

Fair trials and federal tricks

It should be obvious: When the U.S. government goes after anti-government protesters, it must follow the highest legal, ethical and operational standards. To do otherwise is to reinforce the protesters' notion of an unfair, untrustworthy and undisciplined government.

Yet in the court case against Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy — whose 2014 ranching protests helped inspire the 2016 armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Harney County — federal agents and prosecutors veered off that high road and onto the low road. Because the government withheld evidence that might have aided the defense, federal Judge Gloria Navarro declared a mistrial last month, stating "a fair trial at this point is impossible."

Bundy, sons Ammon and Ryan and sympathizer Ryan Payne faced multiple charges, including conspiracy, from the Bundys' 2014 armed standoff against federal agents in Nevada. Navarro has scheduled a hearing for Jan. 8 to determine whether the case against them should be thrown out. On Friday, the federal prosecutors asked for a new trial, contending their failure to share all their evidence with the defense was unintentional.

Let there be no doubt: Cliven Bundy should not have kept using public land for his cattle after choosing not to renew his federal grazing permit and not paying the grazing fees. The Bundys and their supporters should not have taken up arms against federal agents who planned to seize the Bundy

cattle over the unpaid fees and ensuing fines. Ammon Bundy and his cohorts should not have brought their armed campaign into Oregon and seized the Malheur refuge.

However, documents and testimony reveal that at various stages it was as if some federal agents had a vendetta against the Bundys and their supporters. As one example, a federal threat assessment had found the Bundys were not the violent threat that the government claimed. Yet the government expectation of a violent response from the Bundys almost guaranteed violence. The government had positioned snipers and other surveillance, and armed Bundy supporters had shown up to protect the cattle ranch.

The similarities to the Malheur refuge occurrence are eerie. The U.S. Justice Department's heavy-handed pursuit of two Harney County ranchers — Dwight Hammond Jr. and son Steven Hammond — led to excessive prison sentences in their arson case. In response, Ammon Bundy and his fellow anti-government sympathizers descended on the community of Burns and eventually invaded the wildlife refuge.

Nothing justifies those extremist actions of Ammon Bundy and his followers, or those of Cliven Bundy. But remember: Our nation's founders envisioned a fair, just and accountable government. When federal prosecutors and law enforcement agents subvert these principles, they undermine the very government they claim to uphold.



FARMER'S FATE

Life is like a box of crayons

By Brianna Walker
To the Blue Mountain Eagle



Brianna Walker

My grandma was an artist. An artist who loved colors. If I was to personify her life, I would have to say it was like a box of crayons. And not the little eight pack — no, she's got all 96 colors. She wouldn't go for just red and blue and yellow. Her box would include Atomic Tangerine, Blizzard Blue and Mango Tango. And if I had to pick a crayon for her, she would have definitely been Razzmatazz — mostly red with a touch of jazzy pink.

Her crayon life taught me a lot. Some crayons are sharp, some dull. Others pretty, some have weird names, but each crayon can provide a story, a poem or a life lesson. There may be some colors we prefer, but life is about using as many crayons as you have in your box.

Scarlet is the crayon that would describe some of the moments when Grandma would make Grandma blush. One time in academy, so the story goes, Grandma sparkled at Grandpa and said, "I love you great, I love you mighty; I love your pajamas right next to my mighty. Now don't get embarrassed and don't get red... I meant on the clothesline, and not in bed!"

Grandma was so witty, she was quick with the retorts and often had a poem to recite as well. If she didn't have one, she'd write one. So when I see the Macaroni and Cheese crayon, the only thing I can think of is a poem she wrote a few years ago.

"You can say stout or chubby, or pleasantly plump too much size to the thighs, too

much lump on the rump too much jelly on the belly, lacking thin 'neath the chin doesn't matter how you quote it, does no good to sugar coat it the name of the game is the same fat's fat, and that's that!"

The crayon Screamin' Green made a routine trip to town memorable because Grandma saw a rattlesnake in the road, near their house. She drove over it — and then backed up and drove over it again. This was repeated seemingly in excess. Then, still not satisfied, she drove home, returned with a shovel and proceeded to chop off its head and bury it. Grandma then used the snake as an illustration to Tammy about how we need to stay far away from evil things — because even when we think they are harmless (like the dead snake), they can still hurt us, just like a rattlesnake can poison even after he's dead. Grandma felt proud of herself for not missing a teaching moment, and asked Tammy if she understood. Tammy nodded, "If I ever see a snake, I'll get you and not Grandpa!"

Eggplant and squash aren't the same color — but they are often both lumped in the uneaten food category, so the eggplant crayon brings to mind my aunt Brenda's pancakes.

Trying to be sneaky healthy, she filled the batter with squash. Taking the plate of squashy pancakes to my Grandma, she said, "Mom, I want you to tell me these are the

best pancakes in the whole world." Grandma replied, "Honey, these are the best pancakes in the entire world."

"Mom, you have to eat them first."

You could almost see Grandma smirking as she replied, "I need to pray for them first." Then she bowed her head, "Lord, thank you for the best pancakes in the entire world."

The crayon pink symbolizes breast cancer awareness — to which our family has been very aware. Most days were good, but sometimes Grandma would get really frustrated with nurses, receptionists and doctors asking brightly, "How are you today?" Since my Grandma didn't think they wanted to really know, she decided to come up with answers they really didn't want to hear. Such as, "Well, the buzzards aren't circling yet!"

Grandma gave us a gift. She didn't leave us a box of four crayons, or even eight. She blessed her friends and family with the whole 96 pack plus the sharpener! Without her, it sometimes seems we are coloring with only blues and grays — but every time we tell a funny story about her, or recite one of her poems, we are actually pulling out those colored memories, and someday we'll see those colors have painted a rainbow in our sky. So if you are ever missing a loved one, pick up a Razzmatazz crayon and remember:

"Goodbyes are not forever. Goodbyes are not the end.

They simply mean we'll miss you. Until we meet again!"

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Vote yes on Measure 101

To the Editor:

Ballot Measure 101 is important to rural Oregon. Where you live should not determine the level of care you receive, or if you are able to receive care. Families living in rural communities deserve consistent access to quality health care. In some rural counties, more than a third of families rely on Medicaid.

This January, voters will be asked to vote on Ballot Measure 101, a measure that will provide direct funding for Medicaid in Oregon, protecting coverage for nearly 400,000 Oregonians and reducing premiums. It will also allow Oregon to receive nearly \$5 billion in federal funding.

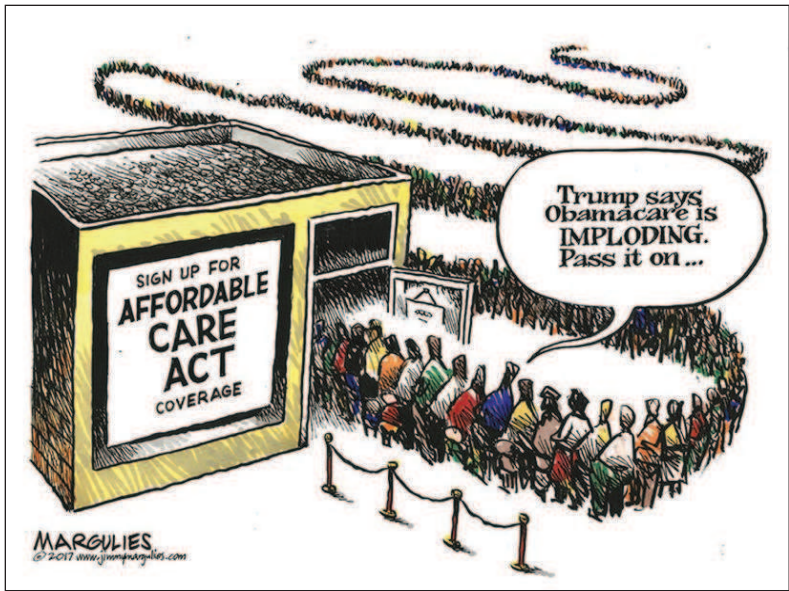
According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, Oregon's rural uninsured rate fell by 51 percent between 2013 and 2015. We need to build on that success to

keep all of us healthy and stabilize costs. We can't go back to a time when many people waited too long to go the doctor and ended up in the emergency room, or never even made it to the hospital. Families should not be put in that position.

Join me in voting yes on Measure 101 this January!

Robert Duehmig
Oregon Rural Health Association board president

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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- **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.
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