunately for him, his uncle was the county sheriff. When he was apprehended, his uncle would make Sonny nail down loose boards on the board sidewalks they used to have in downtown John Day. The old ladies in town would see Sonny back on duty, shake their heads and scold him about being bad again.

When Sonny was about 13, his parents and uncle had enough of his indiscretions. They loaded him up and took him to a remote ranch where they ran in 40 head of horses that had not been touched and told Sonny to have them ready to go by fall. These were not 2 or 3 years old; they were 4- to 8-year-old horses that were feather-footed, big enough to really buck and were tough minded. His parents or uncle would bring Sonny groceries and tobacco every two weeks and check on his progress. Sonny would tie up a leg on one of the horses, throw the saddle on, get on and pull the slip knot on

the leg. He told me that on the really bad ones he would head and tail five together and get on the one in the middle. I suggested that might make for a pretty good wreck. Sonny admitted this was true but they couldn't buck as hard that way. He did recommend not falling off if you tried this.

Living alone and being on your own at that age can have an odd effect on people. Sonny could stand his own company and if he didn't like you he totally ignored you and didn't talk to you. It was like you weren't even there. If you annoyed him you could suffer his wrath physically, or if lucky that day just receive a good cussing. Sonny could string combinations of cuss words unheard by almost everyone.

One day we were driving yearlings down the road when the mail lady ignored Sonny's request to stop and she turned the cattle back just before they got to the gate. Sonny gave her a good cussing and whipped her vehicle with his rope for emphasis. The next day federal marshals were at the ranch and wanted to know where the guy was who had assaulted the mail carrier, which is a federal offense, turns out.

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Join Rail with Trail discussion

The Joseph Branch Trail Consortium and the Wallowa Union Railroad Authority sponsored a community workshop on the evening of June 23 in Enterprise. The purpose of the workshop was to report efforts to develop the Joseph-to-Enterprise Rail with Trail segment and answer questions about the trail. The major point made during the workshop was that the boards of the trail consortium and WURA are determined to involve community members in the planning process, either through their participation in public workshops and meetings or by serving on committees.

More refined construction cost estimates, trail placement recommendations and environmental and historical preservation assessments are being prepared by Anderson Perry & Associates, a "qualified" La Grande engineering firm. The current trail cost estimate is \$2,850,000 and includes trail elements for which costs were not included in the Joseph Branch Rail with Trail Concept Plan (<http://bit.ly/29EocUX>). Federal and state programs provide



GUEST COLUMN

Terry Edvalson

the majority of start-up funds for bike and pedestrian trail development and improvement projects in Oregon and nationally. You and I — through our federal and state taxes, lottery purchases and gifts to foundations — are contributing to these trail-development funds. Members of the consortium and railroad authority hope to capture Northeast Oregon's equitable share of these funds for the Joseph Branch Trail. If we don't, the funds will be spent elsewhere on other trails.

A grant application to the Federal Highway Administration for an Access to Federal Lands grant was submitted on June 30 to help pay for construction of the Joseph-to-Enterprise trail segment.

There will be a capital fundraising effort to raise money from trail supporters

in Wallowa, Union and Baker counties and elsewhere in the region as tax-deductible gifts for the matching funds needed to attract federal, state and foundation grants for trail construction.

A question of support for the trail was posed in a (June 22) letter to the editor that stated a presumption that all adjacent property owners are opposed to the trail. In fact, survey results demonstrate a majority of adjacent landowners and residents of Wallowa and Union counties support development of the trail.

Randomly selected registered voter survey results:

- 20 percent of adjacent landowners support the development of the entire 63-mile trail, and 40 percent support development of specific trail segments; 26 percent oppose development of the trail.
- 62 percent of all registered voters support development of the entire trail, while 9 percent oppose development of the trail.

General public survey results:

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Not here in Lake Wobegon

To the white citizens of our county: If today you were to see a black person smiling and waving at the white faces around them, would you think: "See, they don't all have to be so upset"; "One of the 'good ones'"; or "Why can't we all just come together in peace?"

I am in awe of the strength people of color have just to step out the door, to not constantly snap under the weight of white America's seeming inability to understand, to witness them not just get up every day, not just educate every day, not just fight every day, but to see them do it with finesse and compassion and humor. I can't fathom that level of power.

As white people, we don't have to think about racism when our community is nearly all white. Racism does not usually become apparent to whites until there are people of color in their frame of reference. This needs to be made clear to any rural, majority-white community whose citizens perceive themselves to be too far away to feel compelled to react in the face of the proliferation and pornographication of black death taking

LETTERS to the EDITOR

place in this country, whose (well-meaning) police department issued a much lauded call to peace only after (and only directly acknowledging) the killings nearly 2,000 miles away in Dallas.

As more and more unjustified and unjustifiable extrajudicial murders of black lives pile up, and as I am confronted with and participate in white silence, with the evil that I and people like me perpetuate and benefit from in our sins of commission and omission, I feel the need to speak up. A new future is possible, but can only be accomplished if reality is accepted. #BlackLivesMatter

Robby Day
Enterprise

World economies linked

Thank you for your cogent editorial explaining the need for trade partnerships to bring order to the plethora of rules and tariffs that countries can place

on imports from other countries. You make a strong case for eliminating the chaos that can occur when countries have no agreements on trade.

Another issue regarding trade has to do with world economies, the need to have agreements that keep everyone afloat. At this point in time all countries are interdependent, as demonstrated by the current European dilemma. We in the U.S. should consider that hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of U.S. citizens live, work or study in other countries. In turn, millions of citizens of other countries study, live and work (legally or illegally) in the United States. It is important to us that other countries' economies are healthy. I care about the economies of the countries where my family members and friends live.

Trade agreements are an important part of living in a world of 7.4 billion people. It is imperative that we work together, make agreements and consider the needs of everyone, not just ourselves. It is a matter of survival.

Evelyn Swart
Joseph

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