

Occupational hazards

It's over. Finally, it's over. After 41 days that alternated between hand-wringing and heart-wrenching, the occupation of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge has ended. Four protesters remained until Thursday. Much of their last 12 harrowing, confusing hours in the refuge streamed live and unedited through the Internet. It was a glimpse into paranoia and fear, into anger and frustration.

We heard grievances about this country — a lack of jobs, a lack of purpose, a lack of morality, a lack of future. It was the cry of the fearful, the pessimistic and the proud, grabbing the bullhorn and the moment and shouting straight into our speakers.

Whatever it was, you had to listen. At times it was scary — the threat of violence both coerced and self-inflicted were ever-present. And at times it was farcical — the list of grievances included Hillary Clinton, the Middle East and a lack of marijuana.

But there is no laughing off the underlying issue.

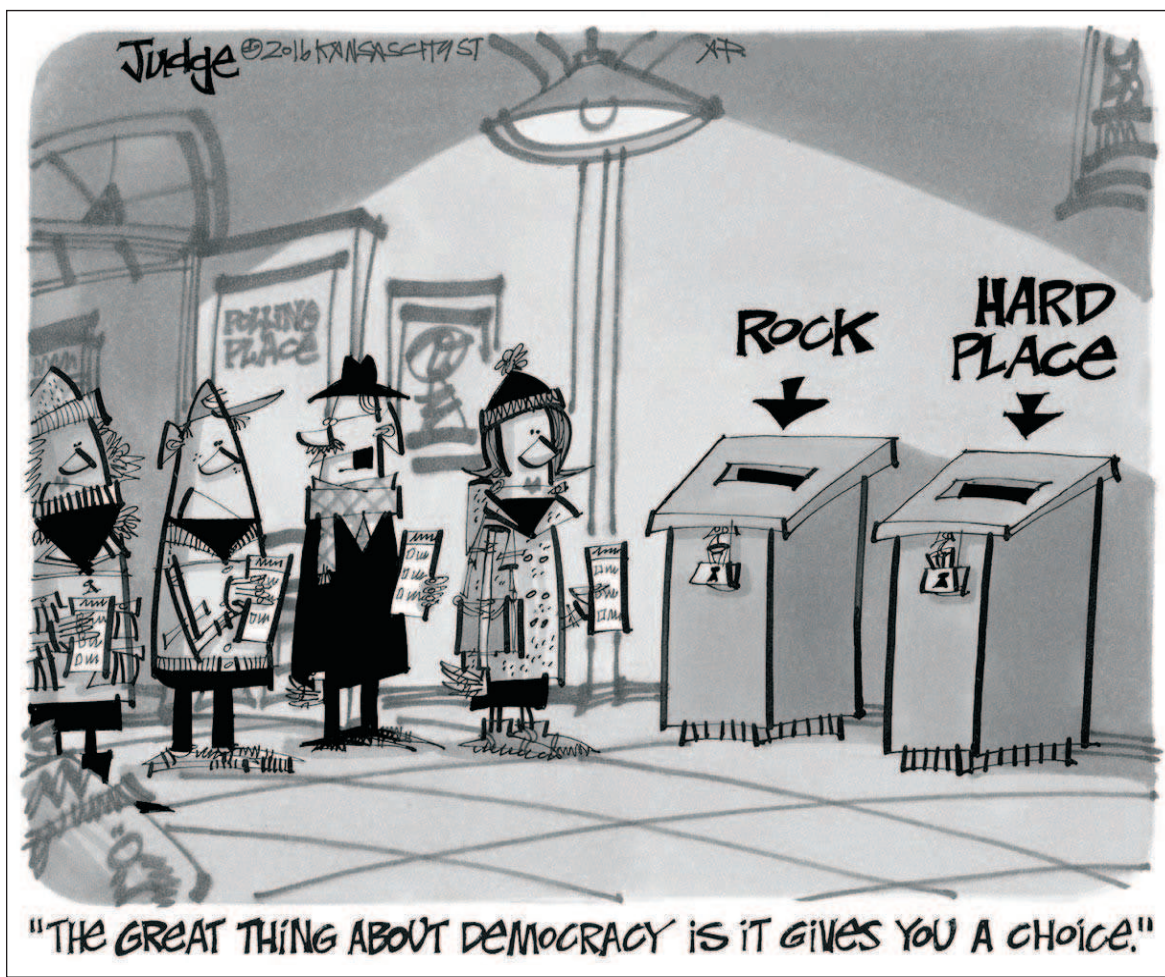
This has been a traumatic experience for Eastern Oregon. The days sure were dark. And now that the out-of-state players have left the field, we're left to sift through their message and their actions.

For 41 days, Eastern Oregon was a dangerous place to be. Not because of the armed men and women holed up at the Malheur Wildlife Refuge, and not because of federal and state law enforcement swarming around them. They posed threats only to one another and anyone who stood between them.

But the weapons carried by both sides isn't what threatened us.

The danger is the seeds, already planted and beginning to take root, now doused with gallons of water and a hefty heap of fertilizer. You know the kind. The seeds of mistrust for neighbors with the wrong bumper sticker on their truck. Of animosity toward "the government" as a bogeyman instead of an entity that can and should be held accountable by the people. Of blatant disregard for reasonable discourse — instead choosing to cling to a single line from the Constitution, an ugly prejudice, or a stern glare and a wall of silence.

Like a flock of winter birds taking off from Malheur Lake, the occupiers have left. It's up to us to decide what their pattern in the sky means, and which seeds we want to tend to now that they're gone.



FARMER'S FATE

Mommy Milk Cow mom-isms

By Brianna Walker
For the Blue Mountain Eagle



Brianna Walker

I milked my first cow at my grandparents' house when I was little. So little, I had a hard time balancing on the little T-shaped milking stool, and my fingers didn't seem to reach all the way around the teat. Finally my grandma sat on the wooden stool and pulled me in front of her. She wrapped her own hands around my fingers, and "we" milked the cow together. Filling up the bucket with warm frothy milk, while every once in a while "shooting" a stream into the cat's tin.

Since then, my milking experience has covered sheep, goats and dogs (don't ask). Mostly recently, with the addition of a new baby, I have experienced life on the other side of the fence, as my family has begun affectionately (I hope) calling me Mommy Milk Cow.

Within days of giving birth, I came down with mastitis, and soon learned that "feeding on demand" has much less to do with the baby's demand than

the mother's. As I was trying (often unsuccessfully) to fill up the baby's walnut-sized stomach with a grapefruit-sized quantity of milk, I realized that it was from sore, tired, engorged, nursing women that coined some of the most common "Mom-isms."

1. "Don't play with your food!"

Said the sleep-deprived mom who just wants her baby to eat, so she can go back to bed.

2. "You will stay there until all your food is gone!"

Said the engorged mom who came into her milk too suddenly and is dying from the pressure.

3. "Think of all those starving children in (insert country of your choice) that would be delighted to eat your food."

Said the mom who is part Holstein and is swarming in milk enough to feed twins.

4. "It's no use crying over spilled milk."

Said the mom who accidentally sprayed her crying baby in the face with milk.

5. "You just ate an hour ago!"

Said the mom whose baby prefers little snacks around the clock instead of fewer, more hearty meals.

6. You will eat it, and you will like it!"

Said the no-nonsense mom who has already been through this four times before.

As the baby and I go through the above steps, in no particular order, I am starting to think I should get two henna tattoos across my chest, giving the baby the option between "Take It" or "Leave It."

As the Mommy/Baby dance will continue as he grows, I look forward to seeing what other phrases or words of wisdom I will start to view in a different light. But until then, I'll enjoy my role as Mommy Milk Cow — as long as my husband continues in his role as Daddy Diaper.

Brianna Walker occasionally writes about the Farmer's Fate for the Blue Mountain Eagle.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sheriff's office had no people at ambush

To the Editor:

I really enjoy Terry Steele's letters (The Eagle has no comic section). Terry should get his facts straight. The Grant County Sheriff's department had no people at that ambush. Sheriff Palmer was at the senior center when it all went down. I wonder what Terry would say if he needed Glenn and he wasn't there. I have plenty of guns and lots of ammunition. If Glenn needed this radical individual, I would be right by his side protecting people like you.

Joe Clarke
Long Creek

factions in our communities, we should demand the right to hear the law enforcement officers involved in the shooting of one of the occupiers that took place between Burns and John Day. I know this has to go through an investigation, but they have free speech rights also. So speak up, gentlemen. Where's the audio to the FBI film? Speak up! As public servants it is your duty and your right — unless you are afraid it may incriminate you.

Michael R. Christensen
John Day

Wanted: real sheriff

To the Editor:

Through the course of events in the last month, a true patriot emerged, Sheriff Dave Ward of Harney County. He has stood his ground with the safety of his community first and foremost. No political agenda, just solid professional law enforcement, with genuine concern. The man is a hero, the true definition of a patriot. Grant County needs a sheriff of the caliber of Sheriff Ward.

The events around the illegal occupation of the Malheur refuge has resulted in community polarization and has made me feel unsafe in my own beautiful community. Why? Because I don't agree with this interpretation of the "constitutionalist" message. I abhor the violence and the stigma they have brought

to Eastern Oregon. The misuse of God and the American flag to try to substantiate their cause disturbs me. I oppose their public lands agenda and personally believe public lands are for all, and a gift for future generations. Because I don't like these things, I am at odds with the political agenda that seems to be the core of our sheriff's office.

Therefore, I don't feel safe and protected. In fact, I believe our sheriff's office is totally ineffective and actually jeopardizes community safety because it "doesn't play well with others." Small communities have small law enforcement agencies. They have to work together, support each other, and most of all trust each other to be the most effective in providing public safety.

It's called "mutual aid." Our city officers, OSP, DA's Office, federal officers, visiting agents and neighboring county sheriffs all cooperate beautifully together to assure the safety of all citizens. But guess who is not asked to play because he cannot be trusted to uphold the laws he was sworn in to uphold? Enough is enough, the people of this county need, and deserve, to have faith that when they dial 9-1-1, a sheriff of integrity will respond. I believe Sheriff Palmer needs to be recalled, impeached, voted out, whatever it takes, to reinstall a sense of protection and safety to all citizens of Grant County.

Lee Rice
John Day

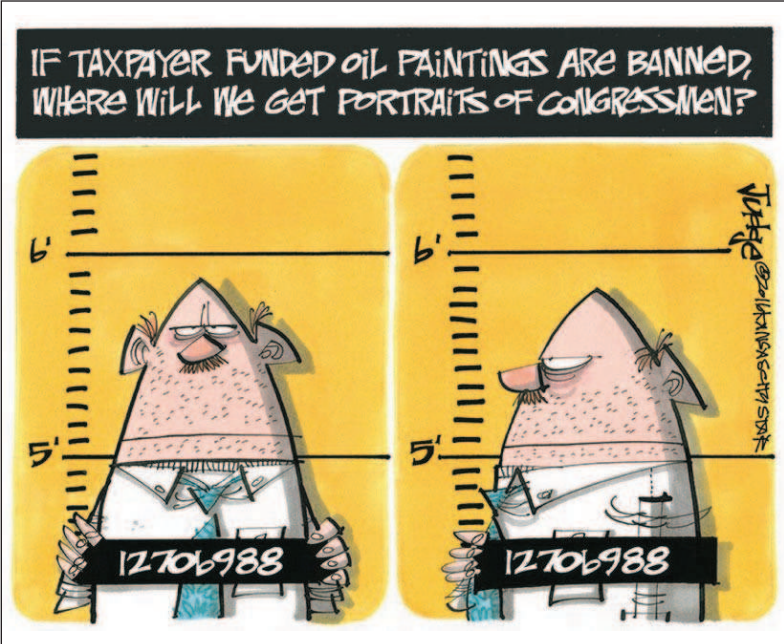
Officers involved in shooting should speak up

To the Editor:

There are many differing opinions circulating at this time. Many are divisive, political and disturbing to the local cohesiveness of the communities involved. This is in reference to the continuing occupation of the Malheur refuge.

We are all guaranteed the freedom of speech under Amendment No. 1 of our Constitution and should exercise that right when we feel the need. Now instead of throwing stones at individuals or certain

Letters policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters will be asked to be contained to 350 words. No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters. Submissions to this page become property of the Eagle. The Eagle reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Letters must be original and signed by the writer. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. We must limit all contributors to one letter per person per month. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters to editor@bmeagle.com, or Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845; or fax to 541-575-1244.



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