

Pick your protest carefully

Never let anyone tell you protests don't matter.

From the French Revolution to Selma, and from the Malheur Wildlife Refuge to Standing Rock, otherwise powerless people gain influence when they join together to defy the government, corporations or the law of the land.

Often this kind of statement requires some law-breaking. It was the case in the Boston Tea Party, it was the case in the Nat Turner's Rebellion and in more recent cases, too.

Protesters must ask themselves if they are willing to break the law in order to stand up for their beliefs. They must ask themselves if the law in question is immoral or unconstitutional, or better yet both. They must ask themselves if they are willing to go to jail, willing to be kicked and punched and humiliated.

There is a line of thinking that protesters are sitting on their rumps, collecting welfare and waiting for any micro-aggression to get bent out of shape about while the rest of us working stiffs earn our paychecks.

But living through the blizzard in North Dakota right now is anything but easy, as anyone who went outside their front door for more than a few minutes during this week's snowstorm knows. Likewise, there is nothing easy about heading toward John Day and seeing police lights in your rear view mirror.

Black Lives Matter protesters have blocked streets and even highways, and similar tactics were used by protesters against Donald Trump in Portland last month. Negatively affecting other people's lives is no way to engender support, but organizers believe the problems they create bring

light to their concerns.

And yes, there are insurgents who try to capitalize on the illegal aspect of protest, who try to twist the mob mentality. Protests require extreme vigilance and dedication to stay on message, to keep everyone on the same page and to disavow violence at every turn. How well organizers and protesters can do that often portends how successful their protest will be.

Success is not assured. In fact, it's often unlikely. The anti-Trump protests in Portland were mocked, infiltrated by a violent element, and ultimately did no good except to reiterate that many people don't want Donald Trump to be the next president.

The thousands of people at Standing Rock got at least a temporary win, and brought their concerns to a much wider audience who found their plight sympathetic and honorable.

The people who occupied Wall Street were unable to reach the politicians who had the power, despite months of media coverage.

Nat Turner was hanged for his violent rebellion 30 years before the Emancipation Proclamation was signed.

The Boston Tea Party spurred the creation of the most powerful nation on Earth.

Maybe because this country was conceived in protest, the Founding Fathers made sure to protect the right to assembly and speech. It's something we shouldn't take for granted, and we should always be wary when peaceful protests are banned preemptively or shut down violently.

But it's also not a right we should misuse. Potential protesters must go forth understanding the risks, their rights and what they are trying to accomplish.



Contributed photo/Kay Steele

Running up and down the Middle Fork John Day River, this mule deer buck could not kick loose the barbed wire tangled in its antlers.

GUEST COMMENT

Remove old barbed wire to prevent wildlife tragedies

By Terry and Kay Steele
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

A recent photo shoot in northern Grant County revealed a problem that causes injury and death to wildlife. Miles and miles of old, rusty barbed wire is strewn across the countryside from years and years of neglect of abandoned fencing. Downed wire creates death traps for animals — wild and domestic.

Placing blame for this tragic situation is not useful. Abandoned wire is found on both private and public lands. It is understood that its use is required where fencing cows is necessary; however, the deadly accumulation of old barbed wire will barely be noticed — until something bad happens.

Rutting deer (and elk) do battle for available mates. They lower their racks and thrust themselves forward to clash. As they charge to and fro, their antlers can easily become hopelessly entangled in

downed barbed wire. Many of these bucks are destined to a long and painful death — unable to eat, drink or protect themselves from predators or the elements.

On this day, a beautiful mule deer buck, dragging barbed wire, pulled his way to the cooling waters of the Middle Fork of the John Day River. His efforts to dislodge the wire were frantic. Panting hard, he kicked up his back feet as he plunged and swung his head back and forth. Unsuccessful, he left the river with the wire in tow and disappeared over a high ridge. Short of a miracle, the wire will become hung upon something and he will meet an unnecessary fate.

Unbelievably, in less than an hour, about 25 miles away, we witnessed a second mule deer buck catch his rear feet as he leaped a partially downed fence. He struggled a bit but was able to kick his way free — this time.

There are many problems in

our county that are hard to know how to fix. This is not one of those. The problem of abandoned barbed wire is solvable. Ranchers can lead the way — work collaboratively with public agencies to conduct a countywide cleanup. It is recognized that ranching is more than a full-time job, but there are possibilities and opportunities to turn this into a win-win situation. Partnership grants can put people, especially our youth, to work removing this hazard. A sense of value and pride for accomplishing this task would be a worthy outcome. Recycle the rolls of discarded wire. The removal of barbed wire risks will benefit horses, cows, hunters, hikers and, yes, the wildlife we all cherish.

Terry Steele, nature photographer, is a self-educated naturalist. Kay Scheurer Steele, biologist, is a self-educated photographer. More of their work can be viewed at terrysteelenaturephotography.com.

Making an enrollment list and checking it twice

By Susan Johnson
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

Enrolling in health insurance can get complicated. That's why it's important to gather the information you need ahead of time to eliminate headaches.

To save time and avoid repeat trips to your assister, collect the following information in a folder as you prepare to apply for health insurance through HealthCare.gov:

- Information about your household size. Figure out who in your household should apply before you start your application.
- Home and/or mailing addresses for everyone applying for coverage.
- Information about everyone applying for coverage, such as addresses, birth dates, and Social Security numbers.
- Information about the professional helping you apply (if you're getting help completing your application), such as name, job title and contact information.
- Document information for legal immigrants.
- Information on how you file your taxes. (For example, if you're self-employed, you may pay estimated taxes each quarter.) You might want to

bring your last tax filing.

- Employer and income information for every member of your household (for example, from pay stubs or W-2 forms).
- Your best estimate of what your household income will be in 2017.
- Policy numbers for any current health insurance plans covering members of your household.
- A completed Employer Coverage Tool for every job-based plan you or someone in your household is eligible for. (You'll need to fill out this form even for coverage you're eligible for but don't enroll in.)
- Notices from your current plan that include your plan ID number, if you have or had health coverage in 2016.
- In order to choose a health plan, you'll probably want to gather the following additional information, which will help you choose a plan which best fits your needs:
 - Names of medical facilities anyone in your family uses.
 - Names of all family physicians or other providers, including specialists.
 - Names of all medications anyone in your family is currently taking.
 - Frequency of provider visits

for each family member.

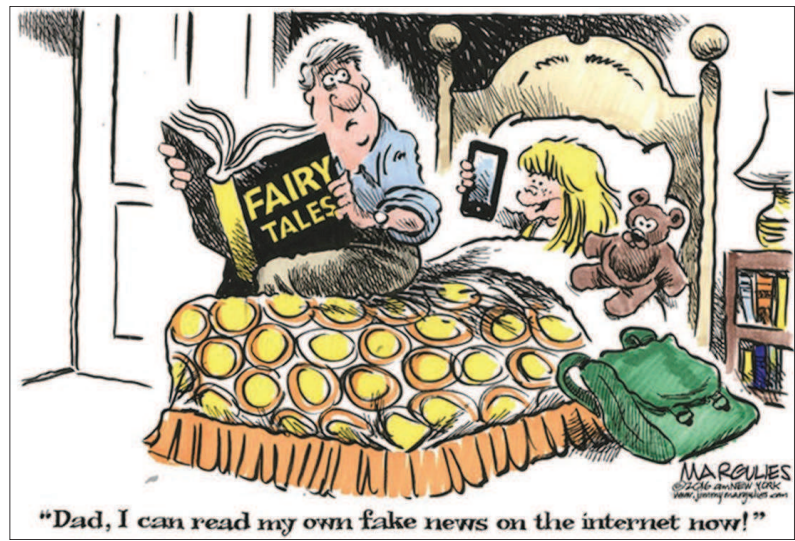
- Whether or not each family member smokes.
 - Premium and deductible amounts you are able to pay.
- HealthCare.gov has tools which allow you to see which doctors, facilities and prescriptions are covered by each plan.
- You can get assistance with your application by visiting Oregon HealthCare.gov, by calling the Oregon Health Insurance Marketplace from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays at 1-855-268-3767, or by locating a Local Enrollment Center.

The Affordable Care Act is still the law of the land, and open enrollment only lasts until Jan. 31, 2017. You must enroll by Dec. 15, 2016, for coverage to be effective Jan. 1, 2017.

You must pay your premium monthly in order to maintain coverage—85% of people get help paying their premiums, which can often be less than \$75 per month.

Enroll today and enjoy the peace of mind that comes with having health insurance for you and your family.

Susan Johnson is the regional director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region 10.



WHERE TO WRITE

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