

## A Christmas Comma

by Pastor Joel Carson

Punctuation matters. The entire meaning of a sentence can be grasped or lost based upon the placement of those little dots and pen strokes.



Perhaps you've seen the humorous t-shirts that demonstrate this reality by offering two similar but different sentences:

"Let's eat, grandpa!"

"Let's eat grandpa!"

That's a big difference! Now, allow me to give one Yuletide example.

Many of you are familiar with the Christmas Hymn, "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen."

Notice the placement of the comma. The way I've presented it above is the correct and original usage. Many people, however, erroneously assume the comma is placed after the word ye (you), which changes the meaning of the sentence. Let's compare the two (also note that the word "rest" means "keep" in modern English, and "merry" means "joyful").

"May God keep you, joyful gentlemen (incorrect meaning)."

"May God keep you joyful, gentlemen (correct meaning)."

The difference is subtle, but it matters. This first line, understood rightly, expresses a desire for people to enter into and remain in a joyful state. Why the call to joy? What is the occasion? The next line tells us: "Remember, Christ our Savior was born on Christmas Day to save us all from Satan's power when we were gone astray."

The comma helps us to see that the gentlemen in view were not already joyful, but were beckoned into joy based upon the good news that Jesus was born to bear away the sins of rebellious people. If we move the comma, we lose the meaning.

Perhaps, this year, we could all use a pocket-sized grammar guide in our stockings

*Merry Christmas*

## Concerns Raised at Farragut Shooting Range

by Sheryl Puckett

**Brad St. John** is a Range Safety Officer (RSO) with decades of experience in Olympic and NCAA type shooting. He has raised serious safety concerns about operations at the Farragut Shooting Range. The range is managed by the Idaho Department of Fish & Game. St. John was a volunteer at the range for five months in 2025.

One of Mr. St John's concerns is that, "Firearms are left loaded on the shooting benches when shooters go downrange in front of the firearms as confirmed regularly by all RSO's at Farragut Shooting Range. The use of chamber flags will eliminate this death risk. IDFG refusal to implement NRA safety protocols continues to risk lives." St. John also noted, "Chamber flags cost less than a dollar each, You can't have people in front of loaded weapons ever," he said. This is a principle universally accepted across the shooting community.

In his letter to the Director of Fish & Game, Mr. Frederick, he states, "The Farragut facility reportedly suffers from the following: Radios rarely work, even after repeated requests for repair. There is no posted emergency phone number. No written emergency protocols or training are provided for RSOs or shooters. Only one AED is available on site, with no training. AEDs are needed at the Archery and Shotgun ranges because they are far from the main shooting area." (Update: newly upgraded radios were purchased recently and are currently in use.)

"Every minute delayed AED use decreases survival probability by 10 percent. Requests for more AEDs and training have gone unanswered," says St. John.

All Idaho state employees should stop using the range when it's closed. All shooting must have an RSO present.

OSHA regulations require employers to protect workers from lead exposure. Range staff have been directed to use leaf blowers for daily cleaning. The primary concern at both indoor and outdoor shooting ranges is lead contamination from spent bullets, bullet fragments, and primer residue. Leaf blowers undoubtedly spread lead dust and other hazardous particles into the air. The volunteers are provided no masks or protection.

Additionally, loaded ammunition is reportedly being mixed with brass and sent for smelting, posing a significant explosive risk. OSHA standards require that all live rounds be removed before brass recycling. **CONT.**

## CONT.

According to St. John, Fish & Game range safety officer credentials have reportedly been granted without verification or testing. He documented that an expired NRA credential was accepted without renewal and no qualification process occurred. "IDFG can't issue Range Safety Officer credentials to persons without current qualifications," he stated.

To bring the Farragut Shooting Range into compliance and ensure public safety, St. John recommends the following actions:

- Mandate empty chamber flags on every shooting bench
- Ensure all radios are functional at all times for both RSOs and staff.
- Develop and implement written emergency protocols, including AED use and medical response procedures.
- Provide training and require acknowledgment of all safety and emergency procedures.
- Create and use standardized incident reports for unsafe behavior or medical incidents.
- Supply whistles for RSOs to gain attention safely when shooters are wearing ear protection.
- End the use of leaf blowers for cleaning; replace with OSHA compliant methods.
- Prohibit IDFG employees from using the range when closed to the public unless an RSO is present.
- Reclassify the Range Master position to require a college degree, NRA RSO certification and verified range management experience.
- Conduct annual safety inspections of all IDFG ranges statewide.

"This is not 1955," St John says. "We have more people with firearms and more risk than ever before. The Farragut Shooting Range is the most dangerous service IDFG provides to Idaho citizens and it must be 100% safe, 100% of the time."

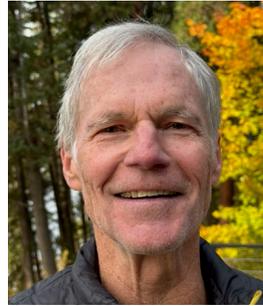
Volunteer Services & Hunter Education Coordinator, Heidi Knapp, said, "Safety is our top priority." She recently purchased more chamber flags although stated they're not a requirement.

Another Farragut Range RSO said about the safety concerns: "We do make improvements all the time."

Director Jim Fredericks states: "... We have operational rules and protocols consistent with many other shooting ranges in Idaho ... we will continue the process of assessing, evaluating and making improvements ..." In response, St John wrote, "I'm trying to help you ... I've purchased range flags and will donate and volunteer to install them."

## VETERAN'S HEALTH

by Editorial Bayview's Dr. John Charyk



I'm writing this article on Veterans Day, hoping it will raise awareness of ongoing actions that suggest an intention to dismantle the VA and privatize veterans' health care.

It's hard to imagine the horrific life-changing experiences many vets encountered in the service of country, and the difficulties they face on return to civilian life.

Here are some sobering statistics: 30,177 veterans of post-9/11 conflicts have died by suicide, which is four times as many as were killed in the conflicts themselves. In the 2 decades following the Vietnam War the suicide rate among veterans was as high as 22/day. More recently, it is "only" 13 suicides/day.

So why is it that in the first 6 months of the new administration, the VA has recorded a net loss of thousands of health care positions? The losses include 688 physicians, 1,882 registered nurses, 365 licensed practical nurses, 316 nurse assistants, 511 social workers, and 201 psychologists. These moves destabilize the VA system and undermine its long-term sustainability.

We've seen numerous budget cuts lately, framed as attempts to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse. Agencies such as FEMA, FAA, NOAA, and the Dept. of Education have already been affected. Now this approach is being directed toward diminishing our veteran's health care system.

Integrated care coordination and comprehensive screenings were pioneered at the VA. Very few community providers are familiar with the many special health needs of vets such as rehab from amputations, traumatic brain injury, PTSD, and toxic exposures (e.g. burn pits, agent orange). If veterans are pushed into the fee for service profit driven medical model, access will become more difficult, care will become fragmented and more expensive, and quality will decline.

Abraham Lincoln made a promise to veterans at the end of the Civil War, that the nation would "care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan,"

Let's not weaken our commitment to those who have served our country.



Council's Address: P. O. Box 112, Bayview, ID 83803  
Council website: <https://bayviewcommunitycouncil.org/>