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WHY IS THE RULE OF LAW IMPORTANT?

We in America may sometimes take our rights and laws for granted. If our house were to be seized by the government to use for its own purposes, we would be outraged and probably immediately turn to the court system to protect our right to our private property ownership. Yet, 57 percent of the world—5 billion people—cannot depend on things to work in their countries in the same way.¹ People in power in these countries bend or ignore the laws to benefit and enrich themselves and their cronies with no system of checks and balances. This leads to economic instability; if you can't count on owning your property or business from one day to the next, why would you invest in it in the first place, or improve it?

We count on the Rule of Law, which is defined by these four tenets:

The Rule of Law is a durable system of laws, institutions and community commitments that delivers four universal principals. 1) Accountability. The government as well as private citizens are equally accountable under the law. 2) The laws are clear, publicized and stable and are applied evenly and protect fundamental rights, including the security of persons and contract, property and human rights. 3) Open government. The processes by which the laws are enacted, administered and enforced are accessible, fast and efficient. 4) Accessible and impartial dispute resolution. Justice is delivered in a timely manner.²

Most importantly, the ends do not justify the means. Bending of the law to end up with a perceived 'good' social outcome is still not okay. If a building permit were issued for a 10-story apartment building next to your house in a single-family, home-zoned neighborhood without any public meetings for a zoning change or conditional use process, it is not right, even if it creates much-needed affordable housing. Our county requires extensive public processes of any developer wishing to change zoning or even build a building.³

A county commissioner board cannot just site a gravel pit in the middle of Ketchum with no process, even if the gravel is needed for our roads. Furthermore, Idaho state statute requires the county to have a public auction process if it wishes to transfer property out of county ownership. Transferring property to a private entity or individual without this process would be cronyism in giving up a public asset to enrich just one entity.

This is how dictators in other countries stay in power—by divvying up public properties to their supporters and friends. But this is not what we find acceptable in America. We count on the Rule of Law to protect us with process; clearly understandable laws, open meetings, and evenly applied rules that our government has to follow—as well as private individuals. We keep our democracy stable when no one is above the law in our country.

¹ www.lexisnexis.com/en-us/rule-of-law/default.page
² Handa Center for Human Rights, Stanford University, Lecture of Professor Beth Van Schaack, the Leah Kaplan Visiting Professor in Human Rights at Stanford Law School and a faculty fellow with the Handa Center for Human Rights and International Justice, <https://handacenter.stanford.edu/videos/annual-lecture-human-rights-reclaiming-rule-law>
³ www.co.blaine.id.us/218/Land-Use-Application-Forms



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EVENT FEATURE



A view from Idaho BaseCamp. Photo credit: Whitney McNees

IDAHO BASECAMP TO HOST 11TH ANNUAL FEASTIVAL

BY HAYDEN SEDER

Back for its 11th year, the popular, family-friendly Feastival at Idaho BaseCamp will take place over the weekend of Sept. 20-22. Both the fall festival and its location over Trail Creek are unique, with participants invited to camp or rent one of the structures on the property and participate in dancing, workshops, yoga, pot-lucks and more.

Feastival is actually a fundraiser for Idaho BaseCamp, a nonprofit organization founded in 1998 by Matthew Gershater to provide education on environment, community and individual impact upon nature. Idaho BaseCamp's curriculum is rooted in the acquisition of knowledge gained through both experiential and academic study.

Whitney McNees, BaseCamp programs director and Matthew's wife, admits that the fundraiser is more of an "awareness-raiser," as the event usually just breaks even.

"We just love doing it and bringing the community together up at BaseCamp," McNees said. "It's great to have a weekend where everyone can check out the space, enjoy the coming fall and maybe get a last hurrah of camping and hanging out outside before the weather turns. It's more about the community coming together than being a money-maker for us."

The event features a full weekend lineup of activities. Music will be performed Friday and Saturday night by Boise psychedelic harpist Wend, Ketchum folk/Americana band Idaho Vacation, L.A. electronic-infused singer and songwriter Dot, Ketchum DJ Joey Sides, and Ketchum psychedelic looping/experimental folk group Acid Genie. Bands play riverside at the "beach cabana," where cocktails will be sold. This year's cocktails are a collaboration of Warfield alcohol, Roadbars recipes and Boho Lounge doing the pouring.

The weekend will include several workshops, including "Intro to Systemic Family Constellations" with Veronica Rheinhart and "Kundalini + Creativity: Connecting Through the Heart with Art" with Eliza Tobin, visionary artist.

Saturday morning will feature the usual dance party, with this year's rhythm-and-roots dance being led by Sean Parnell. Yoga will take place Sunday morning.

A potluck will be held both Friday and Saturday night, with Idaho BaseCamp providing the main course and festival attendees providing supplemental dishes (dishes are assigned by last name on the event website). On Saturday, the infamous annual "Beet Off" beet-cooking competition will take place, with the winner taking home the coveted golden beet.

Tickets to the event are \$50 for adults, \$25 for teens 13-18, \$15 for kids 5-12 and free for children 4 and under. Tickets include music, main dinner course, access to all events, yoga, dancing and camping in tents, cars and RVs (no hookups



Another view from Idaho BaseCamp. Photo credit: Whitney McNees



One of the musicians performing at last year's Feastival. Photo credit: Whitney McNees

available). For those looking for a more upscale camping experience, a sleep yurt is available for rent that sleeps 6-10, as are 10-foot-by-10-foot canvas wall tents that sleep six adults. A new hemp cottage known as "The Bungalow" was built this spring, which has one queen bed and is also available to rent. All sleeping accommodations can be booked online.

For those not sure what to expect or bring, a suggested packing list is available on the Feastival website. McNees encourages people to dress warm and celebrate the coming of fall as weekend temperatures look slightly chilly.

"We will have plenty of indoor space to stay warm and our coldest, wettest Feastivals have been some of the ones that brought people together the most!" McNees said.

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