

Turn the page on occupation

In a way, Oregon finally gets to turn the page on the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge headquarters, little more than a year after a 41-day standoff came to a close.

EDITORIAL

Voice of the Chieftain

Feds re-seized the public property in February 2016, an event that gained international attention. To some who watched, it was a clear example of government overreach. To others, it was no doubt domestic terrorism.

To a Portland jury, it was somewhere in between. That jury last week returned guilty verdicts on two defendants and not guilty verdicts to two others who had been charged with conspiracy. Remember that back in October, Ammon Bundy and six others were acquitted on the same conspiracy and weapons charges after a five week trial — results that shocked legal experts but confirmed the feelings of many Bundy supporters.

Whether legal or illegal, it was clear Ammon and his brother Ryan were ringleaders in the occupation.

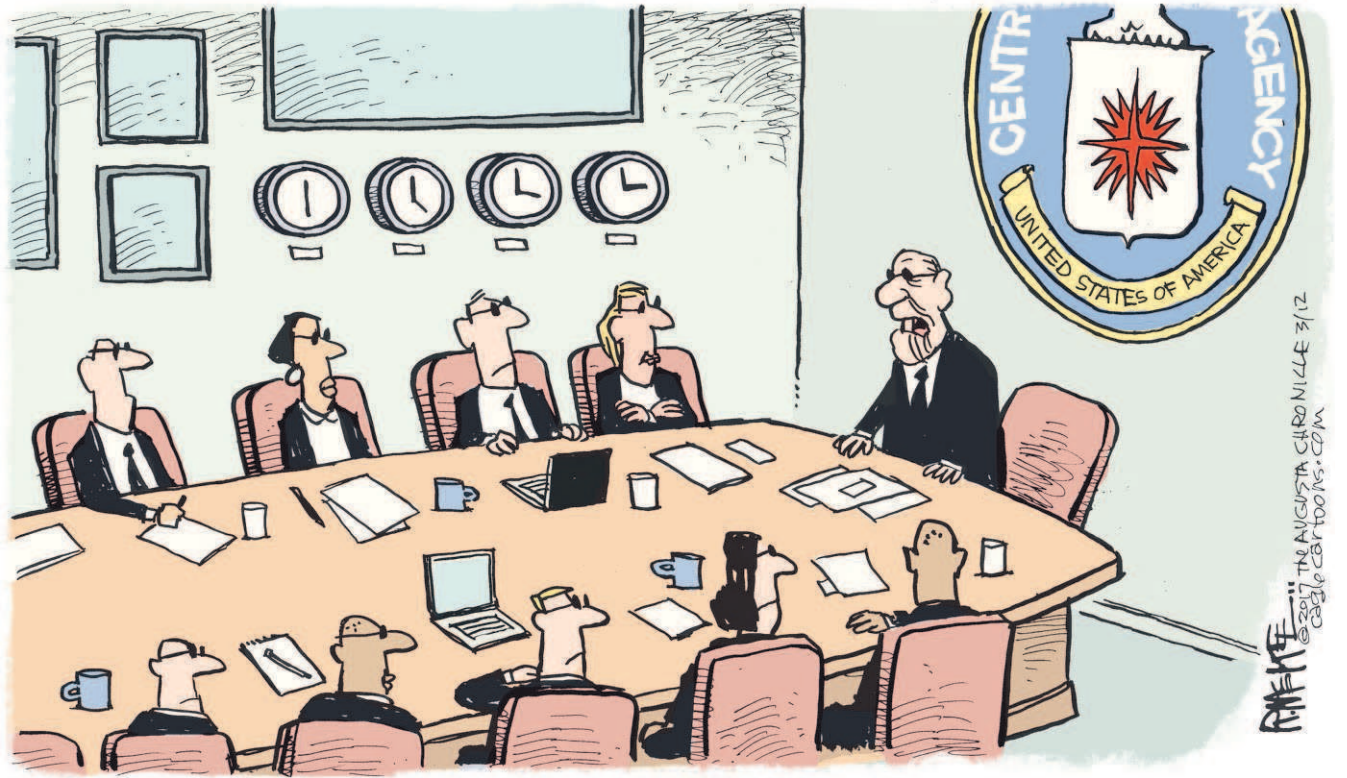
It's disappointing that some minor players were found or pleaded guilty for their crimes, while those in control and who devised the plan remain unconvicted. That may not last long, however, as Ammon, Ryan and their father, Cliven, face even more serious charges in a Nevada court of law.

Perhaps it is truly the occupation that will never end.

Yet, for Eastern Oregonians, we should consider the book of justice closed for all intents and purposes. We should take a new book off the shelf and start a new chapter, one where ranchers and residents can speak without fear about the land they love and listen to others. The rabble-rousing outsiders didn't start that conversation, and they sure aren't going to have the last word.

We have an opportunity to rebuild from the community up. We should reject outside agitators and instead focus on the local economy and the local environment. When thinking about public lands, we should not be hyperbolic about problems, pessimistic about solutions, nostalgic about the past or nihilistic about the future.

Let's put the occupation behind us and step forward as a region.



"WE CAN NOW ACCESS SOMEONE'S MOST PERSONAL, INTIMATE INFORMATION BY HACKING THEIR COMPUTER, PHONE & TELEVISION...OR WE CAN JUST CHECK THEIR FACEBOOK PAGE!"

Adventure on less traveled road

As I write this column I am again on a trip with my wife. We came down to California to thaw out from the toughest winter we have endured in Northeast Oregon. Branding season is just now winding up here and the ranchers that are branding this late have pretty big fall calves, most over 350 pounds. You need to have a horse you hate, to punish roping a bunch of calves this size but it is sure nice to be horseback in 65 degree weather in what's left of the California grasslands.

When I travel the country I tend to take roads less traveled and roads I haven't been on. Winter driving tends to dispel that urge. My wife is totally against leaving the interstate for any reason other than to fuel up or eat. Nevertheless, in the past she has been privileged to have an occasional adventure in driving. Several years ago when I was commuting from California to Saskatchewan, I reviewed a Montana map while staying in Lewistown, Montana. I always wanted to drive through the Bear Paw Mountains that run east to west below the hi-line. To my delight I spotted a road that forked off the highway and ran straight through the Bear Paws to Chinook, Montana. Rather than discuss the detour with the little woman I took it upon myself to alter the route and surprise her.

At the turnoff I had her distracted enough to transition into the left turn unnoticed. The road looked good to me



OPEN RANGE

Barrie Qualle

and was paved, which is a good sign in central Montana. After a few miles unfortunately the pavement ran out and we were on a gravel road. It was about then the questions started. I explained that I had discovered a shortcut and would save time getting to the ranch in Saskatchewan. She continued to grumble about the fact that she didn't like her car being driven on gravel. The gravel gradually played out and we found ourselves on dirt. The dirt lasted for about ten miles with an occasional ranch visible. The abuse really didn't start till we ran out of dirt and the road became two tracks headed north across a beautiful prairie. I cheerfully pointed out that the tracks were pointed in the right direction and we were making good time. My confidence level slipped a little when the tracks forked.

I always say; when you come to a fork in the road, take it. We went right and happily the road improved a little as we were now winding down the Missouri breaks to the river with the Bear Paws in view on the other side. My confidence level lifted a little when the river came in view. The road finally

reached the Missouri but with a small setback. There was no bridge. However there was a ferry on the other side and a single wide trailer with a sign that read "Honk horn for ferry." I smiled and obediently honked. After waiting a few minutes, honked again. Nothing. I tried extended honking and abbreviated honking with no response. It had been fifteen miles since we had seen any sign of habitation.

By now the abuse I was enduring was loud and continual. She was now suggesting we turn around and retrace our trip back to the highway, a cardinal sin of western touring. I pointed out that we didn't have enough fuel to make it that far. Even that didn't shut her up. We had been sitting on the south side of the river for close to twenty minutes when I gave honking another chance and lo and behold some fat guy in overalls emerged from the trailer, stretched and brought the ferry across. We boarded and crossed the wide Missouri. As we were crossing I asked the ferry driver a couple of questions. His response was "You will have to speak up, I am hard of hearing." To which I responded "no kidding."

The road on the north side of the river was much like the one we had traveled. It went from dirt to gravel and on the north slope of the Bear Paws to pavement.

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Take your meds to prevent illness

GUEST EDITORIAL

Joel White and Sloane Salzburg

Philip Mandel, a 60-year-old Beaverton man, is a stereotypical Oregon fitness guru. He bikes hundreds of miles a week, hits the gym regularly, and sticks to a low-fat, largely vegetarian diet.

And like hundreds of thousands of his fellow Oregonians, he has had trouble adhering to his doctor's orders. He recently stopped taking his cholesterol medication for two weeks after experiencing some odd side effects. When his physician found out, he ordered Philip back on the drug to help prevent life-threatening conditions like heart attack and stroke.

Too many Oregonians are still hiking along Philip's former path of medication non-adherence. It leads to increased hospitalizations and deaths -- and staggering healthcare bills. Fortunately, Oregon health officials can prevent much of this devastation with a few simple reforms that help patients take their medicines as intended.

Oregon, despite its outdoorsy, athletic image, isn't the healthiest of states. More than 61 percent of residents — about 2.5 million people — suffer from at least one chronic medical condition. For example, high blood pressure — a major risk factor for strokes and heart disease — afflicts one in four Oregonians.

Many of these conditions are easily controlled with medication. High blood pressure treatments, for instance, can cut incidents of stroke by 35 to 40 percent and halve the odds of heart failure.

Yet Oregonians take their pills about

as reliably as they drink mass-produced beer. Two-thirds of Beaver State residents fail to follow their doctors' prescription plans. More than one in five prescriptions goes unfilled.

Stunningly, patients with chronic illnesses — the ones who most need these medicines — are the most likely to skip doses or forgo medications altogether.

Patients who fail to take their medications suffer far higher rates of hospitalizations, surgeries, and hospital stays. Poor adherence to prescribed drug regimens accounts for at least 125,000 untimely deaths in the United States each year.

Non-adherence is also an economic disaster. Oregon spends \$4 billion every single year on medication-related problems. Nationwide, adherence costs \$105 billion annually.

More than 50 major health-care organizations recently investigated why patients seemingly ignore their doctors' orders. Surprisingly, only 5 percent of patients with chronic conditions weren't taking medicines because they couldn't afford them.

A stunning 92 percent of patients say that simply receiving clear information about the drugs would help them take their medications.

Patients also say they'd be more likely to adhere to treatment plans if they received reminders or if they had better discussions with their doctors.

Fortunately, there are several easy steps the Oregon Health Authority and private insurance companies can take to provide residents with better tools to help them take their medicines.

First, they could leverage technology more effectively to identify when prescriptions aren't filled at the pharmacy. An existing electronic standard that facilitates transactions at the pharmacy counter — called the SCRIPT Standard — could be adopted. Using this standard could allow an email to be sent to doctors when a prescription remains unfilled. That should prompt physicians to follow up and remind patients to take their medicines. SCRIPT also streamlines insurance payments, making it easier for pharmacies and patients to fill prescriptions in a timely manner.

Second, they could implement a Comprehensive Medication Management system. Patients with multiple chronic conditions often receive prescriptions from different doctors. Providers must remain vigilant to ensure the various drugs interact safely with each other and are optimal for the patients' various medical conditions — and Comprehensive Medication Management gives them the tools and framework to do so.

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We can't ignore Trump's missteps

LETTERS to the EDITOR

With no intention of sending another letter about this administration, so much has happened this week it is not possible to ignore.

Daily we are struck with more alarming facts about Trumps engagement with Russia. His staff meets with Russian emissaries or President Trump has suspicious financial dealings with Russian citizens.

Our representative, Congressman Walden, has taken the lead on a health plan which would leave 12 to 15 million people unable to afford health care by 2020. Included is a large tax reduction (think 'very large) of \$276 billion (yes, that is a 'B' per PBS) for .9 of 1 per-

cent of the very affluent over the next ten years. He is trying to push this bill through with a vote, with no oversight by the Congressional Budget Office. This is not the plan as promised. We can only hope it is dead on arrival in the Senate.

Now we have a new defense budget (HR 1301) paid by gutting our domestic programs. The State Department, Education Department, Environmental Protection Agency, health care, foreign relations and much more are being

stripped of funding and any staff who might question this administration. Will our promised infrastructure improvement not suffer the same fate? The defense budget is already larger than the next seven largest defense budgets on the planet, before a proposed 10 percent increase.

Our defense budget could be reduced to half the size and still be larger than the combined value of the next three. The best defense is an offense but how big an offense do we really need?

In the words of this minority president "What the hell is going on?"

David Ebbert
Enterprise

Letters to the Editor are subject to editing and should be limited to 275 words. Writers should also include a phone number with their signature so we can call to verify identity. The Chieftain does not run anonymous letters.

In terms of content, writers should refrain from personal attacks. It's acceptable, however, to attack (or support) another party's ideas.

We do not routinely run thank-you letters, a policy we'll consider waiving only in unusual situations where reason compels the exception.

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WALLOWA COUNTY
CHIEFTAIN

USPS No. 665-100

P.O. Box 338 • Enterprise, OR 97828
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Wallowa County's Newspaper Since 1884
Enterprise, Oregon

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PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY:
EO Media Group

Periodical Postage Paid at Enterprise and additional mailing offices

Subscription rates (includes online access)	1 Year
Wallowa County	\$40.00
Out-of-County	\$57.00

Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

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POSTMASTER — Send address changes to
Wallowa County Chieftain
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