Opinion

Protect ranchers, not wolves

magine for a moment that you have a new job. You are L to manage an alpha predator, known to be one of the most efficient and voracious hunters in the wild. This predator doesn't just hunt for food, it teaches its young by practicing how first to isolate an animal, chase and wear it down and then grab it from behind and tear it apart while it's still alive — altogether a horrific scene.

Now imagine that near your predators are farms and ranches, where families have raised cattle, sheep and other livestock for generations. They were making a living on those ranches long before your predators were allowed back into the region.

Yours is a thankless job. You know that most of your predators will stay away from livestock, but you also know that it is inevitable that some of the predators will hunt cattle, sheep and even llamas. You know that a cow, a calf, a ewe or any other animal has no chance against your predators.

Considering these facts, what is the first step you'd take in your new job? Cross your fingers and hope the predators find enough elk and other wildlife and stay away from livestock? Make excuses for the predators every time they tear a calf or a lamb into shreds? Pretend the attacks were by an "undetermined" animal?

This scenario and these questions have been played out across the West as state and federal wildlife managers try to figure out what they're doing in managing wolves. In varying degrees, they have succeeded in losing the trust of the people who live in wolf country.

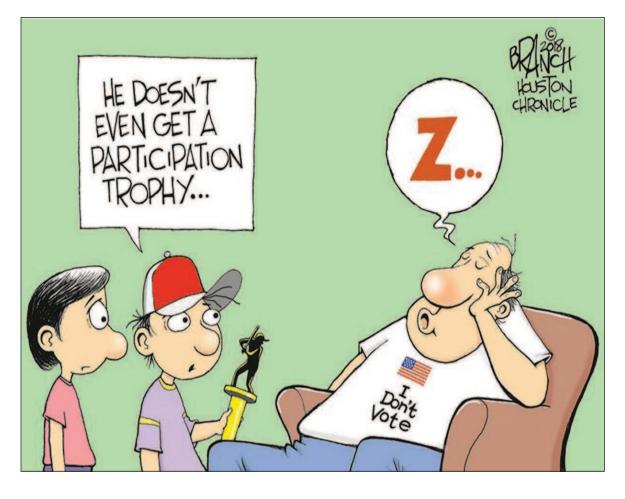
Ranchers are forced to stand

It got so bad last summer in Washington state that a researcher was treed by wolves twice — while wildlife managers dawdled after she called for help on her satellite phone. A helicopter crew from another agency rescued her. If it weren't for that state Department of Natural Resources crew, who knows what would have happened. The researcher probably would have been blamed, though.

Since the mid-1990s when the first 66 wolves were put in Idaho and Yellowstone National Park, wildlife managers and some members of the public have laid all blame on ranchers and others. It continues today, as wolves from British Columbia arrive in Washington state and wolves from Idaho spread across Oregon and northern California.

In every instance, the onus is put on the ranchers to protect their livestock from the predators. This is backwards. It should be up to the wildlife managers to assure the wellbeing of livestock. The ranchers have done nothing wrong. In some areas they are not even told where wolves are so they can move their cattle. In other areas, the implication is that just by having cattle the ranchers are at fault.

Washington and Oregon are in various stages of rewriting their wolf plans. In Oregon, a group of conservationists and ranchers, working with a mediator, have developed a proposal to have wildlife managers work proactively with ranchers to protect livestock. While this may seem obvious to any neutral bystander, it marks a breakthrough in common sense, if nothing else. Many ranchers have lost faith in wildlife managers. They don't even report wolf attacks on their livestock. They don't trust them. After so many years, it's time wildlife managers worked to earn that trust.



FARMER'S FATE

3 rings and 30 seconds

By Brianna Walker For the Blue Mountain Eagle

"Hi, my name is ..."

... you say you are from?" . and your favorite hobby is?" BBBBZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

I smiled and grinned at — John? Jim? Jack? What did he say his name was? The next John, Jim or Jack sat down, and I stuck out my hand for another handshake.

"Hi, my name is ... "

"... your favorite movie is?" BBBBZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

He stood up, and the chair was briefly vacant before another young face sat staring at me. I have often wished that people would come with a 30-second movie trailer, so you would know what you're getting yourself into before you buy the three-hour movie — but I may have to rethink that, as 30 seconds may be too long for some people!

I crossed my legs then leaned forward in the chair. The young man sitting across from me leaned back.

"I didn't quite catch your name," I said, leaning closer, trying to read his name tag.

He strained back as far as his chair would allow while he mumbled incoherently. I smiled, my most "it's OK, I am not going to bite you" smile, and nodded as if I had understood his mumbled name. "Are you from this area?" I questioned. He moved his head. I couldn't tell if it was in the affirmative or not.

BBBBZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

This time it was the fire alarm that ended the conversation. I don't know who was



ly knocked over the chair heading for the nearest exit. I had happily left the world of dating 14 years ago. I left it with

no regrets, no feelings of unfulfilled experiences or unmet expectations - I had found the man who would become the tractor to my baler, the butter to my popcorn, the crimson to my gray.

When we married, getting to know your significant other was still a slow and relatively traditional process: no texting, no social media - and certainly no speed dating.

Although if there would have been, I am sure I could have sequenced my questions for maximum speed of elimination. Watermelon or cantaloupe? John Deere or Massey Ferguson? Komatsu or Hyster? You don't know the difference? Next! I may have saved myself some painful dating experiences.

While I may have escaped ac-

had a giant QR code on the front - just scan it and save us both the stilted conversation. Either that or a 30-second commercial of myself that I could just set on repeat.

Hours later, I fell into my husband's arms at home.

"How did it go?" he asked.

"Great," I sighed, kicking off my boots. "There's nothing like 'speed-dating' to make you realize just how long 30-seconds can be!"

Later that night, I was snuggled on the couch reading a chapter to the family before bed. I closed the book when I noticed my sleeping family. The baby was snuggled with the cat, my oldest had nodded off still clutching his colored pencils and my husband snored softly in the recliner.

I once read that a man reserves his deepest and most true love not for the woman in whose company he feels electrified, but the one in whose company he feels tender drowsiness. I smiled contentedly for a moment before whispering loudly in my husband's ear, "BBB-BZZZZZZZZZZZZ!"

"What?!" He woke up sputtering.

I smiled. "It's so great when you find that one person you want to an-

Walker

by as tens of thousands of dollars of livestock are repeatedly killed, injured and traumatized by wolves. Then the ranchers are blamed for "not doing enough" to stop the attacks. It's much the same argument as telling a crime victim that you "deserved" to be attacked and it was "your fault" because you were in the "wrong place."

The ranchers and their livestock need protection, not the wolves.

"Family?" I asked.

Again the same head movement.

"Activities? Hobbies?"

People still read

newspapers

To the Editor:

newspaper.

Nothing.

"Coffee?" I asked in desperation.

I had no idea just how long a minute could be.

According to a recent online

article in Editor & Publisher, a

Nielsen Scarborough study sug-

gested "that in an average month,

169 million adults read a U.S.

or more iterations — in print, on

the web, via a mobile app, cour-

tesy of an e-newsletter or through

a social media news feed." (edi-

Some 58 percent of people

torandpublisher.com)

They may be reading it in one

tual speed dating, tonight's event was based on the same concept. I had accepted a position as a freshman mentor at the local college. To facilitate the meeting between the students and mentors, the college had set up the room with the musical-chair/speed-dating concept.

Occasionally the 30 seconds would fly by, the buzzer cutting the conversations short, while others hung long and painfully pregnant in the air, begging for the buzzer to signify an end to this misery.

Many times I wished my shirt

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

noy in 30-second increments for the rest of your life!"

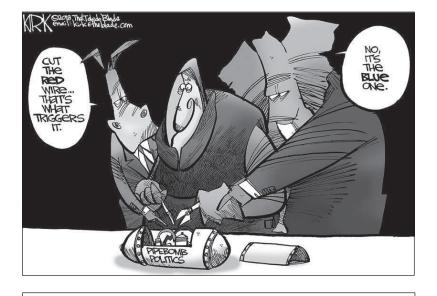
He glared at me groggily, "It's also true what they say about the three rings of marriage ...

"BBBBZZZZZZZZZZZZZ, your time is up!" I tried to interrupt him.

"First, the engagement ring ..." "BBBBZZZZZZZZZZZZZ!"

"Then the wedding ring ... "BUZZ BUZZZ BUZZZZZZ!" I whisper-shouted.

"Then the suffer-ring." Brianna Walker occasionally writes about the Farmer's Fate for the Blue Mountain Eagle.



WHERE TO WRITE

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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.

ages 16 and older reported they regularly read newspapers. There are not noteworthy differences across communities in the numbers of people who regularly read newspapers.

But 57 percent of suburban residents and 56 percent of urban dwellers are more likely to read their newspapers on handheld devices than 45 percent of rural residents, according to a 2012 article by the Pew Research Center. (pewinternet.org)

"Print isn't going away. If you are from Cleveland, then you were probably one of the thousands who wanted a print copy

of the Plain Dealer that was released the day after the Cavaliers won the NBA Championship... So why in the digital era would people from all over want the print version? Nostalgia. The print newspaper is memorabilia people can keep forever." (advance-ohio.com)

"A newspaper is the center of a community, it's one of the tent poles of the community, and that's not going to be replaced by Web sites and blogs," declared Michael Connelly.

And I agree.

Melissa Martin Wheelersburg, Ohio

etters policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or Lworld 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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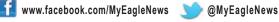
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