

Moving beyond protest

Kenny Delano, Mt. Vernon, offered constructive advice when he spoke at the vigil for LaVoy Finicum Saturday in John Day.

He urged attendees to contact their elected government representatives to voice their concerns.

Even amid the anti-government sentiment in the crowd gathered to mourn the loss of the Arizona rancher, Delano remembered an important point that seems to be lost in most of the rhetoric: Our government is of the people, by the people and for the people.

Those supportive of the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge remember the last part well. They scream at the top of their lungs that the government is not working for them.

Yet, they often seem to forget that those other things with ears they're yelling at are people too.

They forget that, in our representative democracy, the government is not a static entity that has no concern for these things called "people." Our government is comprised of people.

We are our government. We make choices. We vote on issues. We elect leaders to represent us.

Our system of government is not something that needs to be overthrown. We've already done that, and we created a system that gave everyone a voice. We created a system in which we can all work to change the status quo.

But it takes work.

Protest is easy. Effecting change is much more difficult.

Screaming at the top of our lungs may make us feel better, but at the end of the day, it accomplishes little.

Whipping like-minded people into a frenzy with popular platitudes may make us feel like we are accomplishing something, but it changes little.

Real change in our system of government requires winning the hearts and minds of those who disagree with you. Our system favors the majority — not the minority just because they're screaming louder.

Real change requires listening to those who disagree. It requires talking with them, not at them. It requires addressing their concerns — not repeating the same thing until you've won them over.

If people truly hope to effect change in our system, they cannot treat those who disagree with them as an enemy. They must remember those opposed are people too.

And we are all in this together — whether we like it or not.

United we stand. Divided we fall. And that means everyone, not just those with whom we agree.

Wild ideas like taking back the country one wildlife refuge at a time won't accomplish anything.

If people truly want change, it's going to take a lot more than that.

And it's going to require respect — even for those who disagree with you.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Are conflicts of interest preventing action?

To the Editor:
What does it take to get off "top dead center"?

I still do not see any action being taken that would indicate an investigation is underway with regards to the Canyon Creek fire!

There seems to be an appearance of a conflict of interest that keeps the powers that be from getting an investigation going. Is there a problem with some of the county commissioners and the Grant County public forest commissioners and the U.S. Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Commission along with the Blue Mountains Forest Partners? Is there a conflict of interest? When you took your oath of office, there is a clause there that says, I "will faithfully and honorably demean myself in the office of." This statement is there to let you know that you are not to allowed a conflict of interest to ever taint any action that you take or do not take in your elected office.

The investigation should have been called for by the county commissioners and the Grant County public forest commissioners long ago. The longer this goes without the public seeing action taken is telling the public that there must be a conflict of interest.

Is what is happening in Harney County with the wildlife refuge happening here in Grant County, just in a different way? We are losing our lands and our access to the public lands, and our elected officials are not getting involved as they should. It is pretty hard to see this happening and not come to the conclusion that some people have a vested interest in this matter that is not in the best interest of the Grant County residents, therefore, it must be lining some pockets.

In my last letter, I listed four things that need to be done now! Look at the list!

I am repeating my statement: Hold your elected officials' feet to the fire. You cannot expect a different result if you keep putting the same people in office.

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

Overbearing government rules affect more than public lands

To the Editor:

I must comment on something I've noticed; a good percentage of the folks against this occupation and awakening seem to receive either a government paycheck or a government retirement of some sort. They surely will not bite the hand that feeds them, even if that hand is currently attempting to smother us and our rights.

Make no mistake: It's not just public lands that are being affected by overbearing rules and regulations, but also private property, water and irrigation issues, many other rights including gun rights, freedom of speech (for some) and now forced mandatory health insurance.

Wake up, folks, because sooner or later these issues will affect all of us one way or another. You may

want to consider protecting your rights while you still have them and are able to enjoy them.

Cal Christensen
John Day

Nation consists of states united

To the Editor:

After reading the many letters to the editor in the Feb. 3 edition of the Blue Mountain Eagle, I am astounded and embarrassed by the some of the language used to describe the peaceful protesters. I am not embarrassed for myself, but for the people who chose to use such language.

The words that are probably the most embarrassing to hear from fellow citizens are the terms "armed militants" and "domestic terrorists" used to describe men and women whose sole intent is to see that the Constitution of these United States of America is protected from those who wish to pervert it.

The Constitution is not a "living document." The Constitution is a compact between the independent, sovereign states, forged and signed by those states to form a central government to oversee matters of war and foreign policy for the good of all states. It is, in simple terms, a contract between the states, that when ratified basically created the federal government.

The federal government is not all powerful, all knowing and certainly is not entitled to give or take any powers or rights from the people.

The federal government was created with limited powers specifically set forth in the aforementioned compact. This was done to protect the rights of freemen and to ensure that those protections would continue as long as the compact is adhered to.

A man lost his life in the mountains south of here while performing his duty as a citizen of these United States of America. How many of you, who called this man a militant, a criminal, a domestic terrorist, are willing to do the same for your fellow citizens to protect their rights?

I pray that those who have put their lives second to their duty have enough knowledge to mourn the loss of a citizen at the hand of government, and to stand united. Shouldn't we all be "constitutionalists"? There is no us versus them; there is only us. The federal government is a product of us, so stand up and put it back in its place.

Kenny Delano Jr.
Mt. Vernon

Grant County must stand united against outside abuse

To the Editor:

It is our belief that everyone in Grant County wants the same thing: That is to be able to enjoy our lives without interference from overzealous bureaucrats and others outside of Grant County.

These people may try to control our lives, by force of law, contrary to the U.S. Constitution. We need to stand united against this abuse. One of the duties of county government is to help us do this.

A county sheriff is the only

elected law enforcement officer in the state of Oregon. According to Oregon state law, our sheriff is the chief executive officer and conservator of the peace in this county.

We believe that he and his office deserve our respect and support.

We don't think it is the right thing to do to condemn Glenn Palmer for something that happened in Harney County. That county isn't even in his jurisdiction.

Sally and Gene Dunn
John Day

County must investigate Canyon Creek Complex fire

To the Editor:

Having been elected by the citizens of Grant County, the members of the Grant County Public Forest Commission cannot ignore the severe and often absolute devastation fire is causing the Malheur National Forest. Citizens' lives have been endangered, homes and private property destroyed, communities at risk, while our forests are ravaged by fire. The danger and damage is not temporary and will be with us for generations to come.

The pattern of fires being uncontrolled in their early stages show evidence of questionable judgment. The responsible authority must have an attitude of fighting initial fire immediately, aggressively and relentlessly until the fires are out — not controlled, but out.

An investigation into the fires at Berry Creek and Mason Springs Aug. 12-14 that became the Canyon Creek Complex fire of 2015 can provide answers necessary to effect the changes that must be made in firefighting.

The Grant County Court must authorize and fund an immediate investigation by a licensed investigative agency.

The Grant County Public Forest Commission shall be responsible for the investigation and provide to citizens the findings of the investigative agency. With the information derived from the investigation, coordination with the Forest Service can be achieved to more effectively prevent catastrophic wildfire in Grant County.

Tad Houpt, Dave Traylor, Roger McKinley, Dan Bishop, Mike Smith, Nicky Sprauve and Larry Blasing
Grant County Public Forest Commission members

Two sides to the refuge debacle

To the Editor:

Boy, this Bundy thing sure has split the people in Grant and Harney County.

I just want to say, the way I see it, if you are one of those that can only see one side of this debacle, I might suggest you go get checked out for tunnel vision.

Pete Walker
Seneca

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WHERE TO WRITE

GRANT COUNTY

• **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0059. Fax: 541-575-2248.

• **Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: tocc1862@centurylink.net.

• **Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: dville@ortelco.net

• **John Day** — 450 E. Main St., John Day, 97845. Phone: 541-575-0028. Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: cityjd@centurytel.net.

• **Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: info@cityoflongcreek.com.

• **Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: monument@oregontrail.net.

• **Mt. Vernon** — P.O. Box 647, Mt. Vernon 97865. Phone: 541-932-4688. Fax: 541-932-4222. Email: cmtv@ortelco.net.

• **Prairie City** — P.O. Box 370, Prairie City 97869. Phone: 541-820-3605. Fax: 820-3566. Email: pchall@ortelco.net.

• **Seneca** — P.O. Box 208, Seneca 97873. Phone and fax: 541-542-2161. Email: cityseneca@centurytel.net.

SALEM

• **Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: www.governor.state.or.us/governor.html.

• **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

• **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.

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• **The White House**, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500; Phone-comments: 202-456-1111; Switchboard: 202-456-1414.

• **U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D** — 516 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. Email: wayne_kinney@wyden.senate.gov Website: http://wyden.senate.gov Fax: 202-228-2717.

• **U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D** — 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. Email: senator@merkley.senate.gov. Fax: 202-228-3997. Oregon offices include One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St., Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; and 310 S.E. Second St., Suite 105, Pendleton, OR 97801. Phone: 503-326-3386; 541-278-1129. Fax: 503-326-2990.

• **U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R** — (Second District) 1404 Longworth Building, Washington D.C. 20515. Phone: 202-225-6730. No direct email because of spam. Website: www.walden.house.gov Fax: 202-225-5774. Medford office: 14 North Central, Suite 112, Medford, OR 97501. Phone: 541-776-4646. Fax: 541-779-0204.



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PUBLISHER MARISSA WILLIAMS, MARISSA@BMEAGLE.COM
EDITOR SEAN HART, EDITOR@BMEAGLE.COM
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT KRISTINA KREGER, KRISTINA@BMEAGLE.COM
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT CHERYL HOEFLE, CHERYL@BMEAGLE.COM
COMMUNITY NEWS ANGEL CARPENTER, ANGEL@BMEAGLE.COM
SPORTS ANGEL CARPENTER, ANGEL@BMEAGLE.COM
MARKETING REP KIM KELL, ADS@BMEAGLE.COM
OFFICE MANAGER LINDSAY BULLOCK, OFFICE@BMEAGLE.COM

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