

Go read a book

Read Across America week kicked off Monday, and today is the birthday of Dr. Seuss.

That makes this week as good a time as any to remind parents and grandparents, teachers and students about the importance of reading.

In some respects, reading habits have changed for this generation. Instead of reading the comics on the back of a cereal box at the breakfast table, children are more likely to be poking at their screen of choice, watching videos or playing games or conversing with classmates.

But text messaging has made reading and writing ever more critical, perhaps at the expense of inter-personal skills. Being able to express yourself through words is more important than ever. Use bae or fam or lol incorrectly and watch your bae or fam lol at u.

Study after study shows the benefits of reading: It increases your IQ, your vocabulary and your knowledge. Reading fiction improves empathy, increases brain connectivity and function. The number of books in a home is strongly linked to academic achievement.

Reading also gives you memories that can last a lifetime. Here are a few:

My favorite childhood book is “The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree.” I have a fond memory from my first grade class with Mrs. Johnson. She had each student bring their favorite book to share. I was always drawn to this book because when I was younger my cousins and I were big explorers at our family ranch. I remember thinking about how those three little bears were always so brave to go into that spooky old tree by themselves.

Now with my own children, when I am asked to read to their class for Dr. Seuss Day, I take my favorite book to share. I love to be extra animated when reading to the class and in the end embarrass my kids. It makes me smile to think this book now creates memories for my kids.

Do they dare go into that spooky old tree? Yes. They dare.

Three little bears ... One with a light. One with a stick. One with a rope.

— Marissa Williams, publisher

Any memories I have of reading books (as with everything else in my life) involve children. And as a mother, grandmother and former preschool teacher, I bet I’ve read hundreds of them to and with young and eager listeners — at least half of which were on the “heavy rotation” cycle and read themselves a hundred times each. If you know kids, you know what I’m talking about.

My favorites are those that captivated and held the kids’ interest — and mine. That often meant easy-to-follow story lines, illustrations that actually followed the text and lots of repetition. Young kids are really

into repetition.

One of my favorites is “Little Blue and Little Yellow” by Leo Lionni. Between the covers of this picture book, the first of Lionni’s long list of published works, is concise text and simple illustrations — not much more than just blotches of color throughout. But the power is in the story, and at the heart of this one is a message of racial intolerance and the power of friendship — without actually saying so much and without being preachy. That’s the secret. “Little Blue and Little Yellow” is an example — at least to this aspiring children’s book author — of what a perfect children’s book should be.

I have many favorites from days gone by, mostly “classics” — “Corduroy,” “Go Dog, Go,” “The Little Red Caboose” — most of which I still know verbatim. And as the words and images return from time to time, so do the memories of sharing a warm lap, time together and a good tale.

— Cheryl Hoefler, editorial assistant

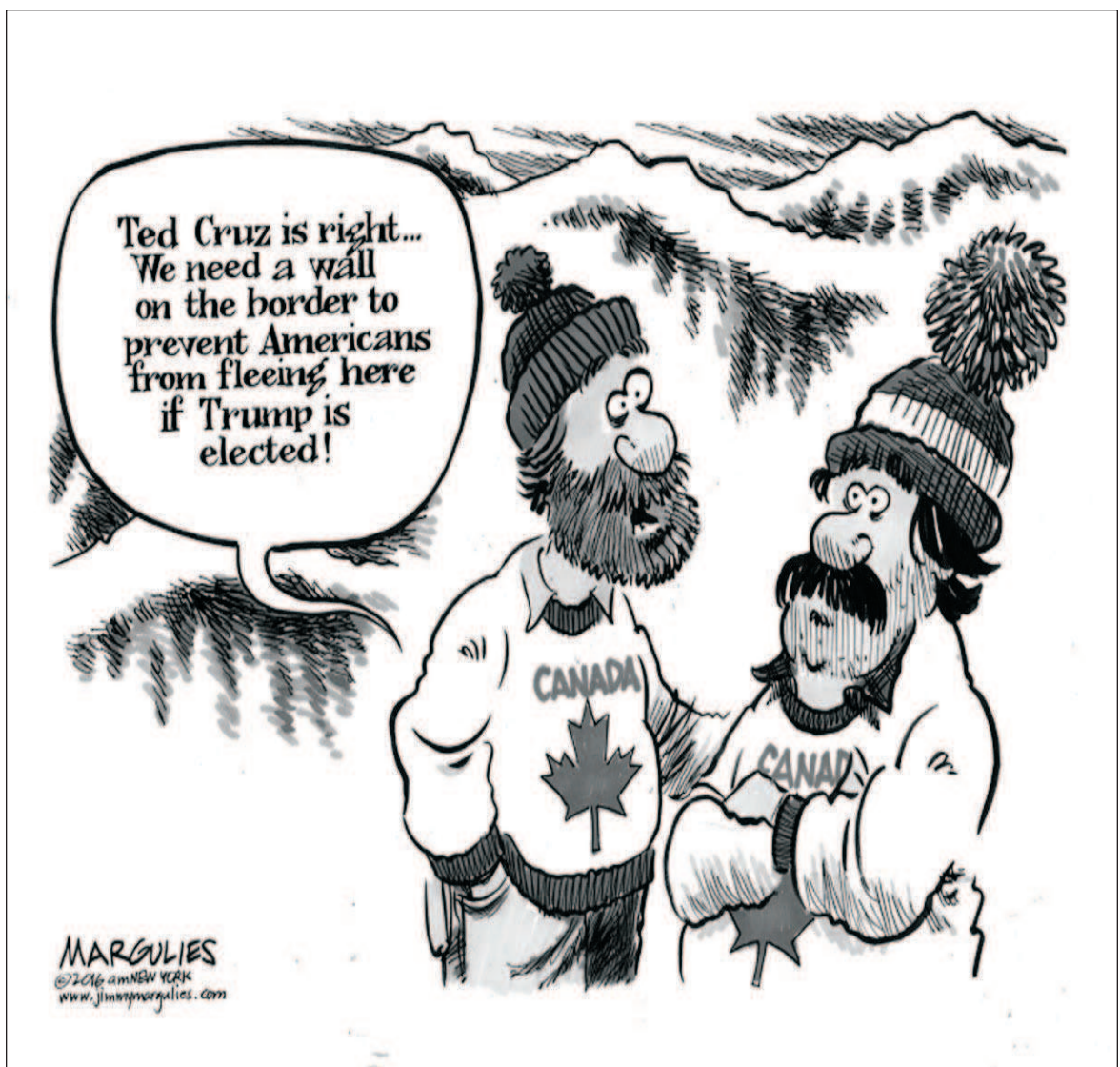
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Reading was a huge part of my life growing up. Growing up without a television meant there was a lot of time devoted to reading in our household, and that shaped my childhood. When it comes to a favorite, would it be the countless Dr. Seuss books, inherited from my mom and still sitting on the family bookshelves, waiting for the next generation of young readers? Do I choose the infamous Harry Potter series, my constant companions for 10 years straight? The Little House on the Prairie? Our collection of nearly every book Louis L’Amour wrote? Anything Roald Dahl ever published? Choosing a favorite is, in a word, impossible.

While I was a voracious reader from a young age and capable of spending entire days with my nose in a book reading to myself, I fondly remember my mom reading aloud the 1957 book “Gone-Away Lake” by Elizabeth Enright and its sequel, “Return to Gone-Away,” once we discovered it existed. A great many bedtime story hours were devoted to those books, begging for one more page of the adventures had by a trio of cousins who discovered an abandoned Victorian resort community next to a bog that used to be Lost Lake, and the lifestyle of the two people who still lived there. Countless nights were spent, “way past your bedtime, young lady,” exploring the limitless edges of fantastical worlds brought to life from words on a page.

Reading taught me to use my imagination and appreciate every story someone has taken the time to tell. Even now, if I have a book in my hands, the world may as well stop revolving outside of it until I finish it. Luckily, I grew up knowing the magic doesn’t end when the pages do.

— Lindsay Bullock, office manager



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

“A sorry performance” by County Court

To the Editor:

The Grant County Court responded to appeals from citizens for an investigation into the early stages of the Mason Spring and Berry Creek fires of August 2015 by voting, more or less, “No.”

Judge Scott Myers stated the Grant County Public Forest Commission was not the group to monitor the investigation and voted, “No.”

Commissioner (Boyd) Britton, who does business with the Forest Service and did not ethically recuse himself, voted, “No.”

Commissioner (Chris) Labhart was for an investigation but wanted citizens to sit down to a “talk” with the Forest Service to learn the facts.

So the biggest and most damaging fire in Grant County will be ignored by our three elected officials even though it was evident from those attending the meeting an investigation was absolutely in order. Overall, it was a sorry performance by three men elected to represent the citizens of Grant County

Ron Ballard
Mt. Vernon

Sheriff did his duty protecting everyone’s rights

To the Editor:

I’ve just spent most of two days reading past issues of the Blue Mountain Eagle. I can’t believe how arrogant some people are! Do you really want a sheriff that doesn’t go out and get as much information as possible on a problem he doesn’t want happening in Grant County? Oh my gosh! Your sheriff had lunch with one of Bundy’s group! What a sensible way to gain knowledge! Agree with Bundy? Only in the fact that we need to protect our constitutional rights. Sheriff Palmer took an oath to do that; he should agree. Does he agree with how they chose to make their point? Of course not, if they’re breaking laws to do it! And since when shouldn’t a sheriff try to attend or speak at a public meeting? Wouldn’t his presence at a public meeting with two groups of people with very opposite opinions have been a good thing? We lived in Grant County and moved to the Harney County area until recently retiring. We saw what was happening there. Grant County, you should all be thankful and realize how lucky you are to have a hardworking, honest sheriff. Harney County

has Cramer and Grasty, who have many friends and will rule in favor of their “good old buddies,” and Ward who is their buddy! Do you really want this in Grant County? Sheriff Palmer had a tough job to do; he has to protect everyone’s rights, yep, everyone’s! He did everything he could to do that.

We commend Sheriff Palmer for doing his duty even while being ridiculed by those who think constitutional rights are only for a chosen few. For those of you that think you are the chosen ones, read a document that starts: We the people.

Rick and Diane Camara
Athena

“My vote will go to the cowboy”

To the Editor:

As for (County Commissioner Chris) Labhart’s resolution to ban “militia” in Grant County, we have enough rules and regulations in this country; my vote will go to the cowboy in November. Mr. Labhart may want to ban the “militia” that takes over “4 Corners” every October.

As for Mr. Dunnigham’s letter, I have not seen or read anywhere Sheriff Glenn Palmer wants to take public land and give it to private interests. Also, he seems to think he is doing Grant County a favor in coming here; well, I say, if he is not coming here anymore, “Yeah!”

Don Long
John Day

Nothing but talk

To the Editor:

A little history as I understand it. The voters of Grant County told the County Commissioners that they wanted the county to manage and oversee the public forests in Grant County. This was by a large majority of the voters. That was when the Grant County Public Forestry Commission was established.

Why am I bringing this up? Because one of the county commissioners, Chris Labhart, asked at a recent meeting, “What do you do anyway?” We are trying to do what the voters mandated that we are to do, but the County Court, county commissioners (of which Chris Labhart is one) and the U.S. Forest Service keep putting roadblocks in our way. They are using stall tactics and diversions to keep us from even doing an investigation as to how the Canyon Creek Complex fire became such a destructive fire and who is responsible for letting this kind of disaster happen. We have been calling for an investigation, but it appears that the county com-

missioners and the County Court really do not want an investigation to take place, because they keep stalling and postponing so that no action can take place. Folks, spring is coming and along with it comes snow melt and rain, and nothing has been done but talk on the flood mitigation.

What does it take to get these people off dead center?

We’ve had a destructive fire that has destroyed many homes and lifetimes of valuable goods and memories, and now the experts tell us the floods are coming, and all that is happening is talk, talk, talk. How much more destruction is going to take place while the powers that be keep putting roadblocks in the way?

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

Sheriff should be physically able to perform duties

To the Editor:

It was my understanding that Todd McKinley resigned his position as undersheriff due to a shoulder injury that made him unable to perform his duties as a police officer, but now he wants to be the sheriff?

Shouldn’t the sheriff be as physically able to perform the duties an undersheriff would?

Krista Griffin
John Day

County fortunate to have Sheriff Palmer

To the Editor:

What is this hysteria over public safety in Grant County? Sheriff Palmer is the one who should be concerned about his safety. How can he have absolute trust his fellow officers and even his own dispatchers will have his back in a potentially dangerous situation? Yes, Peggy Clark, I too called this a “witch hunt” from the beginning. Sheriff Palmer has been and continues to be a good public servant, and all of us are fortunate to have him. It’s a shame he wasn’t at the arrest site — cooler heads (his) might have prevailed, and Mr. Finicum might still be alive. Glenn Palmer has supported this community all his years as sheriff; now, despite the allegations, innuendos and outright lies, it’s time we stand up in his support. Your vote counts; use it.

Patti Yellow Hand Bull
Monument

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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