

# We must stop this now

Since May we have watched ever more stunning and audacious acts of violence committed in our great cities under the cover of “mostly peaceful” protests.

Perhaps we became jaded after more than three months of nightly riots accentuated by vandalism, looting, and attempts to burn public buildings and immolate police officers.

The sight of an angry mob of our fellow citizens busting into the U.S. Capitol, disrupting the House and Senate sessions and making a mockery of one the highest institutions in our republic is sickening and almost beyond comprehension.

Almost. We have been building to this for a very long time.

The politics of the past 20 years have become increasingly divisive, intolerant and personal. America has been divided on all issues into competing factions, each encouraged to believe in the infallibility of its position, to revile the position of opponents and to doubt our foundational institutions. The rule of law be damned.

How did we reach a place where significant portions of the electorate believe either Donald Trump stole the election in 2016 or Joe Biden stole the election in 2020? When did we lose faith in each other?

Politicians, left and right, have become expert at stoking the flames, without regard to the potential damage.

Our elected officials — presidents, members of Congress, governors, mayors — have used the harshest, most inflamma-

tory rhetoric against their opponents. They whip these mobs into a frenzy, send them out into the street and act surprised when bad actors embedded with legitimate protesters turn ugly. They deplore the violence while subtly suggesting that it was all somehow justified.

We should expect more from our elected officials, but the fault is in ourselves.

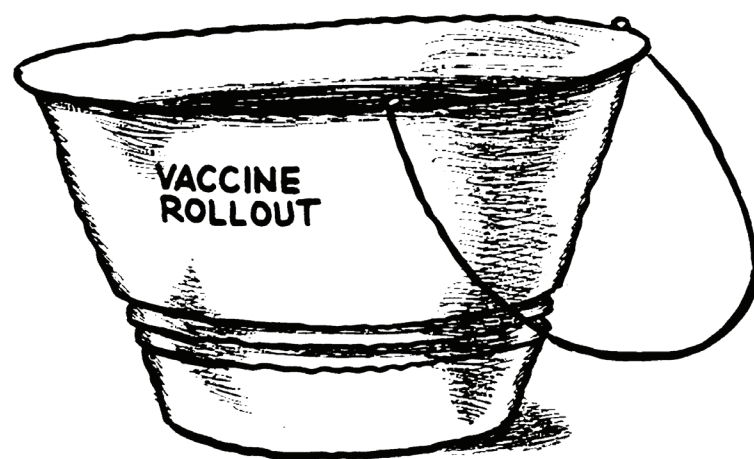
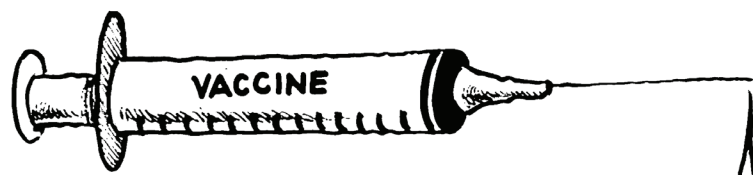
We have become all too occupied with the divisions, arranging ourselves neatly in one camp or another. We have listened only to those things that bolstered our world view. We allowed agitators and activists to use our fear and anger as a means to their own ends.

We stopped talking with and listening to each other. We have slapped vile labels on our neighbors and turned them into irredeemable enemies. And, when times are desperate, instinct dictates we deal harshly with an enemy.

Each of us passes through history so briefly that we often don't appreciate the trials endured by previous generations. America has a fiery history. We've been here before.

Time and again our ancestors learned that there are more things that unite us than divide us; that we can respectfully disagree; that if not friends, we are not enemies; that the legitimacy of an argument is not determined by the force with which it is made; that we can restore trust in our institutions; that no mob rules.

We can pull ourselves from the brink. We must stop this now.



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## FARMER'S FATE

# Electrical tape bandages

A few years back, we were riding ATVs on the Oregon Dunes. The group had stopped to take pictures near a beautiful river below us, winding its way through the sand hills. I don't remember the reason, but somehow my dad asked if anyone had a zip tie with them. I actually had a used one, fastened onto my handle bars. My dad flipped out his pocket knife and proceeded to open the zip tie and slide it off. Just as he was nearly finished, the knife slipped and gouged his finger. As blood dripped from the fresh cut, we started looking for bandages. We came up with a couple of napkins and some blue paper towels — but nothing to fasten it with. Then we noticed a tree that had several wraps of electrical tape around it (I have no idea why), and we cut off a little piece and re-labeled it to my dad's finger — after which we kept riding and had a fantastic weekend.

But I kept thinking about that little piece of tape — and the farmers and ranchers that would use it as a bandage. I keep a notebook handy to jot down random thoughts, and that weekend I jotted down: “Reasons farmers shouldn't be counselors: They think everything can be fixed with duct tape, baler twine, a big hammer, electrical tape, a dead chicken around the neck, a hot shot — and if all else fails, the sale yard.” Pretty sure I used most all of those tools the last week. A gate



Brianna Walker

needed to be sturdied up — baler twine. The kids' beach ball had a hole in it — gorilla tape. The rake wheel needed some work — a big hammer. A couple of the roosters decided to move up their pecking order — a hot shot. And a trailer load of lambs headed to the sale yard. I guess no one had a dead chicken around their neck — although I was ready to hang one around those bloody rooster's necks! Wonder if it works on roosters as well as dogs?

Right now is a strange time to be alive — if you stoop over you get walked on, if you stand up tall you get shot. There are opinions and ideas circulating, and it's getting harder to discern fact from fiction. There's a bitter undercurrent, and it seems just like those two roosters fighting to determine who is the most important — which got me to thinking about who is the most important on a farm. Cows give butter, chickens give eggs, the dog provides protection and the cats keep the mice down. Maybe it would be easier to think of what is most important on a farm. Tractors quickly come to mind — but without implements, they become useless. The shop is only important if there is something to put in it — same with the barn and the chicken

coop. Fences, gates, power tools, all are useful — but pointless if they stood alone. And without people to operate the tools or feed the animals — the whole thing crumbles.

It reminds me of a childhood song:

*If the eye said to the hand, I have no need of thee*

*from the head to the feet I have no need of you*

*how could we ride or hold a thimble*

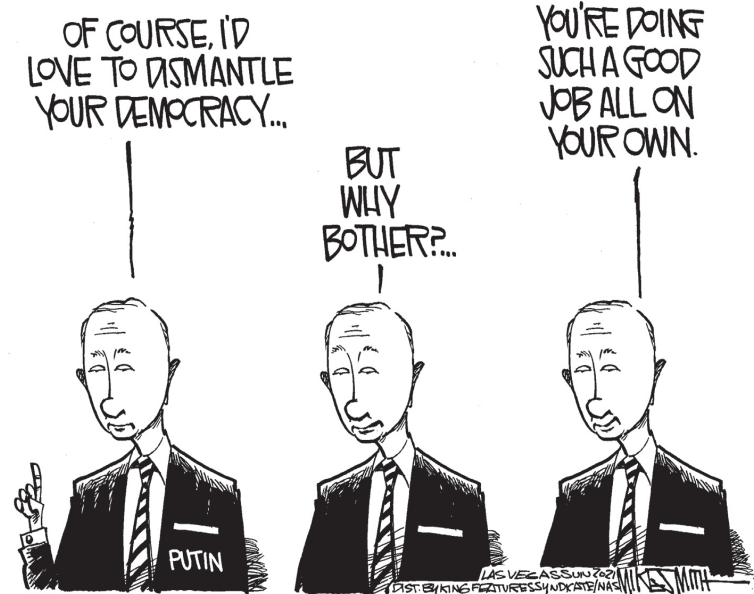
*how could we ride or run so nimble*

*how can the body be complete without feet?*

Feet, hands, eyes, ears — it's our differences that make us whole. It is our differences that us function — but only if we are united. A whole fleet of beautiful new bank out wagons would do a wheat farmer no good unless he also has combines and tractors. The plow horse, the guard dog, the climbing goat — together they make the farm function. Let's cherish our individual heritages, knowing it is in uniting those differences that gives America its strength.

Right now the gate feels a bit wobbly, but with a little baler twine and duct tape we can sturdy that right up — if not, there's always electrical tape bandages and dead chickens!

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



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### ‘Trump’s thugs’

**To the Editor:**  
Since last Wednesday's insurrection at our nation's Capitol, I've heard the people involved referred to by different names. What I would call them are “Trump's thugs.” The most horrifying thing I saw was one carrying a sign saying, “Jesus Saves.” Was their message that God approves of their criminal behavior? Make no mistake, Donald Trump was totally responsible for this entire abomination. Jesus had nothing to do with it.

Terry Steele  
Ritter

### ‘Determining the pay of elected officials’

**To the Editor:**  
I am responding to the article in the Eagle last week about potentially replacing Bob Quinton on the Budget Committee with an employee of the Prairie City Mayor Jim Hamsher, who is also a county commissioner. The Grant County Budget Committee does not approve hours for anyone on the payroll. That is an administrative process. The Budget Committee receives the budget, reviews it for appropriateness, balance and feasibility, and they make recommendations.

There is a proper process for determining the pay of elected officials as defined in ORS 204.112. It is not in the hands of the commissioners themselves. And their duties are defined by statute. The requests on the part of Jim Hamsher and Sam Palmer are inappropriate. They should stop trying to circumvent the laws. We have seen enough of that. If they want a raise they should do it the right way and not replace a valued Budget Committee member because he didn't support their requested pay raise.

Eva Harris  
Canyon City

### The country is becoming a dictatorship

**To the Editor:**  
If you could possibly pry your face away from your flat screen TV that has more square inches of surface than my two-car garage, I have some information you may be interested in. I know you may miss a few minutes of football, basketball, baseball, hopscotch and Naked and Afraid, but I can assure you that when you get back to your TV, Naked and Afraid will still be naked. Whenever a wannabe dictator decides to take over a country he or she will follow the recipe that the Nazis followed in Ger-

many. No. 1, seize all of the weapons from the citizens. It is OK to leave a few garden and farm tools as long as they are dull. At least part of the U.S. Congress is trying to implement this step. No. 2, control the media so you will hear what the leaders of this takeover want you to hear. This has already been accomplished. No. 3, install professors in our colleges that teach the students that socialism is the best thing since the smart phone. They will also be taught that the Holocaust did not happen and that a man placed on the moon was fake. When our glassy-eyed college students graduate from the college, some of them will actually be able to fill out a job application (if there are any jobs). Already done. No. 4, make sure that the citizens have easy access to recreational drugs. Citizens that are in a constant state of euphoria usually do not cause problems such as those messy old protests. Again, already done. It sounds like there is only about one more step to be accomplished and the U.S. will be a dictatorship. I'm not sure if Hitler and Bin Laden are still alive, but I heard that they had been seen in Starbucks having their latte. They would be safe there because Starbucks in the past has refused service to police. If these two are in their graves, I bet they are clapping their hands and saying, “Maybe we won after all.”

Ed Butler  
Prairie City

## WHERE TO WRITE

- GRANT COUNTY**
- Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0059. Fax: 541-575-2248.
- Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: tocc1862@centurylink.net.
- Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: dville@ortelco.net
- John Day** — 450 E. Main St, John Day, 97845. Phone: 541-575-0028. Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: cityjd@centurytel.net.
- Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: info@cityoflongcreek.com.
- Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: cityofmonument@centurytel.net.
- 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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- Seneca** — P.O. Box 208, Seneca 97873. Phone and fax: 541-542-2161. Email: senecaoregon@gmail.com.
- SALEM**
- Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: governor.state.or.us/governor.html.
- Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).
- Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.



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