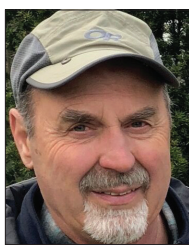


OTHER VIEWS

Roger Hockett



Branding calves on Prairie Creek and the treatment of animals

Your March 23 article on a proposed law to protect animals (I neither support nor oppose this bill) unearthed memories of my childhood on Prairie Creek in 1954 when I was 8 years old.

Behind the Big Blue Barn (now a site of romantic weddings) was a place of the annual spring rite of branding, castrating, vaccinating and dehorning the new calves born in January and February. My parents, Ray and Azalea Hockett, had about 100 cows with calves, plus the yearlings. As an 8-year-old, my responsibility was to keep the irons red hot in a fire near the holding chute, and to hand them to Dad once the calf was secured. Then to take them from him and get them hot again for the next calf. As a child, I simply did my duty and ignored the mayhem about me, but as an adult the memories of that process have dug deeply into my psyche. The graphic images of those annual two spring days are as clear in my mind as if it were yesterday.

Our calves experienced peak stress as they were separated from their mothers for the first time, then pushed into the chute, BANG the head gate locked, now collapse the sides tightly, rotate the chute 90 degrees, vaccinate, castrate if male and bring down the red-hot CT branding iron with force to sear the tender pink side skin to a crisp black as the smell of burnt flesh wafted over us. Then the chute was rotated vertical, the nose bar clamp with the bloody burlap wrap was brought across their face and cinched down to the chute. The ears were cut open, the small horn buds were sliced off with a knife, and the red-hot dehorning iron was brought down hard on each side of the head until the skin and skull smoked with two round blackened depressions. The bloody-faced calf was then released to stumble from the chute in a state of shock. Repeat 90-100 times more. At the first touch of the CT iron the calf would begin to bawl, thrash, kick, bang the head in a wild attempt to escape the pain. At the first touch of the dehorning iron, the thrashing resistance would become even wilder, rolling of the eyes, slobber flinging, ramming the head back against the chute gate as the hot iron stayed on the head for five seconds on each side.

Let's you think I exaggerate realize that a cousin came up from Portland one spring to attend branding. He lasted all of two calves before turning very pale and left for the ranch house. No, this is not about being a bleeding-heart moderate. This is about showing respect for other beings. My Dad was not a brutal man. I once had to put down a cancer-eyed cow for him as a teenager because he did not have the heart to do it, and he could walk and stand among the cows in the pasture without them moving away. No, this was simply the accepted way branding was done in the '50s.

Veterinarian schools have since documented the extreme stress and pain of this process (elevated heart rate, blood cortisol concentration, respiratory rate, exertion pressure against restraints). Physiological symptoms can last up to eight hours. The pain at the burnt skin nerves lasts up to eight weeks. National veterinarian associations are now pressuring industry to abandon this way of treating cattle.

Why do we do this to animals? Custom, ignorance, lack of compassion, meanness, money, the list is long that implicates us. In general, it comes down to not respecting animals as having intelligence and feelings. Rather we look at them as economic entities, like a tractor or bale of hay. In the last few decades a great deal of basic research has opened up our knowledge about the cognitive intelligence (self-awareness) of animals. Whales learn new songs they hear from other whale populations; dolphins have used their sonar to convey to a researcher a pregnancy that she was unaware of; apes know when looking in a mirror that the image is themselves and not a generic ape; elephants have complex family networks; birds learn from others how to become tool users; and the list gets longer each year.

At 75 years of age, I have come to believe that animals are not "things" like a tractor, they are intelligent non-human beings with souls. Surely in the 21st century we have the technology to end this barbaric process.

Roger Hockett grew up in Wallowa County and is retired in Newcastle, Washington. He is a Navy veteran, a graduate of both the University of Oregon and Oregon State University, and spent a life designing and manufacturing commercial furniture.

Accepting the responsibility freedom requires

ON LIBERTY

Devin Patton



Sigmund Freud rightly stated, "Most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility and most people are frightened of responsibility."

Responsibility is costly, and anyone desiring to take on more responsibility for his or her life, or the life of another, finds that there are resisting forces that must be overcome in order to do so. The importance of overcoming internal resistance (fear, indifference and overwhelm, to name a few) cannot be overstated, but we must also consider the external factors that hinder our willingness to take on greater responsibility. Presently, there are very few voices within the public sphere praising those with the courage to take on the sort of responsibility that leads to meaningful living; instead, populists on both the left and right of the political spectrum promote messages of blame and victimhood, claiming that the federal government is responsible for our well-being. Our lack of personal and corporate responsibility has been detrimental to our psyches and to our families, communities and nation, and the worst part is that many, like myself, have been influenced by these messages without even realizing it.

Considering Freud's statement, naturally, we should ask: to what end? Does maximum freedom involve maximum responsibility? Thinkers throughout the ages have recognized that a sense of purpose (meaning) is one of the strongest predictors of a satisfying life. By contrast, purposelessness is linked with mental health disorders and a plethora of adverse outcomes. Where does one find a sense of meaning? The culture today erroneously claims that our sense of meaning comes from within, or lies in the self-gratification that comfort, relationships, money, status, or career provide. This is simply not

true. Clinical psychologist Jordan Peterson explains that "it's in responsibility that most people find the meaning that sustains them through life."

In his book "Ethics," theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer goes a step further to explain that it is only through deputyship, or caring for our fellow man, that one is able to truly live; "Only the selfless man lives responsibly, and this means that only the selfless man lives." He further explains that one must accept responsibility for the lives of others in order to live ethically, in a concrete sense. "A father acts on behalf of his children by working, providing, intervening, struggling, and suffering for them. In so doing, he really stands in their place. He is not an isolated individual, but incorporates the selves of several people in his own self. Every attempt to live as if he were alone is a denial of the fact that he is actually responsible. He cannot escape the responsibility, which is his because he is a father. This reality refutes the fictitious notion that the isolated individual is the agent of all ethical behavior. It is not the isolated individual but the responsible person who is the proper agent to be considered in ethical reflection."

Our cultural attitude toward male responsibility has taken a sharp turn away from this ethic, a shift clearly demonstrated by the change in the types of men portrayed on popular television shows over the last few decades. We once admired characters like Andy Griffith, the kind and respectable sheriff of Mayberry, but now television programs capitalize on the "bumbling dad" trope (e.g. the Simpsons, Everybody Loves Raymond), portraying men devoid of leadership qualities and the ability to care for their families and communities well. Young boys, once expected to "man up" and accept responsibility for others with strength and integrity, now are told that they are disposable and unnecessary, especially given the fact that women are outperforming them in various arenas.

Likewise, women have been encouraged to back-burner their unique responsibility to create nurturing homes and provide for the needs of children, loved ones and community.

C.S. Lewis famously stated, "The home-

maker has the ultimate career. All other careers exist for one purpose only — and that is to support the ultimate career."

We've seen many women voluntarily outsource their vital roles as homemakers and mothers so that they can pursue other careers, but it has come at a cost.

In her piece entitled "What America lost as women entered the workforce" (The Atlantic), Emma Green explains: "Women have long formed collective organizations intended to improve American society. They volunteered their time, waged political campaigns, and advocated for the poor and elderly. They organized voters, patronized the arts, and protested the government. In the years since women's liberation, this kind of civic engagement has dropped precipitously. ... The most vulnerable members of society have lost their best allies — women — partly because those women are too busy working. ... The corner office isn't always the pinnacle of leadership."

It is the most concrete forms of ethical responsibility (responsibility for the nuclear family and community) that the populists, Marxists, Hollywood elites, and our public school systems have sought to eliminate by pushing a narrative that denies the importance of personal responsibility and confuses us into thinking that a meaningful life will be found in comfort, career, or our own achievements. We've been taught that it's the government's role to take responsibility for the poor and the vulnerable, and that our responsibilities as parents and community leaders are burdens that the government can bear by "investing in the future." The idea that we ought to personally assume responsibility for the well-being of others in order to live the most meaningful life has been subverted for so long that it now seems illogical, and we have very few modern-day examples to look to for guidance. In spite of this, we mustn't be fearful of accepting the responsibility that freedom requires — ultimately it will lead to a more satisfying and meaningful life.

Devin Patton is a fifth-generation Wallowa County native whose pastimes include the study of ag economics, history and free thought.

Be cautious of inflation when planning your retirement

LAYIN' IT ON THE LINE

Steve Kerby



Long-term loans carry higher interest rates than short-term loans because there are more variables in play over a more extended period.

Another factor that makes long-term loans less attractive to lenders, thus raising interest rates, is inflation. Inflation is the rise over time in the price of goods and services. Lenders know the longer it takes the borrower to pay back a loan, the less that money will be worth because everything costs more.

Inflation is the rise over time in the price of goods and services. Is a loaf of bread higher than it was the year you were born? Inflation is measured as an annual percentage, and the same way interest rates are measured as a yearly percentage. Is inflation a bad thing? Not necessarily. It means

prices are rising because demand is increasing, resulting from a growing economy. In a healthy economy, wages rise at the same rate as prices. So in a healthy economy, inflation always rises, meaning the same dollar amount is worth less five years from now. Sounds pretty healthy. Inflation hurts interest rates because lenders know the longer it takes you to repay the loan, the less the money is worth.

The simplest explanation of inflation is "too much money chasing too few goods." Usually, this is because interest rates are low, and people borrow more money and buy a lot of stuff. Another reason could be the government is spending a lot of money on defense contracts during a war. For example, manufacturers do not have enough supply to keep up with the demand for tanks, cars, missiles, etc. In short, inflation (rising prices) kicks in when manufacturers produce goods slower than people demand. So, if we run out of ice cream, popsicle prices spike upward.

Now that we understand that supply and demand equals inflation, let's talk about another inflation angle. The cost of doing business also pushes price levels up for several reasons. The exciting thing is

that the rising cost of business may have nothing to do with demand. For example, labor unions negotiating a new contract for higher wages, the elevated cost of exporting goods or new taxes strain the operating budget. Any of these factors will push the price of products, interests and services up because of the cost of doing business.

When planning for your retirement, considering inflation is a crucial factor. There are ways to keep your funds safe and secure and, at the same time, hedge part of your inflationary concerns. Fixed Indexed Annuities calculate the yield on an annuity based on an outside source such as the S&P 500 Stock Index. This index has replicated inflation many times throughout our history.

As an avid outdoorsman, Joseph and the Wallowa area have been a big part of Steve Kerby's life since 1964. Steve is a Syndicated Columnists member, a national organization committed to a fully transparent approach to money management. With over 50 years in the financial services industry, Steve specializes and focuses on each individual client's goals. Visit stevekerby.retirevillage.com or call 503-936-3535 for more.

Help is available through Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness



Chantay Jett



Tosca Rawls

OTHER VIEWS

The last 13 months in Wallowa County have been particularly difficult with the amount of loss we have suffered through completed suicides. The common denominators in all of the cases were pain or stress — physical, mental or emotional. The longing to just stop hurting.

However, suicide affects everyone who ever knew the person and who loved and cherished that person. The ones closest suffer the most pain and the most damage. That emptiness, that hole, that gap, is the space that's so hard to reconcile. It's sitting in the unknown with no answers. Suicide can touch anyone, anywhere and at any time. But, it is not inevitable. There is hope. By starting the conversation, providing support and directing help to those who need it, together we can prevent suicides and save lives.

This is where Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness comes in. Our organization has dedicated the year of 2022 to suicide prevention and awareness. We are now providing several groups and education opportunities, open to the public, to learn more about the warning signs of suicide, how

SUICIDE PREVENTION SCHEDULE

QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Trainings
April 14, 6-7:30 p.m., June 9, 6-7:30 p.m., Aug. 11, 6-7:30 p.m., Oct. 13, 6-7:30 p.m., and Dec. 8, 6-7:30 p.m.

Hearts for Health building at 606 Medical Parkway in Enterprise

QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Training for Veterans

July 6, 6:30 p.m.

Hearts for Health Building at 606 Medical Parkway in Enterprise

CIT (Crisis Intervention Training)

May 16-20

Hearts for Health Building at 606 Medical Parkway in Enterprise

Grief Support Groups

Thursdays, 5-7 p.m.

Hearts for Health Building at 606 Medical Parkway in Enterprise

Adult Mental Health First Aid

June 16 and June 17, 8 a.m. to noon

Hearts for Health building at 606 Medical Parkway in Enterprise

Suicide Awareness Luminary Vigil

Sept. 10 at dusk

Wallowa County Courthouse in Enterprise

to prevent it and to get support if you are experiencing grief. Evidence shows that talking about suicide and following up with loved ones are just some of the actions we can all take to help others. (Please see the schedule with this column.)

For a couple of years now, we have also been working with local law enforcement and first responders in crisis situations in order to prevent unnecessary arrests and costly ER visits, and are one of the state providers for Crisis Intervention Certifications.

We also have a 24/7 crisis line that can be reached at 541-398-1175.

In addition to the suicide-prevention and education activities, we are also here to provide anyone with confidential, love-filled care, with empathy and understanding. We are able to provide same-day ser-

vice to anyone who needs it, seamless access to services regardless of socioeconomic or health insurance status and individualized treatment plans for individuals and families.

Together as a community, we can help destigmatize the challenges everyone of us suffers but often are too ashamed or embarrassed to seek help. We can help to normalize the human condition in one of the most complex times this world has ever seen. And, we can bring some light into a dark place. Together, we can prevent suicide.

Please call us 541-426-4524 to sign up today.

Chantay Jett is the executive director for the Wallowa Valley Center for Wellness, and Tosca Rawls is the organization's public relations and development director.