

Right and wrong ways to protest

Two separate, yet related, events in Burns this weekend are perfect examples of how to and how not to protest.

Harney County Sheriff David Ward pointed this out succinctly in a press conference Monday.

"This began as a peaceful protest," he said. "It took an unfortunate turn when some of those folks broke off and began an armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge."

First was a peaceful rally and march protesting the resentencing of the Hammonds, Burns ranchers convicted of arson on public land.

The large group of protesters made their point. They exercised their First Amendment rights to speak freely and to peaceably assemble.

No laws were broken. No one was hurt or threatened.

This was a perfect example of how citizens can and should protest legally and peacefully.

Later, an armed group of the protesters seized control of an unoccupied federal site.

The group blocked entrances to the site and placed sentries in

a watchtower. They threatened violence if provoked by law enforcement and said they had no plans to leave.

Although both forms of protest had the same goal — at least on the surface — the armed occupation has only alienated the occupiers from people who may have supported their alleged original cause peacefully. Further, the armed occupation has created a situation that could easily end with bloodshed.

When the protesters invaded and occupied the refuge with threat of force, they crossed a line. They tarnished all the efforts of a peaceful protest and lost potential support from most reasonable people.

The only thing the armed occupation did well was create a perfect example of how not to protest.

We stand with Sheriff Ward in urging the armed protesters to stand down, and we echo his comments to those at the refuge:

"The Hammonds have turned themselves in. It's time for you to leave our community. Go home, be with your own families and end this peacefully."



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wrong move against Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

To the Editor:

What an outrageous situation in Harney County with the seizing of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge by a radical militia group. The people who are declaring Malheur Headquarters as their new militia base made a grave error in their selection.

In recent times, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge has become a model of true coordination management involving a large cross-section of stakeholders. This alone is headline news given the historical conflicts regarding cattle grazing on a national wildlife refuge. If the criminal occupiers of the headquarters set down their weapons long enough to pick up a copy of the "Malheur National Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan" (that I know is within sight around the offices there), they might discover their huge mistake in seizing the refuge. They ought to realize they are attempting to destroy what local ranchers, hunters, federal agencies, environmental interests and citizens of the area and beyond worked so hard to pull together and all signed onto in the 2013 plan.

The militants say that they are there to protect the rights of people to use the refuge freely. However, a reporter who drove to the headquarters to interview them was told to leave. They had weapons; he did not. He left. Apparently you cannot enter the refuge unless you are one of them.

The occupiers have called upon armed supporters from across the nation to come and make the national wildlife refuge their headquarters. Wait a moment. Does this mean I can't enter OUR refuge to photograph wildlife? Others can't go there during the rut to see large mule deer bucks? Thousands of birders will not be able to access the visitor's center grounds, museum or trails and roads because the refuge will be occupied by armed militant terrorists who say they are protecting people from "federal tyranny?" We don't need radicals protecting our rights. The true cooperative Americans with a vested interest in Malheur Refuge are already in place successfully coordinating with the USFWS. I hope those from Harney County hang tight with the refuge management plan and get rid of these self-declared "patriots" post haste.

Kay Steele
Ritter

Gov. Brown's blueprint lacking

To the Editor:

The Dec. 23, 2015, issue of the local paper reported on Governor Brown's three-part blueprint to "fix" Oregon government: Government transparency and account-

ability, with agency funding specifically in education, health care and public safety.

She plans to create a position for a public records advocate and a new education innovation officer position as well as expand the Office of Small Business Advocate. Lacking in this report of her plan is addressing Oregon's future to provide for homeless Americans and veterans that constitute a large percentage of those Americans. Nor did she address the possible funding for additional housing, welfare, food stamps, medical provisions and the need of expanded schooling to accommodate the 10,000 Muslims she has stated her intent to welcome to take up residency in Oregon. That shows an abysmal absence of foresight.

We need terms like "honesty" and "integrity" to be more than just words in the dictionary. Citizens need to climb out of the fog of apathy and avoidance and demand the fulfillment of promises for government transparency and accountability once again. We need true interpretation of the Constitution, both United States and state of Oregon, and laws protecting our rights, not the Supreme Court or lesser courts that assume to make laws such as allowing some welfare recipient to stomp, burn or defecate on our flag in direct violation of 18 USC 700, Title 18, Part 1, Chapter 33 (aka Desecration of the flag of the United States, 1989) which prohibits such an act and titles it a crime.

Judy Kerr
Canyon City

Helpful nurse appreciated

To the Editor:

Recently one of our relatives was in the hospital in John Day. We were waiting for him in Bend where he was to be air flighted. It ended up being a long wait, and we were worried. He finally called on his cellphone and a nurse came on and updated us, and then, periodically, she called and told us what was going on. Although we didn't get your name, we want you to know that we appreciate you so much.

Charm Bogle
Prineville

Citizens should get involved after the Canyon Creek fire

To the Editor:

We are on top dead center after the Canyon Creek fire!

It seems that the county court and the county commissioners are happy that things are quieting down because the environmentalists and U.S. Forest Service as well as the Fish and Wildlife really do not want anything investigated or changed. I wonder how any of these folk would react if it were their homes and lifetime memories that were lost, all

because decisions were made that allowed the fire to get away because there is big money to be made by having a big fire.

You may not agree with Sheriff Glenn Palmer and what he is trying to do with the Natural Resources Plan for Public Lands, but you have to admire his courage for trying to do something.

What can be done to jack up our county officials and get them off dead center? You the people getting on the phone to these folk and/or writing letters to the editor demanding that something be done.

I see four things that need to happen yesterday, if not sooner.

1. The flood control project should be started immediately.
2. An investigation into who is responsible for letting the fire get away, and who is responsible for holding up an investigation.
3. An investigation into why the county commissioners have backed the U.S. Forest Service forest management plan. Clearly, the U.S. Forest Service management plan failed!
4. An investigation into why the county commissioners have not requested the Governor to declare Grant County a disaster area. This will free up funds for the flood control and restoration projects.

How many of the county commissioners and/or Public Forest Service Commissioners have a conflict of interest by holding contracts with the U.S. Forest Service while they are voting on issues before their commissions? If we keep voting in the same people expecting a different outcome, shame on us!

Come on people of Grant County, get involved and hold your county officials' feet to the fire!!

Nicky A. Sprauve
Grant County Public Forest
Commissioner position No. 2
Canyon City

The theme is not the type of parade

To the Editor:

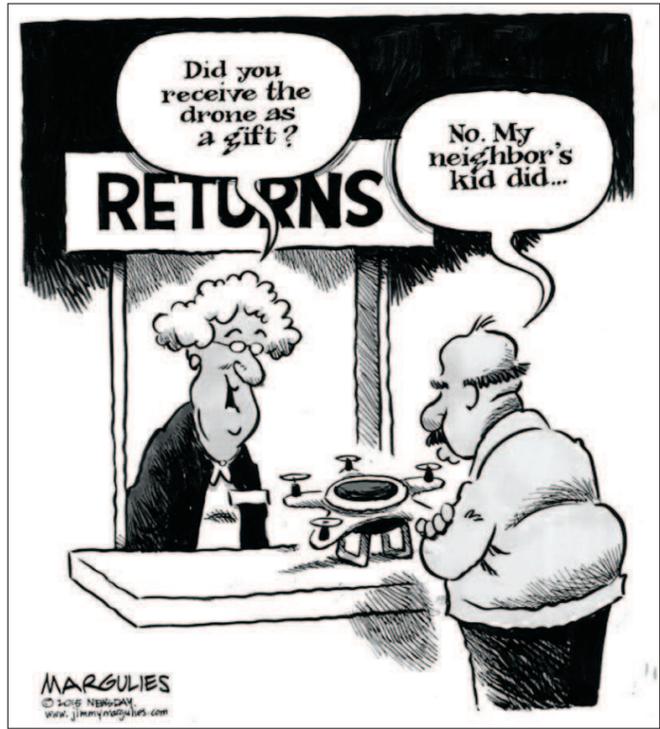
Richie Colbeth mixes apples and oranges in his letter to the editor (published Dec. 30), complaining about the lack of religious references because the Dec. 12 event was a Christmas parade.

It is the "Timber Truckers Light Parade," called such since its inception in 1993 to support the timber industry. The theme this year was "An Old-Fashioned Christmas." On occasions, the theme has been patriotic. Colbeth mistakenly referenced the theme as being the type of parade, which it is not.

I would suggest, in the future, he learns the difference so he is not confusing a theme with the parade. The entrants choose their own decorating ideas, and if he noticed, at least one had a Nativity scene on the entry.

I am sure the parade committee would welcome his entry next year.

Mary Jane Allen
Timber Truckers committee
member
John Day



WHERE TO WRITE

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- **State Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** (District: 60), Room H-475, State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. Email: rep.cliffbentz@state.or.us. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/bentz/home.htm.
- **State Sen. Ted Ferrioli, R** — (District 30) Room S-223, State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-986-1950. Email: sen.tedferrioli@state.or.us. Email: TFER2@aol.com. Phone: 541-490-6528. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/ferrioli.
- **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.



Grant County's Weekly Newspaper

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1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION RATES
(including online access)
 Grant County\$40
 Everywhere else in U.S.....\$51
 Outside Continental U.S.....\$60
 Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

Periodicals Postage Paid at John Day and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER
 send address changes to:
 Blue Mountain Eagle
 195 N. Canyon Blvd.
 John Day, OR 97845-1187

USPS 226-340

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