

Standard-Examiner

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OURVIEW

Move now to protect Range Creek ranch

An amazing array of ancient Indian ruins are at risk now that land is public

For more than 50 years, Waldo Wilcox kept pot hunters and arrowhead scavengers off his 4,200-acre Range Creek ranch in southeastern Utah. Two weeks ago, the news went public that 1) the state of Utah now owns the ranch and 2) it is home to hundreds, if not thousands, of Fremont Indian pit houses and dwellings — ruins containing countless artifacts in an untouched condition.

But already a few of those treasures have gone missing.

The thing that makes Range Creek so valuable to archaeologists — its undisturbed state — is what makes it a prized target for pilferers of ancient tools and other items. As Kevin Jones, state archaeologist, told the New York Times: "There are places with concentrations of this magnitude. The difference is that this place hasn't been wrecked."

For professional researchers and scientists, Range Creek is an amazing place. Wilcox knew it was special, too; not only did he run cattle there for half a century, but he was well aware he and his livestock were treading on ground that had been home to a long-gone people. (Fremont Indian culture spanned eight centuries between 500 and 1300 A.D.) In order to protect the resource, as well as his livelihood, he was careful to keep people off his land, and didn't let on to anyone the historical treasure trove that

existed there.

For the sum of \$2.5 million, Wilcox sold his ranch in 2001 to the Trust for Public Land. Subsequently, the Bureau of Land Management and the state of Utah took ownership, and the Division of Wildlife Resources has the responsibility to manage the land. It was in the process of planning a public comment process for a proposed plan when word got out.

And that's the problem: Now the state owns this piece of public land, with its wealth of undisturbed archaeological sites, but has no management plan in place to protect it. People have been walking into the Range Creek ranch to have a look-see ever since the news broke, and the state is still trying to figure out how to protect the pithouses from both well-meaning sight-seekers who might trample irreplaceable history and thieves who are looking to turn a profit at the expense of the state and future scientific knowledge.

We urge the DWR and other state agencies to cord off Range Creek as soon as possible. Since whatever is lost can never be restored, it is vital that the taxpayers' financial investment and cultural benefit be safeguarded. Eventually, we hope, a strict system of guided tours will be allowed into the Range Creek area. Anything less risks destroying the precious sites preserved by nature for 1,000 years, and Waldo Wilcox for the past 50.

ANOTHERVIEW

California growth

Utah has nothing on So. California for urgent growth-planning requirements

A planning group thinks it has figured out how to accommodate the more than 6 million additional people expected in Southern California by 2030: Change housing and building patterns on just 2 percent of the land.

Its report addresses the very issues residents and lawmakers are grappling with — how to preserve open space and provide enough (and affordable) housing.

The goal of the Southern California Association of Governments' Compass project is to meet growth head-on without depleting open space to create "a sustainable Southern California with a high quality of life for everyone."

In its Growth Vision Report released last week, Compass looked at needs in the region's six counties — Ventura, Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino — and 188 cities.

The report said that changing the use of just 2 percent of the land to mixed-use housing, and

locating housing and businesses next to transportation hubs could decrease gridlock and pollution, and increase affordable housing and jobs.

That's a tall order, given the region's limit of land suitable for development, the expected population increase and the hodgepodge of planning guidelines as diverse as the people who live here.

Compass approached its ambitious task by soliciting ideas and solutions from counties, cities, communities and neighborhoods in the six counties and by seeking cooperation and coordination at these and regional levels.

To meet expected growth, Compass urges use of infill development — earmarking vacant and underused land as well as failing strip malls for high-density, mixed development, especially along transit corridors and near employment centers. Its recommendations also include a variety of development types and preservation of existing single-family developments.

— Ventura County Star

GRONDAHL STANDARD-EXAMINER



"We've got a hostage situation here involving an escaped Yellowstone wolf and a 1,000-year-old Fremont pot."

Another birthday's come and gone

It is said that on July 4, 1776, as they all signed the Declaration of Independence, Benjamin Franklin warned his fellow "founding" rebels, "We must all hang together or assuredly we shall all hang separately."

But John Adams, who would become our second president, had a more optimistic message: "We shall make this a glorious and immortal day," he said. "When we are in our graves, our children will honor it. They will celebrate it with thanksgiving, with festivities, with bonfires, and illuminations."

And we have done that. For the 228th time, we have celebrated the signing of that declaration and the unique form of government the signers went on to create. It was to be a government, in John Adams' phrase, "of laws and not of men." And it would be a government constitutionally required to uphold and protect those "unalienable" rights the Declaration proclaimed.

After the speeches and fireworks, the nation's birthday also should be a time for reflection on our stewardship of the gift bequeathed us by those refugees from the gallows. Can we say, with anything like Adams' assurance, that our children and their children will continue to honor and celebrate it?

Today, independence is hardly an issue for the world's only superpower. And the blessings of liberty are manifold. Americans are healthier, wealthier and generally safer than ever before — and live longer. But they vote in ever-decreasing numbers. It



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was obvious that in any real democracy, the people ultimately would rule. But several of the Founders were concerned about the practical implications of that ideal. Would the people be knowledgeable enough to rule wisely? As Thomas Jefferson famously put it, "If a nation expects to be ignorant — and free — in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be."

Are the schools equipping young Americans today for the global complexities of the modern world? Not when they turn out young people who don't know the name of their congressional representative or their state's senators, or where to find Europe on a map. The system of rights and liberties, checks and balances, created by the Founders has been severely tested since Sept. 11. We witnessed the terrible destruction of the World Trade Center in New York and the attack on the Pentagon in Virginia, and watched with growing trepidation the collateral damage to our liberties caused by fear and overreaching at the highest levels of government. We remembered then Franklin's stern judgment: "They that can give up essential liberty to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety."

We have witnessed the president and attorney general of one of the most secretive administrations in American history claiming war powers to deny civil liberties protected by the Bill of Rights. We've seen the creation, in America, of a detention procedure in which detainees have had no recourse to lawyers, no chance to plead their innocence — people who simply disappear into a system right out of George Orwell's "1984."

But then, last week, the Supreme Court — the same conservative court that civil libertarians had begun to despair of — told Mr. Bush in a nearly unanimous ruling that "a state of war is not a blank check" and that he did not have the power to imprison American citizens or anyone else indefinitely, without any ability to challenge their accusers in a court of law. In other words, he could not suspend the Bill of Rights.

The system the Founders gave us still works as long as we guard it jealously and use it courageously — as did the attorneys who brought the detainees' cases to the high court. The foundations of American democracy laid by the Founders still are there — still sturdy.

That's the good news. And even in these fearful, fractious and polarized times, we might still learn to deserve that liberty won for us by the men we celebrate and quote on the Fourth of July.

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If it's Sunday, let's grab a drink

WASHINGTON — If you blink while scanning the news briefs, you might have missed it.

The Virginia state legislature, in a fit of absentmindedness, accidentally took a step toward reviving the old-fashioned Sunday. You might think that this would play well in a state with a reputation for being socially conservative — but you would be wrong.

The alarmed business community went to battle stations to demand a special session of the legislature to rectify the oversight, and a state judge blocked enforcement of the inadvertently revived "blue law" for 90 days.

And as the old blue laws went, this one wasn't particularly blue. It simply said that an employer couldn't force an employee to work on Sunday or Saturday if that day happened to be the employee's Sabbath.

The outcry over this minor legislative slipup dramatized just how much the role of Sunday has changed in American life.

It is now a pivotal shopping day. Figures assembled by The Washington Post show that Sunday is the best day of the week for grocery, chain and drug stores. It is a big day for dining out and no slouch as a business day for shopping malls. The numbers suggest that if retailers had to pick one day of the week to close it wouldn't be Sunday, it would be Wednesday.

It wasn't always so. Well within the memory of many adults is a time when nothing was open on Sunday, nothing. Stores, restaurants, bars — virtually all commercial establishments — were



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Scripps Howard

closed on Sunday, and some states deployed gumshoes to enforce the Sunday-closing ordinances, universally known as blue laws.

(Historians have debunked the notion that the names come from the laws having been originally printed on blue paper. "Blue" just seems to be an unusually handy adjective — blue blood, blue streak, blue moon, etc.)

Those few convenience stores that did stay open were subject to bizarre restrictions on what they could sell: bread and milk, but not meat and fish. The idea was to ban the Sunday sale of anything that wasn't a necessity and the blue noses had an expansive idea of what wasn't a necessity — tools, pots and pans, clothes, furniture, records, silverware. You could buy film but not a camera to put it in.

In this country, the blue laws originated with the Puritans who were determined to build the New Jerusalem in the New World even if they had to lash, maim and mutilate a few of the flock to do it. All activity, except church attendance, was banned on Sunday and the punishments could be quite severe. George Washington was reputedly arrested once in Connecticut for unnecessarily riding a horse on the Sabbath.

By the time of the Revolutionary War, America had developed a more relaxed attitude to both Sundays and the consumption of alcohol on Sundays — too relaxed in the opinion of the temperance movement. As it gathered momentum through the 19th century, the movement attacked the sale of beer, wine and liquor by attacking its sale on Sunday.

Eventually, the dries succeeded in banning alcohol consumption altogether from 1918 to 1933.

When Prohibition was repealed, the bans on Sunday sales tended to survive. In the past few decades, the laws against selling liquor by the drink on Sunday have largely disappeared. Bans on sales of liquor by the bottle were on the books until quite recently but even they are going by the way.

By coincidence, two days after the judge enjoined the accidental blue law, Sunday liquor sales became legal in Virginia, along with Rhode Island, the latest state to allow them.

In any case, to many big-box retailers the day of the week is irrelevant because they are open around the clock.

But you can still peg a member of a certain generation because before setting out on a weekend shopping trip, they tend to ask, "It's Sunday. Are you sure they're open?"

And if the other person is a member of a new generation, they will reply, "Of course they're open. It's Sunday."

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